

In this number:

Energy efficient buildings - legal agreement 1

EU Liberals & EU-wide price for construction materials 2

8th International Masonry Conference 2

World Sustainable Building conference 2

E-PRTR website & ceramic site information 2

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Energy efficient buildings - legal agreement



"Energy performance of buildings is key to achieving our EU Climate & Energy objectives for 2020, namely the reduction of Greenhouse gas emissions and the achievement of a 20% of energy savings. By this agreement, the EU is sending a strong message to the forthcoming climate negotiations in Copenhagen. Improving the energy performance of buildings is a cost effective way of fighting against climate change and improving energy security, while also boosting the building sector and the EU economy as a whole."

Commissioner Piebalgs

On 18 November, the EC Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs publicly welcomed the political agreement on the recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) reached by the European Parliament and Council. Martin Elsberger from the EC DG Transport & Energy reported on the successful outcome of the negotiations at the European Parliament Ceramic Forum (EPCF) organised by Cerame-Unie on 19 November. He explained that the agreement retains the key aspects of the 2008 EC proposal. The recast EPBD, repealing Directive 2002/91/EC, aims at extending the scope and strengthening the current Directive by setting a legal framework to upgrade the national building codes and by launching an ambitious policy of nearly zero energy buildings, so that all new buildings will be nearly zero energy as of 2020. As for existing buildings, Member States will also draw up national plans to increase the number of nearly zero energy buildings.

Moreover, the recast EPBD also improves the information provided to consumers in the buildings energy performance certificate. Not only the energy performance certificate shall be shown to the prospective new tenant or buyer of the building, but the energy performance indicator of the building shall be stated in the sale or rental advertisements.

The new Directive now covers also small-scale renovations. However, the Directive does not prescribe in detail how these energy savings should be achieved; it will be up to Member States to specify the necessary measures. In any case, the consumer should be informed about the energy performance of a building as early as possible. When a building is purchased, an energy-performance certificate has to be handed over to the consumer. In general, all energy-performance measures should be cost-effective for the consumer. Details pertaining to the cost-effectiveness shall be included in the energy performance certificate. This certificate shall provide only basic information (2-3 pages) and does not replace a full energy audit. When transposing the Directive, Member States shall follow the "life-cycle approach", but here again they have a large degree of flexibility in order to consider specific local and regional circumstances.



As one year ends, we can already look forward to meetings to come! So for information, here at the TBE meetings already planned for early 2010:

- 19 January:** EU-ETS ad-hoc group
- 24 February:** Regulated Dangerous Substances ad-hoc group
- 8 March:** Roof tile product group
- 9 March:** Sustainable construction working group
- 20 April:** Masonry product group

There remains for me to thank you for your input and support and to wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and successful New Year.

EU Liberals & EU-wide price for construction materials



On 26 November in a speech to the European contractors federation (FIEC), Guy Verhofstadt, leader of the liberal group in the European Parliament, argued that the health of the construction industry is vital to the health of the wider European economy. In his speech he outlined the extent of the crisis in the construction sector, brought on principally by the economic downturn and in particular marked collapse of business in countries like Spain, UK and Ireland which had previously experienced a credit-fuelled boom. Guy Verhofstadt proposed that the EU devise a dedicated strategy for the sector given its pivotal role in stimulating economic growth and jobs. According to Mr Verhofstadt, such a strategy should contain at least the following four elements:

- Increase in budget line to support SMEs in the sector which accounts for some 7.5% of total employment in Europe;
- Agreement on availability of EU grants and EIB loans for construction projects to be accompanied by more transparency and accountability;
- A special focus on the construction sector in the new Member States which are still lagging behind in many basic infrastructures and have been especially badly hit by the financial crisis making recovery even more difficult;
- Last but not least, the setting of a EU-wide price for construction materials as is currently done in the US and China.



We may have to talk to liberal leader to check exactly what he has in mind and to make him understand our opinion on this controversial proposal.

Finally, Mr Verhofstadt underlined that the recovery of the construction sector is inextricably linked to the European economic recovery as a whole which requires a strengthening of cross border financial supervision, a recapitalisation of Europe's banks to support investment and the development of a green, non-fossil economy that respects sustainability and climate change commitments.

<http://www.alde.eu/en/details/news/verhofstadt-outlines-dedicated-plan-for-european-construction-industry-4/>



8th International Masonry Conference

4-7 July 2010, Dresden (DE)

Interest in the topic of sustainability has increased considerably in building and civil engineering. Masonry therefore needs to develop and provide suitable solutions. The slogan of the 8IMC is: "Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Masonry Construction".

http://masonry-conference.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2nd_announcement_registrationform.pdf



World Sustainable Building conference (SB11)

18 - 21 October, 2011 Helsinki (FI)

The co-sponsors of the SB10/11 conferences have agreed to a change of venue, organizers, and dates for the SB11. After the very successful Melbourne SB10 conference the next one will not be held in London as announced but in Helsinki. More information about SB11 is available on the new Conference website.

www.sb11.org

E-PRTR website & ceramic site information

Astrid Volckaert, Director, Cerame-Unie

Since November the EU Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR) is on-line. This register aims at improving public access to environmental information at factory level. It provides information on the emissions of pollutants in the 27 EU Member States and covers more than 24 000 sites in 65 economic activities.

Ceramic installations with a production capacity exceeding 75 tonnes per day or with a kiln capacity of 4 m³ and with a setting density per kiln of 300 kg/m³ are included in the scope of the register.

However, emissions need to be reported only when they exceed the threshold values.

The data currently available is from 2007. However from 2010, the information will be updated each April.

Check if your facility is included and if so think about your image and possible local permitting issues.

<http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/>

