



PRESSE RELEASE

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Heterogeneous Picture in Construction Material Recycling in Europe

As a result of the meeting of the General Assembly held in Brno this year EQAR has stated extremely differing framework conditions for construction material recycling in Europe.

Whereas in some member states such as the Netherlands, Italy and Austria the product status applies to all recycled construction materials the end-of-waste for recycled construction materials is still a long way off in other member states. Yet, the product status for quality-secured recycled construction materials is the key for a successful circular economy in construction in Europe, as Manfred Wierichs, President of EQAR, points out.

The practice of construction material recycling in Europe over decades has shown that quality-secured recycled construction materials are not inferior to primary construction materials neither in technological respect nor as regards their environmental compatibility. As only recycled construction products and not recycled waste are accepted on the market.

As regards the demands and testing of environmental compatibility of recycled construction materials also a vast heterogeneity is to be stated in the member states. Though recycled construction materials in conformity with hEN 13242, hEN 13285, hEN 13620 represent construction materials harmonized on European level due to performance properties as to environmental compatibility lacking in the standards there does not yet exist a European single market for recycled construction materials.

Thereby practice shows that within the limits of the single market a regional exchange of input material as well as processed recycled construction materials would be appropriate and have remarkable positive effects on construction material recycling in Europe. Considering the overall length of the internal borders of the EU a uniform European product status for recycled construction materials would open an additional market covering nearly 25 % of the total area of the EU members states, according to Manfred Wierichs.

As the European test standards for determining the rate of releasing ecologically damaging substances from construction materials are shortly before being published an assessment of the environmental compatibility by introducing respective performance properties into the construction product standards relevantly harmonized on European level should be possible within a few years given good will. Thereby respective performance levels and classes for environmental compatibility properties should be defined which will allow marketing and the use of recycled construction materials throughout Europe according to the EU Construction Products Regulation.

EQAR encourages the EU Commission to speed up a respective European standardization warning against new hurdles for construction material recycling being set up.

Thus, investigations carried out in Czechia and Italy have shown that the so-called HP-14 criterion for checking the ecotoxicity for mineral construction and demolition wastes is not relevant. Yet, it is to be feared that this test criterion will be applied also in future to recycled construction materials with respective additional test costs and requiring much time.

Instead of erecting inhibition thresholds for recycled construction materials discriminatory against primary construction materials a minimum standard for the quality assurance of recycled construction materials should be rather implemented in all EU member states stopping the improper dumping of builder's rubble, as Manfred Wierichs demands.

EQAR invites to a European Congress on construction material recycling to be held in Vienna on March 22, 2018. In the framework of this event the above-mentioned and further subjects around construction material recycling and circular economy in construction in Europe shall be discussed.