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European Summer School on Construction History CH.ESS 2012

In 2003, the first international congress on Construction History was organized in Spain. Although the conference was already a great success, the number of participants kept on growing as well as the general interest in the field of Construction History. After organizing the third congress on Construction History in 2009, Werner Lorenz (TU-Cottbus) and his team took the initiative to group seven European universities to organize a series of Summer Schools in the field. The first European Summer School on Construction History was organized in Cambridge, thanks to funding of the European Union. The initiative intends to bring students, researchers and scholars together in a multi-national environment and to examine a particular aspect of construction history at advanced level.

We are proud to announce that the Department of Architectural Engineering at Vrije Universiteit Brussel together with the Department of Building, Architecture and Town Planning at Université Libre de Bruxelles hosted the second European Summer School on Construction History CH.ESS 2012, which was dedicated to the 'Birth of Modern Engineering' and focused on the developments in iron, steel and reinforced concrete in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Next to participants from VUB and ULB, more than 40 students and scholars affiliated to the University of Cottbus (DE), Universität der Bundeswehr München (DE), University of Cambridge (UK), Università di Bologna (IT) and the Politechnika Wroclawska (PL) participated during two weeks.

The program consisted of lectures on the development of materials and techniques, building actors and inventors, but included also workshops to practice and test the equipment for the assessment of concrete structures and study trips to Antwerp and Brussels. Finally, to stimulate the interaction between students of civil engineering, architectural engineering and architecture, on site fieldwork was organized, including the assessment of a thin reinforced concrete shell, designed by engineer André Paduart, and a nineteenth century iron truss in Schaarbeek.

