

**Comment on the meeting of
“TC325 - Crime Prevention through Building-, Facility- and Area Design”
12. Feb. 2013, UNMZ Prague**

The meeting had a very clear agenda: Acceptance of the minutes, acceptance of the agenda, roll-call of delegates, report of the secretary on proceedings prior to the meeting, report by the Convenors of Technical Committee Working Groups, development of documents, etc. Nevertheless the meeting was not straight forward.

Two major topics were raised for discussion:

1. To work towards a certain status of standardisation: Technical Report (TR) or Technical Specification (TS)
2. The lack of motivation of participants to contribute to the work

Mr. Da Costa, official representative from CEN in Brussels, encouraged us to work towards Technical Specifications (TS) because this would have more weight in the whole process of standardisation. “Working towards a TR is only for the bookshelves!”. To develop a document with the status TS is a clear sign for regular application in practice. This would encourage experts to contribute. However, the work on a Technical Specification (TS) signals a clear aim for the development of a European Norm (EN), although a standard may formally maintain the status TS for a long time. Nevertheless, I would suggest, that working towards a TS actually deflects more experienced countries from participating. The reason is that an official and powerful European Standard conflicts with national standards. For example, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Denmark have produced national standards or schemes for quality assurance in urban planning and building design. To contribute to a European Standard then would be counter-productive, as the British Secured by Design Scheme and the Dutch Police Label Secure Housing would have to be abandoned and withdrawn as they conflict with the European Standard. Therefore, in my view, the work towards a Technical Specification in prospect of developing a European Norm (EN) may cause experts in these countries to stay away from the standardisation process in CEN. It is only through the promotion of a Technical Report (TR) that we can encourage more experienced experts to cooperate in the European standardisation process. Without this potential conflict they may be of great value as they give other members an insight into the practice of the work with a similar standard in their countries. In return they may get a better understanding of the functioning processes in their own countries when they hear about local cultural, political, administrative and legal circumstances from other countries in Europe.

The lack of motivation has – in my opinion – to do with the following points:

- The topic is fluent and has no clear focus. It pretends to deal with “crime prevention” but does not limit itself to technology for target hardening or to formal police surveillance. It is open to all ideas that support informal (natural) surveillance, community responsibility and management of urban space. And design shall support these goals. There is very little understanding about how this works, what mechanisms are at work behind this idea, and what side-effects may be involved. Consequently there is little agreement on the single items of recommendation in the texts, and this leaves the Working Groups without active contribution to the process. Secondly, the issue of ‘crime prevention’ is extended from a pure legal understanding of deflecting offending to the support of community safety, well-being and to work against fear of crime. Environmental design therefore gets mixed up with social management, and the work on standardisation is oscillating between social interventions and policing.
- There needs to be a market that helps distribute the standards, and delegates in this TC325 care very little about creating a demand for their work. They are enthusiasts and opportunists who work for the good because they believe in it.
- The application of planning and design recommendations is subject to local situations. Therefore guidelines for risk assessment become more important than suggested solutions for each object. The security standards follow the concept: “if...then...”. “If” stands for the result of

risk assessment; “then” stands for the specific measure in response to the situation. This shall be reproduced in a matrix that says “high risk – high level of security measures”, “low risk – low level of security measures”. What makes sense, therefore, is to produce guidelines on how to think about opportunities for crime in specific spatial situation, e.g. public places, shopping centres, schools, petrol stations, etc. The standard then may become something like a guideline for qualitative interviews with the aim to raise awareness about cause and effect of environmental features, infrastructure, social and economic features, the history of crime development and the kind of management of the place. The question-based guidelines shall be used as an encouragement for security managers to advise planning practitioners on how to think about crime prevention.

- It was claimed that the standard documents are too complicated and difficult to use. This is true, but that’s why we are here: We need to translate the complicated matter of crime prevention for practitioners. To think that this is done in a few technical statements for product quality is misleading. Policy norms are different from product norms. We need to develop a complementary service, something like a “CPTED academy”, or an “urban security academy”. The standard documents need explication and guidance for application.
- The difficulties of this matter will be experienced again in the next task of the TC325: The development of a standard for schools (Part 6 of the series). Again here we will be confronted with the complexity of security work: Are we simply to avoid opportunities for crime by any means, or are we responsible for a good social climate at school? How far shall social work be incorporated into the standard on design? If social work is part of school management, then it must be considered, just like the management of the kitchen, the technical supply system and maintenance staff. Control mechanisms are complex, and that accounts for railway stations, petrol stations, all buildings considered as “critical infrastructure” of a country (or city) – and it accounts for schools and other building institutions. In other words: We are transposing the task from “crime prevention” to “control mechanisms and public order management”. We oscillate between the deflection of criminal offenders and social work.

I do hope that the difficulties outlined here will be understood and considered in the future work of standardisation of “Crime Prevention through Building-, Facility- and Area Design”.

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