

The Commoncense project

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The European standard EN15251 was recently adopted to define acceptable indoor temperatures and light levels as the basis for energy calculation. The provision of comfort is a key concern for building designers. Mechanical cooling is energy intensive. Naturally ventilated (NV) buildings with fewer energy costs cannot control indoor conditions closely. Formally standards have used comfort models which favour close environmental control so NV buildings have been looked on as second-rate. EN15251 allows NV buildings more freedom for environmental variation in line with the findings of comfort theory.

The Intelligent Energy Europe project Comfort monitoring for CEN standard EN15251 linked to EPBD (EIE-07-190 COMMONCENSE) seeks to use existing information from field surveys to test the limits set by EN15251 for temperature and lighting and to validate its recommendations using existing data and building simulations. Some new exploratory comfort studies will also be used to test the limits of the thermal and visual comfort recommendation in EN15251. The findings will be widely disseminated among key actors and stake holders in the countries of the consortium. This paper will describe the progress so far towards the goals of the project and introduce some of the new thinking about building standards which have arisen from the work.