Appeal by the construction industry for a rapid and sustainable recovery

In 2019 the construction industry represented 9,5% of the EU27 gross domestic product, 12,7 Million workers and 3 million companies, most of which are SMEs with less than 20 workers. In addition, construction activities contribute to the overall economy via a strong economic and employment multiplier effect.

Buildings, during their operational phase, are responsible for approximately 40% of energy consumption and 36% of CO_2 emissions in the EU. Hence, as recognised in the European Green Deal, they offer a great opportunity for energy efficiency and emissions reduction.

Within this framework it is obvious that without the construction sector the European Union cannot respond to its main challenges in terms of competitiveness, youth unemployment, digital economy, energy efficiency and energy poverty, circular economy, affordable housing, climate change, clean mobility and connected infrastructure etc.

Stimulating construction activities needs to be at the heart of economic recovery plans both at EU and national levels.

In order to ensure this, the EU sectoral social partners of the construction industry, the EFBWW (European Federation of Buildings and Wood Workers) and FIEC (European Construction Industry Federation), together with EBC (European Builders Confederation), Construction Products Europe, Housing Europe, UIPI (International Union of Property Owners) and EuroACE (EU Alliance of companies for energy efficiency in Buildings) :

1. **Welcome** the new recovery instrument "Next Generation EU" proposed by the European Commission and its tight linkage to the objectives of the European Green Deal. We urge the Heads of State and Government and the Member States to rapidly approve it and robustly implement all its various components.
   The proposed amounts of funding are a good starting point and can get us on the road to ensure that the consequences of the pandemic do not drive the EU into a social and economic disaster.

2. **Ask** that the adequate policy framework, instruments and procedures be put in place (including fast-track procedures, the application of adequate environmental and social criteria and the rejection of abnormally low tenders in public procurement), in order to ensure that Member States can make the best possible use of the funding available and that such funding effectively reaches the real economy in the shortest possible time frame.
   A rapid and sustainable recovery, based on the creation of decent and quality jobs, can only be achieved if private and public investment is facilitated and if equity levels in companies are rapidly restored.

3. **Underline** the need to involve the European and national social partners of the construction industry as well as other stakeholders from the construction ecosystem in the implementation and application of the European and national recovery packages to ensure that the measures are targeted and effective.

4. **Fully support** the need to focus investment on the success of Europe's green and digital transitions and in particular on the sustainable renovation of the building stock in the EU. Moreover, the EU also requires sustainable investment in the maintenance of existing infrastructure and in the construction of new climate-proof and resilient infrastructure and buildings, in order to reduce the environmental impact of our way of life and to make the EU more competitive. This will require flexible fiscal and budgetary rules at EU and national level to allow public authorities to be the driver of such investment programmes.

5. **Underline** the need to focus priorities and investments on increased training and education programmes for the re-skilling and up-skilling of workers enabling them to cope with changing market needs.

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EurACE 20 YEARS
THE EUROPEAN ALLIANCE OF COMPANIES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS

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