

Immediate release

Press release

14th October 2015

EBC 25th anniversary

EBC supports the involvement of more women and young people in construction

Brussels, 14th October 2015 – Yesterday evening the European Builders Confederation (EBC) celebrated its 25 year anniversary with a photo exhibition and a dinner in the European Parliament on involving women and young people to make construction SMEs more inclusive. The exhibition and the dinner were co-hosted by four MEPs: Anne Sander, Sofia Ribeiro, Catherine Stihler and Silvia Costa. The Employment Minister of Luxembourg – currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU – Nicolas Schmit and DG JUST Director for Equality Salla Saastamoinen were the keynote speakers of the dinner. The exhibition featured photos depicting the passions, the efforts and the stories of young people and women working in construction trades. It shows how they got involved in the sector and what their take on the future is.

Opening the celebration, Patrick Liébus, President of the European Builders Confederation (EBC), said *“In the photo exhibition it is revealing and inspiring to learn the stories of all these talented people, each of them with a different path but all very similar for their passion and ambition. We wanted to bring their experiences and stories to the European Parliament to let them speak about how varied and rewarding working in our sector can be.”*

Patrick Liébus continued *“The construction sector is in urgent need of new talented and skilled people. There is a skills shortage in the construction industry for both specialist and general professional figures. In certain countries the sector does not have enough apprentices to replace retiring workers and cope with demand. At the same time, unemployment remains in double digits in the EU as a whole.”*

More than 23 million people are out of work, with youth and long-term unemployment being a source of particular concern. The EU youth unemployment rate is more than double the overall unemployment rate.*

Patrick Liébus said *“Only 10% of the construction sector is composed of women and less than 1% of young women. Just 8% of the sector are young people. These figures are incredibly low. However, EBC is fully committed to triggering a change in this situation. The sector has the capability to integrate women and young people, who are not well represented in construction and who are by and large more at risk of unemployment. Women and young people are the future of the sector.”*

On this occasion DG GROW also held the award ceremony for the winners of the European video competition [“Build Europe with us”](#) in cooperation with EBC. The competition was launched to encourage young talent to join the construction sector. Patrick Liébus concluded *“We are very pleased to meet the winners of DG GROW’s video competition and honoured to welcome this ceremony within our Anniversary celebration. I would like to thank the European Commission for its trust and collaboration.”*

- Ends -

Notes

* The EU rate of youth unemployment (15 to 25 years old) is 20.7% compared with 9% of the overall rate.

Links

To know more about EBC’s commitments for women and young people, [check out this press release](#)

More information about these events [can be found here](#).

Note to editors

Established in 1990, the European Builders Confederation - EBC - is a European professional organisation representing national associations of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises working in the construction sector. Through its national members, EBC represents 2 million construction microenterprises and SMEs. EBC is a member of UEAPME (the European association of micro-enterprises and SMEs), on behalf of which it chairs the UEAPME Construction Forum.

The construction sector is of vital importance to the European economy. With 3 million enterprises, an annual turnover of around € 1600 billion and a total direct workforce of 13 million, the construction sector contributes at around 10% to the GDP of the European Union.

99.9% of the European construction sector is composed of small and medium-sized companies, which produce 80% of the construction industry's output. Small enterprises (less than 50 employees) are responsible for 60% of the production and employ 70% of the sector's working population.

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