



EFBWW NEWSLETTER

News from the EFBWW

Turkey: earthquake and solidarity support

On 6 February Turkey and Syria were hit by a severe earthquake. Until now the death toll amounts to more than 50.000. The EFBWW is deeply saddened by this immense loss and has expressed its condolences and sympathy to its affiliate YOL-IS. EFBWW calls on the EU institutions and Member States for urgent support and assistance to the people of Turkey and Syria in these sad and darkest moments. The EFBWW also expects that the Turkish government will do everything it takes to look into allegations related to building crimes using inferior building materials, disregarding earthquake-proof building requirements, and corruption.

Right to Energy Forum 2023

The [Right to Energy Coalition](#) organised its annual event in Brussels on 21-23 February. The event focused on the energy crisis, gas dependency and its impact on people. EFBWW is a member of the coalition and contributed to the event. In the panel on "Delivering a bold EPBD deal"



EFBWW policy officer, Slavica Uzelac, presented EFBWW's position on the revision of the directive and the pitfalls for implementation such as staff shortages and the challenge for the construction sector to meet the renovation needs. Read the full programme [here](#).

First hurdle taken - Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)

On 9 February, the ITRE Committee (Industry, Research, Energy) of the European Parliament (EP) adopted its report on the EPBD. During the 13-16 March plenary, the EP is expected to vote on the report. The overall report of the committee is positive. The most heated debate was about the Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), which indicate the needed level of renovations of buildings to limit energy consumption (read the [newsletter from October 2022](#)). The ITRE committee agreed: Public and non-residential buildings must achieve EPC class E by 2027 and D by 2030 (Commission: class F by 2027 and class E by 2030), Residential buildings must achieve EPC class E by 2030 and D by 2033 (Commission:

class F by 2030 and class E by 2033). However, MEPS do not cover all worst-performing buildings in a country as many exemptions apply, e.g. in case of lack of economic and technical feasibility (costs of materials too high) and the availability of skilled workforce. Given the exemptions, it is expected that MEPS will only affect between 22 and 25% of the current building stock. Read the EP press release [here](#).

Cross-border VET – social dialogue with woodworking and furniture industries

On 13 February, in a dedicated EU social partners' event of the woodworking and furniture industries, participants discussed the overall challenge of staff shortage and lack of attractiveness of the sectors. Valuable input was received by guest speakers from DG Employment and Cedefop. Participants agreed that transnational vocation education and training is a means to boost the attractiveness of the sectors. The European programme Erasmus+ provides support for the European exchange of VET students. However, participants state that the programme is not well known among companies and training providers. EFBWW also stressed the need for improved working conditions, better health and safety measures, as well as fair and decent salaries. The European social partners agree to continue working on the issue of skills and VET and to find solutions

Contents:

News from the EFBWW	1-3
Projects	3-4
News from the affiliates	4-5
Calendar	6

for future challenges due to the transformation into a carbon-neutral economy and further digitalisation. Read the press release [here](#).



New EU Forest Strategy 2030 - social partners' position

The European woodworking and furniture social partners welcome the report by the European Parliament, dated 13 September 2022, on the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. The report highlights the important role that forests play in the creation of green jobs in rural and mountainous areas. Social partners are pleased to see that the strategy sees that it is important to improve the attractiveness of employment in the sector especially in the context of the digital and green transitions of forest-based activities, by attracting young people and female entrepreneurs to the sector and finding investments opportunities for the sector and throughout the value chain. Read full position [here](#).

Commission reviews EU Social dialogue

In January 2023, after a two-year consultation process, the EU Commission published two documents with the intention to strengthen the social dialogue in Europe – a Commission communication on the EU sectoral social dialogue and a draft Council recommendation on national social dialogue. The communication proposes several measures to improve the EU sectoral social dia-

logue such as the establishment of a social dialogue coordinator in each of the Commissions' DGs; support to the negotiations on social partner agreements; facilitating synergies between existing committees and reaching out to sectors not covered by social dialogue on EU level. However, the most controversially discussed issue in the hearings of the past two years remains the financing and the logistics for organising sectoral social dialogue meetings. The communication announces, nonetheless, changes to be discussed with the social partners. The draft Council Recommendation addresses the social dialogue on national level and will need to be adopted by the Council (foreseen date is June 2023). The proposal for a recommendation coming from the Council could trigger improvements at national level, in particular where trade unions are seeking to improve social dialogue and collective bargaining. Read news of DG EMPL [here](#).

Updates on Asbestos

After the European Commission published its proposal for a revision of the workers protection Directive and its Communication dealing with other aspects of the asbestos topic, things started moving forward. The EMPL Committee in the European Parliament published its amendments to the report of rapporteur Mrs Trillet-Lenoir from the ALDE Group. Instead of the proposed limit value of 0.01 fibres/cm³, most groups, including the EPP, propose to keep the original Parliaments demand of a limit value of = 0.001 fibres/cm³. Based on a report of the rapporteur, which already included many of the original EP demands on the protection of workers and all related aspects, many amendments aim to even increase the strength of the report. The vote of the EMPL

Committee is currently scheduled for 14 April. On this day, the EFBWW is planning to organise a small demonstration in front of the European Parliament, to insist on stronger rules to better protect construction workers in relation to asbestos in the midst of the Renovation Wave.

Dennis Radkte EWC proposal/ vote in EP

The EFBWW, together with the colleagues in ETUC and the other ETUFs, welcome the EU Parliament's adoption of the Denis Radkte MEP legislative report on the revision of the European Works Council directive. This addresses key shortcomings in the 2009 recast directive used by MNCs to circumvent workers' information and consultative rights. It is essential that the European Commission takes on board EFBWW long-standing concerns and demands and urgently addresses the European Parliament's calls to improve the rights and prerogatives of EWCs.

Due diligence updates

EFBWW affiliate ACV BIE (Belgium) hosted an event to discuss the implications of the proposed new rules for due diligence in the EU. EFBWW Policy Officer Jonathan Cornah joined a panel to give a European-level perspective on behalf of the Federation, spelling out what this means for the construction industry across the continent. While the ambition of the proposal will create a level playing field, a poor directive risks undermining already established liability schemes in the industry. Moreover, the opportunities represent a challenge for unions to be involved in designing good due diligence procedures in company policies. EFBWW has worked previously to develop a

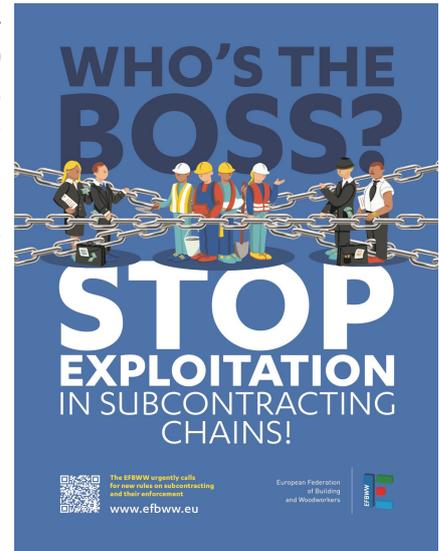
toolbox for trade union representatives and, combined with a good due diligence directive, the fight against unfair and unsafe practices can be stepped up.

Subcontracting campaign

After a long period of preparation, [the campaign](#) will be officially kicked off on 1st March. EFBWW is now coordinating with its affiliates to create maximum visibility for the campaign and draw attention to the issue both at the national and European levels. As part of the Subcon-

tracting campaign, EFBWW will organise a Week of Action from 30 May to 7 June 2023 full of events and insights on subcontracting. The Week of Action will end with a demonstration in Brussels, in which workers, affiliates, and MEPs are welcome to join.

Stay tuned for the latest updates!



Projects

FELM

The joint project of EFBWW and FIEC on the 'Better Functioning of the European Labour Market' (aka FELM) organised a seminar to share views on the project's conclusions and potential policy recommendations. Participants representing trade union and employer organisations attended the seminar, where researchers outlined the research carried out on the project. From better data collection to tackling unfair competition in tenders and protecting labour standards, this project underlines something that EFBWW has long raised at the European level. Current regulations are not adequate to combat labour criminality and exploitative subcontracting arrangements continue to plague the sector. The steering group of the project will meet again next month and put forward recommendations and conclusions. The social partners will host a final conference of the project in Vienna on 25th April.



Blueprint final GA and dissemination event

On 22nd February 2023, the final event of the Erasmus+ project Construction Blueprint for skills took place in Brussels and online. The event was the perfect occasion to present the findings of this 4-year project during three roundtables with high-level panellists dedicated to the skills for digitalisation, circular economy and energy efficiency in construction. In the framework of the Blueprint projects and through the creation of a Sector Skills Alliance (SSA), key European

sectoral organisations and VET providers cooperated to develop innovative instruments to address skills gaps and shortages, and to match skills demand and supply in construction, while supporting the transition towards a sustainable construction sector. Main takeaways in the [joint press release](#) from EFBWW, FIEC and EBC.

Scaffolding project

The EFBWW project on the Scaffolding sector has commenced. On 7th February a second steering group meeting took place. The project partners agreed on the research concept for the country reports. These reports will give insight in various

aspects of the sector, amongst other training in the sector, working conditions, OSH problems, the status of social dialogue or technological changes. Based on the national reports and an overall research report, also informing about the sectors situation at EU level, the consortium will start to elaborate policy

recommendations for the various aspects. At a next meeting the steering group will discuss more in depth standardisation issues relevant for the sector. A series of workshops aiming at discussing the draft policy recommendations will be scheduled for 2024.

News from our affiliates

Italy Congress Fillea CGIL



From 8 to 10 February 2023, the 20th Fillea CGIL Congress was held in Modena with the title: "More Bargaining + Representation = More Democracy". The Congress was attended by more than 500 delegates and, at the end of the Congress, Alessandro Genovesi was confirmed as General Secretary. The Congress came at a complicated time for the future of the construction industry in Italy, which, despite its growth, thanks to the public investments of the NRRP, is facing the first measures of the new (right-wing) Government, without any prior discussion with the social partners, which undermines the future of the sector and the will to protect construction workers. Alongside this, the main issues addressed in the Congress debate were related to the need to govern the green transition of the sector, on the one hand with more stability and quality of work, starting with safety and training, and on the other hand with the

necessary industrial policy for greater qualification of companies. Read [more here](#).

UK

Strikes and anti-strike legislation

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. However, in recent years, basic trade union rights have been under attack in several EU Member States. For this reason, UK trade unions have been striking during the whole month of February.

France

The protests against the pensions reform keep on going

The strike wave continues in France. Protesters are taking 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 a worse health and safety status, given the arduous conditions of work. EFBWW General Secretary, Tom Deleu, joined the French construction unions on 30 January to distribute leaflets to inform construction workers about the pension reforms and called for massive participation in the fol-



lowing strike and manifestation days.

Austria

GBH mission in Brussels: fight against wage/social dumping

30 years ago, the EU introduced the free movement of workers and, after all, this measure led to an exchange of workers and a huge increase in wage and social dumping. Due to its proximity to Slovenia and Hungary, Austria is the first destination country for postings. Reason enough for the Bau-Holz union (GBH), to travel to Brussels and meet with the EU Commissioner for employment and social rights Nicolas Schmit, and other EU institutions. [More here](#)

Sweden

Byggnads – start of CBA Negotiations



On Tuesday 14th of February, Byggnads CBA negotiations started off in a spectacular fashion. Up to 200 members gathered outside of the employer organization’s office to give the Byggnads delegation their support and to demonstrate against work-related crime. Both national TV and radio, together with a range of newspapers, covered the event which made the evening news. President of Byggnads, Johan Lindholm, addressed the crowd and thanked them for coming out and let them know that their support was well needed if Byggnads are to be successful in the upcoming negotiations.

Ireland

Workers won a significant increase in their redundancy payments at the Workplace Relations Commission

In Spring 2022, Irish workers were temporarily transferred to the UK by construction firm Roadbridge, and shortly after, they lost their jobs without notice when the business went into receivership. SIPTU Workers Rights Centre Sector Organiser, Deirdre Canty, said: “They received

their redundancy entitlements under UK legislation however, at the Workplace Relations Commission hearing, SIPTU representatives successfully argued under Section 25 of the Redundancy Payment Act, 1967, that as each worker had worked in Ireland for longer than in the UK that they should have received payment under Irish legislation. A claim for a minimum notice period for the workers was also successful. This resulted in them being awarded up to eight weeks in additional wages.” Canty added: “This is a very significant win for our members and has the potential to have a much broader impact across the industry and on employment rights in general.” [More here](#)

Spain

Rising number of accidents, especially fatal accidents, at work

Spanish affiliate CCOO draws the attention to the alarming surge of accidents in 2022, in particular in the agriculture and construction sectors. Indeed, provisional data for 2022 show 826 deaths at work, 121 more than in 2021. This represents an increase of 17.2% in the number of fatal accidents, which rises to 18.1% when they occur during the working day and 13.1% in the case of accidents when going to and from work. It should be remembered that these provisional figures for fatal accidents will increase when consolidated data are available, and if the trend of 2021 is repeated, the figure would reach around 870 deaths. The incidence rate of fatal accidents during working hours increased by 13.7%, with an increase in all sectors: 89.3% in agriculture, 22.6% in

construction, 2.1% in industry and 3.5% in services. [More here](#)

Luxembourg

Labour shortage in the craft



industry is not inevitable

In a statement OGB-L building, building trades and metal construction union has passed the message that the labour shortage in the craft industry is not inevitable but has been produced by employers.

This statement followed the public complaints of employers’ representatives from the building and craft industries about a lack of workers in various sectors of the craft industry. For OGB-L the shortage of labour and the lack of attractiveness of various sectors are the direct results of the refusal by employer federations to have any serious discussions about upgrading the professions in question, which would involve a real improvement in working conditions and pay. [More here](#)



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.

EFBWW Meeting schedule 2023

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 (a.m.)	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)
30 March 2023 (full day)	EFBWW - FES workshop CEE affiliates to discuss the impact of the green transition on our industries and particularly in the CEE region	Prague, Czech Republic
3 April 2023 (full day)	EWC Coordination Group	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
4-5 April 2023	STIC II project - Seminar Construction sector	Ghent, Belgium
14 April 2023 (a.m)	EFBWW Presidium	Brussels, Belgium
17 April 2023 (a.m.)	EFBWW Congress Preparation Committee	Online
20 April 2023 (full day)	Standing Committee Wood/Furniture	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
24 April 2023 (a.m.)	Green Deal and Construction - EFBWW/Just Transition centre	Online
25 April 2023 (full day)	FELM final seminar	Vienna, Austria
28 April 2023	International Workers' Memorial Day	
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
31 May - 1 June 2023	BWI World Board	Geneva, Switzerland
30 May - 7 June (TBC)	EFBWW Week of Action for the Subcontracting campaign	
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