



Questionnaire Response

10 September 2012

QUESTIONNAIRE ON SUGGESTIONS ON FURTHER STEPS FOLLOWING THE WORKSHOP ON THE POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION 86/666 ON FIRE SAFETY IN EXISTING HOTELS BASED ON THE MBS METHODOLOGY

1. Do you have major criticisms to the reviewed text of the MBS methodology as resulting from the Workshop?

Our primary criticism is of the reluctance to revise section B, despite broad agreement in the B working group that the importance of the hotel's structural fire safety was underestimated and somewhat taken for granted. A number of proposals were made to correct this, but have not been taken into account here.

A second concern is that the reviewed text for sections M & S needs rigorous editing to improve each point's completeness and consistency. The present draft is lacking in both respects – being rather hit and miss as regards precision and accuracy in many instances (some comments are attached in more detail).

It was all too evident that the seminar's intent was to push the adoption of the MBS approach, with the fewest changes possible, regardless of its fundamental inadequacy. Specific proposals by several stakeholders to strengthen the methodology in order to create a significantly more robust & coherent document, were treated as attempts at troublemaking, for not following the script.

2. As a result of the discussions held during the workshop, a clear need to define certain essential terms was identified. In your opinion, which definition for the following terms or concepts should be included in the recommendation?

A) Hotel – in terms of size (area, number of rooms, etc) and also in terms of age (old, new, refurbished)

The safety of the consumer should not be prejudiced by the hotel's size, height, design or age. All hotels should be included therefore.

The level of fire protection may be different from hotel to hotel, but should always correspond to the requirements of the current fire safety assessment.



Hotels with fewer than 10 rooms may be protected by simpler measures, but nevertheless, adequate fire protection equipment, engineered to meet their specific needs.

B) Height of a hotel (measured in meters, in number of floors, etc.)

A “one size fits all” approach will not reflect the specific fire protection needs of any given hotel, which will vary with location, design and many other characteristics apart from their height or number of floors.

All hotels with more than two floors should be subject to the same requirements to demonstrate strict compliance with regularly updated individual fire safety assessments. Simpler, smaller structures must also demonstrate the effective provision & maintenance of what will be probably less complex fire protection installations

C) Fire evacuation drill (definition, extent?)

A fire evacuation drill should be conducted at least once a year, but this may need to be held more frequently to take into account changing seasonal staffing levels, staff turnover, or the need to train nightshift workers separately.

3. The Commission is planning to define a platform where guidance documents in the area of fire safety management (e.g. a model for risk assessment) can be made available for hoteliers. Do you have any suggestions/preferences as to where this platform should be hosted?

A single source for this information (one stop shop) would be preferred, hosted centrally at a European level. DG Sanco's own Tourism Observatory could potentially serve this purpose well.

Alternatively one could consider using ANEC, as a CEN associate member, as hosts for the site, given their direct involvement with consumer protection standards and their cross European reach.

The mandate for preparing and regularly updating the guidance materials themselves should be, in our view, given to a CEN technical committee.



- 4. A technical guidance document should be developed to complement the guidelines presented in the Methodology. This document should be set up by technical experts with the help of a working group, and should be guided by CEN. What would you expect from this technical guidance document? How could you contribute to this document?**

We would see value in a CEN-led working group with oversight for reviewing, up-dating, and revising the information held for hoteliers (see Q3). We would not see a separate guideline document as helpful; nor would we expect hoteliers to consult such a document, which by its very nature would be more technically complex.

- 5. The issue of enforcement of a non-binding instrument such a recommendation is of prime importance. What are your suggestions in relation to enforcement?**

Lacking the leverage of a Directive and with no financial incentive on offer, the options for persuading either Member State governments or hoteliers, to improve compliance with the Recommendation's proposed fire safety measures, would seem severely limited.

Far too many hotels still do not comply today with the measures launched in 1986, and Member States have failed to monitor and enforce progress towards this goal.

The Commission is deluding itself if it believes that new text in the technical annex alone will make a difference. This is doubly true if the new text were to be based on the proposed, flawed and incomplete MBS methodology – an approach which cannot demonstrate any proven level of success in improving fire safety in any hotel in the 2 years since it has been available, and has not even been adopted by around 50% of the Tourist Associations in Europe.

The Construction Products Regulation, recently in force sets standards including for fire safety in buildings across the EU, and harmonizes the approach to information provision and labeling for construction components used in the construction and renovation of the building stock – including hotels. It would be very practical and highly efficient to extend this methodology and use CEN to develop a standardized approach to ensuring hotel fire safety. This could easily be integrated into the scope of TC127, whose mandate already includes fire safety in all buildings, and which is supported by a substantial body of technical experts and national standardization bodies representing all Member States.

If the Commission has neither the ambition nor the desire to substantively improve the protection of Europe's citizens and visitors (40% of hotel nights), but is happy to complacently accept the status quo (without even knowing what that is, given the absence of any attempts to collect meaningful data in 25 years) then the only honest option is to drop this hopelessly inadequate attempt to paper over the cracks of a policy which has failed and close the dossier forthwith.



If, on the other hand, the Commission is willing to make a serious attempt at strengthening the regulatory framework for hotel fire safety, then we would be willing to support such a commitment with all the technical and expert resources at our disposal.