



Think Concrete, Go precast

BIBM welcomes the new circular economy package, issued by the European Commission on 2 December 2015.

The precast concrete industry is pleased to see that the initiative contains coherent, long-term measures to enhance the life span of construction works (through durability, maintenance and repair) and to increase the recycling and reuse of construction waste, both contributing to “closing the loop”.

In particular:

- BIBM is content to see that material efficiency and durability are important criteria in product design, thus the longer the lifetime of a building, the less waste will be produced.
- BIBM is convinced that design for disassembly is the way forward; consequently it welcomes the pre-demolition guidelines presented in the Action Plan.
- Likewise, it welcomes the definition of backfilling and the recognition of the importance of reducing the use of virgin materials
- While concrete is 100% recyclable and precast concrete elements can be reused in new applications, it must be acknowledged that there are challenges when it comes to construction and demolition waste management. BIBM welcomes the fact; the new package proposes sorting systems and guidelines for treatment of C&D waste in the future.
- Furthermore, BIBM is also pleased to see that the creation of market for secondary raw materials is a priority in the package, which is indeed a main barrier in the present situation. The creation of such a market should be linked to a sustainable market development model in order to become a real development and it should not be done from a “top-down perspective”, artificially by law, creating additional burden for the industry.
- Finally, BIBM believes that the exchange of best practices, proposed by the Action Plan, is a good way of learning from Member States who are better performing than others.

The main challenge remains the proper implementation of the rules and putting them in the right context for the construction sector. The main specificity of construction products is that they are intermediate products and therefore their performance should only be measured at building level.

BIBM is eager to get involved the future work and provide the precast concrete experience in the field for the full implementation of the circular economy package.

BIBM (from the French acronym “Bureau International du Béton Manufacturé”) is the Federation for the European Precast Concrete Industry, established in 1954, represents the interest of precast concrete industry of 15 European countries with a combined European industry turnover of 24 billion Euro, directly employing approximately 170,000 European citizens.