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Welcome

Welcome to ERMCO News, summer 2013. Many of us attended the ERMCO Annual meeting of Representatives in Cascais, Portugal.

The Board and the Ecotec and ESD Committees met on Thursday, and the Representatives on Friday 6 June.

The Reps' meeting was attended by 65 people, including the President and Secretary-General of BIBM, the European precast concrete association, who made one of the presentations.

A number of presentations on topics relevant to the industry were made in the morning session which opened the doors to a constructive debate.

All are available on the members' area of the ERMCO website.

The meeting also approved the budget for next year, and the continuation of Stein Tosterud as President, and of Piotr Rusecki and Erwin Kern as his colleagues on the President's Committee.

Thanks again to APEB, the Portugese Association for the organisation and hospitality.

Now, late July, with a temperature of 30 degrees in Brussels, may we take this opportunity to wish you all a good summer holiday, and not too many emails waiting for you when you come back!

ERMCO Secretariat team ■



Mix design for ecological concrete

An article from the Technical University of Delft in the current issue of *Concrete Plant International*



describes the use of particle packing optimisation to produce ecological concrete. The idea of particle packing models in mix design is something that we may be more familiar with in principle than in practice, but in this article authors show how it can dramatically

reduce demand for water and cement - hence its contribution to ecological concrete. Read more ([here](#)).

The 'Product Environmental Footprint'

The European Commission has published yet another new environmental initiative. This one is the PEF, or 'Product Environmental Footprint', which is designed as a simple way around what they call the 'green maze'. This has resulted in some strong objections within Construction Products Europe (formerly CEPMC), because it seems that it may supersede EPDs, into which the construction industry has put years of work. You can read the press release ([here](#)), some background notes ([here](#)), and Cembureau's view ([here](#)).

Turkish infrastructures drives investment

With one of the most competitive and dynamic construction industries in the world, Turkey has strong links to other regions where construction activity is also strong such as North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Russia. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's Quarterly Turnover Index, construction increased by 11,5% in the fourth quarter of 2012 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. The north-west of the country sees the greatest concentration of production and consumption.

An article from *Aggregates Business Europe* is illustrating the developments of infrastructures in Turkey. A key reason for much of the sector's activity is the target for



Turkey to join the European Union in 2015, which obviously demands the development of an improved infrastructure. The plan is to build a total of 9.700km dual carriageway and 5.500Km of motorways by 2023. The total investment is said to be up to €20 billion. Major players throughout the sector are attaining and keeping a high profile. Read more ([here](#)).

Early concrete strength to reduce congestion

In the same Issue of *Aggregates Business Europe* we found another interesting article on the UK experience to determine the minimum cube strength required from the reinstatement material to open the highway to traffic. The aim of the project funded by the Department for Transport of London is to help minimise the amount of time that works disrupt traffic by clarifying the early-age strength requirement of concretes, and other cement bound materials, used for the reinstatement of openings in highways. Read more ([here](#)).

Non-destructive assessment of concrete structures

The European Standard EN13791 *Assessment of in-situ compressive strength* is currently under revision, with the participation of ERMCO. Now, related to this, you may want to look at a recent article in *Concrete Plant*

International magazine on non-destructive assessment of concrete structures. One of the authors was responsible for the RILEM state-of-the-art document on this subject, which is always of interest to ready-mix producers. Read more ([here](#)).

Seizing the Day for Fire-Safe Buildings

Our partner *Fire Safe Europe* has published a trade article on the need to raise awareness on fire safety in buildings. Under Europe-wide laws, by the end of this decade all new buildings will use far less energy than they do today. This must be considered an opportunity to tie fire safety standards to new buildings programmes. At this transitional moment, as we change building practices to energy use across Europe, the European Institutions must endorsed the issue of fire safety in order to create safe and energy efficient buildings for generations to come. To read the article, click ([here](#)).



Revision of the Carcinogens at the workplace Directive

The revision of Directive 2004/37/EC on *Carcinogens and Mutagens at the workplace* (CMD) is underway. In early 2013 the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH) released its opinion on the Commission's proposal. A positive response was given on the need for more binding occupational exposure limits (OEL) for a number of substances. On Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS), the ACSH agreed a binding OEL of 0.1 mg/m³ is justified. For such a binding OEL there is, however, an alternative legal framework- the Chemical Agents Directive, 98/24EC, (CAD), on the risks related to chemical agents at work. The views of the ACSH interest groups were split regarding RCS; the CAD route is generally preferred by industry and is less onerous. On the basis of this ACSH Opinion, the Commission will prepare an impact assessment on the revision of the Carcinogens Directive which should be ready in late 2013, early 2014. Read more ([here](#)). ERMCO has prepared a summary of the implications – click ([here](#)).