



FOCUS

Building & Construction ISSUE

EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS NEWSLETTER

PROVIDES **EuPC** MEMBERS WITH A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF **EuPC** ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES

October 2013

EC sustainable construction competitiveness strategy

In the end of 2012, the Commission started an initiative aimed at reinvigorating the construction industry towards the horizon 2020. Five thematic groups were started:

- 1 stimulating investment in renovation and innovation
- 2 skills and qualification
- 3 sustainable use of natural resources
- 4 Internal market : product and services
- 5 International competitiveness

Studies have been initiated to propose input for strategy, the outcome of which will be available later on this year. They will be reviewed by a High Level Strategic Forum. A series of initiatives are initiated in this context and further defined in other articles : consultation on sustainable building, EC conference on innovation...
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Consultation on sustainable buildings

DG Environment launched a consultation aiming at defining a strategy to make buildings more sustainable. A series of options was proposed addressing both product and building level and ranging from mandatory to voluntary. **EuPC** contributed to this consultation stressing the following key points which are mostly in alignment with the rest of the construction product sector represented in Construction Product Europe:

a) support of voluntary approach through European Standardization (CEN TC 350) both for products (Environmental Product Declarations) and for the assessment of buildings

b) This European standardization approach (methodology and formats) should be aligned

at international level (ISO)

c) CEN TC 350 indicators for products are currently not covering all aspects relevant to the sustainability of buildings. They should be expanded but leaving freedom at National level to use less indicators from the common set

d) Common or mutually recognized Databases for Life Cycle Analysis must be defined at the minimum at EU level

e) Platforms for the voluntary publication of Environmental Product Declarations should be developed at EU level

f) Provided they use a common set of indicator and common methodologies, performance of buildings may be assessed by private bodies at National level depending on National/ regional preferences

The European Commission initial analysis of the 250 answers to this consultation identifies 5 key elements for green buildings:

- Material use for Construction Products
- Energy use
- Durability
- Deconstruction & recyclability
- Management of Construction & Demolition waste

It concludes that the best policy option of a mandatory European framework for the assessment of building and that the data quality was generally insufficient. This is contrasting with the views of construction products federations.
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Innovation in construction

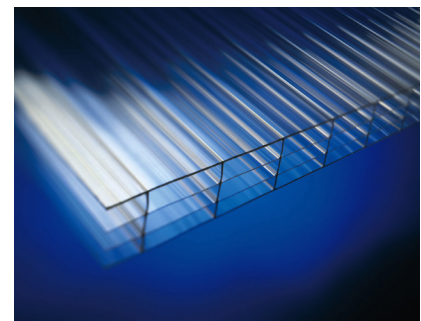
On 21 October, DG Enterprise held a conference on innovation in

construction. This conference aimed to give input into the so called high level group for construction. In this conference some trends in the thinking of Commission for stimulating innovation in construction were explained.

On the financing side, several initiatives are developed by the European Investment Bank in order to support and potentially more risky (mainly public) projects at advantageous rates (e.g. JESSICA project).

Two main objectives will be promoted for innovation in construction for the period 2014-2020 : energy efficient buildings and coping with ageing of European populations. A number of Public Private Partnerships (like e.g. the Energy Efficient Building Public-Private Partnership) have been set up in order to further define research needs.

It is also quite clear that the focus will be less on product and more on systems (e.g. a heating solution, not just the boiler). This necessitates companies wishing to participate in research projects at EU level not only to contribute to the above objectives but also to bring development providing holistic solutions through network of actors including downstream such as builders, architects or buyers groups.
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Declaring dangerous substances content in construction products?

The current construction product regulation foresees that the declaration of substance content should not go beyond what is required in the Regulation on Chemicals (REACH). For plastics converted products this means that the declaration of performance must be accompanied with information on the content of substances of very high concern defined under REACH if they are present above 0.1% in the construction product. As foreseen in the construction product regulation, the Commission is now re-evaluating whether content declaration obligation should be associated with construction product. The Commission therefore commissioned a study by the consultant RPA. The Commission should submit a report to the European Parliament and Council latest before 25 April 2014. More info: geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

EuPC building & construction division: consultation on strategy

During the **EuPC** General Assembly in Brugge on 24 May 2013, Frédéric Midy, CEO Aliaxis for the region Europe, Middle East and Africa, was elected **EuPC** Building and Construction chairman, he replaced Alain Requillart (SFEC) who had held this function over the last 4 years. Since then, the division members have been consulted on their expectations and several face to face meetings took place with different stakeholders so as to better need their requirement. The results of this consultation shall be discussed during next Building & Construction EXCOM on 18 November 2013. If you did not yet give your input please contact us. More info: geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

Potential prioritization for authorization of Azodicarbonamide blowing agent

Azodicarbonamide is a blowing agent widely used in the plastics industry (about 3.4 million T of processed foamed

plastics products would be concerned) and especially in construction. The proposal of the European Chemicals Agency to prioritize it for authorization under the REACH chemical regulation could have dramatic consequences on the activities of plastics converters in Europe and on employment.

On 23 September, **EuPC** submitted detailed comments to the European Chemicals Agency. In the next phase the Member States Committee shall define an opinion by mid December. It will then be up to the Commission to decide on which substances should be prioritized.

It is **EuPC** opinion that authorization is not the adequate route to control the potential risks associated with this blowing agent. **EuPC** has set-up an "ADCA plastics users consortium" that shall follow-up the prioritization process and coordinate research within the plastics sector focusing on documenting further exposure levels in plastics converting plants. It is important that companies using ADCA participate to the work of this group in order to further increase knowledge on the use of ADCA and propose adequate responses to the questions raised by this proposal. More info: geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

REACH

The REACH process continued strongly in 2013 with **Registration** of about 3.000 new substances registered by the 31.5.2013 deadline; more substances were added to the **Candidate List** (now 144) and the Authorization **Annex XIV** (now 22). The Commission Road Map targets 440 substances to be evaluated by 2020 by RMO analysis (Risk Management Options) for SVHC identification.

Recycling and Authorization: In February 2015 the first series of Substances (a.o. DEHP) subject to the Reach Authorization procedure will reach their "Sunset Date". The Reach Authorization process has not taken into account the special case of Recycling. The Commission's own proposal is considered unrealistic by the Recycling

Industry. Conversations continue with the Commission, especially on DEHP but also on End-of-Waste issues. Inspections: the European Member States have stepped-up inspection of Companies' Reach Compliance and 2.400 Reach Inspectors are being trained. In addition to the normal REACH Consulting Service by **EuPC**, a "Pre-Inspection Audit" service was set up, open to all members who have receive notice of inspection or who wish to be prepared at all times for unexpected inspections. More info: walter.claes@eupc.org

Eu Project update: NanoSafePack



The **main aim of the NanoSafePACK project** is to develop a best practices guide to allow the safe handling and use of nanomaterials in packaging industries, considering integrated strategies to control the exposure to nanoparticles (NP) in industrial settings, and provide the SMEs with scientific data to minimize and control the NP release and migration from the polymer nanocomposites placed on the market.

To **achieve** this aim, a complete hazard and exposure assessment will be conducted to obtain new scientific data about the safety of polymer composites reinforced using nanometer-sized particles. The proposed work will focus on a selected set of nanometer-sized materials (nanoclays and metal oxide NP) relevant to the packaging sector. Results from the exposure and hazard assessment studies will be used to compile a risk assessment of the use of NP in the packaging industry.

NanoSafePack is a Research for SME Associations project funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme managed by ERA-Research Executive Agency <http://ec.europa.eu/research/rea> (FP7/2007-2013) under Grant Agreement n. 286362. <http://www.nanosafepack.eu> More info: ruth.colado@eupc.org

2013 EuPC Calendar - Events & Meetings

18 NOV 2013
26 NOV 2013
27 NOV 2013

B&C Excom and Technical Committee
Packaging
EuPC Steering Committee

Brussels, EuPC Offices
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