



POSITION PAPER

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On-site prefabrication

Precast concrete products are high-quality, innovative construction products manufactured by SMEs throughout Europe (more than 8.000 production plants with an average of 25 workers per plant) for incorporation into buildings and civil engineering works. Their value is linked both to the **know-how** of the manufacturer and the **permanent control** of its factory production which, for structural elements, is certified by a third party.

Harmonised standards for precast concrete contain not only technical information, but define the background for the achievement of desired characteristics by reference to European design codes, production and quality control, definition of personnel skills and tasks, and so on. The resulting quality of these factory manufactured products incorporates the benefits of **improved safety factors** (following Eurocode 2) and other advantages such as optimised concrete cover to reinforcement linked to controlled factory production.

In our opinion, any manufacturer of concrete products has to have the choice:

- **Either** it makes its products following the relevant **European harmonised standard**, for precast concrete products, profiting from the advantages of factory-based production whilst having to demonstrate its compliance with the European Regulation (thus declaration of performance and CE marking);
- **Or** it produces to the relevant **national building code**, does not profit from the advantages of prefabrication and, therefore, does not have to make a declaration of performance.

Any other intermediate situation would bring **safety concerns** and **market distortion**:

- Trained, skilled personnel and disciplined quality control (as defined by the European harmonised standards) are the only way, when combined with the manufacturer's know-how, to guarantee the safety of precast concrete products;
- CE-marking would lose all credibility: one would find on the market exactly the same product with and without CE-marking, thus creating problems of market surveillance.
- Precast concrete products presently manufactured following the rules for CE-marking (especially by small enterprises), will be excluded from the market in an anti-competitive way.
- All the know-how and excellence of the precast concrete industry would be endangered by the presence of products which are apparently the same, but do not fulfil the same standards of quality in the cause of pure cost-cutting.

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BIBM is the European organisation representing the Precast Concrete industry, involved in the supply of sustainable solutions for the built environment. The sector employs more than 210.000 people in 8.000 production plants around Europe, generating more than 35 billion Euros of turnover