

Fire risks related to certain appliances fired by solid fuel

During the recent meeting of the Preparatory Group and of the Working Group on Queries the Finnish representative draw the attention of the MS and the EC services to the following:

- The quantity of solid fuel used in the test methods referred to in hEN 13240 (room heaters), hEN 15250 (fireplaces) and hEN 15821 (sauna stoves) does not correspond to the fuel quantities which are often used in the northernmost (the coldest) regions of the EU. In these regions the appliances are often used for large-scale heat generating purposes.
- The above situation results (when these appliances are used for large-scale heating) in flue gas temperatures in the chimney which are in reality significantly higher than the flue gas temperatures declared by the manufacturers in line with the standard. Furthermore these higher temperatures are present for a much longer time than the time observed when making the test
- This creates a risk of fire because the chimney itself and the materials around the chimney are submitted to much higher temperatures and for much longer time periods than the temperatures and time periods declared by the manufacturer. The risk could be aggravated even further since a large part of these appliances are traditionally sold in retail to individual consumers, which are not properly informed.

The above are based on the findings of a recent study undertaken by VTT. The study report has been enclosed in the SCC documents as CONSTRUCT 12/943 for reference.

The discussion of the issue in the WG Queries revealed further that some Member States have attempted to remedy the situation by adding national rules, notably by means of the use of national standards resulting in the fragmentation of the Internal Market.

The above situation could lead into increasing risk of fire, due to the way these appliances are sold/used and has led to an incorrect application of the CPD in certain the Member States, which is highly undesirable from the point of view of the Internal Market and the free movement of goods principle.

The following operational conclusions have been drawn to be implemented asap:

- CEN is expected to deliver in February 2012 a roadmap for swiftly find appropriate solutions for the test method as well as the 3 appliances standards and, possibly, certain chimneys standards.
- The issue at hand is to be brought up in the SCC for information purposes especially v-a-v Member States (the technical discussions, nevertheless, were to take place in the pertinent CEN entities).
- The EC services shall follow diligently the developments both within CEN and in Member States concerned. When the rectified package of standards is in place, all Member States are expected to take them properly into account in their regulatory activities. If this conviction of the Commission were not met, further actions are to be contemplated instantly.