



connection

ISSUE '99 **2**

INFORMATION BULLETIN FOR ICI POLYURETHANES RIGID FOAM CUSTOMERS

FROM THE EDITOR

In **connection** issue 2 '98, we discussed the EU fire classification system which at that time was being developed within the framework of the Construction Products Directive ("CPD"). Last April, the EU Standing Committee for Construction ("SCC") finally adopted the Euro-classification system for fire, thereby establishing the essential requirements for the provision of European harmonised fire safety in buildings.

The classification system will affect all construction products in Europe. In this **connection** we describe the implications for the polyurethane industry. We attach a chart illustrating the classes of fire performance for construction products, which you can use as a reference tool.

We also discuss the Huntsman acquisition, which as you know was announced in April, and the future of the rigid polyurethanes business in this context. In addition we draw your attention to two new videos produced by EPIC.

Kind regards,

Andrea Lewis - Marketing Officer

EURO-CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM PROVISIONALLY ACCEPTED

The newly-approved European Classification System for reaction to fire bases its criteria on the fire safety performance of a construction product, determined by a series of specified testing methods. With the aim of ensuring that such tests are based on realistic methods and so as to avoid excessive testing procedures, we have worked closely with Committees such as the European Fire Regulators Group and the EU SCC under the umbrella of APME over the last year. The fire criteria that have been defined for the classification of polyurethane rigid foam products are considered acceptable from a polyurethane industry angle.

EXPLANATION OF ACRONYMS

APME	The Association of Plastics Manufacturers in Europe
BING	The Federation of European Polyurethane Rigid Foam Associations
CEN	Centre for European Normalisation
CPD	Construction Products Directive
EGOLF	European Group of Official Laboratories for Fire Testing
EPIC	Association for Engineered Panels in Construction
FIGRA	Fire Growth Parameter
ISOPA	European Isocyanate Producers Association
OLG	Official Laboratories Group
RG	Regulators Group
SBI	Single Burning Item test
SCC	Standing Committee for Construction

The Fire Growth Parameter ("FIGRA") is defined to give an indication of the speed of fire development and is used to determine in which fire safety class a product is placed. However an independent study has shown that the FIGRA value calculation requires technical improvement. This could result in a better classification for some polyurethane products, which is more in line with perceived fire safety performance. A solution is also needed for pipe insulation and smoke measurement in the Single Burning Item test ("SBI") remains a concern.

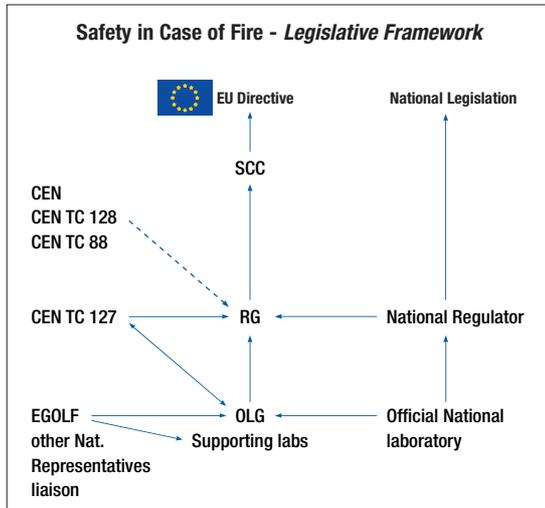


Despite recognised weaknesses in the classification system, the SCC has decided to adopt the regulation with the agreement that if future experience demonstrates that amendments to the decision are necessary, then - after consultation with the EC Fire Regulators Group - suitable proposals will be taken into account.

Linear products have been excluded from the European decision for reaction to fire. Currently an adhoc fire group within the product group for insulation products, the Centre for European Normalisation Technical Committee (CEN/TC88), is working on a suitable reference scenario and a modified SBI test to accommodate pipes and pipe insulation.

If I have
seen farther
than others,
it is because
I stood
on the
shoulders
of giants

Sir Isaac
Newton,
British
Mathematician
(1642-1727)



ICI experts are closely involved at a political and technical level, in the regulatory developments regarding the fire safety area of the CPD, through trade associations including APME, ISOPA and BING. In addition, we participate directly in various CEN committees and working groups to ensure the necessary amendments are made when the European Classification System is revised. ISOPA and BING have produced a position paper on requested adjustments in the final draft of the SBI calculations, in accordance to the latest data shown by the FIGRA calculation study. Some of their fire experts are also active in the adhoc fire group for pipe insulation. Copies of this position paper can be obtained from Diane Daems at ICI Polyurethanes, on: + 32 (0)2 758 97 05

GETTING TOGETHER: HUNTSMAN AND ICI PU JOIN FORCES

Huntsman ICI, a new major global company, is about to be formed, following Huntsman's announcement in April of its intention to purchase ICI Polyurethanes from the ICI Group.

Huntsman is the largest privately owned chemical company in the USA with a strong position in the polyurethane market, and has grown rapidly since the 1980s. We believe that the synergy between us will strengthen our global position and reinforce the service we have been delivering while under the ICI umbrella. Huntsman is committed to global expansion and further developing a strong downstream operation. Our addition to this new company will help them achieve both these objectives.

At the end of last year, Shell Chemicals and ICI Polyurethanes signed a letter of intent to form a strategic alliance in rigid polyurethane foams, and negotiations on the various contractual arrangements have now reached the final stages. The implications

of the take-over of ownership of ICI Polyurethanes have been discussed with Shell, and we expect the alliance to go ahead as planned, with Huntsman ICI as the new partner.

The polyurethanes business in Huntsman ICI will remain unchanged and the existing management team and key personnel you are familiar with will continue to work in the new company.

As part of Huntsman ICI, we aim to ensure we remain the leader in MDI-based polyurethane technology and systems, as well as aniline production. We are excited about the opportunities this new venture brings and are dedicated to serving our customers and delivering the programs and results you have come to expect of us.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call your usual ICI Polyurethanes contact who will be happy to provide you with more information.

EPIC VIDEOS AVAILABLE ON KEY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA OF PUR COMPOSITE PANELS

EPIC – Engineered Panels In Construction, a UK information and advisory service – has recently compiled two videos about polyurethane composite panels. The first provides information about composite panel cladding systems, focusing on key criteria such as insulation performance, installation, ventilation, water resistance and fire safety.

In the second video, fire safety is discussed in more detail. It illustrates the behaviour of composite panels in fire situations and answers key questions, such as building stability, insulative performance, flame spread and fire resistance. Copies of both videos are available in English, French, German, Italian and Russian from Andrea Lewis at ICI Polyurethanes (00 32 (0)2 758 9396).



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