EU Highlights

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Editorial

After two years of activities within Eurogypsum, my mandate as President of the association will finish after the General Assembly of 21st May 2014.

During the last two years, we promoted the image of the gypsum products and solutions with the European Parliament Gypsum Forum which has also been a success in terms of exchanging best practice for renovation, recycling and resource efficiency with different stakeholders in the construction sector.

The GtoG project co-financed by the life + programme started in January 2013 and paves the way towards a circular economy in the construction sector. The sector was awarded the carbon leakage status in 2013.

Finally, we developed a framework of biodiversity indicators which we are now currently striving to implement in pilot quarries across Europe.

Many other activities were carried out by the Eurogypsum working groups. I have not the place to record them all but I wish to thank you for the time and substantial effort that the working groups and committees make for having a dynamic association.

Dott. Maurizio Casalini
President
EU and Eurogypsum
General Policies

Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (EIA) revised

The proposal adopted contains requirements for the non-energy extractive industries. The adopted directive maintains the threshold of 25 hectares whereby an environmental impact assessment is not automatically required. Scoping is not mandatory and the possibility of joint procedures exists. Mineral exploration activities have also been excluded from the scope of the Directive.

Member states agreed with MEPs’ request for the cumulative impact of projects to be taken into account. This is meant to stop large projects being split up into a number of smaller schemes.

The deal also allows for more public engagement through a central online portal, strengthens rules on conflicts of interest, and extends the list of impacts considered in EIAs to include climate change, biodiversity and hydromorphology.

Text requiring member states to use accredited experts to verify EIAs has been replaced by the need for “sufficient expertise” to “examine” them. Project developers only need to use competent experts to draw up EIAs rather than accredited ones.

Raw Material and Environment

Carbon leakage List 2015-2019
Eurogypsum relied on the support of PwC to update the qualitative market assessment for the year 2011-2012 upon request by the Commission. This update was delivered to the Commission on 10 March 2014.

The Commission will soon release the draft carbon leakage list for the period 2015-2019.

The List must also be rubber-stamped by the new European Parliament in September 2014.

Biodiversity Pilot Projects
Eurogypsum decided to implement the framework of indicators agreed upon during the master thesis of Carline Pitz in 2013. For that purpose, pilot quarries across Europe have been chosen.

During the month of April 2014, a common baseline reporting was carried out by the University of Gembloux. The latter will be used by all quarries involved in the implementation of the biodiversity indicators.

Between May and November 2014, the university of Gembloux will act as a help desk for the quarry WG in the implementation of the indicators in the pilot projects.

The university of Gembloux will additionally follow pilot projects on a regular basis (monthly) to identify success, problems, and difficulties / to promote exchanges among pilot projects in collaboration with the Quarry WG.

After the 17 November 2014, deadline for the quarries to give their results to the University of Gembloux, the latter will organise a meeting to analyse results and discuss the opportunity to apply for an EU funded project.
GtoG new project officer
The new project officer started his job on 7 April 2014. His name is Luigi Della Sala. He is Italian and has an experience of 4 years in project management. He replaces Pauline Chancelée who decided to go back to work in Africa.

We wish him much success.

GtoG Newsletter
The GtoG quarterly newsletter is available by clicking on the following link: http://gypsumtogypsum.org/communication-tools/newsletter/

Scientific and Technical Issues

Eurogypsum Sustainable WG set up
The mandate of this working group is to support the developments of the CPE sustainability WG relating to PCR rules, TC 350, product environmental footprint, the implementation of the basic work requirement 7 on the sustainable use of natural resources, and the forthcoming action plan on resources efficiency opportunities in the building sector planned to be published early May 2014.

The WG held its first meeting on 17 February 2014

Scenarios towards a Resource Efficient Europe- Workshop 20 February 2014

On 20th February 2014, the final report of the Scenarios towards a resource efficient Europe study was presented at a workshop in Brussels.

The Study was commanded by DG Environment. This project is one of the inputs to the Communication on resource efficient buildings due to be published early May 2014.

Tom Rommens, Eurogypsum Sustainability WG leader attended the workshop and reported as follows.

In this study, the impact of 10 measures to promote resource efficiency in the EU was studied:

- Design for deconstruction;
- Increase durability of products (flooring, paint)
- Increase recycling (asphalt, concrete, PVC, glass, carpet, plasterboard)
- Increase renovation rate
- Increase the use of recycled materials
- Intensify the use of buildings
- Decrease land use for built environment
- Decrease C&D waste
- Resource efficiency: selection for lower impact
- Resource efficiency: use construction materials more efficiently

These last two would have the greatest environmental benefits on EU level...

Topical papers can be downloaded from http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/resource_efficiency/index.htm

During the workshop, several remarks were raised, among others

- Lifetime of a building was set at 50 years, whereas it is clear that in many buildings major works are done every
20-30 years. This was not taken into account in the economic analyses.

- The methodology for life cycle assessment is not in line with TC350 methodology.

- DG Environment takes 2030 as the horizon in this study, whereas DG Enterprise studies similar issues with a 2050 horizon.

- In this study, the emphasis is on Environmental Tax Reform as a solution to finance the future circular economy: according to the consultants, taxes should shift from labor to resources, and these taxes on resources should be paid as far upstream in the value chain as possible (by mining companies, for example...).

- What is the business model for renovation? Shouldn't investments for renovation be taken into account for providing cheaper loans etc. (How could the banks cooperate?)

Exploratory Study with regard to Eco design of Thermal Insulation in Buildings

A group of consultants finalized the above-mentioned study and reached the conclusion that the imposition of a specific target on energy performance in the use phase with regard to insulation products, is impossible. The energy saving (in terms of thermal performance) for the same insulation product varies across Member states. The appropriate level at which a target could be imposed is at the level of the building envelope.

Requirements regarding the building envelope are handled by the implementation of EPBD in the Member States.

The level of significance of Eco design requirements on environmental performance in the production phase is rather low and it is difficult to judge which impact category is the most important one.

For more details, please click on the below link: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/28614139/vito/MEErP%20exploratory%20study%20insulation%20materials_final%20report.pdf

The Commission will propose the next steps for discussion in the horizontal Eco design Consultation Forum meeting planned on 5 May 2014 in Brussels.

Marketing and Communication

Visit of Vaujours Quarry and Plant with officials of the Commission

On 14 March 2014, Eurogypsum and the Vaujours team organized a visit of the quarry and plant for 6 officials of the European Commission.

The aim was to show how we close the loop in practice-extraction-manufacturing-use in construction-recycling-re-incorporation into the manufacturing process.

The following officials attended:
Mr. Gwenole Cozigou, DG Enterprise, Director Raw Materials and consumer-based products

Mrs. Flor Diaz Pulido, DG Enterprise, Deputy Head of Unit Raw Materials

Mrs. Ima Gomez, DG Enterprise, desk officer unit raw materials

Mr. François Wakenhut, DG Environment, Head of unit biodiversity

Mr. Ismo Ulvila, DG Climate Action, Desk Officer Unit benchmarking

Mr. Aurélien Genty, DG Enterprise, Desk Officer Unit sustainable industrial policy and construction.

Underground Quarry

Eurogypsum thanks once again the Vaujours team for its dedication to the officials during a fruitful visit and at the same time very pleasant.

The German Minister of Construction, Dr. Barbara Hendricks attended the Gala Dinner of BV Gips

Eurogypsum was invited to the annual general meeting of BVGips which was held on 2 and 3 April 2014.

During the gala dinner, our German Association was greatly honored by the presence of Dr. Barbara Hendricks, Minister for the environment, construction, and protection of nature and security of nuclear reactors.

She encouraged our German member to go forward into the path of a circular economy with the eternal recyclability of Gypsum.

Dr. Barbara Hendricks and Thomas Bremer, the President of BVGips

Presentation of the GtoG Project in Weimar

On 26 and 27 March 2014, the Weimar Gipstagung took place. It is a forum on gypsum problematic being studied in a scientific way. This year Russia and Ukraine were present. We were a total of 120 participants.

Our German association sponsored the event and the secretary general, Holger Ortleb presented the German Gypsum association (see below photo).
Eurogypsum gave a presentation on the GtoG project and its first steps towards a circular economy. This presentation enabled a better communication flow between academics and industry.

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**Eurogypsum Forthcoming Events**

**Board Meeting**  
21 May 2014 from 12h00 to 13h00 at Hotel Stanhope, rue du commerce 9, 1000 Brussels

**Extended Annual General Meeting**  
21 May 2014 from 14h00 to 17h30 at hotel Stanhope Brussels

**Sustainable Construction WG Meeting**  
4 June 2014 from 9h00 to 12h00 at Eurogypsum Offices

**GtoG Steering Committee Meeting**  
17 June 2014 at Eurocities, Brussels from 10h00 to 17h00

**Marketing WG Meeting**  
24 June 2014 from 13h00 to 17h00 at Eurogypsum offices