

European Federation  
of Building  
and Woodworkers



# PACT FOR SKILLS

## A Pact for Skills in Construction by the EU sectoral Social Partners, EFBWW and FIEC in cooperation with EBC

### PREAMBLE:

The EU construction industry represents 9.5% of EU GDP (€1,324 billion) and 6.1% of EU total employment (12.7 million workers in about 3.2 million enterprises)<sup>1</sup>.

Having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, which is the EU's compass for a social and inclusive recovery and for just transitions towards climate neutrality and a digital Europe;

Recognising that the digital economy of today and tomorrow must have people at its heart;

Recalling that with the European Green Deal, in which the Renovation Wave will play a key role, Europe has marked its ambition to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050;

Firmly believing that knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) are key for both people and companies to unlock opportunities for more and better jobs with good working conditions, as well as growth and competitiveness, as laid out in the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, and vocational education and training (VET) is an individual right that aims personal growth, independence and citizenship;

Highlighting the important role of workers, companies and social partners in identifying KSC needs and supporting development of relevant KSC;

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1. According to the FIEC statistical report 2020

Underlining in this respect that construction social partners are already very much involved in the fields of VET and qualifications, including reskilling and upskilling the workforce, via targeted projects, at EU or national/regional/local levels, as well as specific policy initiatives at the sectoral social dialogue;

Recognising however that such commitments represent both challenges and opportunities, considering the specificities of the construction industry, which make the issue of VET both crucial and complex to address (i.e. fragmentation of the sector, lack of qualified workforce in almost all Member States, need to improve the image of the profession, etc.)

Highlighting the importance of the Construction Blueprint project, which is aimed at facilitating and strengthening the matching of new and future KSC and occupational needs in the sector in the fields of energy efficiency, circular economy and digitalisation with the construction VET curricula.

Acknowledging that the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected the construction industry, especially in some EU countries where activity has been put at a stand-still, showing the importance of the mobility of workers with good conditions and, wherever applicable, equal treatment, goods and services within the EU and swift action towards a fair and resilient recovery;

We welcome the Pact for Skills initiated by the European Commission to mobilise a concerted effort among private and public partners for quality investment in VET and KSC for all working age people across the Union, and we shall respect and uphold the following key principles:

- 1. Building strong partnerships, including with VET institutions**
- 2. Monitoring occupational supply/demand and anticipating KSC needs**
- 3. Working against discrimination**
- 4. Attracting more young people and women in the sector**
- 5. Promoting a culture of lifelong learning for all, supported by adapted incentives**

## **BUILDING CONCRETE COMMITMENTS**

In addition to respecting and upholding the key principles, the signatories of this Charter are committed to implement the upskilling and/or reskilling actions that each stakeholder has chosen, in order to bring the key principles of the Pact to life. Although the situation varies significantly from one country to the other, the ambition is to upskill and reskill overall at least 25% of the workforce of the construction industry in the next 5 years, to reach the target of 3 million workers. The training provided differs from country to country and it can comprise of short-time and long-time courses.

Taking into account their structure and role, whether at European, national, regional and/or local level, the signatories will choose amongst the following commitments those which are the most appropriate to match their own needs in terms of upskilling and reskilling.

They should also indicate QUALITATIVE key performance indicators (KPIs) – and, if possible, QUANTITATIVE KPIs as well – to monitor their own commitment. An indicative list of KPIs could cover, for example:

- Indicating the number of people being trained within the construction industry in their respective countries;
- Geographic coverage of VETs
- Number of companies that provide training and apprenticeships
- Participation of women and youth in VET and apprenticeships programs
- Participation in courses on digital and green KSC
- Apprenticeship and VET programmes started and completed
- Having a national action plan for one or more goals mentioned in the Charter, which is supported by both national employers' and workers' associations;
- Number of awareness raising campaigns for VET opportunities completed

## 1. Building strong partnerships, including with VET institutions

- At national level and according to each national context, a wide range of stakeholders may be involved, notably social partners, vocational education and training providers, public authorities, researchers, public or private employment services, chambers of commerce or other intermediary paritarian bodies.
- Such stakeholders, gathered within an informal partnership, cooperate on European, or national, or regional or local level, as appropriate.
- A proactive role of each partner is ensured.
- The members of the partnership have an open dialogue and share and exchange knowledge to ensure high quality of the training offer including quality of teachers/trainers and of the training programmes.
- The partnership builds its action on tested tools, existing best practices, but also aims at developing innovative solutions.
- Industrial relations in the construction industry are promoted and strengthened, as well as solid cooperation with the national VET and educational bodies are being built.
- Where they already exist, paritarian institutions in the construction industry should be promoted and developed further. In those countries where such paritarian institutions don't exist yet and where there is an interest to set them up, specific assistance should be provided.

## 2. Monitoring occupational supply/demand and anticipating KSC needs

- KSC demand and supply (both job-related and transversal) are regularly monitored, as far as possible, in particular in the fields of digitalisation, energy efficiency and circular economy,
- KSC anticipation takes into account the need to support the digital and green transitions in the construction industry, the need of attraction young people and women in the sector and the consequences of ageing of the workforce.

- Monitoring of KSC demand and supply looks at needs for workforce and companies at regional, national and European level.
- KSC anticipation includes the fast changes on the labour market and provides relevant and timely information on the skills needs.
- KSC anticipation takes account of regional, national and European developments.
- The monitoring mechanism includes not only job-related but also transversal and basic KSC needs.
- The KSC needs identified are built on both job-related and soft competences.
- All partners involved ensure the long-term implementation and sustainability of the outcomes of the Construction Blueprint project according to their national needs and conditions.

### **3. Working against discrimination**

- Equal opportunities for everyone are actively promoted
- Inclusive and respectful environment is ensured
- Promote equal access to high quality upskilling/reskilling opportunities in the target population, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, etc.
- Ensure the validation and recognition of acquired KSC (including work experience, non-formal training or micro credentials)

### **4. Attracting more young people and women in the sector**

- Tailored activities towards specific target groups are encouraged;
- The needs and capacities of individuals are taken into account, including their personal and vocational needs (e.g. mid-life career change, work-life balance);
- Develop awareness raising campaigns about career opportunities
- Improve the image of the sector
- Promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in VET and apprenticeships programs

### **5. Promoting a culture of lifelong learning for all, supported by adapted incentives**

- Employers and workers are made aware of the value and benefits of upskilling and reskilling. Workers are encouraged to improve their KSC according to the specific needs of their job and occupation.
- Initiatives should be developed for and with workers and be supported from all management levels.
- Guidance and career development support are made available.
- Appropriate financial resources are deployed, with public funding support at all levels (EU, national, regional, local).
- Regular monitoring and quality assessment are ensured.

- special attention is put on upskilling and reskilling of targeted groups with specific needs (in particular older and low-qualified workers).
- Support is provided to management and staff to learn and to overcome barriers like lack of time, funds or information on upskilling or reskilling opportunities.
- Sectoral paritarian bodies are further developed and their action promoted in the field of training; additional support is provided in CEEC countries, where such schemes are not yet in place.
- Financial and non-financial incentives for companies to provide upskilling and reskilling to employers and staff are put in place.
- Dedicated support (e.g. tools, services and funding) is made available to micro, small or medium companies to create and sustain a learning culture in the organisation for both management and staff.
- EU social partners should work closely with the EU Institutions to set up an online platform providing more guidance on available funds and schemes for upskilling and/or reskilling initiatives in the construction sector (one-stop shop).
- Actions on quality apprenticeships, traineeships and work placements are developed jointly between employers and workers.
- Develop schemes that combine theoretical and practical training
- The acquisition of new KSC should benefit from improved mutual recognition across the EU in order to unlock workers' mobility.

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List of signatories



Thomas Bauer  
FIEC President



Johan Lindholm  
EFBWW President



Rinaldo Incerci  
EBC President



**EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY FEDERATION**

AVENUE DES ARTS, 20  
1000 BRUSSELS  
BELGIUM  
TEL. 32 (0)2 514 55 35  
info@fiec.eu  
www.fiec.eu

European Federation  
of Building  
and Woodworkers



**EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF  
BUILDING AND WOODWORKERS**

RUE ROYALE 45, BOX 1  
1000 BRUSSELS  
BELGIUM  
TEL. +32 (0)2 227 10 40  
info@efbww.eu  
www.efbww.eu



**EUROPEAN BUILDERS CONFEDERATION**

ROND-POINT SCHUMAN 2-4  
1040 BRUSSELS  
BELGIUM  
TEL. +32 (0)2 403 37 19  
secretariat@ebc-construction.eu  
www.ebc-construction.eu