



## CIB NEWS ARTICLE

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### Around the Task Groups and Working Commissions

#### W084 – Building Comfortable Environments for All

## Report on the Conference on Accessibility and Safety For All held in March 2006, Verona, Italy



by

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The International Conference of the Working Commission W084 was held last March in Verona, Italy, during the PTE Exhibition devoted to older people and sponsored by the Italian magazine Assistenza Anziani (Caring the Older People), by the Institute, CNR ITC, and by CIB. More than 110 people attended the Conference: even if the Italian participants were the principal group, other EU countries were represented, plus USA. The working day was devoted to discuss three principal topics, which were organised into specific sessions briefly described below.

*The First Session,*  
THE NEW SAFETY MEASURES FOR PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES, was chaired by Jon Christophersen, from the Norwegian Building Research Institute and W084 Member.

In 2001 in Italy the National Fire services Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs made a working group aimed at the definition of suggestions to employers in the field of safety in case of fire considering the problems which arise when disabilities have to be considered. The first document issued by

the group was the guidelines for assessing safety in case of fire in workplaces with people with disabilities.

The speaker, S. Zanut, Fire Dept., Ministry of Internal Affairs, Italy, showed the main problems faced by the group and the solutions adopted in order to comply the safety requirements together with privacy and the other needs of the people involved. Further, he discussed some case-studies in the province of Pordenone, North east of Italy.

The second author A. Zuliani, University of Padova, Italy, illustrated a work specifically devoted to the risk perception by people with motorial disabilities, while the third speaker K. Papaioannou, Aristotele University of Thessaloniki, Greece, explained the problem of emergencies due to a fire alarm for people with physical or mental impairments.

G.Sclip, from the University of Trieste, Italy, described a training for disabled employees and their tutors facing an emergency situation.

The following presentation, by S. Confino Rehder, Designer, from USA was more devoted to comfort and safety for older people with disorientation problems, while V. Carriero, by the Technical Dept. of the

University of Florence explained a project within his University aiming at destroying the barriers, obtaining environments always more readily acceptable, usable, safe and comfortable. In this case, the complexity was higher because the University building was of historical and architectural value.



From left to right Jon Christophersen, chair of the first session and Kyriakos Papaioannou, speaker in this session

*The Second Session,*  
RE-THINK AND DESIGN PUBLIC AREAS AND BUILDINGS FOR LARGER USER GROUPS. chaired by Luigi Biocca, from the CNR ITC Italy.

The first speaker, E. Vetromile, from the Province of Rome, Italy, presented problems of mobility in public areas, particularly for older people and some technical solutions which can enhance the accessibility, safety, comfort and, last but not least, attractiveness of public areas.

We moved then to a case-study of renewal for older people inhabitants in the center of the city which hosted the Conference, Verona (M.R. Motolese, researcher, Bologna, Italy). Accessibility in railway stations in the region of Normandie was the topic of two French technicians working in the Ministry of Infrastructures, (S. Lejeune and J. Lacogne). The main points of the work on these railway stations were:

- a work on different types of handicap (low-mobility people, but also deaf people and people with disabilities in seeing and hearing) and situations which are creating handicap;
- one client, but three different owners of the public spaces: RFF (Réseau Ferré de France) the French public agency responsible for the construction and maintenance of the rails for the platform ; SNCF for the station buildings; and the town for the public spaces around the railway station ;
- each railway station has been studied (48 stations) with a list of the situations creating a handicap for people with disabilities, linked to an

analysis of itineraries inside and outside the stations.

D. Mira Dascalu, from the Faculty of Architecture, Technical University, Iasi Romania couldn't participated at the Conference but proposed a new approach for the layout of old public spaces and of the old residential tissue, in order to become safe, accessible and ecological public areas for larger users groups. It is known the attachment of elders and people with different needs to some old residential and public places, which can give them an important territorial feeling, urban identity and self respect. So, for these groups, it is very important the layout of these old city tissues – with or without architectural value.

*The Third Session,*  
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY OUTCOMES SUPPORTING ORIENTATION, chaired by Peter Lansley, from the University of Reading UK, concluded the works.

The first speakers, M.V. Giuliani and L. Tiberio, from the CNR Institute of Cognitive Science and Technology, Italy presented a case-study of orientation in a hospital environment, S. Lucia Hospital in Rome, for a person with hearing impairments.

The project aimed at improving the degree of humanization of the hospital environment, in particular for deaf people. By "humanization", they referred to the extent to which a socio-physical environment is able to meet the global needs of the users. In such an environment, a main concern for humanization seems to be communication, both face-to-face and through the environment. In this respect, the project was twofold. Some key issues for the development of a more humanized environment for deaf people were identified, and the project was addressed to find practical solutions to improve the overall quality of the hospital.



Programme of the Conference

Again the housing environment regarded the topic of Antonio Frattari, from the University of Trento, Italy: a sheltered house, accessible and technologically equipped, for people with a light level of disorientation which is located in Rovereto, North of Italy.

On the same topic, but more generally devoted to older people, the last intervention of the Session (Giuseppe Ceresi, IRSRS, Trento, Michela Chiogna, University of Trento, Italy) described how the house and its inhabitants can be supported by new technologies.

Trying to resume the principal aspects, I underline the following:

- Interdisciplinary is important in many research fields, but in W084 is even crucial;
- Frail Categories can be supported by an accessible and comfortable and safer environment but also by the adoption of new technologies, which enable them to live and act more independently;
- The outdoor environment is more and more analysed and studied, because frail people can not remain closed and bounded within their house.

### Future Meetings

The next Meeting of CIB W084 will be held in South Africa, in May 2007, in conjunction with the CIB World Building Congress.

### Free Proceedings

CIB Members can ask for free a CD copy of the Verona Proceedings.

A separate article of these proceedings was distributed in the previous newsletter 2006/4 and can be downloaded [here](#).



### Additional Information

For additional information about the CIB W084 meetings please contact the Coordinator: Annalisa Morini at [a.morini@itc.cnr.it](mailto:a.morini@itc.cnr.it).

You can find more information on the activities of CIB W084 at [www.cibworld.nl/website](http://www.cibworld.nl/website) - section "Databases" - database "Commissions - type W084 in the search field "Commission number".