

Annual meeting of the World Ceramic Tiles Forum in Germany

The 26th World Ceramic Tiles Forum (WCTF) was hosted on 7 and 8 November in Berlin, Germany, by the European Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers' Federation (CET) and the Bundesverband Keramische Fliesen (BKF). The meetings were held in conjunction with the ISO TC 189 meetings. This edition of the Forum was attended by representatives from Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA.



The Forum provided an opportunity to discuss **global trends in the production and consumption of ceramic tiles**. Worldwide production in ceramic tiles decreased in 2018 by roughly 1 billion sq.m as a result of a corresponding production decrease in China during this period. Despite this decrease, world production in wall & floor tiles still exceeds 13 billion sq.m, almost twice the production level recorded in 2006 when the WCTF started monitoring world production. In addition to the global level, each country attending the WCTF offered insight into national general trends and the regulatory framework affecting ceramic tiles and the construction sector.

The WCTF discussed further the **implementation of the revised customs Harmonised System (HS) codes for ceramic tiles** which entered into force in 2017. WCTF guidelines on the 2017 HS codes are available upon request. A total of 106 countries have now fully implemented the revised HS code 6907 on ceramic tiles.

Held in conjunction with ISO/TC189, the Forum looked closely at latest developments in international standardisation. WCTF members also exchanged information on multilateral and bilateral free trade negotiations and expressed their **concerns in the light of the growing trend in technical barriers to trade taking the form of mandatory certification, export licencing, etc.**, with constantly changing requirements and processes, thereby making it extremely difficult to export products to many regions in the world. The WCTF also explored in details developments in health and safety, climate & energy as well as digitalisation in the construction sector.

Most importantly, this year's edition of the WCTF also focused on identifying the **key strengths of ceramic tiles** in comparison with competing covering materials: "**Ceramics – A safe choice**":



- ⇒ **Safe**
- ⇒ **Hygienic**
- ⇒ **Long lasting**
- ⇒ **Does not burn**
- ⇒ **Resistant**
- ⇒ **Versatile**
- ⇒ **Stable and can be skilfully installed**
- ⇒ **Respects the environment**

Two videos were produced by [Confindustria Ceramica](#) and promoted in cooperation with [ASCER](#) and other associations in various countries. The two videos are available here: [Ceramics— A safe choice](#); [Ceramics - technical properties](#).

With record-high attendance and key actions agreed, the 26th WCTF was a great success. We look forward to the next meeting of the WCTF. The date and location of the WCTF 2020 will be announced shortly on the [WCTF website](#). The annual WCTF meeting is traditionally organised in conjunction with the ISO TC 189 meeting.

ABOUT THE WCTF: *The WCTF was created in 1994 and is the annual meeting of the ceramic tiles manufacturers worldwide. The WCTF is a platform open to all ceramic tiles manufacturers in the world. Any producer or association of ceramic tiles producers wishing to participate is invited to contact the WCTF secretariat.*