

ERMCO NEWS

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SUMMARY

Welcome

DNI
Conference

Betonu

Pag. 1

Late payments:
EU Commission proposal

Bits and Pieces

Pag. 2

Member of:



Welcome

Welcome to the fourth ERMCO newsletter this year. We have been involved in a number of important meetings this autumn. The EcoTec Committee met on 1 September. This date was chosen to allow us to finalise ERMCO positions before the meetings of CEN Technical Committees in the middle of the month.

The ESD Committee met on 24 September and 20 October, both times by internet, to discuss issues such as promotion, sustainability, and identification of 'key performance indicators' for our businesses, particularly those for sustainability. Minutes of these meetings have been, or will be, circulated to the Committee members.

The Board will meet in Brussels on 12 November. Included in the agenda will be a number of presentations from National Associations, which will attempt to disseminate their good ideas to other members.

In the meantime, we hope that all your members' businesses are beginning to see some improvement after the difficulties of the last months, and that you will find articles of interest in this newsletter.

ERMCO Secretariat team ■

DNI Betonu Conference

More than 750 people attended the Conference "DNI Betonu" in Wisla (Poland) from October 11 to 13. The Conference, organized by the Polish Association of Cement

Producers SPC, periodically reunites the Polish academic, technical and production world dealing with cement, precast and ready-mixed concrete, in order to assess the situation, and describe the evolution of the materials and the main uses of concrete in the last few years.

A number of presentations were given during three days, dealing with general economic trends, studies on materials, quality control and the most relevant concrete applications in Poland. Papers are collected in a 1050 pages book and a CD-Rom (for copies write to wydawnictwo@polskicement.pl or www.polskicement.pl).

The final debate, attended by the Polish ministry of Public works and Infrastructures and by the General Director of national Roads, confirmed the importance attached by the Polish Administration to the use of concrete as a durable and economic solution for the new or refurbished main transport axes in Poland.

Besides the many members of the Polish ready-mixed concrete association SPBT, the Conference was attended by the ERMCO Secretary General, who presented a paper on "Ready-mixed concrete: which future after the crisis?".



Late Payments: EU Commission Proposal

Evidence has appeared in a number of Member States, of unjustifiably long contractual payment periods in transactions involving public administrations. Payments in commercial transactions within the private sector or between businesses and public authorities are made very late after delivery and often later than agreed or laid down in general commercial conditions. These practices impinge on liquid assets and complicate the financial management of enterprises, affecting the competitiveness and viability of companies. Payment delays can be responsible for bankruptcies of otherwise healthy businesses and can potentially trigger a series of bankruptcies across the supply chain.

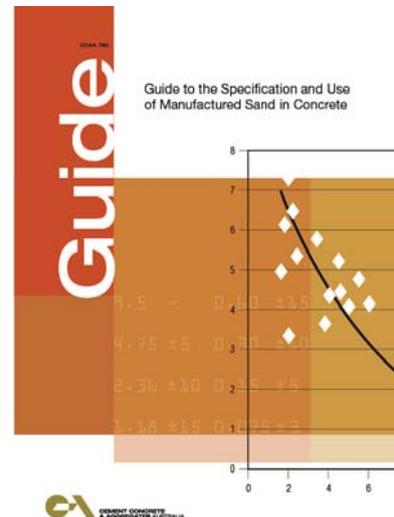
Taking into account the risks mentioned above, the European Commission, launched a proposal on the revision of Directive 2000/35/EC concerning late payments in commercial transactions. The proposal introduces an entitlement for the creditor to recover administrative costs and to compensation for internal costs incurred due to late payment. In the case of public administrations, it has the objective of reducing payment periods. This will be achieved firstly through the harmonization of periods for payment by public authorities to businesses; and secondly by reinforcing disincentives to late payment by a flat rate compensation from the first day of the delay, amounting to 5% of the invoiced amount in addition to the interest for late payment and the compensation for recovery costs.

Bits and pieces

May we draw your attention to a number of recent interesting articles:

- European Union cement and concrete market reports have been published for 2010, with a forecast till 2015. Read more ([here](#)).
- Reports in the press have blamed the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico on the failure of the cement used to seal the oil well, and on the failure to act on evidence that the cement slurry used was unstable. Such press reports are not necessarily reliable, but you can get more information ([here](#)).
- Something technical. Many countries are experiencing planning difficulties in extraction of natural sand. An obvious alternative is the use of quarry-manufactured sand. The Australian Concrete Industry

has produced a Guide to the specification and use of such sand. Read more ([here](#)).



- Research on underwater concrete with pre-placed aggregate, and then grouting the voids in the aggregate. Read more ([here](#)).
- Why are we not selling more self-compacting concrete? It MUST be a benefit to contractors. Here is an article for the UK magazine, *Concrete*, that considers SCC as part of the construction process, rather than a new material. Click ([here](#)).

