

Building resilience across the European construction sector amid the Covid-19 crisis. Outcome of discussions with EU Commissioner Thierry Breton

Further to the sector's [outreach](#), Commissioner Thierry Breton invited FIEC, EBC and Construction Products Europe representatives to discuss the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in the construction sector and possible ways forward to help the industry working through this crisis and efficiently prepare for recovery.

All agreed that health and safety of workers, employees, contractors, customers, suppliers, and communities is an absolute priority. Many actions have been taken across the entire construction value chain in all Member States. However, the sector faces a significant disparity of uncoordinated measures across the region. Dr Scheuch, CEO of Wienerberger, underlined that a functioning single market must be maintained and that, for the benefit of Europe at large, construction supply chains must remain operational, of course in full respect of all health and safety measures and rules that have been established across Europe.

In order to overcome the ongoing crisis, it will be fundamental to further build-up confidence in private and public investments in housing, renovation and infrastructure. Mr Pierre-André de Chalendar, CEO of Saint-Gobain, explained that energy renovation of our building stock must be included in the recovery plans. Indeed, this short-term measure will stimulate and accelerate the recovery and the announced EU renovation wave could deliver those comfortable buildings that our citizens aspire to; it can significantly contribute to the EU climate objective and restore social cohesion in societies that are deeply affected by the crisis. Lastly, he reminded all that there is a huge risk of bankruptcies of firms of all sizes and that we must provide support as the entire construction industry value chain, the biggest employer in EU, in order to allow it to restart as soon as possible.

Our President, Cédric de Meeûs, thanks Commissioner Breton for the opportunity to work with us to ensure that the construction sector builds resilience throughout the crisis and can continue to be a needed central pillar of the European economy; thanks our colleagues from FIEC, EBC and CECE for the proactive collaboration in these difficult times; and wishes to remind us all that the objective must be to protect employees and partners, while maintaining the construction supply chain working in full respect of all health and safety measure that are necessary and have been put in place.

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