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Electric arc furnace slags in cement-treated materials for road construction: Mechanical and durability properties / Autelitano, Federico; Giuliani, Felice. - In: CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING MATERIALS. - ISSN 0950-0618. - 113:(2016), pp. 280-289. [10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054]

Availability: This version is available at: 11381/2811841 since: 2021-10-16T09:26:50Z

Publisher: Elsevier Ltd

Published DOI:10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054

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Construction and Building Materials xxx (2016) xxx-xxx

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect





Construction and Building Materials

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/conbuildmat

Electric arc furnace slags in cement-treated materials for road construction: Mechanical and durability properties

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The aged EAF slags represented suitable aggregates for CTMs.
- Increasing the EAF aggregates content, CTMs developed lower degree of compaction but higher ITS.
- CTMs containing only EAF aggregates showed poor durability performance.
- EAF aggregates partial replacement (30–60%) of natural aggregates produced suitable and durable CTMs.

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ARTICLE INFO

21 Article history: 22 Received 15 September 2015 23 Received in revised form 26 February 2016 24 Accepted 14 March 2016 25 Available online xxxx 26 Keywords: 27 Recycling 28 Steel slags 29 EAF aggregates

- 30 Road construction
- 31 Pavement engineering
- 32 Gyratory compactor
- 33 Durability

ABSTRACT

Electric arc furnace (EAF) slags are by-products of a widespread steelmaking process. The recycling of 36 37 these materials as artificial aggregates in different road applications is a well established practice, which 38 has allowed to reduce the consumption of natural resources and to minimize waste production and costs of landfilling. However, these aggregates are still underutilized in cement-treated materials (CTMs), 39 which consist of mixtures of aggregates blended with small amounts of cement and water that harden 40 41 after compaction to form a strong paving material. In the light of these considerations, different cement-treated materials, each containing different percentages of natural and artificial aggregates were 42 analyzed. After a preliminary characterization of chemical, physical and durability properties of EAF slag 43 aggregates, a mix design procedure based on both moisture-density approach (gyratory compactor) and 44 mechanical testing (unconfined compression test and indirect tensile test) was performed to identify the 45 46 optimum cement and water content of CTMs. The design mixtures were then subjected to 5 different accelerated aging procedures in order to study the influence of some factors (temperature, pressure 47 and humidity) on the durability of the cement-treated materials. The results highlighted how the EAF 48 49 slags represent suitable aggregates for cement-treated materials. The use of these aggregates produced 50 a greater compaction difficulty, but guaranteed excellent mechanical performances, above all in terms 51 of indirect tensile strength. The durability analysis demonstrated that the recycled mixtures showed a worse behavior than the reference one, composed only by limestone aggregates. However, if correctly 52 53 designed, balancing the percentage of natural aggregate replacement, these mixtures could represent 54 suitable and durable solution for base and sub-base pavement layers.

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59 **1. Introduction**

Italy is the second country in Europe, after Germany, for the production of steel, with 23.7 million tons in 2014. With regard to the process, the production of electric arc furnace (EAF), which recycles mainly steel scraps, accounts for about 72.5% of the total (17.2 million tons). In this steel-making process about 150 kg of EAF slag per ton of steel are produced, leading to a total amount

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054 0950-0618/© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd. of more than 2.5 million tons every year [1]. The recycling of steel slags, as artificial aggregates, in concrete and cement industry or in road and geotechnical applications has progressively increased in recent years both in Italy and in all industrially-developed countries. This practice promotes a model of sustainable development, based on reducing the consumption of natural resources and on minimizing waste production and costs of landfilling [2–4].

In comparison to other recyclable materials, such as fly ash, bottom-ash, tire shreds, cement kiln dust or foundry sand, steel slags are underutilized [5]. In fact, many countries have limits and allowances on the use of EAF aggregates, due to their chemical

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77 composition. The presence of free expansive compound (CaO, 78 MgO) in EAF slags mineralogy can have a deleterious impact on 79 pavement volume stability, producing upheaval, swelling and 80 accelerated deterioration [2,6,7]. In presence of water, free lime 81 forms portlandite (Ca(OH)₂) and free magnesium oxide forms periclase (Mg(OH)₂), with an increase in solid volumes of about 90-82 83 130% for Ca(OH)₂ and 120% for Mg(OH)₂ [8,9]. In literature there are examples of steel slags stabilization techniques (exposure to 84 85 weathering, use of additives, water quenching or spaying, high 86 temperature steam treatment) for reducing their volumetric insta-87 bility. Authors suggested a minimum aging period of 4-6 months 88 to transform these expansive components into stable forms [6,7,10]. Moreover, the possible leaching of heavy-metals (Pb, Zn, 89 Cu, As, Sb, Cd) can cause soil and groundwater pollution [11]. Stud-90 91 ies were recently conducted to solve this environmental problem. 92 Different laboratory treatments were developed to transform EAF 93 slags into environmental friendly materials, characterized by very 94 low hazardous polluting elements content [12].

With reference to road construction, EAF aggregates were suc-95 cessfully used due to their excellent mechanical characteristics. 96 97 Some authors demonstrated satisfactory applications of EAF slags 98 in non-structural pavement surface treatments using hot mix asphalt (HMA) mixtures [13–15] and warm mix asphalt (WMA) 99 100 mixtures [16]. Others underlined also the outstanding perfor-101 mances exhibited by steel aggregates in road bases and sub-102 bases both in bound and unbound layers [17–19]. Nevertheless, EAF aggregates have seen relatively few road applications in 103 104 cement bound mixtures, above all in cement-treated layers [20].

105 Generally, cement-treated material (CTM) consists of an inti-106 mate mixture of graded natural or crushed aggregates blended 107 with measured amounts of cement (2%-4%) and water (4%-7%)108 that hardens after compaction to form a strong paving material [21,22]. The CTM needs proper mix design, adequate thickness, 109 and diligent construction in order to obtain suitable fatigue 110 strength and stiffness, which do not lead to shrinkage and thus 111 112 cracking in the surface paving. A suitable stiffness of CTM can 113 improve the fatigue resistance and reduce deflection, rutting and 114 other asphalt strains, but can also avoid the sharp step of rigidity 115 between the concrete slab and the subgrade [23]. Moreover, it rep-116 resents a durable solution, because it is resistant to freeze-thaw 117 and wetting-drying deterioration. Depending on project needs, CTM increases the construction speed, enhances the structural 118 capacity of the pavement, or in some cases reduces the overall time 119 120 project [24].

The physical and mechanical performances of CTM and the 121 122 thickness of the layer are strongly affected by several factors, such 123 as cement content, compaction characteristics, aggregate gradation 124 and the quality of aggregates [25]. Too little cement can cause 125 problems of homogenization of the mixture and provides insuffi-126 cient structural capacity, allowing excessive pavement deflections 127 under heavy traffic loading. Over-rich cement layers, besides being too expensive, are instead too stiff and prone to shrinkage cracking, 128 causing accelerated pavement failure [24,26,27]. 129

The requirements for CTM in different countries are generally 130 expressed in terms of unconfined compressive strength (UCS) at 131 7-days curing time (Table 1) [25,27-29]. The required values 132 133 strongly depend on the road class and material type relies heavily on the required UCS. The international requirements for CTMs sug-134 gest that the unconfined compressive strength test is performed on 135 136 specimens compacted with Modified Proctor procedure (EN 137 13286-2: 2010), whereas Italian specification considers also the gyratory compaction (EN 12697-31:2007). The compressive 138 139 strength, which depends on several factors (degree of compaction, 140 shape of the specimen, curing time and condition), is a representa-141 tive parameter of stability and stiffness of the cement-treated 142 layer. However, especially for the cement-treated base beneath a

durability properties, Constr. Build. Mater. (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054

Table 1

Requirements (technical specifications) for CTMs in different countries.

Country	Cement content (%)	Requirement	
		UCS at 7-days curii	ng time (MPa)
Australia	3-8	>3	
Brazil	~ 4	>3.5	
China	>4% (Road-mix	>2 (Base)	
	method)	>4 (Subbase)	
	>5% (Central-plant		
	mixing)		
Spain	3.5-6%	4.5-6	
UK	2–5%	2.5-4.5 (CM1)	
		4.5-7.5 (CM2)	
USA	3-10%	3.5-6.9 (under PCC)
		5.2-6.9 (under HM	A)
		UCS at 7-days	ITS at 7-days
		(MPa)	(MPa)
Italy	2-4%	2.5-5.5	0.32-0.60
		(Gyratory	(Gyratory
		compactor)	compactor)
		2.5-4.5	>0.25
		(Proctor hammer)	(Proctor hammer)
South Africa	1.5–3%	1.5–3.0	>0.25
	3-5%	0.75-1.5	>0.20
		UCS at 90-days	TS [*] at 90-days
		(MPa)	(MPa)
France	2.5-4%	5–10	1

TS = Tensile strength.

bituminous pavement, the assessment of the mixture's fatigue 143 behavior is more important and significant. Therefore, some countries, besides the UCS performance, recommend limits on the indirect tensile strength (ITS), in order to evaluate the fatigue strength of CTMs.

Cement-treated materials containing EAF aggregates, as complete or partial replacement of natural aggregates, exhibits elastic compressive and tensile strength values comparable or better than those of the natural CTMs. Moreover, these recycled mixtures represents economical base pavements, besides being a sustainable paving option, allowing a decreasing in layer thickness [20,30–31].

With regards to the durability of these mixtures, there are no references in literature. Few studies provided the evaluation of both mechanical properties and durability only on concrete containing EAF slag. Some of these studies have shown acceptable durability of concrete with EAF, thought slightly lower than the conventional concrete, despite rather aggressive test conditions and accelerated aging procedures (freezing and thawing cycles. wetting and drying cycles, swelling procedures, climatic chamber and high pressure aging) [32–36].

This experimental study planned to investigate the chemical and mineralogical composition, the concentration of pollutants and the physico-mechanical properties of EAF aggregates. Additionally, several cement-treated materials containing different replacements of EAF aggregates were prepared to characterize their mechanical and durability performances.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Testing program

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The testing program was divided in three main phases. The first step consisted in a preliminary characterization of chemical, physical and durability properties of EAF slag aggregates, following the requirements of EN 13242:2008 and the toxic characteristic leachability according to EN 12457-2:2007. Secondly a mix design procedure based on both moisture-density approach (gyratory compactor) and mechanical testing (unconfined compression test and indirect tensile test) was performed to identify the optimum cement and water content of CTMs. Finally, the design mixtures, characterized by the optimum cement and water content, were subjected to a detailed study about the influence of some factors (temperature, pressure and humidity) on the durability of the CTMs

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Table 2

Oxide composition and heavy metal content of aged EAF aggregates.

	EAF 0/20 mm	EAF 14/32 mm
	Value	
Oxide		
Calcium oxide (CaO) (%)	18.28	16.46
Silicon dioxide (SiO ₂) (%)	18.90	19.10
Aluminum oxide (Al ₂ O ₃) (%)	5.80	5.84
Magnesium oxide (MgO) (%)	2.53	2.02
Iron oxide (FeO) (%)	37.71	39.75
Manganese (II) oxide (MnO) (%)	2.55	2.78
Titanium dioxide (TiO ₂) (%)	0.24	0.14
Phosphorus pentoxide (P ₂ O ₅) (%)	0.35	0.51
Element		
Lead (Pb) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	29.3	25.9
Antimony (Sb) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	53.2	59.3
Copper (Cu) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	272.8	323.6
Cadmium (Cd) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	21.7	21.3
Chromium (Cr) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	871.3	933.6
Arsenic (As) (mg kg^{-1})	< 0.001	< 0.001
Selenium (Se) (mg kg^{-1})	<0.01	<0.01
Mercury (Hg) (mg kg^{-1})	< 0.001	< 0.001
$Zinc (Zn) (mg kg^{-1})$	259.7	301.2
Barium (Ba) (mg kg ⁻¹)	1252.1	1233.7
Beryllium (Be) (mg kg ⁻¹)	< 0.001	< 0.001
Cobalt (Co) (mg kg ⁻¹)	3.7	5.1
Nickel (Ni) (mg kg ⁻¹)	156.1	105.4
Vanadium (V) (mg kg ⁻¹)	307.2	368.9
Aluminum (Al) (mg kg $^{-1}$)	30,222.5	29,959.5
Boron (B) (mg kg^{-1})	<0.01	<0.01
Iron (Fe) (mg kg^{-1})	301,466	304,229
Manganese (mg kg^{-1})	32,776	35,361

2.1.1. Phase 1: testing materials and properties

182 The CTMs selected for the experimental analysis consisted in natural and arti-183 ficial aggregates, Portland-limestone cement and water. Specifically, two different aggregate types were selected: aged EAF aggregates and limestone aggregates. 184 185 Portland-limestone cement CEM II/A-LL 42.5R (EN 197-1:2011) was used as 186 hydraulic binder for all the mixtures. The added water was clean and free from 187 detrimental concentrations of acids, alkalis, salts, sugar and other organic or inor-188 ganic substances, as required by the regulations (EN 1008:2003).

189 Steel aggregates were provided by a steel mill operating in northern Italy, 190 whereas crushed limestone aggregates were supplied by a quarry near the steel-191 making. EAF aggregates derived from the production of steel bars used for building 192 construction. They were obtained by a separation process (scorification) of the cast 193 steel from impurities present in the electric arc furnace. After the steel slag was 194 slowly cooled, the material was stockpiled for metal recovery and crushed in two 195 suitable grain sizes for road applications (0/20 mm and 14/32 mm). The artificial 196 aggregates underwent an oxidation phase (aging), by exposure to weathering over 197 6 months, to allow the free lime (CaO) and free magnesium oxide (MgO) to be trans-198 formed into stable forms. 199

The oxide composition and the heavy metal oxide content of aged EAF aggregates were determined using X-ray fluorescence (XRF). Table 2 shows that the major chemical components were CaO, SiO₂, Al₂O₃, MgO, FeO and MnO, which together represent more than the 80% of the total mass.

The mineralogical properties of EAF aggregates were investigated using a X-ray diffraction analysis (XRD). X-ray diffraction was performed using Cu Ka radiation generated from a Cu anode (λ = 1.5418 Å). The scanning angle was in the range of $2\theta = 10-80^\circ$, where θ represents the X-ray angle of incidence. As already highlighted

Table	3
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Physical and durability properties of EAF and limestone aggregates.

by Yildirim and Prezzi [6], EAF sample showed a very complex XRD pattern, with several overlapping peaks due to the presence of several crystalline phases in the material. The position, the width and the intensity of each peak, allowed to identify the crystalline phases and to determine the structural properties of the material. The major mineral phases were calcite $(CaCO_2)$, dolomite $(CaMg(CO_2)_2)$ and wüstite (Fe_{0·880}O), while minor phases included larnite (Ca₂SiO₄), magnetite (Fe₃O₄) and quartz (SiO₂).

The EAF aggregate volume stability was determined using two accelerated swelling test methods. Specimens, which were compacted according to modified Proctor procedure (EN 13286-2:2010) or through vibrating table (EN 1744-1:2013), were soaked into hot water (ASTM D4792/D4792M-13) or exposed to steam (EN 1744-1:2013) to accelerate the hydration reactions. Swelling measurements from the steam test satisfied the requirements of group V_{ε} (maximum expansion < 5%) of EN 13242:2008, whereas the volume expansions, after waterbath swelling test, were clearly smaller compared to the limiting expansion (0.5%) specified in ASTM D2940.

The engineering properties (physico-mechanical properties) of aged EAF and limestone aggregates are reported in Table 3, whereas Table 4 reports the chemical properties of EAF aggregates.

With reference to the geometrical requirements, the EAF aggregates had a polyhedral and angular shape. The excellent toughness, abrasion and polishing resistance, the limited ice sensitivity and the small imbibition coefficient characterized this material. Due to the presence of high iron oxide contents, EAF aggregates had density values (3885-3970 kg m⁻³) larger than those of natural aggregates, such as limestone (2902 kg m⁻³).

Toxic characteristic leachability procedure (TCLP) analysis, according to EN 12457-2:2004, was performed on EAF aggregates to assess their leaching properties. Table 5 provides the results of the TCLP analysis compared to the leachate concentration limit values defined by the Italian Ministerial Decree 186/2006.

2.1.2. Phase 2: design mixtures selection

Four different CTMs, each containing different percentages (by volume) of natural and artificial aggregates, were analyzed (Table 6). One mix, which served as reference, was composed entirely of natural limestone aggregates (L). The S mix was prepared only with EAF aggregates, whereas the other two were intermediate limestone/steel slag mixtures (SL and LS). The LS mixture was composed of 30% EAF aggregates (16/31.5 mm) and 70% limestone (0/16 mm), whereas the SL of 60% EAF aggregates (5/31.5 mm) and 40% limestone (0/5 mm). The finest fraction (particle sizes smaller than 0.063 mm) in all the mixtures was represented by limestone filler. The mixtures were combined in accordance to the aggregate grading curve suggested by Italian government-owned road company corporation (ANAS) specifications for CTM (Fig. 1).

Table 4

Chemical properties of EAF steel slag aggregates.

Test	Standard EN	EAF 0/ 12mm	EAF 14/ 32mm
		Value	
Water-soluble chloride salts (Mohr method) (% by mass)	EN 1744-1:2013	<0.01	<0.01
Acid soluble sulfates (% by mass)	EN 1744-1:2013	<0.2	<0.2
Total sulfur content (% by mass)	EN 1744-1:2013	<0.1	<0.1
Water soluble-sulfates (% by mass)	EN 1744-1:2013	<0.1	<0.1
Volume expansion (steam test) (%)	EN 1744-1:2013	0.04	0.08
Volume expansion (water bath test) (%)	ASTM D4792/ D4792 M-13	0.03	0.04

Test	Standard EN	EAF 0/12 mm	EAF 14/32 mm	Limestone 0/32 mm
Flakiness index (%)	EN 933-3:2012	8.86	10.67	11.02
Shape index (%)	EN 933-4:2008	6.87	7.62	7.98
Los Angeles coefficient (%)	EN 1097-2:2010	14.14	15.65	22.9
Micro-Deval coefficient (%)	EN 1097-1:2011	7.9	9.1	14.1
Polished stone value (%)	EN 1097-8:2009	56.8	58.9	43.7
Water absorption (%)	EN 1097-6:2013	0.78	0.89	0.51
Freezing and thawing resistance (%)	EN: 1367-1:2007	1.51	2.10	1.21
Sand equivalent test (%)	EN 933-8:2012	81	-	71
Density (kg m ⁻³)	EN 1097-6:2013	3970	3885	2902

The initials in () are the category for each parameter described in EN 13242:2008.

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Table 5

Concentrations of	f pc	llutants	in	the	leachate	(EN	12457	-2.2004
concentrations e	I PC	inutants	111	unc	reachate		12457	2.2004

Element	EAF 0/12 mm	EAF 14/ 32mm	Ministerial Decree 06/186 Limit value
Chlorides (Cl) (mg l^{-1})	3.0	3.0	100
Fluorides (F) $(mg l^{-1})$	0.1	0.3	1.5
Nitrates (NO ₃) (mg l^{-1})	1.1	<1.0	50
Sulfates (SO ₄) (mg l^{-1})	3.1	3.2	250
Cyanide (CN) (µg l ⁻¹)	<5	<10	50
Arsenic (As) ($\mu g l^{-1}$)	<5	<5	50
Barium (Ba) (mg l ⁻¹)	0.05	0.20	1
Beryllium (Be) (µg l ⁻¹)	<1.0	<1.0	10
Cadmium (Cd) (μ g l ⁻¹)	<1.0	<1.0	5
Cobalt (Co) (µg l ⁻¹)	<5.0	<5.0	250
Chromium (Cr)	34.8	14.6	50
$(\mu g l^{-1})$			
Mercury (Hg) (μ g l ⁻¹)	<1.0	<1.0	1
Nickel (Ni) ($\mu g l^{-1}$)	<5.0	<5.0	10
Lead (Pb) (μ g l ⁻¹)	<5.0	<5.0	50
Copper (Cu) (mg l^{-1})	<0.01	<0.01	0.05
Selenium (Se) (μ g l ⁻¹)	<5.0	<5.0	10
Vanadium (V) (μ g l $^{-1}$)	123.4	65.4	250
Zinc (Zn) (mg l^{-1})	<0.01	<0.01	3
Asbestos ($\mu g l^{-1}$)	<1.0	<1.0	30
$COD (mg l^{-1})$	10.0	10.3	30
рН	11.0	7.79	5.5-12.0

Each of the 36 mixtures considered was labelled with the aggregate mix acronym followed by two numbers, separated by slash, which represented the nominal amount of cement and the nominal amount of water.

The cement (c_{nom} (m/m %)) and water (w_{nom} (m/m %)) nominal content varied, at intervals of 1%, between 2–4% and 5–7%, respectively. These values are percentages by mass. The choice to study aggregates with different mineralogical nature and density, required a volumetric approach in the mix design. It was necessary the introduction of α coefficients, defined as the ratio between the density of the natural limestone aggregate (ρ_L) and the mean value of density of each mixture (ρ_M). In this way, the mixtures were prepared using effective cement (c_{eff} (v/v %)) and water (w_{eff} (v/v %)) contents, expressed in volume, obtained multiplying the nominal content (expressed in mass) by the α_M factors (Table 6).

The mix design provided the optimization of water and cement content on the basis of a mix design study conducted by means of gyratory compactor (EN 12697-31:2007). This process permitted to identify the CTM characterized by the highest degree of compaction and workability. Specifically, the compactor ram applied and maintained a vertical pressure of 600 kPa during compaction. The compactor tilted the specimen mold at an angle 1.25° and gyrated it for 180 gyrations at a rate of 30 rpm.

The mix design performed by moisture-density testing was then compared with a mechanical approach. The mechanical properties of the mixtures were evaluated by performing unconfined compressive strength test (EN 13286-41:2006) and indirect tensile strength test (EN 13286-42:2006) on cylindrical specimens prepared with the gyratory compactor, after 7 days (Fig. 2). Specimens were de-molded 24 h after compaction and were cured in air for further 6 days at 23 °C and at 50% relative humidity. Three specimens (diameter = 150 mm; height = 160 mm) were subjected to unconfined compression test and three specimens (diameter = 150 mm; height = 80 mm) were subjected to indirect tensile test. The final

xture

Table 6			
Aggregate type and	l composition	of the	mi



Fig. 1. Volumetric grading curve of the CTMs.

result was then calculated as the mean of the three independent specimens. Then, it was analyzed the evolution of the ITS for different curing times (3, 7, 28 and 50 days). 278

2.1.3. Phase 3: durability analysis

A detailed study about the influence of several factors on the durability of the CTMs was conducted on the four mixtures characterized by the optimal water and cement content. Three specimens of each mixture, which were cured at 23 °C and at 50% relative humidity for 28 days, were subjected to different conditions of temperature, pressure and humidity, by adopting 5 accelerated aging procedures [34–36]. Before and after each durability test, the tensile strength and the volume were measured. The volume was calculated measuring each dimension of the specimen in three different angular positions (120°) and averaging the results. Therefore, the volume of the specimen was the volume of the minimum circumscribed cylinder. Durability performance was evaluated by comparing the variation of these two parameters and by visual analyzing the samples superficial appearance.

Possible internal damage of CTMs due to own composition was analyzed by means of two different accelerated aging tests, based on swelling procedures, which involved the soaking of specimens into hot water. The objective of these tests was to accelerate hydration reactions of free expansive compounds (CaO and MgO) contained in EAF aggregates and consequently the mixtures swelling behavior.

2.1.3.1. Hot-water bath test. In this test, which was based on the methodology proposed in the ASTM D4792/D4792M-13 standard, the specimens were stored in a hot-water bath maintained at 70 °C for 20 days. Each specimen was then removed from the bath, surface dried and slow cooled at 25 °C for 2 h.

2.1.3.2. High pressure test. The specimens were placed in a pressure pot and soaked in water at temperature of 112 °C and at a pressure of 155 kPa (1.55 bar) for 3 h. In order to assure that both surfaces of each specimen had free access to water, a stainless steel mesh with adjustable leveling feet was placed at the bottom of the pressure pot.

In parallel 3 cyclic procedures, which caused continuous moisture movement through mixtures pores, in order to simulate a possible environmental degradation, were performed.

Mixture	EAF (m/m %)	Limestone (m/m %)	$\rho_{M}~(kg~m^{-3})$	$\alpha_M = \tfrac{\rho_L}{\rho_M}$	c _{nom} (m/m %)	$c_{eff} \left(v / v ~\% \right)$	w _{nom} (m/m %)	$w_{eff} \left(v / v ~\% \right)$
L	0	100	2753	1.000	2	2	5	5
					3	3	6	6
					4	4	7	7
LS	30	70	3141	0.877	2	1.8	5	4.4
					3	2.6	6	5.3
					4	3.5	7	6.1
SL	60	40	3518	0.783	2	1.6	5	3.9
					3	2.4	6	4.7
					4	3.1	7	5.5
S	94	6	3824	0.720	2	1.4	5	3.6
					3	2.2	6	4.3
					4	2.9	7	5.0

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Fig. 2. Unconfined compressive strength test (a) and indirect tensile strength test (b).



Fig. 3. Densification curves for the optimum mixtures.

308 2.1.3.3. Freezing and thawing cycles. The specimens were subjected to 20 daily cycles
309 of freezing and thawing; they were maintained at -19 °C for 18 h and at 4 °C for 6 h
310 in a climate chamber. Before the test, the specimen were fully saturated with water
311 through a membrane vacuum pump and subsequently stored in watertight plastic
312 bags to avoid the evaporation of the water.

2.1.3.4. Wetting and drying cycles. In order to study the combined effect of temperature and moisture, the samples were subjected to 20 daily cycles of wetting, through immersion in water at 23 °C for 16 h, and oven drying at 110 °C for 8 h.

2.1.3.5. Thermal shock test. This test planned two cycles of water immersion in the
pressure pot at temperature of 112 °C and at a pressure of 155 kPa for 3 h, separated
by a cycle of freezing at -19 °C for 2 h in a climate chamber, so that the samples
underwent thermal shock.

Table 7

Theoretical maximum specific gravity (G_{mm} %) at 180 gyrations of CTMs.

c _{nom} (m/m %)	w _{nom} (m/m %)	Mixture			
		L	LS	SL	S
2	5	84.57	82.32	80.22	75.78
2	6	85.62	82.50	81.28	76.01
2	7	86.86	82.50	83.26	77.78
3	5	83.14	82.08	80.27	76.18
3	6	87.83	83.46	83.77	78.91
3	7	87.19	83.24	82.22	78.75
4	5	85.51	82.40	80.59	77.66
4	6	87.25	83.35	82.01	77.98
4	7	87.63	83.40	83.64	78.83





3. Results and discussion

3.1. Design mixtures selection

Gyratory compaction allowed to describe in depth the degree of
compaction of CTMs. During compaction the height of the speci-
mens was automatically measured and both the mixture density
and void content were calculated. The test results were plotted322
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in densification curves which describe the bulk specific gravity of



Please cite this article in press as: F. Autelitano, F. Giuliani, Electric arc furnace slags in cement-treated materials for road construction: Mechanical and durability properties, Constr. Build. Mater. (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054

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Fig. 6. UCS (with standard deviation) for all mixtures with 4% cement content after 7-days curing time (T = 23 °C and RH = 50%).



Fig. 7. UCS (with standard deviation) for all mixtures with 3% cement content after 7-days curing time (T = 23 °C and RH = 50%).

the compacted mixture (G_{mb}) , expressed in terms of percentage of theoretical maximum specific gravity $(G_{mm} \%)$, as a function of number of gyrations.

The optimum densification mixtures were represented, for all mixtures, by the 3% of cement and 6% of water (Table 7 and



Fig. 8. ITS (with standard deviation) for all mixtures with 3% cement content after 7-days curing time (T = 23 °C and RH = 50%).



Fig. 9. ITS (with standard deviation) at different curing time (3, 7, 28 and 50 days).

Fig. 3). It can be noted that as the EAF aggregates content increased,332the densification curves shift downwards but remained roughly333parallel. Therefore the presence of EAF aggregates decreased the334level of densification, both during the compaction and in the final335stage. The greater compaction difficulty in the mixture containing336artificial aggregates can be explained mainly by their surface characteristics. The rough surface texture generates high friction338



Fig. 10. Superficial appearance of sample representing mixture S (a), SL (b), LS (c) and L (d) after wetting and drying test.

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Table 8

Properties of CTM after hot-water bath test.

Mixture	Volume variation	Indirect tensile s (MPa)	Indirect tensile strength (ITS) (MPa)		Superficial appearance
	(%)	Before	After		
L	0.26	0.34	0.45	+32.35	Good
LS	0.24	0.48	0.53	+10.42	Slight oxidization
SL	0.40	0.48	0.50	+4.16	Slight oxidization Slight oxidization
S	0.91	0.62	0.37	-40.32	Detachment of coarse aggregates

Table 9

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Properties of CTM after high pressure test.

Mixture	Volume variation (%)	Indirect tensile strength (ITS) (MPa)		Strength variation (%)	Superficial appearance
		Before	After		
L	0.40	0.34	0.26	-23.53	Good
LS	0.47	0.48	0.29	-39.58	Good
SL	0.32	0.48	0.31	-35.42	Good
S	0.46	0.62	0.30	-51.61	Slight oxidization

between the particles. For this reason, even for high moisture content (7%), the water was not able to generate a useful lubrication.
By adopting a semi-logarithmic scale, considering the logarithm
of the number of gyrations, the densification curves assume a trend
which is almost straight. The curves can be represented in a simplified manner following Eq. (1):

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$$G_{mm} \% = C_0 + KLog(N)$$
 (1)

where C_0 defines the degree of self-compaction, that identifies the 348 349 compaction degree at 0 number of gyrations (vertical shift factor), K is a parameter that represents the workability of the mixture 350 351 and N is the number of gyrations. According to a linear interpolation, C₀ represents the intercept (at 0 number of gyrations) and K 352 defines the slope and of the regression line which better fits the 353 354 densification curve. The Superpave (Superior Performing Asphalt 355 Pavements) system, final product of SHRP (Strategic Highway 356 Research Program), suggests to estimate the volumetric properties 357 of the paving mix at three key compaction points: $N_{init} = 8$ (initial 358 number of gyrations), N_{des} = 100 (design number of gyrations) and N_{max} = 180 (maximum number of gyrations). Specifically, N_{init} cor-359 responds to the state of the mixture as the breakdown roller makes 360 its first few passes, N_{des} describes the anticipated state of density in 361 the mixture after 3-5 years of service (after the indicated amount of 362 363 traffic) and N_{max} represents the state of density that should never be exceeded in the field [37-38]. 364

The intercept (C_0) and slope (K) constants, describing the regression lines, calculated following both approaches were almost superposed. In terms of workability the behavior of the mixtures was similar and the regression lines were almost parallel: the K values varied from 3.44 (S) to 3.77 (L) considering all the points, whereas varied from 3.53 (S) to 3.88 (L) selecting the 3 key points (N_{init} , N_{des} , N_{max}) suggested by the Superpave criteria (Fig. 4).

The mix design based on the mechanical approach showed that 2% cement content led to unsatisfactory ITS (ITS < 0.32 MPa) (Fig. 5), whereas for 4% cement content the mixtures registered excessive UCS (UCS \gg 5.5 MPa) (Fig. 6).

Since considering the 3% of cement, the UCS values were slightly higher compared to the Italian requirements (Fig. 7). As can be seen from the Fig. 7, there were no major differences among the mixtures with regards the compressive strengths. Moreover, for equal cement content, the amount of water did not affect significantly the mechanical performances. Otherwise, it could be noted a significant improvement in the tensile strength with increasing the EAF aggregates and a slight reduction with 7% of water content (Fig. 8). The ITS values measured for the L mixture (0.26–0.34 MPa) were half than those of S mixture (0.49–0.60 MPa), while the blended mixes showed an intermediate behavior. The sources of the high increase in tensile strength observed for CTMs containing steel aggregates are probably be attributed to the particle angularity and rough surface texture of EAF aggregates, which contributed



Fig. 11. Internal oxidation of mixture S (a) and disintegration of mixture SL (b).

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Table 10

Properties of CTM after wetting and drying cycles.

Mixture	Volume variation (%)	Indirect tensile strength (ITS) (MPa)		Strength variation (%)	Superficial appearance	
		Before	After			
L	0.27	0.34	0.25	-26.47	Stripping Detachment of coarse aggregates	
LS	0.35	0.48	0.32	-33.33	Stripping Detachment of coarse aggregates Slight oxidization Slight oxidization	
SL S	0.38 0.75	0.48 0.62	0.26 0.32	-45.83 -48.39		

Table 11

Properties of CTM after freezing and thawing cycles.

Mixture	Volume variation (%)	Indirect tensile strength (ITS) (MPa)		Strength variation (%)	Superficial appearance	
		Before	After			
L	1.07	0.34	0.13	-61.76	Mortar flaking	
LS	2.22	0.48	0.13	-72.92	Mortar flaking	
SL	n.a*	0.48	n.a*	n.a*	Two specimens almost completely destroyed Significant internal oxidization	
S	3.29	0.62	0.14	-77.42	Detachment of coarse aggregates	

* Value not available due to the disintegration of the sample.

to create high interparticle friction and particle interlocking, thusto guarantee better tensile strengths.

Therefore the mix design based on the mechanical approach
confirmed that the optimum cement and moisture contents were
3% and 6%, respectively.

The curing time is an important factor that affects the mechanical parameters of cement-treated materials. Fig. 9 shows the relationship between ITS and curing time. The graph points out very similar values (0.29 MPa) among the mixtures after 3 days (except for the L mixture), whereas the tensile strengths increased with curing time following different paths for each mix. Specifically, the rate of increase was more rapid during the initial curing period than at later times. The ITS, for the same curing period, increased402with increasing steel aggregates content, hence S mixture showed403the maximum ITS values.404

3.2. Durability analysis

The durability analysis involved 5 different accelerated aging tests, which were performed on three specimens of each mixtures characterized by the optimum cement and water content $(c_{nom} = 3\% \text{ and } w_{nom} = 6\%)$.

The hot-water bath test produced slight oxidization and loss of coarse aggregates at the surface in the mixture S; some oxidized parts also occurred in specimens representing mixtures SL and LS. In terms of expansive behavior the effects of immersion in hot water were gradually stronger increasing the percentage of EAF aggregate within the mixtures. The results of mechanical strength after testing highlighted improvements in the order of 5–30% for all mixes, except for the mix S which pointed out a significant fall in ITS (–40.32%) (Table 8).

In the high pressure test, which used the combination of both 419 elevated temperature (hot water) and pressure to accelerate 420 expansive reactions, the final swelling rate confirmed that this 421 testing procedure produced noticeable but homogeneous expan-422 sions in all mixtures (about 0.5%). Though the ITS values after test 423 were guite similar for all mixtures (0.26–0.31 MPa), the compar-424 ison between the pre-test and post-test values underlined a signif-425 icant decrease in mechanical performances. Mixture S was more 426 susceptible to loss of strength, having showed ITS negative varia-427 tions (-51.61%) more than twice as mix L (-23.53%), whereas 428 the blended mixtures exhibited an intermediate behavior (Table 9). 429

After wetting and drying test, mixture S and SL appeared in 430 good condition, although some specimens showed many signs of 431 oxidation. With regard to mixtures LS and L, the cementitious coat-432 ing on the natural aggregates was stripped off (especially in the 433 side surface of the specimens), thus the coarse aggregates tended 434 to detach (Fig. 10). This cycling testing accelerated durability prob-435 lems because it subjected the specimens to the motion and accu-436 mulation of harmful materials (sulfates, alkalies, acids, and 437 chlorides) and alternate effects of thermal dilatations and 438 contraction. 439

The combined effect of wetting and drying caused a slight increase of volume in all mixes (0.27–0.38%), and a more significant value for the mixture S (0.75%). The post-test ITS results identified a reduction in the mechanical performances of all mixtures.



Fig. 12. Superficial appearance of mixture S (a) and stripping in mixture L (b).

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Table 12Properties of CTM after thermal shock test.

Mixture	Volume variation (%)	Indirect tensile strength (ITS) (MPa)		Strength variation (%)	Superficial appearance
		Before	After		
L	-0.67	0.34	0.21	-38.24	Stripping
LS	0.02	0.48	0.24	-50.00	Stripping
SL	0.38	0.48	0.31	-35.42	Rather good
S	0.62	0.62	0.12	-80.65	Superficial cracking

The trend defined a resistance decrease with the increase in the amount of EAF aggregates. Specifically, mix S (48.39%) pointed out a loss of strength nearly twice than the reference mixture (26.47%) (Table 10).

A considerably severe condition on CTM was the exposure to 448 449 freezing and thawing cycles. The accumulative effect of successive cycles produced noteworthy volume expansions (1-3%), scaling 450 451 and superficial spalling. Moreover the test caused sample shape 452 variation and detachment of aggregates, which implied difficulties 453 for a strict evaluation of the volumetric change. When water 454 freezes, it expands about 9% and this movement generates pres-455 sures in the pores that, when in excess of the tensile strength of 456 the mixture, cause distress. Specifically, the mixture S showed evident signs of internal oxidation and loss of aggregates even han-457 dling the specimens, whereas two specimens of SL mixture were 458 almost completely destroyed (Fig. 11). Although moderately dete-459 460 riorated, the mixes LS and L were subjected to mortar flaking over 461 coarse aggregate particles (superficial spalling). All mixes showed a 462 significant decrease in strength (60%-70%), in confirmation of a 463 very high severity level of this test. The ITS once again decreased 464 with increasing the content of EAF aggregates within the mixtures 465 (Table 11).

466 The last durability cycling test was characterized by sudden changes of temperature (thermal shock), either from hot to cold 467 and vice versa. The superficial appearance of the samples was 468 rather good. However, it was observed that in L and LS mixtures 469 470 many natural aggregates remained uncoated (stripping), as already noted in the wetting and drying test (Fig. 12a). The maintenance of 471 adhesion between the EAF aggregates and the cementitious matrix 472 473 was probably caused by the rough surface texture of these type of 474 aggregates, characterized by micro-pores. Notwithstanding this, 475 superficial cracks were observed in two specimens of the mixture 476 S, distress almost never detected in this experimental program 477 (Fig. 12b). The existence of the thermal gradient implied difference in thermal expansion of the various parts of the CTMs, causing 478 mixture damage. This procedure caused two opposite volume 479 480 expansion behaviors: shrinkage in the reference mixture (L) and swelling in mixtures S and SL. Moreover, all mixtures highlighted 481 482 significant loss of ITS, above all mixture S in which cracks were 483 developed (Table 12).

484 **4. Conclusions**

The artificial aggregates, derived from electric arc furnace slags, showed excellent physical and chemical properties in the prequalification phase, representing suitable aggregates for CTMs.

The mix design procedure, based on both moisture-density (gyratory compactor) and mechanical testing (UCS test and ITS test), highlighted that the optimum cement and moisture contents were 3% and 6%, respectively. Lower cement content led to unsatisfactory ITS values, whereas for higher cement content the mixtures registered too high UCS values, compared to the typical international limits. For equal cement content, the amount of water did not affect significantly the UCS, unlike the ITS which slightly decreased with 7% of water content. Moreover, increasing the EAF aggregates replacement, decreased the degree of compaction but increased the indirect tensile strength. The particle angularity and the rough surface texture of EAF aggregates, contributed to create high interparticle friction and particle interlocking in the cementitious matrix. These aspects on the one hand caused a greater compaction difficulty, but on the other hand guaranteed excellent mechanical performances, above all in terms of ITS.

The durability analysis demonstrated that the recycled mixtures showed a worse behavior than the reference one, composed only by limestone aggregates. The CTMs containing only EAF aggregates (mixture S) provided poor quality performances both in terms of swelling, with average volume increase of 1.5%, and of mechanical strengths, with loss of ITS up to 80%. The behavior improved instead for the blended mixtures, composed by natural fine fraction and EAF coarse aggregates. These mixtures registered slight volumetric expansions (about 0.5%) and reductions in mechanical strengths quite close to those measured for the traditional CTM. All mixtures, especially mix S, were extremely susceptible to freezing and thawing cycles, dry and wetting cycles and thermal shock. However, the exposure to large or sharp thermal and moisture excursions are generally less likely to occur, especially at the base and sub-base depth.

In summary, the CTMs containing EAF aggregates need a proper mix design to balance the percentage of natural aggregate replacement. If correctly designed, these mixtures could represent suitable and durable solutions for base and sub-base layers, characterized by excellent performances.

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Please cite this article in press as: F. Autelitano, F. Giuliani, Electric arc furnace slags in cement-treated materials for road construction: Mechanical and durability properties, Constr. Build. Mater. (2016), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.conbuildmat.2016.03.054

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