



# EFBWW NEWSLETTER

## News from the EFBWW

The EFBWW wishes you an excellent New Year and looks forward to continuing the good cooperation, fighting together for social progress and social justice!

### Marina leaving EFBWW

On 30 November the EFBWW Executive Committee took place. It was a special and last one for our colleague Marina Saegerman, who retired in December 2022 after more than 41 years of dedicated service to the federation. During the Executive Committee, all the affiliates expressed their gratitude towards Marina's support and professionalism during all these years. A big thank you from the affiliates and the EFBWW family!



getting more political attention. It is our firm aim to put subcontracting high on the political agenda today and in the coming years. We need answers!

### EFBWW speaks at the Left conference on subcontracting

At an event organised by The Left on 7 December in the European Parliament, Sylvia Borelli presented the results of her research "[Subcontracting: exploitation by design](#)". In her research, Borelli looked into the changing characteristics of subcontracting and how it has turned more and more into a business model that leads to social dumping. Finally, she also presented some possible answers. In the next round, EFBWW General Secretary, Tom Deleu, was invited to react to the study, presenting the situation in construction today. He underlined that the problems related to subcontracting were getting more serious, with more and stronger cases of exploitation and social dumping turning more and more into severe labour crimes, including human trafficking and bonded labour. Finally, he also presented the demands, aims and objectives of the EFBWW subcontracting campaign. It is clear that the topic of subcontracting is

### Updates on the subcontracting campaign

"Who's the boss? Stop exploitation in subcontracting chains!" This is the slogan of the EFBWW campaign on subcontracting which calls for a new dedicated European approach for better rules on subcontracting and their enforcement. The preparation of the campaign is in full progress. We are collecting and finalising all the campaign materials. Next steps? Deciding on the detailed campaign calendar and planning the specific actions, including a Week of Action full of events, activities and demonstrations end of May/June (tbc). [Stay tuned](#) and do not hesitate to reach out for any additional info.

### Update on asbestos: Call for Action

MEP Veronique Trillet-Lenoir (Renew Europe) published the Asbestos report on 11 January. The draft report is the proposal for the European Parliament's position on the Commission's draft Asbestos

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Directive. Mrs Trillet-Lenoir's report covers many of the central demands of the previous legislative initiative report of the Parliament, but is unfortunately supporting the Commission's proposal for a 10,000 fibre limit value. From an EFBWW point of view, the Parliament should stick to its 1,000 fibre proposal. This is not only because of its technical feasibility, but because it is of especially high importance in connection with the European Renovation Wave. A possible further reduction of the limit value in the next seven years will not protect the millions of workers and other people exposed now. The deadline for introducing amendments to the Report is 3<sup>rd</sup> February and the final voting in the EP-Plenary session is scheduled for April. Still some time for trying to convince MEPs to opt for the 1,000 fibre limit value.

### Joint activity report EFBWW-BWI

2022 highlighted almost all the existential threats to humanity and our planet. While the world just started to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, humanity faced new crises caused by wars and military conflicts, the uprising of authoritarian regimes, and climate crises. In this year full of challenges, EFBWW and BWI joined forces and cooperated more than ever to defend workers' rights on numerous levels. The two organisations took joint actions, such as the joint Ukraine solidarity meeting and appealed to all affiliates to donate to the "Peace in Ukraine Fund". *"Both federations stood together with the people and workers of Ukraine, campaigned for occupational health and safety to be recognized as a fundamental workers' right, promoted gender equality, built networks within multinational corporations, protected migrant*

*workers' rights."* – said Ambet Yuson, BWI General Secretary and Tom Deleu, EFBWW General Secretary. [More here.](#)

### EU Forest Strategy for 2030 - joint position with EFFAT and IndustriAll

EFBWW adopted a joint position on the [EU Forest Strategy for 2030](#) with EFFAT and IndustriAll Europe. The position addresses issues of common concern such as protection of forests; promotion of forest-based value chains, cascade use of wood and sufficient access to wood as raw material; balanced approach between forest as carbon sink and forest-based products; employment, education and training and social dialogue; and finally, investment in research and technologies, and forest management systems. [More here.](#)

### EFBWW and BWI Conference in Lisbon

A joint EFBWW/BWI multinational companies (MNC) conference was held in Lisbon on 6-7 December. There were over 40 participants mainly from Europe, but also from other continents including North America, Africa and Asia. The purpose of the conference was to develop joint strategies, share information on MNC's operating in our sectors in order to defend social democracy and improve workers'



rights at both European and global levels. The keynote speaker was Marc Saxer, FES foundation, who gave a presentation on Megatrends in the sectors represented by EFBWW and BWI. Workshops took place covering areas such as compliance mechanisms and due diligence, campaigning and organising, EWCs/IFAs and global networks. The conference endorsed that further development and coordination of joint activities should take place to strengthen both EWCs and IFAs.

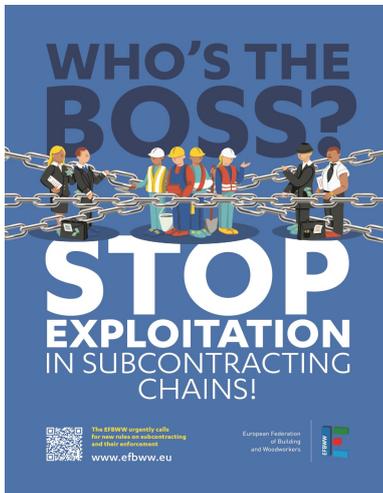
### Challenges of the cement industry

The EFBWW ad hoc cement group met on 14 December. For a couple of years, the cement industry in the EU has been facing huge imports from Turkey and north Africa. The major challenge is obviously the pressure to reduce CO2 emissions. This will have an impact on cement production and employment in Europe as well as on their credibility in local communities. All members of the working group reported about plans to close and size down production, but also about exchanges with local NGOs and citizens on the companies' green engagement (Spain).

### Report on major abuses during EFBWW Executive Committee

At the EFBWW Executive Committee on 30 November, Prof. Sophie Robin-Olivier delivered a presentation on the exploitation of the posting rules. She explained that the posting rules are supposed to provide a correct way for businesses to deliver services in other Member

States, but in reality, they have developed an increasingly abusive character, particularly in the construction sector.



At the same time, Mrs. Szonja Szabo, a specialist on human trafficking at Europol, outlined the activities of Europol to tackle human trafficking and labour exploitation and was happy to note that the ELA can facilitate cooperation between Member States. She also added that for Europol, labour exploitation in the context of human trafficking is hard to identify – often trafficked workers do not see themselves as being exploited – and therefore underreported. The EFBWW is indeed tackling this issue through its [Subcontracting campaign](#), aiming to show the negative impact of subcontracting in the labour market and its consequences for workers and to influence policymakers. [Here](#) to know more about the discussion on major abuses during the last EFBWW Executive Committee.

### ELA campaign on construction

The newly established European Labour Authority has chosen 2023 to be the year to launch its campaign on the construction sector. The EFBWW will be working with the Agency to get workers' priorities

to the forefront of the campaign. We will be supporting an effective information dissemination campaign for workers to know their rights when moving countries within the EU for work, as well as supporting concerted and joint inspections with officials from ELA and other Member States. Combatting exploitation and the undercutting of wages and standards are exactly what we believe the EU should give more attention to. We welcome, therefore, this work of ELA, but it must be effective and the EFBWW will be following these activities closely, ensuring that a better deal for workers happens.

### CBAM and revised ETS coming soon into force

On 19 December 2022, the EU legislators reached provisional agreements on the directives on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the EU Emission Trading System (ETS). The final and official text is not yet published. The most crucial issues to be negotiated were the phasing-out of free allowances of ETS certificates for European producers and the phasing-in of CBAM tax for importers. The timing is set as follows: Free allowances will be reduced according to a trajectory starting with 2.5% in 2026 and ending with 100% in 2034. Consequently, CBAM will start with a gradual tax increase in 2026 and by 2034 importers to the EU will pay in full. The price for the CBAM tax will be linked to the average trading price of EU ETS certificates. Members of the EFBWW ad hoc cement group are worried that CBAM will be applied only three years from now.

### Revision EWC directive

The EU Parliament was scheduled to vote on the Denis Radtke report on 19 January in Strasbourg, but due to

the national manifestation in France on that day, the vote was postponed. There are concerns regarding amendments being tabled by Renew Europe and the EPP groups regarding wordings that would diminish the role of Trade Unions. The vote is now expected to take place on 2 February. In the interim, affiliates are urged to continue to lobby their national MEPs in support of the vote.

### Agreement signed with Bouygues

Following a meeting on 1 December in Paris, the EFBWW has now concluded an agreement with Bouygues setting out the process for the revision of the EWC agreement, following the acquisition of Equans. There were serious concerns about the future employment status of workers in the group and how restructuring would be carried out. The agreement has now been reached on the same social guarantees for all workers and no compulsory redundancies for a period of 5 years. The integration of Equans workers will take place under the most favourable conditions for all involved and a dedicated committee will be set up to monitor the proper application of social guarantees. A revision of the Bouygues EWC will take place to improve its functioning and to reflect the realities of the new group following the integration of Equans which also recognises the role of the EFBWW as the most representative social partner.

### EU Social Dialogue Review: publication of the Commission package

After a two-year consultation process, the EU Commission published on 25 January 2023 a draft Council

recommendation targeting national social dialogue and a communication on the European social dialogue ([read here](#)). Some positive proposals in the draft recommendation include Members States' commitment to respect fundamental rights and freedoms of association and collective bargaining including on pay; to involve social partners fully in policy

-making, in a timely manner with all relevant information to ensure proper consultation and to promote collective bargaining coverage; and finally, to capacity building initiatives for social partners, including use of the European Social Fund. On the other hand, the Commission's communication is addressing to the EU sectoral social dialogue and

states more regular and ad hoc tripartite meetings, facilitates synergies between existing committees, reaches out to sectors not covered by social dialogue on the EU level, supports the negotiations on social partner agreements and finally installs a Social Dialogue Coordinator in all DGs. Read [here](#) the joint statement of ETUFs.

## Projects

### Blueprint final dissemination event and GA

The Construction Blueprint project is officially coming to an end! On 21 and 22 February, the General Assembly and the final dissemination event of the Erasmus+ project will take place, in Brussels and online. During the final event, the main findings of the project will be presented, as well as the tools to equip the European youth and the construction workforce with skills for the future. The [agenda](#) of the final event is full of interesting and engaging panels such as the Roundtables on Skills for Digitalisation, Energy Efficiency, and Circular Economy and the Panel on the Pact for Skills for the Construction sector: Opportunities and challenges.



inform the development of policies affecting these companies and workers. The Seminar was built on over a year's work, collecting and analysing data on this topic carried out by the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. Represent-

### FELM 5<sup>th</sup> Steering Group and workshop in January

The EFBWW, together with FIEC, hosted a seminar for the joint project on the future of the European labour market in construction (FELM), which is an ongoing initiative examining the effect of the growing number of third-country national companies and workers participating in the construction sector in Europe. The aim is to better

atives from the social partners listened to presentations by the researchers and contributed with recommendations and conclusions to the findings. The suggestions will feed into the project and will culminate in a final conference on 25 April in Vienna.

## News from our affiliates

### Bulgaria



#### New CBA in construction

On 28 November the new CBA for the "Construction" branch was signed between the social partners from the Federation "Construction, Industry and Water Supply" – "Podkrepa", the Federation of Independent Construction Trade Unions and the Bulgarian Construction Chamber.

The agreement includes a minimum wage for the industry which should be a coefficient of 1.4 of the

minimum wage for the country. This change is also a 15% increase in the wages for the construction sector. In addition, a commitment was made to create a specialized "Professional training and qualification" fund. Moreover, a "Conciliation Commission and Voluntary Labour Arbitration" fund was established. Among the new agreed points was that the basic paid leave should be no less than 23 working days.

### Turkey



#### Yol-IS Congress in Ankara

The Congress, which celebrated the union's 60th anniversary, witnessed discussions on privatization, subcontracting and flexible employment policies. In Turkey, workers are facing economic and social problems as a result of the neoliberal economic policies implemented in recent years. Ramazan Agar, who was re-elected as the President of YOL-IS, stated



that the decades of experience of the trade union movement have shown that the right to organize and collective bargaining are inalienable rights for workers and therefore must be guaranteed even in the midst of multiple global crises, and the struggle for a fairer world where fundamental human rights and freedoms are threatened. At the YOL-IS Congress, which had as its slogan “Secure Employment, A Safe Life” the union also adopted a series of structural and strategic resolutions in order to increase its organisation capacity. With the participation of over 40 international representatives, the event was a platform for cross-border trade union solidarity and experience sharing.

## Denmark

### 1000 building workers to support start of CBA negotiations in construction

Collective bargaining between the social partners within the private sector has just begun in Denmark. For construction, this regards approximately 80,000 workers within 3F’s area. These negotiations have



already been called ‘the toughest ever’, which should be seen in the light of both the inflation crisis and the new Danish centre government which decided to abolish a holiday to finance military armament. 3F Construction has been preparing for a long time: In Spring 2022 they toured the country to discuss the big themes of their collective agreements with members and completed a survey regarding the demands of the collective agreement. On January 12, 3F kicked off negotiations with their employers, and over a thousand construction workers from all over the country showed up to show their support for the negotiators. 3F Chair Claus von Elling and Co-chair Palle Bisgaard declared “Even though it was raining heavily, it sends a clear message to the employers that we and our members are ready to fight for a good collective agreement.”

## Italy

### Government’s liberalisation of subcontracting will lead to more accidents, exploitation and infiltration by crime

On 16 December, the Italian government approved, in preliminary examination, the draft text of the new code on public procurement. The text will be submitted to Parliament on 8th February. According to the Italian trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL, although the text retains some positive innovations which have been implemented thanks to the prior discussion with the trade unions (separation of labour costs from the price reductions, the centrality of the collective labour agreement, equal treatment of contract and subcontracted workers,...) it still

has some important critical aspects. First of all, it liberalises cascade subcontracting without any rules, with the risk of making control and responsibility along the subcontracting chain more difficult, with obvious risks for workers' safety. Another critical point introduced in the new text, to which the trade unions are firmly opposed, is the raising of the thresholds for direct awarding of contracts (i.e. without tenders), which is also contrary to the recommendations of the European Union. CGIL, CISL and UIL hope that the Italian Parliament will be able to make the right corrections to a text that must aim at qualification, and competition based on quality, protection of workers' rights and health and safety.

## UK

### Strikes and anti-union legislation

Wage increases are key for working people to maintain a decent standard of living through the cost-of-living crisis. Yet, following years of stagnating wages, the UK government is currently attempting to rush measures through parliament intended to severely limit the right to strike in several sectors. These proposals risk contravening International Labour Organisation and Council of Europe standards to which the UK has signed up. The right to take collective action is a fundamental right that cannot be separated from the right to negotiate and conclude collective agreements. In a [joint reaction](#), the EFBWW and other ETUFs have condemned the UK government’s conflictual approach and expressed their support Britain’s striking workers and their trade unions. To oppose the government plans the UK

trade unions announced a general strike for 1st February.

## Spain



### Labour Inspectorate sanctions construction company following UGT FICA complaint

In June 2022, UGT FICA, learned that Dragados, a Spanish construction company, was forcing its workers to work beyond the permitted working hours, when the calendar approved in the Provincial Agreement established that during Summer time, the starting time could not be later than 7.00 am and the leaving time could not be later than 2.00 pm, due to the incredibly high temperatures in the Spanish region. UGT FICA filed a complaint to the Spanish Labour Inspectorate, who verified and confirmed it. The Labour Inspectorate agreed with UGT FICA and

sanctioned Dragados for not complying with the intensive working day in construction. The Secretary General of UGT FICA Córdoba, Pedro Téllez commented "we are talking about a province where temperatures can reach extreme levels, so it is essential that the lives of workers are always put before the selfishness and irresponsibility of companies".

## France



### Strike and demonstration day against pension reform

On 19 January, one million protesters took to the streets to manifest against the French pension reform that proposes to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64, and increase the years of contributions required for a full pension. This pension reform will hit all workers hard, especially those who started working early, and it is going

to reinforce gender inequalities. For workers in the construction and wood sectors, this would translate into worse health and safety status, given the arduous conditions of work. The EFBWW expressed full solidarity and support to the French trade unions and workers.



In this section the EFBWW gives the possibility to its affiliates to share their stories. If you have news or contributions, do not hesitate to contact [ibuttu@efbww.eu](mailto:ibuttu@efbww.eu).

## Miscellaneous

### Esther Lynch elected new General Secretary of ETUC/ start of ETUC Congress preparations

On 6 December the ETUC ExCo elected Esther Lynch as the new General Secretary. At the same ETUC ExCo meeting the candidates for Deputies to the General Secretary and Confederal Secretaries presented themselves. ETUC is preparing for its congress taking place in Berlin on 23-26 May 2023. EFBWW had put forward amendment proposals for the draft Action Programme highlighting issues such as a necessary legal framework for subcontracting, public procurement, posting of workers, and health and safety.

### Standardisation of Ladders

Ladders are still a tool used far too often in construction work and many other professions and working on ladders is often a reason for falls from a height. The ETUC, therefore, commissioned a study to examine window-cleaning ladders and loft ladders with regard to their safety. The study covers the testing of loft ladders and showed that humidity has a considerable influence on the loosening of the screw connections. The use of locking devices to prevent screws from loosening is therefore recommended. Furthermore, an inclusion of loft ladders in the EU Con-

struction Products Regulation is an additional measure to increase the underlying safety requirements. The second research object is window-cleaning ladders. These are often supported by a ladder foot to increase stability. The study showed that a reduction of the ladder foot decreases the stability of the ladder. Trade unions are now trying to influence the related discussion in the responsible technical Committee of CEN (TC 93 'Ladders') Trying to avoid reduction of the ladder foot.

### *EFBWW Meeting schedule 2023*

6 February 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - Joint woodworking and furniture session	Brussels, Belgium
13 February 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - VET	Brussels, Belgium
15 February 2023	EFBWW Presidium	Birmingham, UK
15 - 16 February (full day)	Joint EFBWW-BWI Presidium	Birmingham, UK
22 February 2023	Blueprint project - final event	Brussels, Belgium
1 March 2023 (full day)	European Commission , High Level Conference on Labour Cards/SID-cards	Brussels, Belgium - Hybrid
2 March 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Construction - WG OSH	Brussels, Belgium
3 March 2023	EFBWW Congress Preparation Committee	Online
22-23 March 2023	STIC II project - Seminar Building materials/Cement sector	Marseille, France
28 March 2023 (full day)	OSH Coordination group	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
3 April 2023 (full day)	EWC Coordination Group	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
4-5 April 2023	STIC II project - Seminar Construction sector	Ghent, Belgium
17 April 2023	EFBWW Congress Preparation Committee	Online
20 April 2023 (full day)	Standing Committee Wood/Furniture	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
25 April 2023 (full day)	FELM final seminar	Vienna, Austria
28 April 2023	International Workers' Memorial Day	
4 May 2023 (TBC)	EFBWW - Just Transition Centre Workshop (SCB + SCW/F)	Online
16 May 2023 (full day)	Standing Committee Building	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
17 May 2023 (full day)	EFBWW - FES workshop Future of work (SCB + SCW/F)	Brussels, Belgium
22 May 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Wood - Plenary	Brussels, Belgium - Hybrid
23 May 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Furniture - Plenary	Brussels, Belgium - Hybrid
23-26 May 2023	ETUC Congress	Berlin, Germany
30 May - 7 June 2023 (TBC)	EFBWW Week of action for the Subcontracting campaign	Brussels, Belgium
31 May - 1 June 2023	BWI World Board	Geneva, Switzerland
5 June 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Construction - WG Employment	Brussels, Belgium
6 June 2023 (full day)	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
14-15 June 2023	STIC II project - Seminar Wood/Furniture/Forestry	Berlin, Germany
2 October 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - Joint woodworking and furniture session	Brussels, Belgium
3 October 2023 (full day)	OSH Coordination group/Open expert meeting	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
11 October 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Construction - WG VET/YOUTH	Online
9 November 2023 (full day)	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
12-14 December 2023	EFBWW General assembly	Helsinki, Finland