

ANNUAL REPORT

EUROPEAN BUILDERS CONFEDERATION

2016-2017



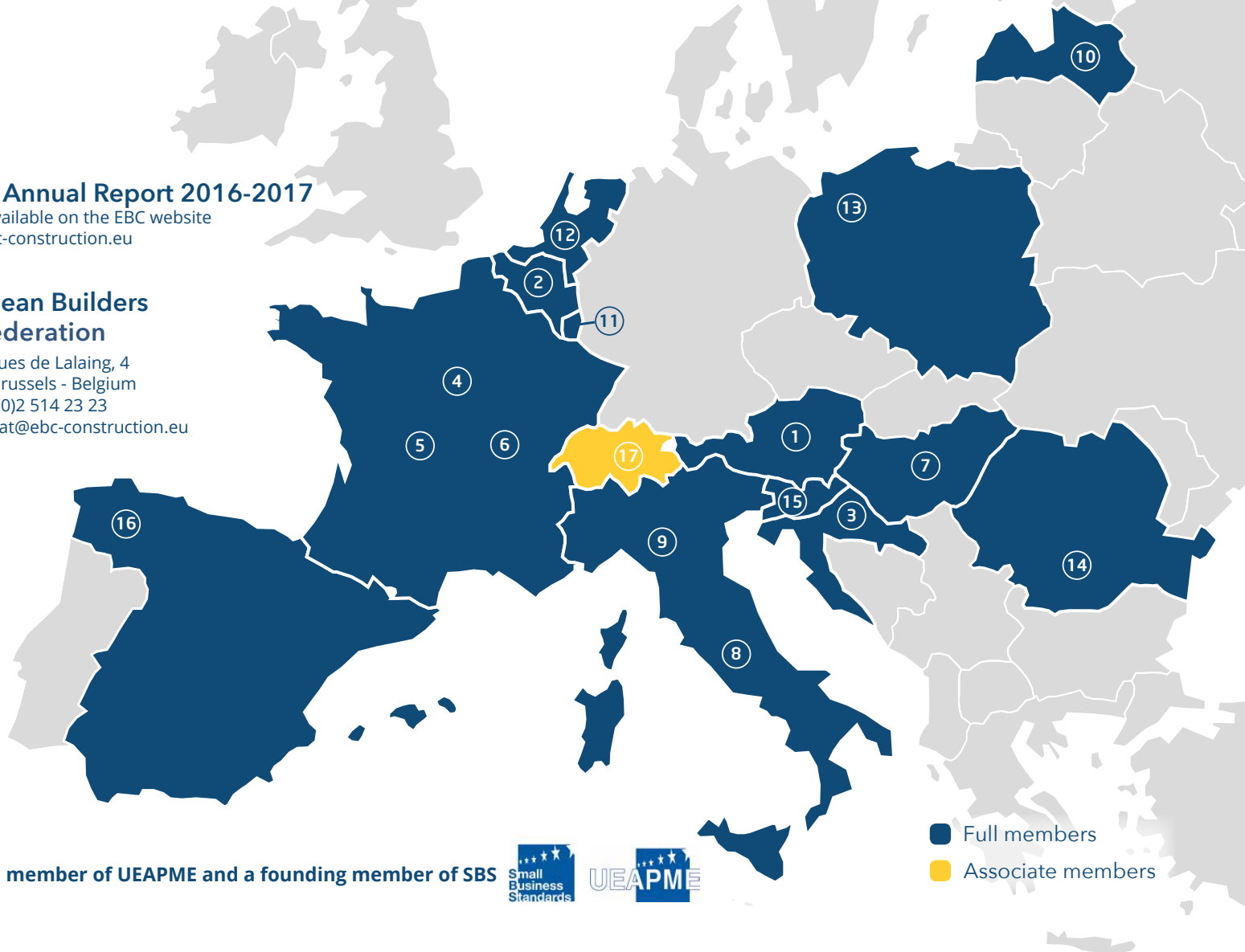
THE VOICE OF CONSTRUCTION CRAFTS AND SMES IN EUROPE

EBC's Annual Report 2016-2017

is also available on the EBC website
www.ebc-construction.eu



European Builders Confederation

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EBC is a member of UEAPME and a founding member of SBS



-  Full members
-  Associate members

EBC

MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|--|
| ① | AUSTRIA |  | WKO - Austrian federal economic chamber |
| ② | BELGIUM |  | BOUWUNIE - Flemish federation of construction SMEs |
| ③ | CROATIA |  | HOK - Croatian chamber of trades and crafts |
| ④ | FRANCE |  | CAPEB - French confederation of craftsmen and small construction enterprises |
| ⑤ | FRANCE |  | CNATP - National association of micro-enterprises in public works and landscape |
| ⑥ | FRANCE |  | SNSO - French association of contractors in finishing works |
| ⑦ | HUNGARY |  | IPOSZ-EKKS - Hungarian confederation of craftsmen, construction branch |
| ⑧ | ITALY |  | ANAEP - Italian association of craftsmen for construction, painting and similar works |
| ⑨ | ITALY |  | CNA COSTRUZIONI - Italian confederation of craftsmen and SMEs, construction branch |
| ⑩ | LATVIA |  | LBA - Latvian builders association |
| ⑪ | LUXEMBOURG |  | FDA - Luxembourg association of craftsmen, construction branch |
| ⑫ | NETHERLANDS |  | AFNL - Dutch confederation of building and infrastructure contractors |
| ⑬ | POLAND |  | ZRP - Polish craftsmen association, construction branch |
| ⑭ | ROMANIA |  | INPR - Romanian employers' association, construction branch |
| ⑮ | SLOVENIA |  | OZS - Slovenian chamber of craftsmen, construction branch |
| ⑯ | SPAIN |  | CNC - Spanish confederation of construction firms, SME branch |
| ⑰ | SWITZERLAND |  | FGMB - Geneva federation of building trades |

FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT



Over the past two years Europe has faced many challenges and events calling its habits into question. Our organisation, the European Builders Confederation EBC has also undergone significant changes, further improving its position and working methods. Indeed, our team in Brussels has changed, bringing a new impetus and new ideas to our association counting 27 years of experience. More than ever, tradition and innovation are key aspects when defending the interests of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the construction sector.

Topics such as the posting of workers Directive, the access to finance, energy efficiency, circular economy, standardisation, public procurement and many others, all touch upon the activity of the construction sector in Europe. EBC covers these sensitive topics to guarantee that our recommendations are duly taken into account in the debates and influence the European policy-makers. The value and importance of construction micro, small and medium-sized enterprises for the economy of our countries and for Europe as

a whole must not be underestimated, as they represent up to 95% of construction firms. The sector provides 18 million direct jobs and contributes to about 9% of the European Union's GDP.

Tradition and innovation go hand in hand, especially in the construction sector. Tradition helps maintain and improve the skills and competencies of our entrepreneurs, workers and apprentices. In the meantime, innovation, notably digitalisation, allows us to explore new and deeper horizons. For instance, Building Information Modelling (BIM) is a good example of innovation that can provide significant efficiency benefits to public works and be a driver for growth and competitiveness.

Furthermore, the digital revolution offers tools to inform and raise awareness on classic and new career paths in our sector, notably among young people and women.

Let me introduce another key topic for our sector - occupational health and safety. Companies have to meet the technical and legal challenges implied by higher standards in this area and we should help them. This issue is at the heart of the discussion during our 27th Annual Congress in Croatia.

One thing must be clear; any new process or requirement must be adapted to the reality of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The same principle applies to standardisation; standards are useful if they suit the needs of SMEs.

EBC is a key player in Europe and its active contribution is well recognisable in all spheres of the construction sector. This is why our next goal is to join the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction as a full member and contribute to the important issues on its agenda with our members' input.

I take this opportunity to thank Riccardo Viaggi for his strong contribution during the 8 years he served as Secretary General of EBC. After this period of development and expansion, our association is again in good hands. Indeed, since his appointment as new Secretary General, Eugenio Quintieri has shown leadership, experience and enthusiasm that will build on the past and lead EBC to success. EBC members look forward to working closely with Eugenio and his team over the next years to make sure that EBC is fully prepared to address the political, economic and social challenges facing the construction sector and actively contribute to shaping the future of Europe.



PATRICK LIÉBUS
EBC PRESIDENT



PRESENTATION OF EBC



A voice for construction SMEs in Brussels!

An increasing number of national regulations derives from the transposition of European legislation into domestic law, especially in policy domains such as energy, standardisation, environment and social issues. However, these rules are usually implemented without properly assessing their impact on SMEs.

Six national associations representing **construction micro-enterprises** in different European countries therefore joined forces in 1990 to establish the European Builders Confederation EBC – the voice of construction SMEs in Europe.

With its 17 member organisations, EBC represents micro, small and medium-sized companies on a European level. Via its Secretariat based in Brussels, EBC works in close collaboration with the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME), an organisation of which EBC is a member. EBC is also a founding member and project partner of Small Business Standards (SBS), the association representing SMEs in the standardisation system.

EBC welcomes a new member in 2017

EBC is pleased to have welcomed a new association member in 2017, WKÖ, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. With this new member, EBC has strengthened its geographical and sectoral representativeness, so that in 2017 more construction SMEs have their voices heard in Europe.

What is the construction sector?

The construction industry ranges from **general contractors**, house-builders and bricklayers to **specialised trades** (such as carpenters and joiners, plasterers, plumbers, heating & cooling and renewable energy installers, electricians, painters and interior decorators and tile-fixers), and companies dealing with the production and processing of construction products.

Depending on the national context, EBC national members affiliate SMEs from all these sub-sectors in the construction industry.



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The Mission

Anticipate, exchange, position and then act.

We represent, defend and promote the interests of micro, small and medium-sized construction entrepreneurs, in close co-ordination with our national member organisations.

Our mission is:

To ensure that construction microenterprises and SMEs' specific needs are taken into consideration during the European legislative process in order to create an **SME-friendly business environment** and to make it possible for construction SMEs to be the driver of **sustainable economic growth** in Europe;

To put forward **construction SMEs' contribution to the European decision-making process** in the field of sustainability, energy efficiency, health and safety at work, entrepreneurship, SME access to markets, standardisation, fair competition in the internal market, among others;

To increase the **understanding of small and medium construction businesses' role** - which represent the vast majority of the sector - for employment and sustainable development, and get them heard in the European institutions, the European Standardisation Organisations and international organisations;

To enable representatives of small and medium construction enterprises to participate in the **European sectoral social dialogue**, thus increasing its relevance and reinforcing its impact. Social dialogue is crucial for a healthy functioning of our economy. However, it has to be representative in order to work well. This is why EBC is asking to be accepted as a full member in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction and contribute with the input of construction companies on its important subjects.

- Booklet on involving women and young people in construction
- EBC Manifesto for the 2014-2019 European legislative term
- A quarterly information newsletter
- The Construction Voice, a monthly newsletter for the press and the EU decision-makers
- An annual report
- Press releases
- Position papers
- Publications on the projects managed by EBC
- Videos

All these publications are available on the EBC website: www.ebc-construction.eu



EBC is also active on social media. Find out more about EBC's activities on Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr!



STRUCTURE

OF EBC



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**Chairman of
the UEAPME
Construction forum**
Philippe VAN
NIEUWENHUIZEN
(MKB INFRA, Netherlands)



**EBC representative
in the European
Social Dialogue
Committee for
Construction**
Andrea MARCONI
(Anaepa, Italy)

TEAM



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**POLICY
OFFICER**
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**COMMUNICATION
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MA in Communication

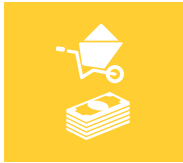


**POLICY
OFFICER**
Fernando SIGCHOS JIMÉNEZ
MA in International Relations



**STANDARDISATION
TECHNICAL OFFICER**
Adam PINNEY
PhD in Energy Planning for
Remote, Rural Communities

THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



9% of the GDP of the European Union



3 million enterprises in the sector



18 million workers in the sector

SMALL & MEDIUM CONSTRUCTION ENTREPRISES



80% Produce 80% of the construction industry's **OUTPUT**



83% Employ 83% of the total **WORKFORCE** of the sector



Create **LOCAL JOBS**



Have a huge potential to increase **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

YOUNG PEOPLE & WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

90% male

10% female

8% younger than 25



91,9% European construction enterprises with less than 10 employees



96,9% European construction enterprises with less than 20 employees



98,9% European construction enterprises with less than 50 employees



99,9% European construction enterprises with less than 250 employees



0,1% European construction enterprises with more than 250 employees

PERFORMANCE AND TRENDS OF THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

As from 2015 the construction industry seems to be on the path to recovery, according to data from Eurostat and from Euroconstruct, a network of research centres specialised in construction economics.

Production of the European construction sector

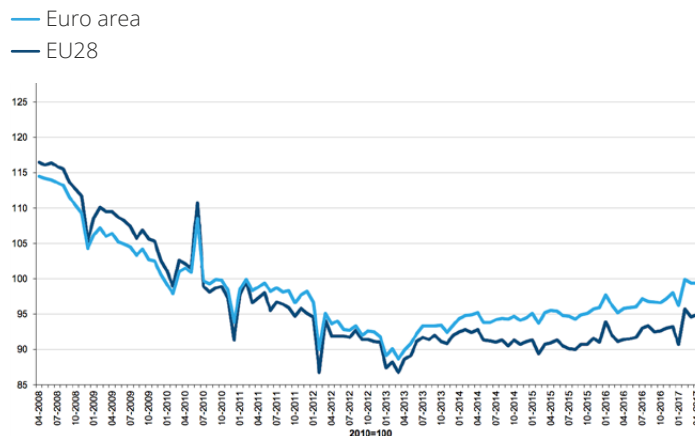
The recovery of the European economy has boosted construction output growth. In 2016, construction output expanded by 2.5%, thus 0.5% stronger than was expected. According to Euroconstruct, the volume of construction output is forecast to increase by 2.9% in 2017 and by 2.4% in 2018, both above previous evaluations. Thanks to the stronger economic upswing than expected half a year ago, significant improvement in consumer confidence and the continuing loose monetary policy, construction demand developments are stronger than was expected, resulting in an expansion of construction output by 8% in 2016-2018,

compared to the initial forecast of 6.5%. According to Eurostat, among Member States for which data is available, the highest increases in productive construction were recorded in Slovenia (+27.8%), Hungary (+22.0%) and Sweden (+19.8%), and the largest decreases in Romania (-18.4%), Italy (-4.6%) and the United Kingdom (-3.4%). In France, construction SMEs activity grew by 1.5% in the first quarter of 2017, confirming the recovery path started in 2016.

Almost all Central and Eastern European countries experienced significant growth as they tried to absorb all available EU funds from the previous programme period, combined with strong demand for housing and new government measures stimulating new residential construction.

The European construction market has entered a phase of recovery but reaching pre-financial crisis levels in different countries is still a long-term goal that will be reachable only with an adequate regulatory and financial framework.

Production in the construction sector



Source: Eurostat 2017

In 2017 the estimated value of construction output is about EUR 1.5 trillion.

ECONOMY AND MARKETS

EUROPEAN POLICIES & EBC ACTIONS

The need for an SME-friendly environment in public procurement

In the EU, the public purchase of goods and services has been estimated to be worth 16% of GDP (Source: European Commission). Therefore, public procurement contracts also reveal a huge amount of the available work in the construction sector. However, various elements were and still are restraining SMEs' access to public procurement, especially when it comes to information, transparency and access criteria. This is why SMEs' access to public procurement has consistently been among EBC's top priorities. In this regard, the Commission has also put in place an ambitious action plan on public

procurement to help Member States and practitioners, including through targeted assistance and guidance.

Since the adoption of the new Public Procurement Directive in 2014, the main concern has been a swift and correct implementation process at national level to ensure a stable legal framework for the coming years and avoid early revision processes. This Directive introduced the European Single Procurement Document (ESPD), which is an updated self-declaration replacing the certificates that economic operators had to obtain

to demonstrate that they fulfil certain conditions to participate in public tenders.

The new legislation establishes that contracting authorities have to accept the ESPD submitted by participants in public tenders. Thus it should make the 'only once' principle applicable, according to which contracting authorities cannot request that a bidder who has already submitted the ESPD during the last four years does so again. Although this could be very useful in cutting red tape and paperwork for bidders, its implementation in certain Member States (e.g. Italy, France and Denmark) is raising doubts and concerns about its possible impact on companies.

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The main issue is that the ESPD overlaps with – instead of substituting – practices that are already in place, hence adding bureaucracy.

In 2017, a Commission report showed that the implementation of the ESPD had only just started due to the late transposition of the Directive. Therefore, the Commission announced that a more thorough assessment of the ESPD should take place in 2019. EBC will continue to follow the issue in order to ensure that the implementation of the Public Procurement Directive will facilitate SME access to the procurement market.

EBC welcomes Commission's 'zero tolerance' against late payments

The Late Payments Directive (2011) gives companies strengthened rights by putting in place time limits for payments by other businesses and public authorities when procuring goods or services. When payment deadlines are not met, the Directive entitles businesses to fair compensation. However, in some EU countries, the Directive is not properly applied.

Late payments have a dramatic impact on businesses by reducing their liquidity and cash flow, complicating their financial management and in some cases even causing their default. So in February 2017, EBC welcomed the decision of the European Commission to take further steps against Italy, Spain, Greece and Slovakia regarding late payments by public authorities to companies.



Construction SMEs need proportionate and relevant requirements, reasonable administrative management and appropriate size of contracts in public procurement



The construction sector rejects the proposal for a 'services e-card'

In January 2017, the European Commission presented a proposal for a new European 'services e-card' as part of a legislative package on the rules governing the single market for services. Services providers will simply have to liaise with a single interlocutor in their home country and in their own language. The home country interlocutor would then verify the necessary data and transmit it to the host Member State. The host Member State retains the current power to apply domestic regulatory requirements and to decide whether the applicant can offer services on its territory.

Together with the other sectoral social partners, EBC shares major concerns on the methods and merits of the proposal. The vast majority of construction companies operate and will continue to operate mainly at a local/regional level. This is not necessarily due to administrative obstacles, but rather to other barriers such as language, technical requirements, cultural differences and customer relations. The proposed 'services e-card' could generate additional problems, facilitate cross-border fraud and disrupt the effectiveness of controls undertaken by labour inspectorates.



Posted workers: Construction SMEs need a fair level playing field

According to the European Commission, posted workers account for just 0.7% of the labour force in Europe. Nevertheless, in the construction sector they represent around 5% of the labour force. The current EU legal framework does not prevent abuses in the posting of workers and this puts many small construction companies at risk. It creates unfair competition among companies that work in the same country but do not play by the same rules. This sensitive topic has been at the heart of a long-standing political controversy between EU Member States.

In March 2016, the European Commission released a proposal for a Directive amending the current European rules on the posting of workers. The situation in the Internal Market now is very different compared to 21 years ago, when the first Directive was adopted. At that time, the average salaries in some Member States were up to 3 times higher than in other Member States. Today, that gap has increased to ten times higher. This is important when such a large disparity in workers' salaries occurs in the same country – as it is the case of posted workers. For all these reasons, EBC is asking:

- Duration of posting should be fixed by European sectoral social partners and posted workers should be employed at least 6 months before starting any posted activity in another country, to avoid bogus contractual relations;
- Levels of remuneration should also include agreements set at sub-national level;
- Temporary work agencies should be excluded from the provision of posted workers because they may create a parallel market of interim workers hired ad-hoc just for posting purposes.

In June 2017, the new French government of President Emmanuel Macron put forward very ambitious and stricter proposals for posted workers, which succeeded in delaying the process in the EU Council. Meanwhile, in the European Parliament, the plenary vote on the report provided by the co-rapporteurs, MEP Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (EPP Group) and MEP Agnes Jongerius (S&D), has been delayed until September 2017. Political negotiations and debates are still animated and complex among the European Parliament, Member States and construction stakeholders, with EBC as the only employers' organisation fully supporting the revision of the 1996 Directive. Given the political complexity and sensitivity, EBC considers that this dossier needs time and further dialogue as this topic is highly important for construction SMEs.



Tighter rules for carcinogenic substances

For decades, the EU has been a front-runner in ensuring high standards of protection against health and safety risks at work. In this framework, the European Commission announced in May 2016 new aims and proposals to modify the legislative framework covering work-related cancers, notably to include silica dust in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive. In February 2017, based on the Commission's initiative, the Employment Committee of the European Parliament adopted an even more ambitious report, drafted by MEP Marita Ulvskog (S&D, Sweden), regarding occupational limit values of several substances.

Common position on construction employers

EBC members are highly committed to working on the prevention of exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica dust in construction activities, amongst other measures by improved work techniques, changes in work processes and methods, and dissemination and exchange of best practices. However, limits on exposure levels must be proportionate to the concerned occupational risk and be technically measurable.

For these reasons, EBC and FIEC, together representing all sizes of European construction companies, published a joint position advising European institutions against requirements on construction companies which are disproportionate in respect of the objectives to be achieved, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, both organizations asked for the adoption of the scenario recommended by the Commission (namely a limit value of 0.1 mg/m³) to provide a high level of protection of workers while not adversely reducing industry activity.

A balanced European agreement

On 11 July 2017, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU came to a provisional agreement in favour of stricter exposure limits to substances believed to cause cancer among workers. As regards silica dust, limit values were introduced in the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive but set at a limit value of 0.1 mg/m³, in line with EBC-FIEC technical suggestions. However, the Commission committed itself to evaluate the need to modify the limit value for respirable crystalline silica dust as part of the next evaluation of the implementation of the Directive.

Construction SMEs need help and guidance to comply with these legislative and technical requirements imposed by the European institutions. For these reasons, EBC is devoting its 27th Annual Congress to find ways to help SMEs to adapt to occupational health and safety legislation at European level.



Demolition, Decontamination and Recycling Forum - Brussels, June 2017 - EBC Secretary General Eugenio Quintieri talks about the importance of attracting workers to the sector.



'On the road to a greener future: acting on employment and skills'- Brussels, June 2017 - EBC Secretary General Eugenio Quintieri speaks on tomorrow's green jobs at a conference organised by the European Economic and Social Committee.

EBC as a European social partner in the construction sector

In September 2015, Eurofound – the EU agency specialised in social dialogue and work-related policies – published its study on the representativeness of European social partner organisations in construction. However, since then there has been no reshuffle of the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction, in spite also of the EC President Juncker's desire for a new start for social dialogue.

What the study shows

EBC is described in the study as “a significant industrial relations actor that brings a specific sectional supplement of representativeness on the employers' side”. Half of all European construction companies affiliated to an employer's organisation are members of EBC, thus confirming that the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction lacks a fundamental representation on the employers' side without EBC's proper participation.

Construction social partners

Currently, EBC is an observer member within the employers' delegation in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction. However, EBC has asked to be fully integrated in the employers' delegation with the right to contribute to the debates and co-sign agreements and joint papers that can shape the future of the construction sector. In this sense, EBC continues discussions with all relevant stakeholders in order to obtain its recognition as a full European social partner. SMEs are crucial for the construction sector; not acknowledging their fundamental contribution will endanger the sustainability of social dialogue and of the sector as a whole.



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EBC recommendations on apprenticeships

- Better involvement of SME associations and social partners in apprenticeship schemes and definition of the sector's skills;
- Massive national campaigns to improve the image of manual trades in general and the construction sector in particular;
- Targeting women in apprenticeship schemes for construction;
- Integrating entrepreneurship education in vocational education and training curricula;
- Supporting small and medium-sized companies to engage in apprenticeship;
- Better use of the European funds to promote new skills

4th anniversary of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship

The European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EAfA) is a platform to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and to change mindsets towards apprenticeship-type training. EBC joined this initiative of the European Commission in June 2015, by signing an apprenticeship pledge for the construction sector.

On 30-31 May 2017, the European Commission organised a high-level event to mark the 4 year anniversary of EAfA in Malta. EBC has witnessed with joy and pride the evolution of this initiative for youth employment and apprenticeships, which brings together a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

All agree on the fact that inclusiveness and openness are key in order for this initiative to remain fruitful in the years to come, acknowledging that “entrepreneurship skills” must be increasingly emphasised.

For construction SMEs, apprenticeships have a very high value, especially because the sector faces the ageing and the skills shortage of its workforce. For this reason, EBC believes that the Alliance should help companies, notably micro and small companies that make up 96.9% of the construction industry, to overcome existing obstacles that prevent them from engaging in apprenticeships.



MALTA EU2017

“4 years of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships: celebrating success and looking ahead”, Malta, 30-31 May - EBC Policy officer Fernando Sigchos attended an event organised in the framework of the Maltese Presidency

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Energy Efficiency legislation: A big opportunity for construction SMEs

At the end of November 2016, the European Commission unveiled the long-awaited 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' Package, an extensive set of legislative proposals revising key Directives for the housing sector on energy efficiency and renewables. It is currently being discussed in the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy Committee as well as the Environment Committee. The European Council had already agreed on a General Approach for the revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) at the end of June. If the European Union is to continue as the frontrunner in climate change talks, this package will be fundamental.

As the voice of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, EBC welcomes the package as an important step towards an energy efficient Europe, because a sound set of measures in this package would 'kill three birds with one stone' as investment in energy efficiency brings economic, environmental and social benefits. However, it is important for European policy makers to take into consideration certain relevant factors.

Revision of the Energy Efficiency Directive (2012/27/EU)

EBC recommends policymakers to:

- Establish a stable long-term regulatory and financial framework to kick-start massive retrofitting of existing buildings or the replacement of obsolete and inefficient equipment;
- Continue to ensure ambitious energy savings through obligation schemes and alternative measures;
- Take into account energy poverty in private and social/public housing.

**The revisions of
the EPBD and
the EED offer a
major opportunity
for jobs and growth
in Europe's SMEs**

Revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2010/31/EU)

EBC recommends policymakers to:

- Support and promote public and private financing schemes for energy efficiency;
- Ensure the dissemination of best practice regarding the aggregation of small energy renovation projects;
- Include regular maintenance of heating and air-conditioning systems in the Directive;
- Lower the kW-threshold indicating the need for a regular inspection and maintenance of heating and air-conditioning systems;
- Ensure that Member States link their financial measures for energy efficiency improvements in buildings to relevant, transparent and proportionate methods that indicate the improvement in energy performance;
- Facilitate the aggregation of SMEs in groups and consortia;
- Strengthen on-the-job training.

European Circular Construction Alliance

Ljubljana, January 2017

EBC participated in the first meeting of the European Circular Construction Alliance (ECCA) in Ljubljana, whose project focuses on the development of a strong stakeholders alliance for the adoption of the circular approach in construction business practices. It also aims to assist companies to achieve success on international markets. EBC demonstrated how European SMEs are reaping the benefits and tackling the challenges of sustainability.

Circular economy: Construction SMEs need feasible transition time

The construction sector is responsible for about 35% of the total waste generated in the EU, and SMEs are fully aware of the role they must play to reduce their impact on the environment. Thus, EBC welcomed the publication of the new Circular Economy package in December 2015. As the legislative process progressed, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament voted in January 2017 on the 1.500 amendments regarding the revision of the Waste Framework Directive and the Landfill Directive, followed by a plenary vote in March 2017. Currently the package is being discussed in tripartite negotiations amongst the European institutions.

Construction SMEs are committed to the development of a new circular economy model. However, the transition has to be feasible so that it does not just happen on paper but for real. The urge for additional targets on construction and demolition waste for 2025 and 2030, set by the proposal for the Waste Framework Directive, can put SMEs' competitiveness at risk due to the lack of accompanying measures and feasibility problems. Legislation must allow time for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to adapt, on the basis of a clear and consistent assessment of the current situation. It is essential that SMEs have access to best available techniques to make recycling waste a reality.




EBC spoke at the Parliament breakfast debate on 'Renewable Self-Consumers and Smart Buildings', organised by Solar Power Europe and SME Europe and hosted by MEP Sean Kelly – Brussels, May 2017



EBC participated for the first time in the World Sustainable Energy Days, by giving a presentation on 'Key priorities and challenges for construction SMEs' and taking part in the poster presentation – Wels, March 2017

EBC together with the International Union of Property Owners (UIPI) organised a workshop on 'Opportunities from energy saving obligations & alternative measures' to finance energy efficiency in private housing – Brussels, October 2016



EBC took part in the kick-off stakeholder meeting of the Energy Efficient Mortgages Action Plan (EeMAP) Initiative, discussing the potential to channel private capital into energy efficiency investments – Rome, June 2017

Extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments: Financing earmarked for energy efficiency

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is an initiative to help overcome the investment gap in the EU. Following its success, the European Commission proposed an extension of the fund and the introduction of technical enhancements in September 2016. The new proposal includes an increase in the EU financial guarantee as well as in the EIB capital, which will mobilise public investment of about 500 billion euro until 2020.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises of the construction sector strongly support the European Commission proposal for EFSI to put even more efforts and focus on environmental and sustainable goals. Given this, EBC advocated for the introduction of a substantial earmarking of EFSI funds and investment into energy efficiency projects, mainly for Europe's buildings. The EFSI regulation is currently being discussed in interinstitutional negotiations.



**A substantial financial
earmarking of EFSI into
energy efficiency is pivotal
in promoting new projects
in this area and in triggering
investment interest from
the private sector**

STANDARDISATION



Innovation in construction: Building Information Modelling for SMEs as the main focus of the EBC Annual Congress

The 2016 EBC Annual Congress debated how to make sure that small and medium sized enterprises exploit the potential of Building Information Modelling (BIM). EBC focused on the topic, mostly to identify the challenges and needs that BIM offers to the construction sector, especially to SMEs. EBC considers that the implementation of BIM is of strategic importance and needs to result in an SME-friendly tool, easy to use for all actors in the construction chain.

EBC contributed to the standardisation activities in BIM through the appointment of **an expert in the CEN Technical Committee on BIM**. It also presented its key messages at several events (e.g. GeoBIM Europe 2016, BIMEXPO):



Addressing the needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in how to design a **European standardised approach to BIM**;

Promoting the adoption of BIM tools that can be adapted to the building renovation market;

Supporting **BIM training programmes** that are not based on the use of a specific software, but are rather targeted to guide all construction professionals towards the digital transition of the construction sector;

Ensuring a smooth **shift in public procurement** from traditional methods to BIM-based ones.

EBC monitors the activities of the European BIM Task Group, which has recently published a handbook for the introduction of BIM by the European Public Sector. The EBC's objective is to ensure that this BIM-related guidance will be applicable by the widest possible segments of the construction market. Moreover, EBC contributes to the design of a favourable European approach in standardisation to Building Information Modelling which is suitable for SMEs.



'GeoBIM Europe 2016', Amsterdam, November 2016 - EBC speaks at the GeoBIM Europe conference

EBC's role to represent construction SMEs in standardisation

Small Business Standards (SBS) is a European non-profit association established with European Commission support. Its mission is to represent and defend SME interests in European and international standardisation. EBC, together with UEAPME, are founding members and project partners of SBS. EBC coordinates activities within SBS to improve the input of construction SMEs to standardisation, and represents SBS in construction-related fora and technical committees. In this way, EBC aims to assist implementation of the Construction Product Regulation (CPR), the main legal act for standardisation in the construction products sector.

Among many other issues, in 2016 EBC successfully expressed construction SMEs' opposition to the drafting of European-wide execution standards for construction, the need for which is not widely recognised by many relevant construction stakeholders, in particular builders and contractors.

EBC chairs the SBS Construction Forum, a yearly event which engages the SME community in discussions and elaboration of positions on SME issues for standardisation in construction.

EBC experts in construction

SBS has appointed 11 new experts in 2017. As a result, 20 experts (out of 55) follow construction related standardisation activities and represent SMEs' needs, which are often neglected in this field. Two of the 20 SBS construction experts are from EBC. As from 2017, construction SMEs therefore have more voice in the standard making system.

The experts can directly contribute to the creation of standards, monitor that standards are SME-compatible and therefore promote a better adaptation of standards to fit SME needs. In this field, based on the work already done in 2015 and 2016, major activities are related to the **promotion of CEN-CENELEC Guide 17**, the guidance document for writing standards that takes into account SME needs and improve their quality and usability.

SME-friendly measures for the full implementation of the Construction Products Regulation

The Construction Products Regulation (CPR) is the most important piece of legislation for standardisation in the construction sector, since it sets the conditions for the CE marking of construction products. EBC constantly monitors and tries to positively influence the implementation of this regulation.

EBC provided its input for the report from the European Commission on the implementation of the CPR published in July 2016. The report acknowledges the limited uptake of simplified procedures for micro-enterprises laid down in the CPR. EBC strongly supported the SBS position on CE-marking solutions for construction micro-enterprises to further promote such simplified methods and advocate concrete solutions to reduce financials burden for micro-enterprises.


This action follows up the successful proposal that EBC made for the new template for Annex ZA (a "check list" that manufacturers use to apply CE marking). The new template now makes reference to those provisions of the CPR that allow micro-enterprises to assess the performance of their products without resort to Notified Bodies, in some cases.

What is the Construction Product Regulation?

The Construction Product Regulation (CPR) establishes, by means of a "common technical language", the need for reliable information on construction products in relation to their performance, offering harmonised assessment methods for the performance of construction products.

The CPR makes the CE marking mandatory for construction products covered by harmonised European Standards (hENs), except in certain, limited cases.

For products not covered, or not fully covered, by a hEN, the CE marking may be applied on a voluntary basis through a European Technical Assessment issued by a Technical Assessment Body. In both cases a Declaration of Performance draft is required, that is to say a document showing the essential performance characteristics of the product.



EBC coordinates the construction-related activities within SBS to improve the input of construction SMEs to the standardisation process



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Joint Initiative on Standardisation

EBC joined Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, to co-sign the Joint Initiative on Standardisation (JIS). This initiative sets out actions to modernise, prioritise and speed up the delivery of standards by the end of 2019, respecting the needs of their users.

The JIS has been supported by three sectoral federations, namely Construction Products Europe, representing manufacturers of construction products, as well as EBC and FIEC, together representing construction enterprises of all sizes – from one person micro firms and SMEs to large globally active contractors – across Europe. It kicked off a dialogue between all the stakeholders involved in standardisation: European and national standardisation organisations, industry, civil society, Member States and the Commission celebrated the agreement, in a ceremony organised by the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU.

EBC at the EU Sustainable Energy Week 2017

EBC was a strategic partner of the 2017 edition of the Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) that took place from 20 to 22 June 2017. Organised by the European Commission, the European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) is an event aimed at building a secure energy future for Europe. It brings together public authorities, private companies, NGOs and consumers to promote initiatives to save energy and move towards renewables for clean, secure and efficient power.

More than 100 people participated in EBC's seminar, as part of EUSEW, on the role of standardisation in the higher energy performance of buildings on 21 June in Brussels. The seminar focused on the new ISO EN 52000 rules, that provide countries with flexible methods to calculate buildings energy performance. The European Commission has aimed at communicating and promoting these rules, set in order to ensure the comparability of different methods to calculate buildings energy performance across Europe. Construction SMEs also need training to improve building energy performance.

The European Commission technical platforms address construction standardisation issues

Following the release of the European Commission report to the European Parliament on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 305/2011, the European Commission decided to engage in further dialogue with relevant stakeholders via technical platforms. EBC regularly participated in the discussions, which focused on:

- Standardisation;
- Derogations;
- Simplified procedures for SMEs;
- Information needs in the supply chain.

EBC also participated in a public hearing on a possible revision of the Construction Products Regulation, organised by MEP Catherine Stihler (S&D). Discussions on this subject form an important part of EBC's ongoing work.



PARTNERSHIPS

COMMITTEES - WORKING GROUPS



European Economic and Social Committee European Economic and Social Committee

EBC President Patrick Liébus joined the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in October 2015 with a five-year mandate. He is a full member of the EESC Single Market and Social Affairs Sections. He represents the French Confederation of the micro and small construction businesses (CAPEB) and the Professional Union of micro-companies (U2P). EBC Policy Officer Fernando Sigchos Jiménez was appointed as his alternate member.



SBS – Small Business Standards

Considering the fundamental interest in standardisation for SMEs, EBC contributed to the preparation of the winning project proposal to create Small Business Standards SBS. SBS represents SMEs in the standard making process at European and international level, not only in the construction sector but also other sectors. In addition to being a founding

member, EBC sits on the SBS Board of Directors. EBC is the coordinator of the construction-related activities in standardisation for SBS, and is also the organiser of the SBS Construction Forum, where experts meet to discuss the latest topics in standardisation.



CEN Technical Committees on accessibility in buildings and BIM

Two of the SBS construction experts are from EBC. They follow standardisation activities both on accessibility in the built environment (CEN CLC JWG 6) and on Building Information Modelling (CEN TC 442).

Standing Committee on Construction

EBC has held the status of observer in the Standing Committee on Construction since 2004. This Committee exists under the Construction Products Regulation with the task of examining any issue related to the implementation of the regulation. The Committee is chaired by the Head of the Construction Unit (DG GROW) and is formed by representatives of the Member States.

European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction

The European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction was created in 1999 by FIEC (European Construction Industry Federation) and EFBWW (European Federation of Building and Wood Workers). In 2007 EBC was integrated as an observer within the employers' delegation for this committee. The EBC Board of Directors mandated Andrea Marconi (ANAEPA, Italy) and the EBC Secretary General to represent EBC at the committee meetings.

EBC chairs the UEAPME Construction Forum

Since 2008, EBC – represented by Philip Van Nieuwenhuizen (from MKB INFRA, the Netherlands) – has chaired the UEAPME Construction Forum, a sectoral committee within UEAPME. The Forum meets twice a year with a full agenda to discuss the most important policy developments regarding micro, small and medium-sized construction companies. Several European sectoral associations and national associations from UEAPME members take part in the Forum.

