

Airtightness networks

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ABSTRACT

The contribution informs about the foundation of a professional network of Czech airtightness test providers and gives basic information about the organisation and activities of this association.

An idea of closer cooperation between Czech building airtightness test providers has existed for several years. (one outcome of such activities is e.g. a database of test results – see Novak (2009)). The introduction of state subsidies for construction of low energy and passive houses in 2009 (programme Green Savings) stimulated the increase of airtightness test providers' number, since the assignment of subsidies was conditioned by a successful airtightness test. With growing number of airtightness test providers, exchange of information, refinement of common rules and namely a quality control has become a real need. In such situation a professional network of airtightness test providers called "Asociace Blower Door CZ" (A.BD.CZ) was founded (www.blowerdoortest.cz) in July 2009.

The association of Czech airtightness test providers A.BD.CZ is "a voluntary, non-political, professional association of persons performing the measurements of building airtightness by means of the fan pressurization method or derived methods and promoting a complex quality of buildings, particularly the reduction of energy consumption due to the limitation of their air permeability" (quoted from the charter of the A.BD.CZ). The main goals of its activities are:

- supervision and quality control of the professional activities of the members
- support of knowledge exchange and lifelong learning of the members
- development of measuring procedures and their implementation
- cooperation with state authorities

The association is headed by its chairman and a three members council. Both bodies are elected by the general meeting of members. The council decides about the admittance of new members. The applicant has to prove that s/he performs actively the activities stipulated in the charter of the association. The membership obligates to observe the common rules defined in the ethical code of the association. The violation of the ethical code may be resolved in a disciplinary procedure and may lead up to exclusion from the association. At present, no further means of quality control are used, however a certification procedure might be established in the future.

At present, there are 23 members in the association from 14 companies, who are spread irregularly over the territory of the Czech Republic. They operate with 14 measuring devices (all of them are standard blower doors). The major part of their activities is measurement of single family houses.

The most important outcome of previous A.BD.CZ activities was the round robin test of its members in June 2010. The round robin test (and the feedback from the results) was perceived as the first step to deal with the quality control issue. More detailed information is available in Novak (2010, 2011). Furthermore, a common protocol of airtightness test results for purpose of the Green Savings programme and common approach to the preparation of the building before the test were elaborated in the framework of A.BD.CZ activities. Planned activities of A.BD.CZ would involve development of a certification and quality control system, a common interpretation of EN 13829 (refinement of approach concerning the building preparation, calculation of derived quantities, expression of results, etc.) and continuation of the project of common airtightness test results database and their analysis.

References

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