



EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY FEDERATION



EUROPEAN  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONTRACTORS

## DISCOVER OUR MANIFESTO IN THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

1. Investing in a competitive Europe
2. Ensure a level playing field
3. Construction 4.0 : Accelerate the digital transformation of the construction industry
4. Construction Products Regulation : Ensure that it works in practice
5. Committing to the social dimension of the construction industry
6. Build a sustainable Europe
7. Commission single point of coordination

# CONSTRUCTION MANIFESTO FOR ACTION EU TERM 2019-2024

CONSTRUCTION IS THE SOLUTION INDUSTRY

# 1

## INVESTING IN A COMPETITIVE EUROPE

### WHY?

- Investment is needed for the well-being of citizens and the **sustainable development of the European economy**: transport, energy, education, housing, etc.
- The **cost of non-investment is much higher than the cost of investment**: it damages economic growth in the short term and competitiveness in the long term.

### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- **Promote public and private funding** – traditional and innovative instruments, incl. PPPs as well as “user/polluter pays” schemes – to facilitate projects with European added value.
- While safeguarding sound public finances, **allow greater flexibility in the Stability and Growth Pact** when Member States implement EU policies and invest in infrastructure and building projects.
- Ensure that **infrastructure maintenance** is taken into account in the relevant EU legislation, funding programmes and the Country Specific Recommendations.
- For better effectiveness of the limited resources, **adapt the global financial, fiscal and regulatory environment** accordingly, e.g. business loans, mortgages, reduced VAT, prudential rules for banks and insurers.
- Renew the European Parliament Intergroup on “Long-term Investment and Reindustrialisation”.

# 2

## ENSURE A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

### WHY?

- In public procurement, “buying cheap” by awarding to Abnormally Low Tenders (ALT) **can ultimately be expensive**.

### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- Improve the 2014 Public Procurement Directives, so that all EU and non-EU contractors – **both private and state-owned companies** – respect the same rules. In particular, **fight against the award of contracts to ALTs** with mandatory thresholds for identification and verification, with the ultimate aim of eliminating such offers.
- **Ensure reciprocity in opening markets**, as well as respect of EU and national law, including rules on **State Aid** and on **reserved funds**, by all enterprises working in the Internal Market.

# 3

## CONSTRUCTION 4.0: ACCELERATE THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

### WHY?

- Digital construction will help to achieve many of the EU’s main policy goals: digital economy, energy efficiency, circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, health and safety etc.
- Digital construction is an **enabler for more efficient processes** and elimination of errors and delays, as well as for a **sustainable built environment**. In order to accelerate the transition, new methods need to be adopted. **Data** is fundamental to digitalisation and new challenges are emerging, creating both opportunities and risks, for both contractors and their clients.
- The development of Smart Cities, which are necessary for the ongoing increase in city dwelling, depends on a swift and **complete uptake of digital construction** along the value chain.

### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- Make **“construction” a priority sector** for relevant EU programmes, e.g. the Digitising European Industry initiative, so that digital construction can be accelerated and **its potential contribution to other EU policy goals achieved**.
- Develop **data policies** that ensure open access to data (subject to EU data protection regulations) and interoperable systems.
- Continue programmes aimed at stimulating the creation of **Smart Cities** and ensure that there is coherence between EU policy and legislation on Smart Cities and all relevant EU policy and legislation that has an impact on digital construction.

# 4

## CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS REGULATION (CPR): ENSURE THAT IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

### WHY?

- CPR does not achieve legal certainty for contractors, because there are **regulatory gaps** increasing contractors’ liability risks.
- More than **100 harmonised European standards** under the CPR have been **blocked for citation in the Official Journal** of the European Union by the European Commission. This is creating major problems for users.

### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- The Commission, together with the Member States in the Standing Committee on Construction must ensure that **regulatory gaps are compensated for**, if necessary by national rules.
- The Commission needs to find rapid solutions to **eliminate the backlog of uncited standards** so that they can be relied upon, ensuring **legal certainty**.

## 5

### COMMITTING TO THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

#### WHY?

- Construction companies in several Member States cannot find enough workers with the required **skills for now and the future**, in spite of the high levels of unemployment in the EU, particularly amongst young people.
- Proper implementation and enforcement of the existing legislation is critical, to ensure a **level playing field amongst companies** and the application of the relevant employment and working conditions for their workers.
- The “**zero accidents**” target in the field of Occupational Safety and Health must remain the main objective for a well-functioning labour market.
- As the officially recognised EU social partner for the construction industry, representing employers, FIEC believes in a constructive **EU sectoral Social Dialogue** with the EFBWW, representing the workers, **respecting national labour market conditions** and the autonomy of the national social partners.

#### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- Promote and support cooperation with and between concerned stakeholders, in order to **update existing training schemes** on a regular basis to take account of technical developments and innovation, including digitalisation.
- Promote and support tools and initiatives for **strengthening the mutual recognition of qualifications**, without lowering standards, in order to facilitate the mobility of services, students and workers within the Internal Market.
- Foster **investment in initial and lifelong training**, as well as **apprenticeship** schemes, amongst other things by means of the EU Semester.
- Continue the **fight against fraudulent practices** by ensuring the correct application and enforcement of EU legislation regarding cross-border provision of services and by facilitating administrative cooperation between administrations.
- Support initiatives aimed at **developing a culture of prevention** amongst construction companies and workers and at **strengthening Occupational Safety and Health**, taking into account specific sectoral circumstances.
- Facilitate and **support Social Partners’ initiatives**.
- The EU must rigorously **respect the principle of subsidiarity** and the competences of the Member States **in labour-related issues**, in particular regarding collective bargaining.

## 6

### BUILD A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

#### WHY?

- Climate change poses a significant risk to buildings and infrastructure as new and worsening natural disasters threaten to compromise structures that were built before such hazards were apparent. **New and existing buildings and infrastructure need to be climate-proofed.**
- The switch to a Circular Economy needs to be accelerated, because natural resources, many of which are often used in construction, are being depleted. At the same time, toxic and/or non-reusable materials cannot be recycled, meaning that they end up as waste. The lack of **suitable recycling facilities** close to construction sites is also an obstacle to recycling.
- Energy efficiency measures have dominated recent legislative work programmes, but the emphasis on energy has taken such a priority, that **other building improvements** – sometimes essential – **have been neglected.** Recent such cases have resulted in disastrous consequences, with the loss of the intended benefits of the renovation.

#### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- Ensure that research into climate change also covers the development of **innovative construction methods** aimed at climate-proofing buildings and infrastructure. Relevant EU programmes should also continue to fund the **implementation of research results** into real-life application.
- When introducing mandatory targets in waste legislation and other relevant Circular Economy policies, take into account **potential trade-offs** between emissions generated when transporting demolition waste to available recycling facilities (often located far from the site) and the actual benefit of recycling. Take into account also that many existing buildings in Europe contain toxic materials that were **permitted at the time of construction**, which cannot be recycled and need to be disposed of safely.
- Instead of focusing only on energy efficiency, switch to **holistic renovation**, that ensures that other problems are solved during deep renovation, resulting in structurally sound, healthy, accessible and energy efficient buildings.

## 7

### SINGLE POINT OF COORDINATION

#### WHY?

- Construction related issues are being addressed **in many different DGs of the EU Commission**, which often makes **coordination** very difficult.

#### OUR MESSAGES AND REQUESTS TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS

- **Mandate a Vice-President** of the European Commission with the task of **ensuring efficient and co-ordinated collaboration** of all DGs concerned across the entire Commission.



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EIC (European International Contractors) represents the international interests of the European construction industry vis-à-vis European policy makers, international financial institutions and society. Its full members are construction federations from 15 European countries, which are directly or indirectly affiliated to FIEC and have internationally active member firms. In the year 2017, the total volume of international turnover carried out by European international contractors amounted to € 176bn. of which more than € 100bn. were generated overseas, and thus they contribute to a positive image of Europe in the world.

[www.eic-federation.eu](http://www.eic-federation.eu)

**FIEC speaks for the European Construction Industry.**

Through its **31 national member federations in 27 European countries** (24 EU & EFTA and Turkey), it represents, without discrimination, construction enterprises

- of all sizes (from one person builders / craftsmen and SMEs through to large international firms),
- from all building and civil engineering specialities,
- engaged in all kinds of working methods (whether operating on the basis of a direct contract with the client, as general / main contractors or as sub-contractors).

This **wide-ranging representativeness** was officially recognised in several studies undertaken on behalf of the European Commission, so that since the creation of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue «Construction» in 1999, FIEC has been the Social Partner representing employers.

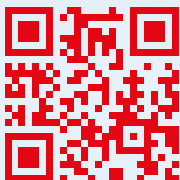
The European construction industry contributes **9% to the EU GDP** and employs **14.5 million people in 3 million enterprises**, most of which are SMEs with less than 20 operatives.

*“In order to take advantage of the rapidly growing international construction market, European international contractors need the full support of the EU’s external trade and financing instruments to be able to compete on a level playing field with its global competitors.”*

**Philippe Dessoy**, EIC President

*“The construction sector is the essential partner to deal with today’s challenges: building sustainable and climate resilient infrastructure creating “zero energy” buildings and smart/digital cities; and equipping existing workers with new skills whilst attracting young people into a modern, innovative industry, giving them an exciting long-term career with prospects. The construction industry will provide the appropriate solutions for better living and working environments, mobility and economic growth in Europe.”*

**Kjetil Tønning**, FIEC President



**FIEC - European Construction Industry Federation**

aisbl - International non-profit-making association  
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(BE 0688 919.140)

EU Transparency Register: 92221016212-42

Avenue Louise 225- B-1050 Brussels

T +32(0)2 514.55.35

F +32(0)2 511.02.76

info@fiec.eu

@FIEC\_Brussels FIEC EU

[www.fiec.eu](http://www.fiec.eu)