

January
2021
*Our best wishes
for the new year*



Dear subscriber,

First days of 2021, we are still working from home and certainly will be for many more weeks. Fortunately, our secretariat quickly organised itself ten months ago and, thanks to our members' support, we did exceptionally well last year in terms of meetings, attendance, and results.

These past weeks have been rather quiet so we thought we would use this first edition of our monthly newsletter to look ahead, to review some of our files and other challenges that we may take on.

Back in October, the European Commission (EC) published its announced Renovation Wave and this, along with the Recovery plan, should inspire Member States to invest in the built environment, allow the construction industry to recover from the crisis and for EU citizens to benefit from more efficient homes and infrastructure. This item is very much still work in progress and it will occupy us for many months. Indeed, in her September state of the union speech, President Ursula Von der Leyen presented the EC plan to reduce the EU's greenhouse gas emissions that would require the revision of existing energy and climate legislation. The European Green Deal included a potential revision of the energy performance of buildings directive (EPBD) announced for the end of 2021. There is already a strong movement to decarbonise construction and the operating-phase of buildings. Reviewing public procurement policies, increasing material efficiency, using lower emission materials, recycling building materials and components, these are all topics that need to be discussed in the coming months.

As you well know, the Construction Products Regulation (CPR) and its associated CE marking are the corner stones of our association work. As announced, the EC should publish its CPR revision proposal later this year. We are of course deeply involved in the discussions with both Member States and the Members of the European Parliament. The German EU Presidency CPR conference was an important event to which we were invited as speakers in both the technical and political parts. We once again put forward ideas for the revision but also urged the EC to work on the implementation. CE marking for construction products may be the tool we are looking for when it comes to digitalisation of the industry and, more importantly, the delivery of environmental data. Last but not least, as CE marking is a prerequisite, we cannot wait for a lengthy revision process to resolve current woes.

The logical next topic is data, including ownership, delivery, format and many more. We see huge investments around the globe in digitalisation and construction is described by some as the next Eldorado, the next Uber and Airbnb money-making opportunities. As our industry is

at the very beginning of a very long, complex value-chain, we need to take a stand on such initiatives as the EC digital building logbook, Level(s) and its sustainability assessment of buildings and other EC construction indicators schemes. For many years, our manufacturers have voluntarily delivered Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). How do we ensure that their importance and value are known by all and used accordingly? How can we include this scheme in the construction digitalisation and decarbonisation processes?

It is important to acknowledge the work done in collaboration with other EU construction stakeholders like the contractors represented by FIEC, SMEs by EBC and machinery producers by CECE. Our latest success lies in the recently launched Construction 2050 Alliance that brings together close to 50 EU associations, including numerous members. As digitalisation will bring challenges and opportunities to the whole value chain, the Alliance would be the ideal gathering in which to discuss 3D printing, robotics, IoT and many more with the whole industry and EU Institutions representatives.

So, we have plenty of things to share with you in the coming weeks and months but, as always, exchanges and feedback allow us to finetune and focus our actions so do get in touch.

Let me end by wishing you and your loved ones a successful and healthy 2021 on behalf of the whole team.

Christophe Sykes
Director General

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