

**FIEC** is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 29 National Member Federations in 26 countries (23 EU & EFTA and Turkey) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as "global players", carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.  
Recognised "Sectoral Social Partner" (employers)



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## FIEC Position on Execution Standards

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### ■ European execution standards difficult to achieve

FIEC believes that execution standards for works at European level are difficult to develop and are not really useful because in the European countries where these standards apply:

- there are differences not only in the national legal systems, but also in national methods, some of which are based on long standing traditions. Other differences exist in climate, geology etc.
- users have different expectations with regard to safety, quality, comfort and use of construction works
- there are differences in education, competences, responsibilities, insurance and liability rules for contractors and other construction actors.

Generally, experience shows that existing European execution standards:

- are either vague, in order to create rules that apply for all possible execution methods<sup>1</sup>
- or are merely a survey of all the possible execution methods.

### ■ Our starting points

FIEC's message to the European Commission and CEN is that the goal of a coherent, technically up-to-date, practice-oriented and broadly accepted set of European standards for design, execution and construction products has not yet been achieved. FIEC member federations have agreed the following principles and conditions concerning the development of execution standards in European standardisation :

a) European framework execution standards for structural works, consistent with the Eurocodes are possible. These should allow full compatibility with voluntary national construction provisions that respect local and regional cultural habits and the technical education of the professionals in local companies<sup>2</sup>.

b) European execution standards for finishing and equipment are useless.

<sup>1</sup> As an example, CEN has ratified two rival standards (EN 1264-4 and EN ISO 11855-5) relating to the design and installation of embedded radiant heating and cooling systems originating from two different technical committees

<sup>2</sup> This means that such European execution standards should not bring more obligations and difficulties to contractors and should especially avoid being too detailed. That means that these standards should avoid normative constraints in terms of quality system and should remain open to national craft rules of art for current works.

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## ■ Additional burden may make execution standards counter-productive

FIEC has observed that in many countries existing European execution standards are complemented by national execution codes and in some cases, the existence of a European execution standard may inadvertently create a need to develop or adapt existing national reference documents. This creates additional work at national level which may be disproportionate to the potential benefit of having European standards. In addition, FIEC is concerned that European execution standards are too prescriptive. In some cases these standards link the execution methods with specific products, potentially preventing contractors from finding creative solutions with alternative products.

## ■ Our recommendations to CEN

When developing execution standards, due regard should be given to the legal status of these standards in different European countries. European execution standards already exist for a small number of trades, but for the majority of trades, they do not currently exist. If new European execution standards are to be developed, FIEC recommends that this be done on a case-by-case basis, developing European execution standards only where a real and present need has been identified by contractors, or where both manufacturers and contractors agree that there are only slight differences in the execution methods across European countries.

We advise that such developments start as CEN Technical Reports (intended for information purposes only) or as CEN technical specifications (one solution only, but no obligation to use the document as a national standard) before evolving later into European standards (ENs become national standards automatically).

It is essential that if work on a European execution standard begins, FIEC members are immediately informed by CEN and encouraged to participate in the development of the standard. CEN should ensure that National Standardisation Bodies (NSBs) inform the relevant national contractors' and trade associations. The NSBs must also establish, with the agreement of contractors, that there is a clear need for the standard, in order to ensure its legitimacy and credibility.