



## SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS: ENSURING A BALANCED APPROACH

**Brussels, 2 July 2014:** The Concrete Initiative welcomes the proposals put forward yesterday by the European Commission on resource efficiency opportunities in the building sector (COM(2014) 445). In order to achieve its purpose, it is important that the approach taken covers the impacts of the construction works during its whole life cycle. When only partial aspects are covered, their impacts should be assessed with the whole picture in mind in order to avoid transfer of burdens and sub-optimisation.

In view of achieving an EU framework for the assessment of buildings, the Concrete Initiative urges the Commission to make full use of the work which has already been carried out by CEN/TC 350 "Sustainability of Construction Works" to provide a system for the assessment of buildings. In addition, The Concrete Initiative is concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the Communication's scope and ambition: does it aim to tackle resource efficiency, as suggested by the title; or environmental issues in general; or rather all three pillars of sustainability? In our view, in order to be truly sustainable, it is essential that policy in this field ensures an equal balance between social, economic and environmental measures. For this reason, assessment over a broad suite of indicators, at the building level, is the most appropriate approach, and thus is the one taken by CEN/TC 350. Choosing only a limited number of indicators would not lead to the best results.

The Concrete Initiative also welcomes efforts to encourage an increased use of construction and demolition waste (C&DW) aimed at reducing the dependence on virgin raw materials. We appreciate the proposal to increase recycled content of construction products but call on the Commission to ensure that requirements on recycled content will prioritise applications where recycled materials have the maximum positive impact. In case of structural concrete, substitution of virgin aggregates should be done where the economic and sustainability benefits are clear. The possibility of recycling concrete in other applications is also relevant in that it reduces the extraction of virgin aggregates. Emphasis should also be placed on prevention and minimisation of waste: given that concrete structures last for 50 -100 years or more, they are clearly based on the principle of preventing waste - the less you need to build, the less need to recycle!

### About us

The Concrete Initiative gathers together the cement and concrete sectors. It is composed of CEMBUREAU (the European Cement Association) BIBM (the European Federation of Precast Concrete) and ERMCO (the European Ready-Mixed Concrete Organization). Its aim is to engage with stakeholders on the issue of sustainable construction, from a concrete perspective.

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