



Workshop

The way forward for the Eurocodes implementation in the Balkans

Policy Context

COM (2018) 65 final of February 6th, 2018¹ stresses that one of key priorities in the enlargement process for the Western Balkan partners is to “*properly apply EU rules and standards not only in law but in practice*”.

As noted in the conclusions by the President of the European Council in March 2017: “[...] *the EU remain committed and engaged at all levels to support them (i.e. the Western Balkans) in conducting EU-oriented reforms and projects.*”

COM (2018) 65 final also notes that: “*The Commission will enhance its technical assistance to the Western Balkans to help them align with EU legislation and ensure its effective implementation in practice*”.

The activities described herein are aligned with EU’s commitment to support the Western Balkan partners in view of democratic, political, economic and societal improvements and are contributing to the **Action Plan set in COM (2018) 65 final**². The foreseen training activities will support the Western Balkan countries and other non-EU countries in the Balkan region to build the capacities to adapt their own national legislation in the field of construction to the EU legal framework.

Background and Motivation

The interest in the Eurocodes³ adoption and implementation in the Balkan region is based on the opportunity for an **advanced common standardization environment**, adaptable to the local requirements of each country (i.e. geographical, geological or climatic conditions) and allowing selection of the level of safety. Moreover, adoption and implementation of Eurocodes will help the Candidate Countries to fully implement EU acquis at the time of accession and support Potential Candidate Countries (and Horizon 2020 associated countries) to progressively align with the EU acquis.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Region: “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhance EU engagement with the Western Balkans” COM(2018) 65 final, 6.2.2018

² Annex to COM(2018) 65 final, 6.2.2018: Action 1 “Strengthening support to the rule of law”

³ The EN Eurocodes are a series of 10 European Standards, EN 1990 - EN 1999, providing a common approach for the design of buildings and other civil engineering works and construction products.



The JRC has offered specialized workshops and provided scientific and technical support to non-EU Balkan countries for the adoption and implementation of the Eurocodes within the JRC Enlargement and Integration Action (E&I) in the period 2013-2016. The focus of past activities was to assess the progress and specific needs for the adoption of the Eurocodes and construction related EN standards in the Balkan region. Eurocodes related dissemination events and workshops carried out, within the context of the E&I Action, include the following events:

- *Adoption of the Eurocodes in the Balkan region, Milan – JRC, Italy (2013)*⁴
- *Building capacities for elaboration of NDPs and NAs in the Balkan region, Skopje, FYROM (2014)*⁵
- *Elaboration of maps for climatic and seismic actions for structural design in the Balkan region, Zagreb, Croatia (2015)*⁶
- *Current status of the Eurocodes in the Balkan region, Skopje, FYROM (2016)*⁷; side event to the 12th Annual Meeting of CEN&CENELEC

All countries in the Balkan region reported significant progress in the process of Eurocodes adoption in 2016 at the workshop in Skopje and it was concluded that **most of non-EU countries in the Balkan region are going to use the Eurocodes as primary standards**. Though most National Standardization Bodies (NSBs) reported that have adopted the Eurocodes as standards, they are used in parallel with existing national codes as none of non-EU Balkan countries have implemented the Eurocodes in the national regulatory framework. The Balkan countries are aware about needs for harmonization of their national legislation and standardization framework for construction with the EU legislation. However, they face challenges, as there is a lack of relevant institutional support for the implementation of the Eurocodes in national legislation and standardization framework.

Objectives and expected outcomes

In order to assist non-EU countries in the Balkan region to respond to above challenges and facilitate the process of Eurocodes implementation in the national regulatory framework, a new workshop will be organized.

The workshop will be a two-day training event, including round table discussions, with a two-fold aim: (a) facilitate the implementation of the Eurocodes in the national regulatory framework in the Balkan region, and (b) present the concept on a Community of Practice (CoP) related to implementation of Eurocodes in the Balkan region.

⁴http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showpage.php?id=2013_12_WS_Balkan

⁵http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showpage.php?id=2014_11_WS_Balkan

⁶http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showpage.php?id=2015_10_WS_Balkan

⁷http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showpage.php?id=2016_06_WS_Balkan



In particular, the workshop presentations and the round table discussion sessions will serve the following objectives:

- Assess the level of commitment of the National Authorities in adopting the Eurocodes;
- Assess the level of harmonization of national policy/legislation with EU regulatory framework;
- Identify challenges and impediments for the Eurocodes implementation at national regulatory framework level and discuss possible actions;
- Assess the progress of definition of Nationally Determined Parameters (NDP) and identify needs for (possible) review of already defined NDPs;
- Facilitate regional cooperation in the Eurocodes implementation;
- Present case studies of EU countries that have successfully implemented the Eurocodes in the national regulatory framework;
- Facilitate exchange of views, knowledge and information between EU experts and representatives of non-EU countries in the Balkan region.

The workshop will provide the necessary technical assistance in support of the Eurocodes introduction into the national regulatory environment, which is a basic step in full implementation. EU experts will share knowledge with the representatives from competent organizations in the non-EU Balkan countries on technical methods and techniques underpinning EU policy implementation. The event will provide an opportunity to build on the experience, initiatives and difficulties concerning the implementation of the European standards and policies for construction in the Balkan Region.

Additionally, the workshop will initiate the activities for the establishment of a regional platform to enhance collaboration within the non-EU Balkan countries on the adoption and implementation of the Eurocodes. It will give the opportunity to present to the participants the framework for a Community of Practice (CoP) related to Eurocodes and their implementation in the Balkan region and secure involvement of invited members. The set-up and implementation of the CoP will be scheduled for a second phase, as a follow-up of the workshop.

It is envisaged that the CoP related to Eurocodes and the Balkan region will provide continuous support in future actions related to Eurocodes implementation in the Balkans. The concept is that the CoP will be engaged in activities related to the Eurocodes and the Balkans (i.e. map knowledge and identify gaps, exchange practical examples of structures designed with the Eurocodes, discuss developments related to the Nationally Determined Parameters (NDPs) and National Annexes (NAs) publication, organize visits and other local events, assist with regional training activities). The CoP will also assist in process of the Eurocodes maintenance and updating once they will be adopted. An e-forum (or platform) will foster the dissemination of information and activities related to the CoP and facilitate



the collaboration among its member – it is envisaged that this platform can be hosted at the JRC Eurocodes website (<http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home>). The CoP members will also have plenary meetings, i.e. occasions to meet, exchange ideas and pave the way for future work. JRC would be monitoring and assisting the CoP with its activities.

Key elements of the workshop programme

The programme of the workshop will be composed of the following parts:

- Presentations of non-EU Balkan countries about status of implementation of the Eurocodes (standards and legislation); discussion on their specific problems and needs;
- Lectures delivered by experts from the European Commission, CEN/CENELEC and EU member states with recommendations on the way forward for the implementation of Eurocodes in the national regulatory framework;
- Presentation of case studies (to be identified by experts and JRC) sharing EU MS experience and serving as best practice examples for non-EU Balkan countries;
- Round table discussions regarding implementation of the Eurocodes in the Balkan region, especially their implementation in the national regulatory framework – conclusions and recommendations for the way forward.

The round table discussion is anticipated to emphasize the challenges and needs of the non-EU countries from the Balkan region. Also, needs for future local training and information campaigns targeted to National Authorities and NSBs on the national regulatory environment related to the implementation of the Eurocodes will be discussed.

Participants

Participants from the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo⁸, Montenegro and Serbia) and also Moldova and Turkey will attend the Workshop by invitation from the Organising Committee.

Participation will be on invitation only and priority will be given to participants representing by National Authorities. Participants are expected to represent:

- National Authorities and policy decision makers (Ministries of Construction, Ministries of Infrastructure, Ministries of Economy and Trade, etc.)
- National Standardisation Bodies (NSBs)
- Chairmen of CEN/TC250 Mirroring Committees and members of TC250 mirroring working groups

⁸ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



- Institutions that are involved in the determination of the National Annexes and the training on the Eurocodes (Scientific community, Research Institutions, Academia) and provide support for the Eurocodes adoption (Chambers of Engineers).

Nominated experts from the European Commission, EU Member States, CEN Management Centre and CEN/TC250 'Structural Eurocodes' will participate and give presentations.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire aimed to assess recent progress, difficulties and needs for the implementation of the Eurocodes in the national regulatory framework in the Balkan countries will be distributed to participants before the workshop and should be submitted not later than 10 September 2018 to the workshop Organizing Committee.

Event Registration

Registration of the invited participants will be done online (link to be provided when the date and venue are confirmed). There will be also the possibility for on-site registration for other participants.

Attendance Fees

There will be no registration fee for the Workshop. The Workshop Secretariat will provide to the participants further information about travel and accommodation arrangements. The participants will be responsible for reserving their accommodations.

Workshop material

Relevant Workshop material will be distributed to the participant at the Workshop. The material (i.e. presentations and other relevant material) from the workshop will be made available on the Eurocodes website⁹ for download after the event.

A JRC Report will be published as a follow-up of the event based on the presentations and material prepared for the Workshop. The report will focus on assessing the challenges non-EU Balkan countries are encountering in Eurocodes implementation in the national regulatory framework and providing recommendations for facilitating the procedure based on the EU MS case studies. This report is envisaged to be of interest to other countries worldwide that have expressed interest in the Eurocodes.

Language

The Workshop presentations and round table discussion will be in English (no translation will be provided).

⁹<http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>



Venue

Tirana, Albania (Venue TBC)

Technical equipment required

AV system (Video projector, screen, sound, computer, lapel microphones), panel set-up for the round-table discussion

Workshop Organizing Committee

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