

Multilayer Pipes for Gas in Buildings

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Good things take time as we say.

In Germany the licensing process traditionally took somewhat longer, but is going in the right direction with the **TRGI** (Technical Regulations on Gas Installations) which are expected in April 2008. In the meantime KIWA/Gastec has already created a mini licensing empire. Huge sales volumes are not to be expected, but it will boost the image of multilayer pipes and generate solid extra business at halfway decent prices.

In France, the powerful **Gaz de France** decided to embark on an expensive major trial (DIGBUIL 1.6 million €) 3 innovative gas pipe materials, namely **PEX** and **PEX/AL/PEX multilayer pipes** with press fittings and corrugated stainless steel pipes. **Gas Natural** and the **DVGW** (German Gas and Water Technology Association) also took part in this large-scale trial, in which PE-Xa pipes from **Uponor-Wirsbo**, PE-Xc pipes from **Acome** and plastic/metal multilayer pipes from **Comap SA**, together with CSST pipes from **Metals Europe GmbH** and **BOA Nederland** were successfully tested.

The answers given at the **Mostra Convegno 2008** in Italy varied widely. Multilayer pipe manufacturers with no « yellow pipes » in their range maintained flatly that multilayer pipes had not yet been approved for gas use, while the manufacturers of yellow multilayer pipes went so far as to highlight their use for « gas ». FAE multilayer pipes have been supplied for gas use in Italy for over 15 years. The « legal situation » confronting perplexed colleagues was characterised some time ago as follows: multilayer pipes are only permitted for gas use in Italy, if they have an Italian or other recognised foreign licence. In the event of a claim for damages, however, the insurance will only pay out in the case of an Italian licence. So much for a European market. The situation in Italy can, therefore, be explained either as « in principle yes, but in practice... » or in the words of Professor of Law Georg Jellinek, who came up with the classic phrase « Die normative Kraft des Faktischen » (an acceptance of the reality of the situation) (after Kant's Critique of Pure Reason) to describe how the law can develop from everyday business relationships.

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