

MODERN BUILDING ALLIANCE · EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CPR Acquis and the Future of Façade Fire Testing in Europe

MBA Webinar, 7 July 2026 · Speakers: Heikki Väänänen (European Commission, DG GROW), Johan Anderson (RISE Research Institutes of Sweden, Convenor CEN/TC 127 WG 10), Roy Weghorst (Kingspan, Regulatory Affairs)

For decades, a façade system sold across Europe has had to be tested for fire performance in every market it entered — one test in Germany, another in Sweden, a third in the UK. That patchwork testing is now, visibly, coming to an end. On 7 July 2026, the MBA brought together the three actors writing the next chapter — the Commission official steering the CPR Acquis Horizontal Sub-Group on Fire, the researcher who led the EU's façade fire project and now convenes the CEN drafting group, and industry — for a candid conversation of where harmonization stands, what has effectively been decided, and where our national networks can still contribute to the outcome.

Three decisions are crystallizing in Brussels

1. Separate, time-based performances — not a single pass/fail. The original idea of one European pass/fail verdict for façades is expected to be replaced. DG GROW confirmed the group is converging on the "alternative option": each essential characteristic such as vertical and horizontal flame spread, falling parts, burning parts, smouldering are assessed separately and classified by time, mirroring the familiar resistance-to-fire logic. One test generates the full data set; each Member State regulates only the aspects it cares about.

2. Indoor testing only. Wind and weather distort flame behavior and limit comparability between laboratories. The project mapped Europe's laboratory capacity and found that indoor coverage is already widely accepted. The direction of travel is unambiguous: indoor testing is more adequate.

3. One method, built on what industry already knows. The new European approach is based on BS 8414 (large-scale) and DIN 4102-20 (medium-scale), validated through a pan-European round robin test(s).

What is decided in law — and what is not

A crucial clarification from DG GROW: the future European test method will not be mandatory in itself. It becomes binding only when a harmonized product standard (ETICS being the first in the queue) references it, and only after that standard's coexistence period expires. Inside the harmonised zone, the product standard also decides which characteristics must be declared; outside it, Member States remain free to require any method they wish. Convergence there is the goal, not the guarantee, and that is exactly where national advocacy earns its keep. The precedent is encouraging: European resistance-to-fire testing gradually displaced national methods even where no harmonised standard compelled it, with the UK the last holdout, moving off BS 476 by 2029.

Meanwhile the wider CPR Acquis machine keeps moving: reaction-to-fire and resistance-to-fire classifications have already been transferred to the new CPR (April and June 2026 respectively); the classified-without-testing (CWT) decision is being carried over now; roofs and external fire exposure follow from autumn.

Still open — and still winnable

- **Falling-parts thresholds.** Fixed 1 kg / 5 kg classes or a declared list of masses? No final decision. Industry warned that importing a 1 kg limit designed for flat-façade testing into the new wing configuration would make façades effectively unbuildable in some markets. The Commission signaled flexibility: one test, one measurement — national thresholds can be layered on top.
- **Wood crib vs gas burner.** A 350 kg wood crib costs ~€2,000 per test and drags tolerance problems into every laboratory. Discussion towards gas-only for repeatability is getting traction; expect a bridging period in which both are permitted.
- **Timeline.** The standardization request is expected by end-2027. CEN/TC 127 Working Group 10 is drafting the large-scale test standard now, in parallel, so the standard and the request can "swap" on arrival. Classification standards follow; product standards and coexistence periods after that.

Why does this matter to markets?

Buildings act as systems, not as products and for the first time, the CPR framework is opening the door to system-level assessment: the façade test itself, and the parallel DG ENER work under the EPBD on photovoltaics interacting with the building envelope (findings to be presented during

FIEP webinar on 4 September 2026). Yes, system testing means more testing. But the prize is the opposite of cost: one European test accepted everywhere, replacing today's duplicate campaigns in the UK, Sweden, Germany and beyond. Harmonization done well cuts the cost of proving safety, never the safety itself. And products that carry the full data set from a single test can serve every market, whatever each regulator chooses to require.

THE ASK: 12 MEMBER STATES ARE STILL SILENT

Only 15 of 27 Member States have answered the Commission's two "killer questions" on the classification approach and indoor-only testing. Every missing answer weakens the mandate for a workable European method and leaves room for positions our industry cannot live with. DG GROW's request was explicit, and unusually direct: even "we have no position" counts as valuable input.

What each national network should do before the autumn:

- Contact your national regulatory authority; confirm whether it has submitted input to the Horizontal Sub-Group on Fire and if not, press for it.
- Channel your national regulatory demands (falling-parts thresholds, smouldering, CWT needs) to the MBA Secretariat, so they reach Brussels with evidence attached.
- Start preparing the ground for a smooth national transition to the European method as the resistance-to-fire migration shows it can be done without market disruption.

The bottom line, in the words that closed the webinar: the measure of the CPR Acquis will not be the number of standards revised, but whether regulators, designers and building owners end up with information they can actually use to build and operate safe buildings. The MBA exists to make sure the plastics-in-construction value chain is at that table with science in hand. This is what membership buys: the room, the evidence, and the network.