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OSLO
June 7 - June 8 2018



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SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES IN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONCRETE PAVEMENTS

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Abstract

The European Union activity in an increasing number of policy domains which affect the national legislations, the social and economic activities so our daily lives. Among the many competences, sustainability has become a key element in the various programmes and policies of the European Commission Directorate-Generals: as a consequence, the considerations sustainability related issues will also have a direct or indirect impact on the concrete pavement sector. The most directly related is the revision of the “Green Public Procurement” criteria for road construction. The basic concept of GPP relies on the request of clear, verifiable, justifiable and ambitious environmental criteria for products and services, based on a life-cycle approach and scientific evidence. Some other challenges, also covered within the GPP criteria, are, amongst others: the Environmental Noise Directive, the Climate Action Plan, Sustainable Urban Transport and the initiative for a Resource Efficient Europe. The concrete pavement industry needs to tackle these challenges and turn them into opportunities. Concrete roads can offer many benefits to sustainability which are not always known by policy makers. Various technical solutions already exist and are further being developed, both in Europe and worldwide. Those challenges may be different from country to country in Europe. After an overview of the EC’s policies, with regard to concrete pavements the paper will present the current situation in Europe, looking to technical solutions, trends and developments, innovations, threats and opportunities.

Keywords: Concrete pavement, Sustainability, Green Public Procurement, European Commission.

Reviewer’s comments

The focus should be on concrete pavements’ sustainability issues connected to the foreseeable evolution of the related EU legislation. The paper should present arguments which could be positively be used to address policy makers.