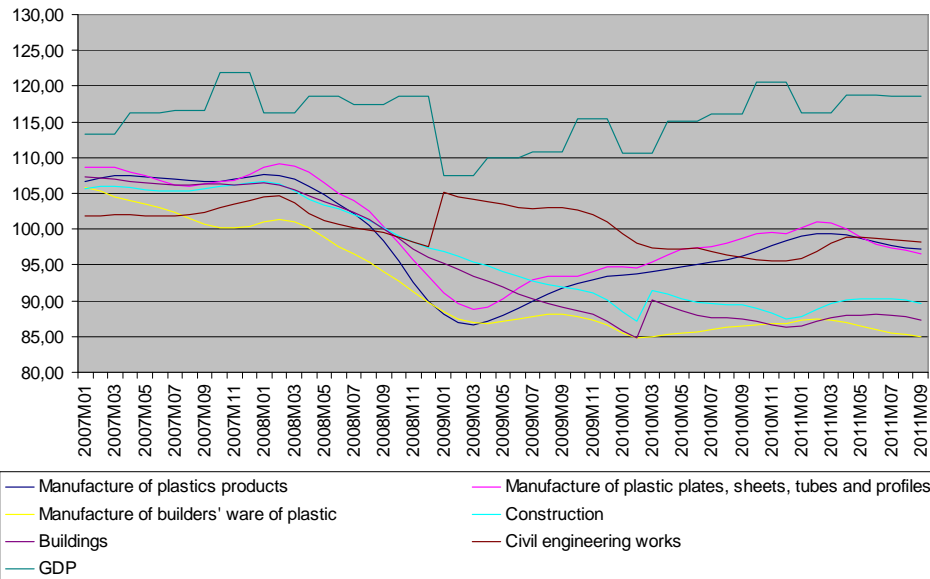


EUROPEAN PLASTICS CONVERTERS NEWSLETTER

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

January 2012

EU 27 plastics & the construction sector Trend (2005 =100)



Trends for plastics in the construction sector : still hard times ahead

Whilst the GDP has reached or even exceeded its pre-crisis level, the construction sector remains pretty much depressed volumes up to 15% lower than their pre-crisis level. Plastics production is following a similar trend albeit on a lesser degree. For instance, semi-finished products such as tubes, profile and sheet production output (please note that these numbers are not only construction, a part of them could be used in other sectors) is about 10% lower than in 2007 and have seen a steady decline since the beginning of 2011. According to Euroconstruct, the outlook for the construction sector is bleak in 2012 due to the effect of the sovereign debt crisis in Europe with a 0.3% decrease. The effect of the crisis should however be limited due to strong and sustained growth in emerging economies. Growth should accelerate again as of 2013. The civil engineering work sector which had less suffered from the crisis due a.o. to public spending and less exposure to speculation could be exposed to bigger risks, like the non residential market in which the public austerity plans could have a negative impact. On the other hand renovation and maintenance should remain stable. It is expected that the construction industry will reach early 2000s production volumes by 2014. For more information, please contact geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

Eco Label and Eco Design

EuPC has been closely following the recent developments with the European EcoLabel and EcoDesign Directive. The EcoLabel is a voluntary scheme that labels eligible products with the 'green flower'. These products should conform to certain criteria that ensure their ecological friendliness for the product's entire life-cycle. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre recently proposed EcoLabels for many new products including - most relevant for **EuPC** - windows and buildings. The EcoDesign Directive, on the other hand, is a mandatory legislation that precepts the minimum energy performance of both energy-using and energy-related products. The proposed revisions to the directive examined, among many other products, windows and flooring. **EuPC** has been attending stakeholder meetings to echo the industry held opinion that pre-existing standards, including those developed by CEN TC 350, as well as environmental Product Declarations (EPD's) already sufficiently and accurately dictate the environmental performance of products and systems. Moreover, these standards and EPD's are based or issued on solid scientific research. Often, the proposed EcoLabel or EcoDesign criteria are also at odds with pre-existing regulations, specifically those governing recycling. Therefore, any additional EcoLabels and any revisions to the EcoDesign

Directive should take an integrated approach by incorporating and harmonising pre-existing European standards and EPD's, without wholly excluding any specific product group based on the classification of substances contained therein. They should take into account the overall benefit of those products and the actual exposure to those substances. It is **EuPC**'s opinion that setting criteria that are meant to specifically exclude entire product groups weakens the overall concept of both the EcoLabel and the EcoDesign Directive and does not work towards achieving environmental goals. **EuPC** will therefore continue to push for this harmonised approach that sets reasonable yet challenging environmental benchmarks for the industry. This approach, also supported by the European Council for Construction Materials and Product (CEPMC), seems to be gaining ground as could be seen in the approach presented by the Joint Research Center for an ecolabel on buildings during the last stakeholders meeting on 30 November 2011. For more information please contact sophia.huda@eupc.org



iPolyCond Handbook : "an introduction to conductive polymers"
As part of the Leonardo project iPolyCond, **EuPC** together with well known research institutes ISmithers RAPRA and Aimplas, and SME's active in the development of new polymer

composites based on carbon nanotubes developed a handbook describing how plastics converters can practically use these composites in their product range. These eco-friendly and cost-effective conductive polymers were developed through the iPolyCond project and protect against the effects of Electromagnetic Interferences (EMI) and Electrostatic Discharge (ESD). These materials are easily injection mouldable. With their greater range of mechanical and electrical properties, conductive polymers will aid SMEs in expanding their product range to a greater choice of applications. Copies can be ordered at **EuPC** Handbook or e-book : € 95 Paperback : € 65 For more information, please contact geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

Update on the EU funded projects

The European Framework Programme intends to promote the collaboration among different stakeholders on a European scale, with the aim of creating innovation networks. Three EU-funded research projects have recently started, in which EuPC is involved, have a specific focus on increasing the technological assets of SME-end users with the aim of increasing the competitiveness of SME's in our sector.

PolySolve (FP7), coordinated by the European Plastics Recyclers, aims to develop a sustainable solvent-based technique to recover purified polystyrene from expanded PS waste, and will explore options to do similar for polycarbonate.

SuperCleanQ (FP7) is coordinated by the British Plastics Federation. This project will develop new quality control and quality assurance tools and procedures for plastics recycling processes targeted at food contact applications, in accordance with existing EC regulations on food contact, in the first place for PET. The project had its kick-off meeting mid November 2011 and will last for 36 months.

NanoSafePack (FP7) has started as well, this project coordinated by Centro Español de Plásticos aims to develop guidance in the safe handling of nanomaterials in the packaging industry, the kick-off is planned on 12th of January 2012 in Barcelona. **EuPC** is involved in another NANO-based FP7 project, next to **NanoOnSpect** which has started in May and focuses on the successful dispersion of nanomaterials and control of properties of thermoplastic nanocomposites.

Other ongoing projects of **EuPC** include PRIME as well as Woody, Biostruct and NATEX for EuCIA. In the meantime, **EuPC** is involved in a number of project applications on various vibrant innovation domains such as nano-based materials, process control and rapid manufacturing technologies.

Please contact Wouter.geurts@eupc.org for comments or questions related to the EU-projects.

2011 EPSE Awards handed out during BATIMAT Fair

EPSE held its 5th annual Awards at the BATIMAT Fair in Paris this past November. This annual awards competition recognizes some of the best and most innovative projects using polycarbonate sheets. This year's competition saw three awards handed out in the categories of innovation, sustainability and design.

The Innovation award was given to the

Catania Shopping Centre in Sicily for its use of infra-red extrusion technology that permitted a maximum of natural light with minimal heat transfer.

The Sustainability award went to the Tropicarium at Luisenpark in Manneheim for drawing attention to the various benefits of using polycarbonate sheets with an application that fully respects the surrounding environment.

The Design award highlighted the versatility of polycarbonate in some very stunning examples, with this year's award going to the German Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo.

To view all the entries for the 2011 EPSE Awards please visit www.epse.org

For more information on EPSE (www.epse.org) and the Awards please contact sophia.huda@eupc.org

Harmonized sustainability indicators for the construction sector

CEN TC 350, "sustainability of construction works" has now finalized and adopted a coherent system of standards enabling to assess the environmental performance of buildings.

EN 15643-1 : 2010 Sustainability of buildings Part 1 : general Framework

EN 15643-2 : 2011 Sustainability of buildings Part 2 : environmental performance

EN 15908 : 2011 defines a Calculation method for the assessment of the environmental performance of buildings

FPREN 15804 Environmental Product Declarations : Core Rules for the Product Category of Construction Products (vote finalized. Publication available on 16/01/2012)

EN 15942 Environmental Product Declarations : communication format : business to business

CEN TR/15941: Environmental Product Declarations : Methodology for the selection of and use of generic data

The environmental product declarations provide common environmental indicators for all construction products. Those are then used in order to assess the environmental impact of a building.

Environmental impacts (Global Warming, Ozone Depletion, Acidification for Soil and Water, Eutrophication, Photochemical ozone create, depletion of abiotic resource elements and depletion abiotic resource fossil fuels) are described in common units to be declared per functional unit.

Additional information is then given on

resource use (from renewable primary energy used to the use of secondary materials, in total 10 parameters).

Finally information is given on the output flows (hazardous waste, non hazardous waste, materials for re-use, recovery , recycling...).

EN 15908 then defines a calculation method for the assessment of environmental impacts of buildings.

The same indicators as those mentioned above can then be used in order to quantify the environmental impacts of a building coming from the sum of products in the building, the construction process, the use phase and the end of life.

Hence rather than defining criteria on different life stages, the approach enables to set goals over the whole lifetime of the building.

For more information, please contact geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

A Smooth transition from CPD to CPR

Whilst the construction product regulation has been adopted in March 2011, most of the new dispositions applicable to the manufacturers shall be effective as of 1 July 2013.

Changes from one system to other are not dramatic, but are from now on applicable in the same way in all EU Member States.

Existing test data should be enough to draft the new declaration of performance but a common minimum format has been defined by the regulation. Discussion on the implementation and simplification of this new format are ongoing. For innovative products, the transition from European Technical Approval Guidelines to European Assessment Document could raise more specific technical problems.

EuPC keeps an eye on these minor transition issues in order to enable a smooth adaptation.

For more information, please contact geoffroy.tillieux@eupc.org

Personalia

With sadness we have to inform you that Dott. Costantino Friz passed away on December 23rd 2011 in Brussels. Dott.Friz has been the first Managing Director of **EuPC** and former Director at the EU Commission DG Industry for many years. We will always remember "Tino" as a gentle highly cultivated person with a lot of personal interests that served **EuPC** to be set up at the time of the merge between Eurtraplast and AEC.

2012 EuPC Calendar - Events & Meetings

06	MAR 2012	Packaging Excom	Copenhagen
07	MAR 2012	Steering Committee	Copenhagen
13	MAR 2012	NPA Meeting	Brussels, EuPC Offices
14	MAR 2012	NPA Meeting with PlasticsEurope	Brussels, EuPC Offices
15	MAR 2012	B&C / RM Committees	Brussels, EuPC Offices
17-18	APR 2012	Food Contact Conference	Brussels
30	MAY-1 JUN 2012	EuPC Annual Meeting 2012	Vienna, Austria
11	SEP 2012	Packaging Excom	Torino
12	SEP 2012	Steering Committee	Torino
25	SEP 2012	NPA Meeting	Wiesbaden, Germany
26	SEP 2012	NPA Meeting with PlasticsEurope	Wiesbaden, Germany
12	OCT 2012	B&C/RM Committees	Brussels, EuPC Offices
21-22	NOV 2012	Plastics Recycling Conference	Brussels
27	NOV 2012	Packaging Excom/B&C Excom	Brussels, EuPC Offices