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European Construction

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Preface

On 1 January 1993 the Single European Market came into being. This, amongst other things, marked the end of trade barriers and a relaxation of customs regulations, enabling free movement within the European Union.

J. Bloggs Ltd can start work on a project in Paris, with their workers catching the 05.30 train from London to Paris. Is this fiction or reality? It could prove to be a nightmare experience for many contractors hoping to make a quick profit (or even a loss) by joining the European bandwagon. A lot of hard lessons will have to be learnt.

How then will the professional building contractor, consultant or student, face up to the challenge? What will they need to know about the practices, procedures and construction techniques in any one or more of the European countries?

These are the questions which have prompted us to write this book. How can we as lecturers (often defined as the gatherers and distributors of misinformation) prepare our students for the European experience?

The only way forward was to go, see and record what was happening in Europe. This we have done in order to produce the core content for this book, which is based on personal observations of construction projects in The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal.

The objectives were specifically to highlight within each country aspects of construction practices and building methods utilised under the following headings:

- Key information
- Construction output
- Review of the construction industry
- Extent of regionalisation
- The housebuilding industry
- Relationships within the construction industry
- The role of the Architect
- The role of the Engineer
- The role of the Quantity Surveyor
- Contractual arrangements and building procurement
- Planning and building control procedures
- Low rise housing construction
- Case studies on low rise housing projects
- Medium rise construction
- Case studies for medium rise construction

Within the text and diagrams an attempt has been made to bring out the differences in building from country to country. The construction details focus on the following building elements: foundations, external walls, floors and roof construction.

We hope that we have been successful in capturing the flavour of the countries visited.

B.C./G.W. April 1994

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Lecturing materials available

A series of slide packs and a CD-ROM are available to aid lecturers on the subject of European construction studies. Details obtainable from: Brian Cooke, 82 Torkington Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 4RL (Tel: 061 483 6701)