EUROPEAN AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DES FABRICANTS DE BETON CELLULAIRE
VERBAND DER EUROPÄEISCHEN PORENBETONINDUSTRIE

Berlin, March 17, 2017

Comment on the revision of the Italian National Building Code (*Norme Tecniche per le Costruzioni*, NTC 2017) submitted on February 6, 2017.

Dear Sirs and Madams,

EAACA, representing the European producers of aerated autoclaved concrete elements, would like to express its concerns regarding the heavy restrictions placed on the use of "thin layer joint" masonry in seismic areas introduced by "Norme Tecniche per le Costruzioni". This Decree was submitted to the European Commission on 6th February 2017 with reference number 2017/43/I.

Our Italian colleagues have tried several times to obtain explanations for these restrictions, with no success. Furthermore, the "explanatory notes" drafted by the Ministry to justify the changes in the code give no explanation about the restriction of thin layer bed joints to low seismic areas (buildings with $ag \cdot S \leq 0.15$ g at the SLV) and to three-story buildings. The only explanation refers to the restriction of the use of masonry with unfilled perpendicular joints.
We therefore ask for changes in Clauses 4.5 and 7.8.
Considering the experimental results on these systems and the wide use of autoclaved aerated concrete blocks laid with thin layer joints in other seismic countries, we believe that the Decree has introduced unjustified barriers to our products.
The Eurocodes allow the use of thin layer joints for masonry structures, but the provisions of the Italian Decree "Norme Tecniche per le Costruzioni" prevail in Italy. We consider this restriction to be a clear barrier to the circulation of products and construction systems in Europe.

A second point that should be clarified is the confusing definition of non-structural elements either "assembled" or "built in the construction site".
There is no clear explanation or definition for the terms "assembled" and "built in the construction site" and this could penalize masonry construction in favor of precast systems.
Since the responsibilities and the tasks of professionals (designers, suppliers/technicians, site engineers) for the two solutions differ as far as design and installation are concerned, the professionals could push for the solution with minimum responsibilities.

Best regards,

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