Anger over EU rebar duties

UK producers unhappy about anti-dumping measures which they say will not stem the flood of Chinese rebar

UK producers have directed their anger at the EU after set provisional anti-dumping duties on Chinese imports of rebar at between 9.2 and 13%.

Industry representatives said the move would fail to stem the flood of Chinese rebar into the country, which now accounts for nearly half of sales.

The influx of Chinese rebar is expected to continue throughout 2016 and into 2017, as the UK construction industry is buoyed by a strong economy.

Last April, the European Commission launched an anti-dumping investigation into imports of high-fatigue performance (HFP) rebar from China, following a complaint from the European steel association Eurofer.

Dumping is the practice of selling a product on export markets at lower prices than on its home market or below its cost of production.

It is regarded as a form of protectionism and as a predatory tactic in international trade to win market share.

Several main contractors have signed up to use European sourced rebar, but pressures to keep costs down are seeing demand for cheaper Chinese rebar running at record levels.

Gareth Stace, director of trade body UK Steel, said, “The Commission’s highly thorough investigation of Chinese exports has highlighted dumping margins in excess of a whopping 60%.

“However, given that the European Commission always imposes the minimum duties possible, unlike the US, then what we end up with are duties that are totally inadequate and may not have any material effect.”

He added, “Unless these provisional duties are increased, then we will see further job losses in the rebar sector in the future, as China shows no sign of stemming this tidal wave of rebar exports, with ever increasing tonnes reaching our shores.”

Architects in some countries warm to BIM

The Netherlands and the UK are at the forefront when it comes to the knowledge and usage of Building Information Modelling (BIM) in Europe, according to a survey of architects by Arch-Vision.

It found that architects in these two countries started with BIM because they were forced by the market, and because clients demanded it.

In France, too, the use of BIM has been on the up for several years, mainly because of government regulations, it said.

These are some of the conclusions in the Architectural Barometer report for the fourth quarter of 2015 European, which is research conducted among 1,600 architects in eight European countries and published quarterly.

It found that 36% of UK architects used BIM – among Dutch architects it was 56%. Apart from market pressure, the optimisation of their own business processes was said to be an important advantage of BIM.

Arch-Vision reported that familiarity with BIM had increased massively among architects in Spain and France since 2013.

It found that other European countries were lagging behind, with many architects still seeing major limitations which made them reluctant to use BIM.

While architects said they saw many advantages, the most often cited limitations of BIM were its complexity and the fact that it took more time.

The Architectural Barometer is conducted in eight countries.

Bilfinger to sell water division

German engineering and services group Bilfinger has announced it is selling its water technologies division.

The divestment will see Chinese company Chengdu Techcent Environment Group acquire the division, in a deal said to be worth over €300 million.

Last October, Bilfinger said it had restructured its company, making industrial, and building and facility two independent segments, following changes by its board.

The company said it expected the transaction to be concluded during the first quarter of 2016.

The company’s water technologies division had around 1,600 employees, and generated an output of approximately €300 million in 2015.

Per Utnegaard, executive board chairman, said, “The move to a company in which water technology is the focus of business operations opens up excellent development prospects for Water Technologies.”