

Leading European Architects Forum : Prague 25th and 26th April Prague

The organisers of this conference, ViB Events contacted me late last year to ask if a representative of CEBC could attend the conference and give a paper related to Building Control. After discussion and consultation with the Policy Committee it was agreed that I attend on behalf of the Consortium.

ViB are a subsidiary of SPG Media Group Events Pic and are a provider of international business-to-business media in publishing, communications, web, emedia and live event formats. They make their money by bringing people who want to buy to meet people who want to sell, in a conference, workshop and a one-to-one manner. They have 350 employees and serve over 5,500 international businesses corporations in 85 countries.

I agreed to give two papers, one on the 'History and work of CEBC', and another on 'Harmonisation of Building Regulations in Europe - Is it possible?' I think that both presentations were well received as they asked if I would do some more for them in the future. They also paid most of my expenses, hotel and travelling etc. I think that I may have made some useful contacts and held CEBC in a good light.

I also chaired a workshop session on 'Building in Russia' given by Kevin Sims of Davis Langdon and Anthony Ruperti of Ruperti Project Services. This joint presentation discussed the difficulties, trials and tribulations of building in Russia.

Leonid Peisakhin gave one of the most interesting and perhaps disturbing papers on 'What are the Processes required to create value when it comes to Investment and Development in Central and Eastern Europe?' This was a summary of the persons you have to bribe in each country to make sure your building project is approved, and that in some countries such as Russia you must have a local 'partner' if you want a trouble-free scheme.

I had to endure a marvellous inaugural dinner on one night and a night out in a Prague restaurant with local delicacies, mainly of the porcine variety and an Umpapah band. It is the first time I have been to Prague and what a wonderful city. (But not as good as your city if I have already been there)

As to whether harmonisation is possible I do not know but in question time after my presentation Thomas McCool, Head of Eastern Europe, Turner Construction, from the USA told the meeting that the American regulations were the best and we should all adopt them, and this would be harmonisation.

Hugh Johnson May
2006.