

European Aluminium and GDA joint note on frequency of inspections under EN 1090-1

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Background

The European standard EN 1090-1 deals with the execution of steel structures and aluminium structures. In its version EN 1090-1:2009+A1:2011, which allows to CE mark construction products falling under the scope of this standard, provisions dealing with Factory production control (FPC) are set to ensure that the products placed on the market comply with the declared performance of the relevant essential characteristics.

The Sector Group 17 of the Group of Notified Bodies under the Construction Products Regulation developed a guidance document for notified body allowing for general deviations from the frequencies indicated by EN 1090-1:2009+A1:2011, as they considered that the indicated frequency gave rise to concerns. The issue has been debated at length also with representatives from the European Commission, which have not considered the guidance developed by Sector Group 17 in the position to rule over the harmonised standard. At the same time, in light of the concerns raised by the Sector Group, the European Commission has invited all the interested parties in dealing with the issue in the framework of the revision of EN 1090-1. This work, conducted in the principle of transparency and inclusiveness that characterises the European Standardisation System, has recently ended and led to the new draft version of EN 1090-1, i.e. prEN 1090-1:2019, which is about to start its administrative path towards publication.

What is (and what will be) the frequency of inspection of manufacturers' FPC under EN 1090-1?

In the new draft of EN 1090-1, the clause on continuous surveillance of FPC was kept to define the frequency of inspections to which manufacturers of aluminium components and kits for structural use are to be subjected.

Table 3 — Routine surveillance intervals

Execution class according to EN 1993-1-1 or EN 1999-1-1	Intervals between inspections of manufacturer's FPC after the initial assessment (years)
EXC1 and EXC2	1- 2 - 3 - 3 - ... ^a
EXC3 and EXC4	1 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 3 - ... ^a
^a The 3 years interval is maintained as long as no changes occur, which would affect significantly one or more of the characteristics.	

As described by the table above, different provisions apply to different Execution Classes. After first yearly checks (one for EXC1 and EXC2; 2 two for EXC3 and EXC4), the intervals between inspections of manufacturer's FPC become longer and never exceed a three-years interval which is maintained unless a significant change that would affect one or more of the product characteristics occur. Such significant change could be, for example, a modification in the structural design of the aluminium components, in the constituent products, in the supplier of the components, or in the method of production.