ERMCO NEWS

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SUMMARY

Member of:

Welcome !

Welcome to our latest ERMCO News, and happy Easter/spring holiday. You will be aware that the Meeting of Representatives this year will be in June, in Paris, in the 50th anniversary year of the French Association, SNBPE. Fifty years of a ready-mixed concrete association! It's hard to imagine what the industry was like in 1964. SNBPE is certainly one of the most active members of ERMCO – there are references to work of theirs in this issue of ERMCO News, and we have often highlighted other news from them in our newsletter. And if you can read French, search http://www.snbpe.org/ for their library of information.

So, we encourage your participation to the Reps meeting, a special event this year, when we will say happy birthday to our French colleagues. And Paris is always Paris…..

Now about us.

Via the ECP, the European Concrete Platform, ERMCO is taking part in the development of an international scheme to demonstrate that concrete is a 'responsibly sourced' material (already a new requirement of environmental certification programmes like BREEAM and LEED). Other international partners are involved, such as the readymix associations of North and South America, NRMCA and FIHP. Other industries – e.g. timber – already make this claim, and we are certainly able to do so, and need to do so, not least to reassure and support our customers.

With colleagues from Cembureau, we are involved in setting up the *'Concrete Initiative'* aimed at properly positioning concrete in the European debate on sustainability of construction materials: if you are in Brussels on May 27 you could attend the launch event of this initiative – if not, expect to hear more about it very soon.

ERMCO Secretariat team

Future EU Commission's Communication on Sustainable Buildings

Thanks to our colleagues from CPE, Construction Products Europe, we now have a clearer picture of what will be the future Communication of the European Commission (EC) on Sustainable Buildings expected in the first half of 2014. Many stakeholders have noted the discrepancy between the all-embracing initial title and the scope, which was limited to environment aspects with the exclusion of energy efficiency. These comments have been taken on board by the Commission which has opened the communication to energy efficiency issues, and is expected to retitle the Communication "Resource Efficiency Opportunities in the Construction Sector". This communication will be part of a larger EC package on resource efficiency and "circular economy". The goal is to reduce the environmental impact of residential, commercial and administrative buildings (but not industrial buildings for the moment). The Communication will propose a framework of core indicators to assess environmental performance. It is expected to be a flexible system (indicators would be different for new and renovated buildings) and able to integrate in existing

schemes. In the next two years collaboration between all stakeholders and Member States will be a key factor and the debate will be based on existing works. To check the official webpage of the EC on this topic, please click (here)

Implications of climate change

All of us are all concerned at some of the possible results of climate change. The UK has suffered very severe flooding this winter: a whole railway was washed away, completely destroyed, in southwest England; thousands of metres of readymixed concrete were required to rebuild the line. The Institute of Civil Engineers there has commented on what will be required from the construction industry, in terms of infrastructure. Click (here) to read more – the site includes a link to UK government thinking.

*In the picture: Flooding in Somerset, West England (Winter 2014).

Use of concrete in roads

Why in Europe are so few roads built with concrete? Why does asphalt still (nearly) always win? The European Concrete Paving Association, EUPAVE, is reconsidering this question. Is it something that can be addressed at European level, or is it a national matter? Should our industry direct its marketing attentions to BIG road projects (motorway paving construction) or smaller scale, more feasible applications like roundabouts (giratoires, rotondas, rotatorie)?

Last year, the French Association, SNBPE, published in its magazine a technical 'dossier' on this last application. If you can read French, click (here) to see what ERMCO Ecotec member Jean-Marc Potier had to say in this dossier. EUPAVE has also made available a longer document on the same subject (in English) – click (here) to get access to it. SNBPE has also published a more comprehensive dossier on the use of concrete more generally in highways etc, which is also available (here).

Revision of EN 206

Most of our readers will be aware that the revision of EN206 has been finalised. The standard is already published by some national standards bodies, and should become available in all countries in the near future. Some of our member associations, e.g. Austria, have announced the new standard in their national magazines. ERMCO members were strongly represented on the CEN technical committee on concrete which revised the standard, and we have subsequently written an ERMCO document on the changes, which has been circulated to all members of the CEN committee, and generally welcomed. It describes the main changes, some of which will be of great benefit to readymix producers. It is publicy available on the ERMCO website – click (here). It is aimed at the construction industry generally, but we will soon make available a second document on the new standard, this one directed specifically at the readymix industry.

Structural use of fibre concrete

The revision of EN206 has included statements on fibre concrete, as well as the revision of the design standard Eurocode 2. ERMCO produced guidance on such concrete in 2012. This is still a relatively new technology, particularly in the use of fibres (steel, or polymer 'macrofibres') for structural purposes, and it remains unclear to some of us when and where and how fibres can replace conventional steel reinforcement. A recent article in the Finnish concrete magazine, *betoni,* gives us some updates on this type of concrete, and focuses on developments in their neighbour, Estonia. There, fibre concrete has been used successfully to significantly reduce slab thickness and to accelerate the construction process. Click (here) to read the article.