



European Commission publishes LEVELs

On 25 August, the European Commission published the finalised framework for the assessment of the environmental performance of buildings, called LEVELs. Two finalised reports have been published on the DG Environment's webpage for sustainable buildings: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eusd/buildings.htm>

European Parliament's resolution on industrial strategy

On 5 July, the European Parliament adopted a Joint motion for resolution on [Building an ambitious EU industrial strategy as a strategic priority for growth, employment and innovation in Europe](#).

With the adoption of this Resolution, the European Parliament sent a strong sign of support the [Joint Declaration](#) signed by 130 signatories including BIBM.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) call on the Commission to “develop, by early 2018, together with the Member States, a Union strategy and an action plan for a consistent and comprehensive industrial policy aimed at Europe's reindustrialisation, with targets, indicators, measures and time scales”.

Furthermore, on 11 July the delegation of the signatories met with Jerzy Buzek, the Chairman of the Committee for Industry, Research and Energy and they handed over the signed declaration. The delegation also met with the Estonian Minister of Economy on the same day.

Fire Safe Europe urges Commission to increase fire safety requirement in open letter

On 10 July 2017, Fire Safe Europe sent an [open letter](#) to President Juncker in which they called the Commission to act without further delay. The letter points out two important arguments of fire safety requirements.

First, it asks to develop a harmonised and rigorous performance based testing method for all facade systems.

Second, they call for a harmonized classification of the smoke toxicity of construction products.



The result of their campaign and open letter is that several media covered fire safety (Politico, The Economist, Reuters) and the European Parliament will discuss for the very first-time fire safety in buildings at a topical debate in the upcoming Plenary Session in Strasbourg (13 September), where both the Council of the EU and the European Commission have been requested to give statements.

Also, on 12 July, discussed fire safety in buildings as a special agenda item during its meeting in the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO). The EP invited the European Commission (EC) to exchange views and to respond to questions from Members of the European Parliament.

MEP Catherine Stihler, the Vice-Chair of IMCO, emphasised on the need to have a European Fire Safety Strategy. She also called on the EU to put in place a system to classify smoke toxicity from different construction products used in buildings. She also said that she spoke to the Estonian presidency in the morning session about fire safety and will send a letter to the Estonian Presidency requesting to put the issue on the agenda of Member States in the Council of the EU.

MEP Christel Schaldemose highlighted the need to protect firefighters and citizens more at large, and was very supportive of improving fire safety at EU level. She inquired about the EC smoke toxicity study, and whether the EC will classify smoke toxicity.

Responding to MEPs quotations, Fulvia Raffaelli from DG GROW at the European Commission (EC), emphasised that this is a Member State issue. She said that the EC will create a platform for Members States and stakeholder to share best practices. She said the EC will look at the possibilities for fire safety strategy. She mentioned that the ongoing study on smoke toxicity will be published in autumn.

Furthermore, she emphasized that the current revision of the Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD) does not relate to fire safety and has no effect on the performance of facades at all (she firmly closed any request to include fire safety in the EPBD discussions).

At the end of the meeting, MEPs agreed that at this stage the EU must step up its act on the issue of fire safety. Also, they agreed to put more pressure on EU member states to reform fire safety regulations.

H2020 project iBROAD kicks off

The H2020 focuses on individual building renovation roadmaps kicked off on 3-4 July in Athene, Greece.



The project aims to explore, design, develop and demonstrate the concept of individual Building Renovation ROADmaps. The tool provides a customised renovation plan with a long-term horizon.

For more information, you can read [here](#) (BPIE).



Live from the European Union

Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive negotiations moved forward

On 11 July 2017, negotiators in the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers, reached agreement on stricter exposure limits to substances.

As for Respirable Crystalline Silica, the Directive in its Annex I “work involving exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust generated by a work process” and sets a Binding Occupational Exposure Limit Value (BOELV) of 0.1 mg/m³ for respirable crystalline silica.

Additionally, in the recitals part of the Directive, the NEPSI Social Dialogue Agreement is mentioned and recognised as a valuable tool to help to implement the Directive.

New limit values were confirmed for hardwood dust (2 mg/m³) and chromium VI (0,005 mg/m³) as well.

Another key provision and big step forward in the protection of workers relates to the medical follow-up after the exposure. National authorities will have to determine whether workers will continue to undergo health checks after the end of exposure “for as long as they consider it necessary”.

The Parliament and the Council will each vote on the draft directive after the summer break.

[European Parliament- Press Release](#)

[European Commission - Press Release](#)

[NEPSI Press Release](#)

Estonia takes over the Council’s rotating Presidency

On 1 July 2017, Estonia took over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. Estonia is the first in the new Presidency Trio also including Bulgaria and Austria.

Trio Presidency has formulated five priority areas:

1. A Union for Jobs, Growth and Competitiveness;
2. A Union that empowers and protects all its citizens;
3. Towards an energy union with a forward-looking climate policy;
4. A union of freedom, security and justice;
5. The union as a strong global actor.

In these areas, several initiatives can and possibly will affect the European Industry and the construction sector, namely

- the Energy and climate policy
- Union for jobs, growth and competitiveness.



The motto of the Presidency is 'Unity through balance', signifying that Europe has a lot of common grounds and it should tackle challenges together in a united manner.

The four priorities of the Estonian Presidency are:

1. An open and innovative European economy
2. A safe and secure Europe
3. A digital Europe and the free movement of data
4. An inclusive and sustainable Europe

Each of these priorities has a few topics that could impact our sector.

1. An open and innovative European economy

The Estonian Presidency will concentrate on the development of a business environment that favours stability, knowledge-based growth and competitiveness.

Areas to feature as a matter of priority:

- Value added tax regime for cross-border trade and removal of value added tax obstacles to e-commerce (2016/0370 CNS and 2016/0406 CNS)
- Cross-border company law
- New electricity market design
- HORIZON 2020

2. A safe and secure Europe

The Presidency will be focusing on modern IT solutions and the introduction of databases to support the Schengen Area. These measures will affect constructively the European market by creating a safer environment.

3. A digital Europe and the free movement of data

The digitalisation of the Single Market is the over-arching goal of the Estonian Presidency and of course it hides a lot of opportunities. The market will live up to its full potential, increasing competitiveness and creating a more favourable business environment.

Business Europe emphasised in its public letter to the Estonian Presidency, that a strong industrial strategy is particularly important in this context.

4. An inclusive and sustainable Europe

Recent changes in the information society has changed the nature of employment; therefore, there is a need to pay more attention to working conditions and skills, as well as the need to reconcile work and family life.



From the point of sustainability, the Presidency is committed to the Paris Agreement and to the 40 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Priority will be given to the following legislations in this context:

- Modernisation of EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) (2015/0148 COD)
- Effort-sharing regulation (ESR) (2016/0231 COD)
- Measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (2016/0230 COD)
- Increasing energy efficiency (2016/0376 COD)

For further information: [Estonian Presidency of the Council of EU - Priorities](#)



National Award Winner Project¹

British Precast Concrete Federation held its annual Best Practice Awards in last May. The awards are split into five categories: Innovation, Health and Safety, Project, Sustainability and Outstanding Contribution to Health and Safety.

Innovation award winner² - Marshalls, Keydrain



'Keydrain' is a single piece concrete drainage unit with a central core specifically designed to drain surface water away. Dual slots pressed into the surface of the unit transfer water to the core via a perpendicular slot at each end face when placed adjacent to one another. Any required length can be achieved by simply adding more units. The product enters an arena which is traditionally filled with non-concrete solutions such as linear channel systems with a plastic or steel grate. A key benefit of Keydrain is its aesthetic appeal as it is manufactured in a variety of concrete colours, which compliment the surrounding concrete

¹ The content of this article is taken entirely from <http://www.britishprecast.org/Awards/Best-Practice-Awards.aspx>

² The 2017 Innovation Award was sponsored by Chryso UK



or natural stone paving products. Additionally, the shape and weight of Keydrain enables simple installation.

Health and Safety award winner³ (less than 250 employees) - Beresford's Flooring



With a new lightweight system named 'The Hole System', a number of operations to the underside of Hollowcore floors can now be completed from ground level. This has reduced working at height, repetitive strain risks, exposure to dust and alkaline drilling wash water, and other risks associated with the regular assembly and moving of access equipment.

³ The 2017 Health and Safety Award is sponsored by Forterra



Health and Safety award winner (250 or more employees) - Brett Landscaping and Building Products



Creating a combined scrap handling system and improvements to the pallet transfer conveyor have drastically reduced gate access frequencies and exposures in both scrap and pallet areas for Fork lifts and personnel alike.

In addition, reduced manual handling and improved posture during work, with reductions in twisting and reaching, have also been recorded.

This award provides a mechanism for companies and the wider sector to celebrate the positive influence and impact that individuals and teams have made to create safer and healthier workplaces.



Project award winner⁴ - Techrete



For the flagship John Lewis store in Leeds, the diagrid pattern was deconstructed by Techrete engineers to panelise a façade to enable production. Innumerable intricate details regarding the geometry, the engineering and the manufacturing were combined in 3D BIM, from which over 600 drawings were generated.

Many challenges were successfully overcome: accuracy of faceted corners, contrasting finishes within single units, installation of unusually shaped units of up to 14 tonnes in weight and the requirement for unique permanent fixing methods.

Precast concrete products are used for a wide range of applications in our built environment. This award showcases projects that deliver on aesthetics, functionality, innovation, workmanship, cost-effectiveness and demonstrates the inherent benefits and properties of precast concrete.

⁴ The 2017 Project Award is sponsored by CARES



Sustainability award winner⁵ - Forterra, Whittlesey Plant



Forterra's Whittlesey factory has been introducing measures to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption over several years.

In 2016 the management team increased production by 12% while improving energy efficiency through a number of measures such as investing in new pallets, improved preventative maintenance programmes, loading shovel replacement, new burners, improved curing control systems and increased insulation.

This series of relatively small improvements have led to a saving in 2016 of 9% compared in energy consumption to 2015 and almost 18% when compared to 2014 when the project started.

This award rewards excellence within the British Precast membership and publicises the progress of the industry towards sustainability.

⁵ The 2017 Sustainability Award is sponsored by GCP



Outstanding Contribution to Health and Safety



Chris Taylor from Stanton Bonna

This award is given to individuals and teams in recognition of leadership, special efforts, or significant contributions to improvements in health and safety in the business or along the supply chain.

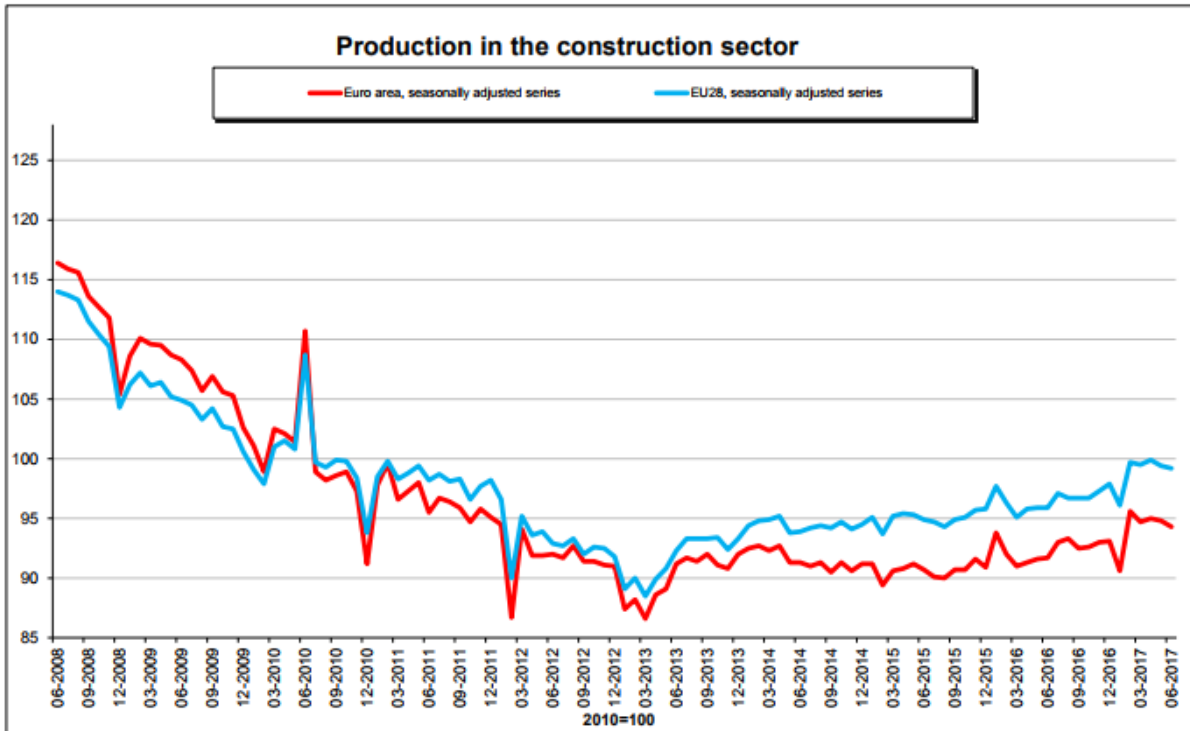
Chris Taylor from Stanton Bonna, and Glenn Regan from Forticrete who win the award.



Glenn Regan from Forticrete

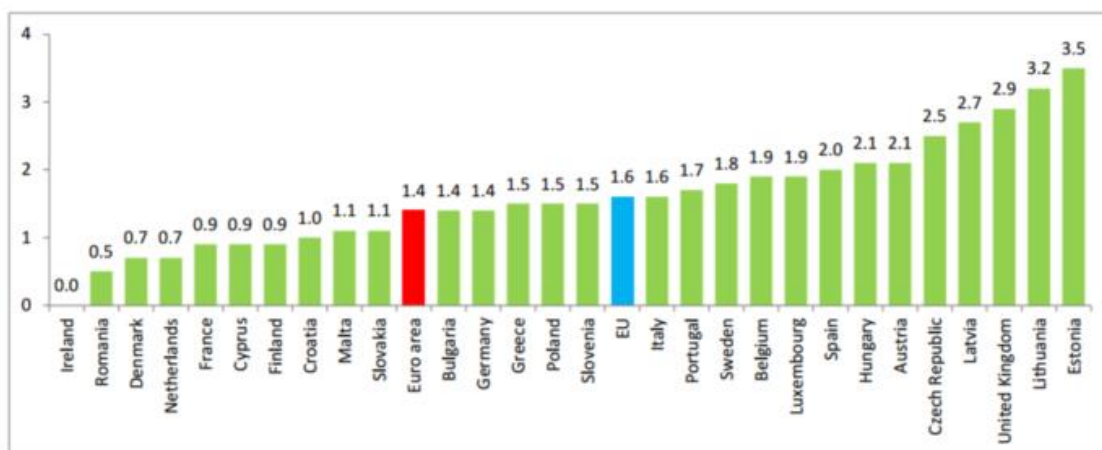


News in brief



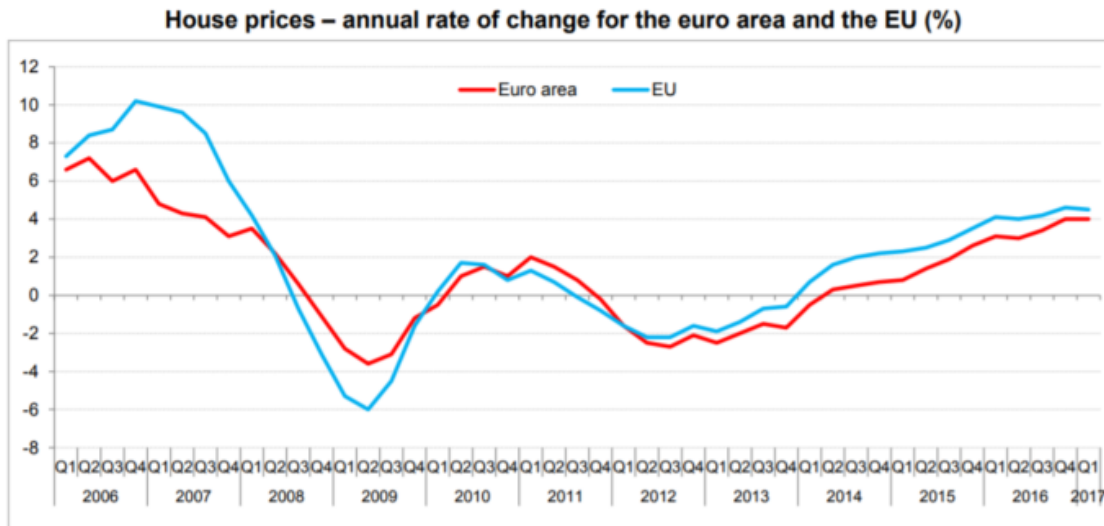
Graph 1- Production in Construction (red - Euro Area, blue - EU28)

According to first estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, In June 2017 compared with May 2017, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector decreased by 0.5% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.2% in the EU28.



Graph 2 - Annual inflation rates (%) in May 2017, in ascending order

Euro area annual inflation was 1.3% in July 2017. European Union annual inflation was 1.5%. The lowest annual rates were registered in Ireland (-0.2%), Cyprus (-0.1%), Bulgaria and Finland (both 0.6%), while the highest annual rates were recorded in Lithuania (4.1%), Estonia (3.9%), Latvia and the United Kingdom (both 2.6%).



[Graph 3 - House prices](#)

House prices, as measured by the House Price Index, rose by 4.0% in the euro area and by 4.5% in the EU in the first quarter of 2017 compared with the same quarter of the previous year.



Agenda

SEPTEMBER 2017

05 September
CEN/TC 229/WG 4 Editorial Panel
 Brussels, Belgium

08 September
ECP TF Fire and Eurocodes
 Confcall

11 September
AhG Concrete Initiative
 Brussels, Belgium

14 September
BIBM Technical Commission
 Brussels, Belgium

25 September
Concrete Initiative on Energy Efficiency
 Brussels, Belgium

OCTOBER 2017

04 October
CEN/TC 229/WG 4
 Brussels, Belgium

04 October
Financing Sustainability (Concrete Initiative)

Brussels, Belgium

05 October
ECP TF Sustainable Concrete
 Brussels, Belgium

09-10 October
CEN/TC 104/SC 1/TG 20
 Paris, France

12 October
CPE Sustainability WG
 Brussels, Belgium

12 October (tbc)
SG 13 Notified Bodies
 Vienna, Austria

19 October
BIBM Communication Commission
 Brussels, Belgium

24-25 October
VEEP General Assembly
 Delft, The Netherlands

27 October
ECP Board
 Brussels, Belgium

To the Newsletter of Construction Products Europe (former CEPMC), please follow [this link](#).

To read the Newsletter of CEMBUREAU, please follow [this link](#). You can also subscribe directly following this link <http://www.cembureau.eu/newsletter/subscriptions>.

To read the Quarterly Newsletter of The Concrete Initiative, please follow [this link](#).

List of Acronyms:



CPE - Construction Product Europe

DG GROW - Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

ECP - European Concrete Platform

EMA - European Masonry Alliance

IPHA - International Pre-stressed Hollowcore Association

TF - Task Force

VEEP Project- Cost-Effective Recycling of CDW in High Added Value Energy Efficient Prefabricated Concrete Components for Massive Retrofitting of our Built Environment