

EFFECTIVE VENTILATION

9th AIVC Conference, Gent, Belgium
12-15 September, 1988

Paper 1 - Keynote Speech

Air Infiltration and Ventilation

M. COLLA

Belgian Secretary of State for Science Policy
Welenschsbeleid
Regentlaan 40
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Mr. Marcel Colla
Secretary of State for Science Policy, Belgium

It is with pleasure that I have accepted the offer to close today the first working session of the 9th Conference of the Air Infiltration and Ventilation Centre of the International Energy Agency. As Secretary of State, responsible for Science Policy, it is also an honour to have the opportunity to do so, let's admit it in front of a highly scientific audience. It is indeed important that Policy makers and Scientists meet each other regularly.

I don't have to convince you, I suppose, of the importance of Air Infiltration and Ventilation in the energy balance of dwellings in particular and therefore in the overall energy budget of our countries. The creation of your Centre, the growing interest for your work and the discussions during Conference prove this sufficiently.

It is however a good opportunity to stress the role your Centre has played in our own national efforts on this subject. As you probably know, the National R.D. Programme on Energy, created and directed by my Department since 1975, has recognised at the start of its third phase (1982-1987) the important scientific effort that was necessary to cover the gap existing at that time in our knowledge on the subject. In the programme an important budget was therefore allocated to ventilation research, at the Belgian Building Research Institute.

More important however, to cover the gap, was the step to join the Air Infiltration and Ventilation Centre in 1983. It permitted almost immediately to start our own research in the best conditions, taking advantage especially of the experience of the Centre in measurement — and evaluation methodologies and in calculation tools. Once again this was a good example, for a small country like Belgium, of the importance of international research collaboration in which I strongly believe. Therefore I think we have to continue to support this kind of research, be it in the framework of the EC and/or the International Energy Agency : scientist must travel, not only for pleasure but to exchange ideas and methodologies, confrontate theories and share results to the benefit of the entire community.

This ventilation area also shows the necessity of multi-disciplinarity; too often scientists isolate themselves and their results in the mist of their own vocabulary.

Ventilation is an area related to many others, which may not be neglected by the technicians. Belgium was therefore very happy to have taken, a few years ago, the leadership of an I.E.A. task in that field ("Human behaviour and ventilation"). Although difficult in starting and working out, this research came recently to an end but has shown very interesting results. It was maybe one of our most valuable contributions to the area which interests you.

In the recent past, the decreasing of oil prices has been for Belgium, like other countries, an easy alibi to cut down the research efforts in the energy conservation field. I regret that only a few activities have been saved from this new storm. I am happy today that the ventilation related research was one of them, that our contribution to I.E.A. has been preserved and that even some new actions were undertaken as proves our recent commitment to a new I.E.A. task on "Air flow patterns in buildings". However, I believe that this

minimum effort must be extended again, to preserve our evaluation and research capacities in the field, to offer a minimum continuity, which is indispensable in all research work and especially in research that underlines policymaking. I therefore have the intention to convince my colleagues to restart a new national effort in energy-research. We will of course take advantage of the results of the National R.D. Programme on Energy and take profit of the experience that has been built up. It finally means that a new effort must be imbedded in existing and new demands, as for example the environment requirements. Energy and energy research is not something that stands on its own; it must be part of our global reflexion on building construction, on industrial productivity, and on new social developments. It means that this research must be, more than in the past, directed to policymaking work: we cannot prepare a decision on the construction of a new electricity plant or on the volume of a gas agreement if we don't know how much the building and industry sectors will consume in the next decades and therefore we need your technological input : what kind of solutions will you offer us for, let us say, the ventilation of the building of the year 2000, or for the rehabilitation of the existing building stock. And important : what will your solution cost, what will it save, how will it be accepted by the public and the building sector,... So many interesting questions where science and political decision have to meet. In that way, I will continue to assimilate your work because I believe it is vital, because I believe that Rational Use of Energy is a fundamental element for our energy policy.

Since the oil prices decreased recently, private energy consumption for building heating has risen again significantly: people have rediscovered, I'm afraid an energy consuming behaviour: too little was invested in structural modifications, in the improvement of the heating systems, in the definition and setting-up of better ventilation strategies : it shows the weakness of our effort but also the urgent necessity to prepare the future in a more efficient way. Therefore, we must preserve and enlarge our scientific potential and our evaluation capacity of the past and the future. Therefore also, we must multiply our effort of dissemination of the research work. The public, the industrial sectors, the policymakers ask for an objective view on the problems, based on scientific work, especially in the energy field. It is our role to continue to support the realisation and dissemination of objective and accurate information. Your Air Infiltration and Ventilation Centre is a good example of how it can be done : sampling and analysing the available research efforts, publishing reports, discussing the research in highly scientific congresses like this one : the response to all these steps shows the usefulness of the process and the efficiency of the way you do it. Let my short speech therefore be a message of support to the work of this Conference and to the efforts you all undertake.

I thank you for your attention.