

# NETWORK AND COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL BUILDING AUTHORITIES

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## Abstract

Norwegian Association of Municipal Engineering / Forum for Building Control have established network groups all over the country. These groups meet frequently (5 -10 municipalities in each group) and learning from each other. There are about 440 municipalities in Norway, and the forum has members from ca 270 municipalities. This network is big and has been in function for over a decade. It includes officers of the local building authorities and controllers. Forum for Building Control has an internet site where different themes are made with a specific theme. When the groups are meeting, they are doing exercises on the themes. In this way they try to learn of best practice. The members of the board are making this exercises with question/answers and examples. Other experts in special field can be used for developing exercises. Once a year all the leaders of the network groups meet for acquire competence and learn from one another. Forum for Building Control arranges seminars and conferences on current interest for members and non – members. Two big conferences a year, and a lot of smaller seminar and workshops. This cooperation contribute to increase the knowledge of the local authorities.

**Key Words: Local building authorities – network, Norway**

## **Norwegian Association of Municipal Engineers has established a nationwide network for local building authorities.**

NKF (Norwegian Association of Municipal Engineers) are:

The association was established in 1907, and throughout this period the measure has been to take care of all members professional and personal development, and for an effective organization, leadership and management of municipal activities.

The association is working With different achievements :

Better local utilitation of technology and infrastructure  
Impact of new knowledge  
To give the municipal-norway a good basis in the work with physical environment.

Our surroundings as an arena for sosial and cultural activities.

Our physical enviroment like nature recourses.

Our local infrastructure as an condition for settlement and business.

NKF's activities shall be based on an overall solution which is important for the service of the municipalities.

The Professional topics are :

Administration and management

Waste, energy and reprocessing

Building, construction and property

Fire brigade and emergency

Building Control and spatial planning

Maps and geodata

Drinking water and outlet

Roads, traffic and communications

Every topic or theme has a board which have the responsibility to develop the topic. Normally members of the board consists of municipal officers from different level in the organization, but in several boards it is officers and members from private business companies. This could be companies which is in cooperation with the municipalities in

some way. Some of the members are working in other part of the public sector.

In the board of building control and spatial planning the members are mostly leaders and officers in the municipals.

Forum for Building Control - Forum for Byggesak is a part of Norwegian Assosiation of Municipal Engineers.

### **Norwegian Association of Municipal Engineers - Forum for Building Control**

Forum for Building Control is the leading association in its field in Norway.

The Norwegian planning and building act aims to have high quality in the entire building process.

The implementation of the changing rules and regulations has been a real challenge to competence in the public and private sector.

Predictability is dependant on good quality control in the building councils code of practice and that the same rules should apply nationwide. This requires an organization which can take care of common interests and have influence where the decisions are made.

Through the network cooperation, the forum aims to be a good support and to offer the product required.

The aim of the forum is to develop and maintain information which gives satisfied customers and good service.

The forum has been one of the initiators to the establishment of a technological building college. The forum will continue to participate active in this project.

Even if it is only a short time since major changes in the building regulations came into effect, the reform will continue constantly. In this connection it is important to participate in the fields where development and new ideas are happening, i.e. among the users. The forum has this opportunity through the "Network News", the Forums' web-site, our publication "Kommunalteknikk" (Municipal

Engineering), through conferences, seminars, participation in network groups and personal contacts.

### **The Forums aims and objectives are:**

To be the leading organization in its field

To be the professional body for its members

To develop cooperation between private and public sectors

To collect and distribute experience and new knowledge

To have an important say in learning and upgrading of competence

To offer service which the members require

To establish and maintain national and international contact in the private and public sector

Forum for building control is a member of CEBC.

Throughout the years, Forum for building control has established a good cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Forum for Building control has a direct contact with the municipalities all over the country, which is very valueable for the legislative power. It is an increasing understanding that the contact the forum with the secretary and the network is important for the Departement and their legislative work.

Throughout many years Forum for building control has been an important cooperation partner for the Nation Office of Building technology, which is an organization between the department and the municipalities of Norway. This contact has been very useful in the introduction and developing of the official Norwegian internet system for submission of building applications.

In addition to this, Forum for building control have in cooperation with conferenses, and so on.

## **The Networks**

NKF have networks in different professional topics as : building control, zoning, construction and property, and for roads and communications.

Inside the Forum for building control. NKF has established 34 network groups with members from 270 of 440 norwegian municipalities. The networks is offering the members an arena for officers from the local building authorities to share and develop their knowledge and professional practice.

The groups are “free” in the way they are organized, they are operating independent from each other. They are organized in a appropriate way in a geographical context.

Norway is a very outstretched country with long distances, and difficult topography, and in some parts of the country it can be difficult with the public communications.

Very often the municipalities has a few persons in the administrations, and they have to be experts in several professional topics.

So groups could be members from 5-10 municipalities.

The secretary of NKF has a very important role and is very often a good helper in the coordination and organization of the work.

Once in a year the coordinators of the groups are collected over 2 days in a seminar to work together with the board. Throughout these days experiences are shared, and making plans for the work in the future.

### **How are they working ?**

Informal networks with clear frames. The networkgroups has in a professional wiew much in common with informal groups, but in the local networks the contact is formalized. The groups has chosen a leader. The leader has contact with other leaders in the other groups. These professional topics and groups are better organized.

The discussion in the groups are based on texture which is developed by the board of Forum for building control in cooperation with other professional experts.

The groups are working in a professional frame, like a study circle. The similarity of a study circle is that the group have to use the texture, as a basis for the professional discussions.

Continuity through regular meetings. The continuity is the differentiate to an ordinary seminar or conference. The groups agree about the next meeting, the topics and where the next meeting shall take place and be arranged. The participants is obliged to the other members, and for themselves, in what kind of skills has to be done for the next meeting. It is attaching the meeting together, and contributes and transfer the professional discussion into their own municipalities.

The networkgroups are intended to be a help to develop the quality of the services. Therefore, it is important to get accept from the leaders at home, that this important work should be given high priority.

## **CEBC**

The Consortium of European Building Control (CEBC) was formed in 1989. It followed preliminary discussions between the Institute of Building Control (IBC) and the European Commission on the need to safeguard building control activities and promote their significance within a rapidly changing Europe. The notion that a pan-European group that identified with these concerns should be formed was endorsed. Accordingly, the Institute of Building Control accepted the challenge.

The suggestion also met with enthusiastic support from a number of building control organisations within other Member States. Subsequently, and under the auspices of the European Commission, representatives of Belgium, Denmark, Spain, the Netherlands and the UK met in Brussels to discuss the principles to be followed and the manner in which affairs should be conducted. This agreed, the Consortium of European Building Control (CEBC) was inaugurated.

Since its formation, the Consortium has grown both in membership and status. Currently, twenty three European countries participate in its activities in a forum where issues that impact on the building control

discipline, can be voiced to good effect. Countries that joined the European Union in 2004 have joined the Consortium. These include Slovenia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia and Romania.

## **Membership**

Members of the Consortium must be either a recognised European organisation that promotes the interest of building control, a government department active in the development of legislation associated with the health and safety aspects of the built environment or a professional body whose members carry out the building control functions. Each European country can be represented by up to three approved organisations. Each member organisation nominates two representatives who become Members of the Consortium.

Members are expected to participate in the activities of the Consortium by attending meetings, exchanging information and, generally providing support and assistance in pursuance of the Consortium's Aims and Objectives.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The principal aims and objectives of the Consortium are:

To help in the promotion of European ideals in connection with activities associated with the building control function.

To liaise with and help the European Commission, Member States countries, EFTA, governmental, professional and private institutions on building control matters

To participate in the work of standard making bodies and to express the interest of European building control.

To help the implementation of EC Directives which affect the construction industry.

To help in matters related to the mutual recognition of professional qualifications in relation to the building control function

promote the science and law of building control by providing a forum for the discussion of matters of mutual interest and the exchange, publication and dissemination of information.

To engage in research programmes and projects considered beneficial to the development of European building control.

## **Past and Current activities**

It has become clear that one of the Consortium's principal attributes is the provision of a European forum which aids the exchange and dissemination of information related to building control. The introduction of Directives associated with the building process, especially the Construction Products Directive, point unmistakably to increased harmonisation within the European construction industry. Increasingly, uniformity of interpretation and application assume greater importance. The speedy circulation of information, particularly that which emanates from Brussels, aided by the views of experts, undoubtedly provides for greater understanding of new proposals, the opportunity to voice constructive opinion, and a greater efficiency in adapting to new requirements.

Developments within Europe, which touch on building control have expanded considerably. It has resulted in a significant increase in the volume of Consortium correspondence and the need for twice yearly meetings. In addition the Policy Committee meets twice a year between the spring and autumn CEBC meetings. The broad range of issues, both of a technical and legal nature, now require closer scrutiny to properly effect the desired intention. In 2003 the Consortium formed several Topic Groups. Currently work is being carried out via these "Topic Groups" under the following headings:

Building Control Systems in Europe

Access for All

Self Confirmation

Web Based Regulations

Liability

EU – Energy Performance  
Directive of Buildings

EU Qualifications Equivalence

Climate Change

Building Failures

As a result of the “Building Control Systems in Europe” Topic Group, a report has been published outlining the building control systems that exist in countries who are members of the Consortium. With 23 of the 25 Member State countries being members of the Consortium the publication has been well received throughout Europe – this report can be accessed via sending an email to [david.smith@cebc.eu](mailto:david.smith@cebc.eu)

More recently, the Consortium has considered details of the European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings and has debated the Directive and its implications on Building Control at its meetings. The Consortium continues to develop its views on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and participates in a scheme for student exchange.

The Consortium is a member of the European Council for Construction Research, Development and Innovation (ECCREDI) and works with other organisations and bodies that form the Council within ECCREDI

I have tried to make a presentation and give you some background to show what this organization can offer to its members. In this connection, the networks are very important to share knowledge which goes both ways. Also from the municipalities to the central administration.

Through this national and international cooperation we can see a entirety, which helps us to achieve a better quality, better processes and services.

## Biography

Mr Hallgeir Strifeldt (51) is an engineer, working for the Norwegian Reindeer administration, as an adviser in planning of areas and GIS (geographical information system)

<http://www.reindrift.no/>

14 years as leader of the department of city planning and building authorities of Alta Kommune (municipal).

[www.alta.kommune.no](http://www.alta.kommune.no)

1 year in Norwegian State Housing Bank, as vicedirector in a regional office.

[www.husbanken.no](http://www.husbanken.no)

Several projects in GIS (geographical information system).

Practice from architect office and several projects as supervision officer.

Member of the board of Forum for Building Control since 2001.