



Dimension stones in Argentina – A review of the actual situation

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Due to the complex geological genesis of the southamerican continent Argentina holds a large quantity of different ornamental rocks. Provinces like Córdoba or San Luis look back to decades of quarrying, containing worldwide unique rocks, rocks which appear in a high variability as well as rocks which are generally in demand at the international market. But during the last years and especially during the economical crash in 2001, the value of the ornamental rock sector decreased more and more. Since in the end of 2002 a light recovery can be recognized. Actually the most part of the argentine ornamental rock industry is given by the granitic sector. The exploitation is mainly carried out by smaller companies, which possess quarries or act as contractur of bigger enterprises for working in their deposits. These marking-dominating firms themselves, some of them with different operating production plants, are mainly concentrated to the processing of finished blocks. The main part of the finished product is still used for the domestic market, which could be also founded by the fact that the argentine ornamental rocks are only documented in a deficient way for the international market, which is not conform to the requirements of the legislation of the latest european standartisation. Furthermore the machinery for processing is subject to international standards which demand for blocks in special dimensions. Therefor the registration and investigation of dimension stone quarries in Argentina on both counts, geological as well as economical, will be necessary for the providers to compete in the world market and will give a deciscion support for the manufacturing industry and other customers. The main intention of this presentation will be to give an overview of the actual situation of the argentine ornamental rock industry, concerning the diversity of available material as well as technical state of affairs.