




> ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

CEPMC - Council of European Producers  
of Materials for Construction - AISBL  
A strengthened identity for enhanced visibility

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

After two years of presidency much has changed at CEPMC, but one thing I am still certain of is the importance and value of the construction industry in helping Europe's fortunes. Of course, CEPMC has had a turbulent couple years for two main reasons. The first, as everyone is aware, is the still volatile economic climate that the construction industry is striving to fight against. The second, and closer to home, is the complete reorganisation of the Association, with a new name, new team and new energy. Hopefully the latter will help address the former's problems in the coming months and years.

When I first stepped up to the role of President I was convinced that the dissemination and communication of the knowledge and specificities of our industry should be enhanced- we needed a new incisiveness, a strengthening of synergies with other European organisations and a greater impact towards European institutions. I am proud to now see this taking form in the new Construction Products Europe.

In the past 10 months the association has grown manifold, with four new team members joining. This has enabled greater internal debates about how best to move the association forward with greater stakeholder involvement on behalf of the whole industry. There has also been an increase in participation of external events, raising the visibility of the sector. One event of note is the very successful CRP workshop the team managed to bring to the European Parliament, which enabled a very productive, sector-wide debate. This new drive has already rewarded the association with a new member and is a drive that has started being recognised by all in the industry.

Overall, I am excited for the future of Construction Products Europe and I wish all the best to the incoming president. With my exit as president, I would like to thank Erwin Kern and the Executive Board for all their help during my Presidency of the Association. I would also like to offer full-heartily my support as senior Vice-President- I am sure there is much to come in such pivotal times.

Sincerely,

Libero Ravaoli



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

You will be familiar with the saying that it is not the destination but the journey that matters most. Well, ten months down the road we can look back and reflect on all the changes we have brought to our association. From the President and Board members, to the participants of our various expert groups and, of course, the members of the Secretariat, many of you have contributed in one way or another to the development of the new structure. Advice, suggestions and comments were carefully collected over the past months and allowed us shape our new EU representation. The enthusiasm has been tremendous and I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to guide us through the process.

Of course, whilst the reorganisation was being prepared, we still dealt with our main files, such as the Construction Product Regulation and dangerous substances, but also actively contributed to new European Commission, European Parliament and European Economic and Social Committee initiatives, dealing with such varied topics as affordability, reduced VAT rates, the sustainable use of natural resources and Product Environmental Footprint. The increased human resources have of course allowed the Secretariat to cover subjects and to prepare more detailed contributions. This was particularly true for the European Commission High Level Forum for the competitiveness of the construction industry and its subsequent thematic groups. These groups, topics and the announced Green Building Communication will require further debate and contributions in the months to come.

As we celebrate the launch of Construction Products Europe, it is important to remember that the achievements of an association like ours are the results of the combined effort of each individual. In time of financial hardship, human and financial means are reduced. Therefore, we must now build on our core values, look for synergies and alliances, and together, continue to work towards a more efficient construction industry.

Sincerely,

Christophe Sykes

## OUR ACTIVITIES

The first members of the new team joined the Secretariat in August 2012 and this short report provides a brief overview of the activities that have taken place within the association since then.

### ECONOMICAL DEBATE

The construction sector was brought to the forefront of the EU political debates with the publication on 31 July 2012 of the EC communication on the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector.

To support the implementation of its strategy, the EC created a High level Forum, where our industry was represented by Mr Ravaioli, and also five thematic groups. The Secretariat led a series of internal debates to help define our needs and to prepare common positions. The results of these debates were presented to the EC as support material. More so, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) decided to draft their own report in response to this EC strategy. The Secretariat secured a seat in the drafting committee to support the initiative by providing input.

Concurrently, the European Parliament decided to draft an Own-initiative Report on social housing under the leadership of French MEP Karima Delli.

The Secretariat offered support and suggested that the report should consider affordable housing as its main theme. In February, the CEOs members of our Industry Round Table were able to discuss the affordability issue with the representative of the European Mortgage Federation. It was deemed extremely important and will be at the core of our June workshop.

### SUSTAINABILITY

This year was marked by the change of convener in our Sustainability Working Group as Mr Hamans retired in the autumn. On behalf our members, the Secretariat would like to thank him again for his expertise and dedication. Mrs Loréa was recently nominated by the Executive Board to take over the chair of this expert group.

Over the last months, a great number of EC initiatives were dealt with by the Sustainability Working Group among which the new EC Public Procurement Directive proposal where we expressed our views towards the relevant European Institutions. To show the importance of our sector, the Secretariat helped prepare our contribution to relevant EC consultations like the one on resource efficiency indicators that took place in October, and the one on the VAT reduced rates launched in January 2013. The Secretariat also drafted a position paper on air quality linked to the EC review of the EU Thematic

Strategy on Air Pollution. Last summer, the EC also launched a pilot-study on Environmental Technology Verification and our Secretariat joined the Stakeholder in order to monitor the issue and report back.

In terms of sustainability assessment, CEN has published the series of standards dealing with the environmental part of sustainability in construction works. While the social and economic parts are being finalized, the industry is developing Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). However, a certain number of uncertainties remain about a possible common approach and future legislation. The systems to verify EPDs have different criteria and the documents are not accepted across national borders. The Secretariat has been offered a seat on the board of the ECO-Platform initiative, which aims to support the mutual recognition of EPD. More so, the EC Joint Research Center has published its Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) methodology to assess the environmental impact of products. The industry is keen to work with the CEN TC 350 methodology and will look at ways in which to find a common approach.

As part of our competitiveness drive, the Secretariat looked at the various support mechanisms offered by the EU for industrial research. Meetings were held with key EC officers and with Mr Bourdeau, Secretary General of European Construction Technology Platform. We submitted comments to

the Energy-Efficient Buildings Public Private Partnership Roadmap and circulated an introductory note to EU funding to the members of our Sustainability Working Group. Mr Bourdeau was also a guest of our Industry Round Table where research funding opportunities and needs were discussed.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Last year, DG Climate Action chose construction as one of three key areas to be included in their Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. This initiative was quickly picked-up by the Secretariat and following a series of meetings and exchanges, we were invited to present our views at a closed workshop organised by the unit. The EC then asked us to publish a position paper to clarify the construction industry's approach to the concept of resilience and adaptation. The European Strategy was adopted on 29 April and will develop in the coming years both at European and at National level.

## CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT REGULATION

The much-awaited Construction Product Regulation (CPR) will enter into force on 1 July 2013. This regulation will transform the legal requirements for making construction products available to the market. Under the CPR,

manufacturers shall provide a Declaration of Performance. This new requirement, its content, the ways to provide it or make it available and the links with the CE label are the centre of the initiative.

On the 27 March, the Secretariat organised a Workshop in the European Parliament to open debate on the possibility to make available the DoP on websites. With all the branches of industry and the EC in attendance, the debate was facilitated by MEP Catherine Stihler, the CPR rapporteur.



Participants of the CPR workshop.

On a more personal note, Mr Pascal Bar was our guest and he was warmly applauded by all those in attendance as he received a well-deserved retirement present.



(Right to left) Catherine Stihler MEP, Christophe Sykes and Frédéric Poeydemenge.

Other relevant actions related to the CPR implementation are the development of a revised model for the DoP, the interpretation of articles covering particular products or manufacturing processes, the market surveillance, and the assistance to members when drawing up the models for the DoP for sectors and products. The work was divided between the CPR Working Group chaired by Mr Creton, which dealt with the political aspects of the regulation, and the Task Group chaired by Mr Poeydemenge, which dealt with the practical issues such as the development of the helping documents and the revision of drafts.



CEPMC Team: (left to right) Oscar Nieto, Catherine Stockwell, Pascal Bar, Marie-France Baire, Christophe Sykes and Chloé Fayole.

Under the requirements of these groups the Secretariat has participated in the December and March meetings of the EC Standing Committee on Construction and also in the May Preparatory Group. More importantly, we delivered our messages on market surveillance to Member States, EOTA, CEN and Notified Bodies through our participation in the AdCo meetings.

## **FIRE**

Under the same working procedure, Expert Group Fire deals with the requirements of construction products related to resistance and reaction to fire. Our convenor, Mrs Lukas, works also in the CEN TC 127 and together with the Secretariat coordinates the point of view of manufacturers, test laboratories, notified bodies and Commission to support the requirement related to fire in the CPR.

## **DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES**

One of the aspects covered by the CPR is the release of dangerous substances

from construction products. This issue is coordinated by the EC through the meetings of the Dangerous Substances Expert Group. Also important is the surveillance of the activities of CEN TC 351 when developing the standardised test method for release of dangerous substances to water and soil and emission to air.

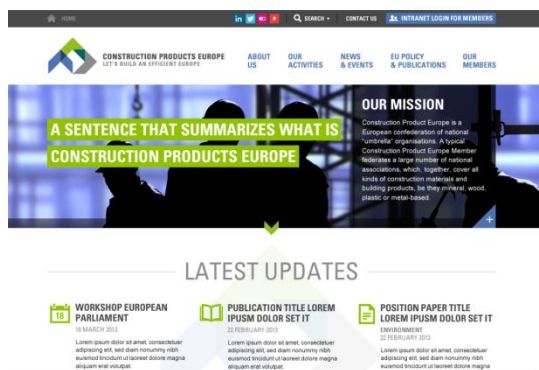
Our convenor, Mr Draeger, and the Secretariat have coordinated the actions of the group and have written a position paper to clarify the understanding of the complex procedure released by the EC to deal with this requirement.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Being acutely aware that communications is a cornerstone of lobbying, the Association has launched its new communication strategy. The traditional tools of communication are being broken down, adapted and developed as new media now drive strategy and decision making. We know we must educate ourselves in these new platforms if we want to ensure

effective participation with all sectors and stakeholders.

The association has changed its name from CEPMC to Construction Products Europe to better reflect its scope and expertise. This included a redesigned logo and the launch of a new website with a much friendlier user interface. The objective was to improve the quality of access to information and analysis with regular updates that will include the latest documents, position papers and news.



An important compliment to the website is the increase in the use of social media. Construction Products Europe has created a blog where we will hold active discussions on selected topics. We have also set up a twitter account enabling us to always be up-to-date with industry and European news as well as connect with those who share a common vision. Last but not least, our Linkedin company page has created a

forum where you can endorse the activities of your association.

It is important to integrate communications with the rest of the associations work, therefore we developed a strategy for communications that has planned out how we will best engage with stakeholders. This document was originally for internal use but we made it available to our members in the hope of sharing best practice in the industry.

Our new extranet will strengthen our internal communications and allow the dissemination of relevant documents with greater ease.

Conversations are now taking place online as well as offline and we must align our communications to reflect this. With a structured communications strategy we will be better positioned to hear the latest news from important stakeholders and be a reliable source of news for others. We must strive to be the reference point for any stakeholder in the European construction industry. Overall, we want to provide relevant and timely expertise and with the changing ways that people consume information, social media and communications are the key to providing this.



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