



EFBWW NEWSLETTER

News from the EFBWW



-1 WEEK TO OUR CONGRESS!

We are a few days away from our big event! From 12 to 14 December, union representatives of construction, wood, forestry, furniture, and building materials will gather for the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) 14th General Assembly in Helsinki, Finland. During the three-day event, participants will discuss the main achievements of the last four years, set the priorities for the next Congress period and elect the new leadership. You can follow the EFBWW 14th General Assembly via [https://](https://congress.efbww.eu)

congress.efbww.eu. Before the opening of the General Assembly, the EFBWW will organise four side events. The first one is on gender equality, where we will present a practical manual with good practices for negotiators of collective bargaining agreements to use. There will be a side event on organising and campaigning and in parallel one in communication as a support tool for an effective lobby work. The EFBWW will also organise a side event on Ukraine.

Guy Standing, author of the book *The Precariat*, will be the keynote speaker, and the opening of the General Assembly will also have the presence of Nikolaj Villumsen, MEP from The Left.

The EFBWW will present its activity report with the main achievements of the last four years as the victory on asbestos, the subcontracting campaign and on the European Green Deal. Two main topics will be

discussed in two panel discussions: the EFBWW will take stock of 30 years of Internal Market and of the just transition process. The union representatives will also approve the priorities for the next Congress period and elect the new leadership.



We are looking forward to welcoming you in Helsinki next week!

#buildtogether

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EFBWW is recruiting

The EFBWW is recruiting a full-time, experienced (minimum 3 years) Administrative Assistant to strengthen its team. Find more information [here](#) and do not hesitate to spread the word.



EFBWW fully supports the ETUC Workers Manifesto

Ahead of the European elections in 2024, the EFBWW joined the ETUC at the European Parliament to launch its Workers Manifesto. In this document, trade unions ask the new European Parliament and Commission to work for a fair Europe with secure jobs, decent pay, excellent public services, women's rights and equality for all, strong workers' rights, and reinforced collective bargaining and social dialogue. The EFBWW will also push for new rules on subcontracting as a limit in subcontracting chains, a ban on intermediaries in construction, equal treatment, equal salary for equal work and digital tools to increase social protection.



European social partners alert: Construction sector must have prior notification

The European sectoral social partners for the construction industry - EFBWW and FIEC - jointly oppose the possibility that prior notification would not apply to postings in the construction industry, including for short-term postings. EFBWW and FIEC [call](#) on the Council to review its position and insist on the need for postings in the construction sector to be subject to prior notification. Prior notification is critical to ensure that worker protection and social standards are upheld in the construction sector so as to guarantee fair competition and prevent exploitation of workers. EFBWW General Secretary, Tom Deleu, stressed that "This is an open door to the explosion of fraud in the construction sector and a frightening decrease in workers' social security protection. Let's not mark the 30 years of EU internal market with a decrease in workers' social and health protection. We will not accept any exemption for our sectors!"

EFBWW and FIEC present their joint work on social ID-cards to the ELA Platform Undeclared Work

On 28 November, at the plenary meeting of the ELA Platform tackling Undeclared Work, EFBWW and FIEC have jointly presented the outcomes of the work in the subgroup on social ID-cards and the state of play of their social partner project SIDE-CIC, that is looking into the feasibility of interconnecting existing social ID-

cards in construction and the need for a European framework in this regard.

The Platform has adopted the report and has recommended that the work on this topic should receive a follow-up given the great interest from member states and social partners.

European social partners agreed on the principles for a sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine



The EFBWW and FIEC signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) in Warsaw, Poland, which encourages stakeholders and authorities to put in place an adequate framework to a sustainable reconstruction of Ukraine. In particular, stakeholders should aim at combatting corruption, promoting quality jobs, developing skills and training, promoting collective bargaining agreements, implementing adequate occupational health and safety provisions, and facilitating cooperation between social partners in Ukraine. Johan Lindholm, EFBWW President, stressed that "there is no reconstruction of Ukraine without workers. They cannot be left behind. Workers' health and safety must be ensured, strict limits on the exposure to asbestos must be imposed and respected. That is the only way to stop an asbestos pandemic that is already threatening everyone. Direct jobs, quality jobs, and collective bargaining agreements must be

the rule. Proper training must be given to workers. Finally, we ask more inspections to make sure that these basic rules are being respected and effective sanctions when they are not.”

Close to conclusion – Energy Performance of Building Directive

The negotiations are reaching its final stage. After a good proposal by the Commission and extensive improvements by the European Parliament, Member States are diluting the legislation proposal. Instead of EU renovation requirements on individual buildings based on harmonised energy classes, the compromise text now takes an average approach over the whole building stock: Member States will design Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and select building segments and renovation depth according to their national energy class system, and their national renovation trajectory. In this way, Member States will design their own standards based on their national energy classifica-

tion systems and will allow maximal flexibility. The majority of renovations (55%) will have to be carried out in the least efficient buildings, corresponding to the bottom 43% of the national stock. All new buildings will have to have a calculation of their lifecycle global warming potential (GWP) from 2030 (which is considered a historic step according to stakeholders). Maximum thresholds for GWP, as well as criteria and methodology are set at national level, within a framework at EU level. On the 8th December it is planned to conclude the negotiations. Remaining topics to agree on are the National Building Renovation Plans and a fixed percentage of average primary energy savings for 2030 and 2035 respectively and the objective of a zero emission building stock by 2050.

Asbestos: support for our Ukrainian colleagues

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is killing people, nature and infrastructure. Some politicians and company representatives already talk and plan rebuild-

ing. But before rebuilding, demolition, repair work and waste management is prevalent. The Russian aggression endangers people all over the country, especially people doing clean-up efforts and workers in restructuring processes. In this respect our Ukrainian colleagues from PROFBUD kindly requested support from EFBWW.

Now, we are looking for material on how to work safely when doing various types of asbestos related work. This concerns especially the management of asbestos containing waste, demolition activities, renovation work and other types of specific work with asbestos containing material.

Material on how to protect people in the various work processes is as well requested, including both organisational prevention measures and technical prevention measures. Furthermore, we create contacts to prevention experts that can advice our colleagues in a more individual way.

Projects

How to deal with transnational restructuring? a practical online and interactive guide for trade unions and worker representatives in multinational companies

EFBWW is participating in a joint European Trade union Federations (ETUF) project on how to deal with transnational restructuring. The aim is to develop a practical and interactive online guide for trade unions and worker representatives in multinational companies. This comprehensive tool, set to launch in 2024, will offer information on various restructuring aspects, including outsourcing, relocation, offshoring, col-

lective redundancies, closure, bankruptcy, merger, and more. There will also be a dedicated section with information and recommendations during the early stages before restructuring.

Social Dialogue on the Rebuilding of Ukraine

On 15th November, social partners of the construction sector met in Warsaw as part of our joint initiative with FIEC to decentralise social dialogue at the European level. This meeting focused on the rebuilding of Ukraine and the discussion of our

joint work programme between EFBWW and FIEC. The meeting was also an opportunity for our newest affiliate from Ukraine, PROFBUD, to participate in European level social dialogue alongside their social partner counterpart for the employers, the Confederation of Builders of Ukraine. The meeting followed the signing of our Memorandum of Understanding on the Rebuilding of Ukraine between EFBWW and FIEC at the REBUILD UKRAINE Conference which took place the day before.

News from our affiliates

Belgium



ACV-CSC BIE Congress and seminar on the Green Deal and Just Transition

From 30 November-2 December the ACV-CSC BIE congress took place in Houffalize, Belgium. Main focus of the congress was on sustainability on work sites, in the social dialogue and as an organisation.

In his opening speech, Patrick Vandenberghe (president ACV-CSC BIE) insisted on the importance of international solidarity and international cooperation referring to the active role of ACV-CSC BIE in the different European and international federations to which it is affiliated.

Prior to the congress, 60 European and international delegates met in Liège to discuss the impact of the Green Deal and the need for a just transition. Tom Deleu (EFBWW), joined a panel together with representatives from different ETUFs and European employer federations to discuss the role of social dialogue in the just transition. As the construction is a key industry in the transition and many investments will be funded with public money, the EFBWW insists on strong and strict social conditionalities in public procurement, including imposing a limit to subcontracting and a ban on agency work. The twin transition must be a driver towards a new business model in the construction industry based on direct jobs, quality jobs, skills and health and safety.

Italy



CGIL/UII protest against the Government's measures threatening workers' rights

From 17 November to 1 December, the general strikes proclaimed by CGIL and UIL against the policies of the Meloni government took place in Italy, with high adhesions at workplaces and demonstrations with the slogan 'Enough is Enough!' filling the squares in over 70 cities.

The objectives of the general strike are the defense of healthcare and public schools against the cuts planned by the government, policies to support wages against inflation, more investments for the environment and industrial policies. Construction workers have also joined the strike because the government's economic policies are severely recessive for the sector, for example, with the cuts in the NRRP for securing the territories (3.5 billion) and plans for the regeneration of city suburbs, resetting policies for energy efficiency and safer buildings, lengthening the age of eligibility for retirement for workers in heavy industries such as construction, and maintaining cascade subcontracting in public procurement.



On 17 November in Rome, there was the largest demonstration with over 60,000 participants from CGIL and UIL, a strong response also to the government's attempt which, at the hands of Transport Minister

Salvini (Lega), in the previous days explicitly attacked CGIL and UIL and preempted workers in the transport sector, shortening the strike from 8 to 4 hours.

FILCA CISL Sicily inaugurates a center for the culture of hospitality in Lampedusa

In June 2023 Filca CISL opened its office in Lampedusa, a symbol of solidarity complemented with the inauguration, last November 17, of the new seat of the "Embassy of culture and hospitality". Protecting, welcoming, and integrating in compliance with the rules and collective bargaining agreements, have always been Filca CISL priorities. The aim of this is to facilitate the social development and give a more dignified life to people with greater problems and hardships in full compliance with the rules. Filca Cisl, together with BWI and the EFBWW always considered legality at the core of their actions, with a more attentive eye to the migrant's issue, those who are much more likely to fall into the hands of "unscrupulous people", due to lack of information about country where they go to work, or because they are desperate for survival. Opening the Embassy of culture and hospitality will help promoting the culture of legality, of hospitality, a link between different cultures and religions in mutual respect by building an intercultural society with interactive relationships and which highlights the particularities of each ethnicity by promoting a culture of peace.

CISL Demo "Participating to grow: improve the Measures, build a new Social Pact"

On 25 November CISL organised a

News from our affiliates

demonstration to ask the Government to make improvements to the 2024 Budget Law and indicate the path to a development strategy fully participated by the social partners. Although some of the unitary requests of the 3 Italian unions have been included in the budget law, corrections on pensions, and more resources for healthcare, education and local authorities are still needed. On November 28, the Government called the trade unions to continue the discussion. It is clear that if the Government does not make improvements and the discussion table is interrupted, CISL cannot exclude from mobilising not only with a demonstration, but also with the proclamation of a strike.



Spain



CCOO del Hábitat holds a new edition of the course for environmental delegates on the cement sector

CCOO del Hábitat collaborates in the course organised by the CEMA

Foundation (Cement and Environment Labour Foundation) which brought together around forty delegates from cement groups. On 16 and 17 November, a new edition of the course for environmental delegates took place in Madrid. It was inaugurated by Sonia Silva Segovia, secretary of Sustainability and International of CCOO Hábitat, who highlighted the relevance of these courses due to the magnitude of the challenge for workers, the achievement of the decarbonisation of the sector and its circularity. Therefore, the importance of anticipating the repercussions that transitions, both ecological and digital, may have on the employment situation was emphasised to be able to defend employment, and to detect upskilling and reskilling needs and the necessary training plans, guaranteeing equal opportunities for all, without anyone being left behind. The course was closed by Daniel Barragán Burgui, secretary general of CCOO del Hábitat, who stressed the influence of the cement sector on the present and future of the Spanish economy, celebrating the performance of the environmental delegates in the substantial improvement of the workers and the sector as a whole.

CCOO del Hábitat campaign against RCS

CCOO del Hábitat is developing a campaign throughout 2023 to fight silicosis and cancer caused by exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in sectors such as construc-

tion. Although CCOO has been denouncing this problem for more than 20 years, in Spain, the desired legal recognition of RCS dust as a carcinogen did not occur until 2021, and its subsequent technical implementation guide, until December 2022. For this reason, the union started the campaign in February 2023 with a national press conference in which the general secretary, Daniel Barragán and the secretary of occupational health, Aida Suárez, intervened, providing data on the current situation and proposing solutions to eradicate this scourge so that "it does not become the new asbestos", transferring this problem to the different autonomous communities of the Spanish territory through press conferences with the particularities of each area. With the leaflet "No more silicosis, no more occupational cancer" ([link](#)) workers are encouraged to inform themselves on their rights against RCS dust and to report to the Labor Inspectorate, with the help of CCOO del Hábitat, any non-compliance that may occur in the workplace.

UK



Workplace accidents skyrocket on anti-Union construction sites

Non-unionised HS2 construction companies in London reportedly have over three times the accident rates of unionised Hinkley Point C, according to Unite, the UK's construction union. With 158 accidents on HS2 London sites since January 2023, compared to just 51

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 pcravina@efbww.eu.

at Hinkley, the disparity is evident even when considering Hinkley's larger workforce. Unite attributes the difference to HS2 joint ventures' anti-union stance, highlighting the absence of union safety reps on sites like Skanska/Constain/Strabag and Balfour Beatty VINCI SYSTRA. The union stresses the crucial role of safety reps in accident prevention and is escalating efforts to secure access to HS2 sites. This situation underscores the importance of the government prioritizing trade unions in public procurement to ensure worker safety on major projects like HS2.

[Read more here.](#)

Finland

Finnish trade unions intensify industrial political actions against the Government

On the 7 November, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) and its affiliated unions initiated a new wave of political industrial action as of 7 November. These measures will be taken in opposition to attacks on the world of work by the Orpo-Purra Government, and as a protest against unfair cuts in social welfare that are inappropriate in current economic conditions. The cuts set out in the Government programme exclusively target employees since



the first and most urgent measure is restricting the right to strike. The other cuts include an increase in the waiting period for unemployment benefit from five to seven days, not being paid for the first day of illness.

Luxembourg

OGBL demonstration will take place next 7 December to demand better working conditions, better wages, and secure, quality jobs.



Miscellaneous

EU-OSHA Healthy Workplace Campaign 2023-25

The European Agency for workplace safety and health (Bilbao Agency) just started its new OSH campaign for 2023 – 2025. The title of the campaign is 'Safe and healthy work in the digital age'.

The main aspects or better groups of aspects are formulated as priority areas:

1. Priority area: digital platform work
2. Priority area: automatization of

tasks

3. Priority area: remote and hybrid work
4. Priority area: workers management through artificial intelligence
5. Priority area: smart digital systems

A [Campaign Guide](#) has been published (available in all EU languages) and shows some areas concern our sectors to a large extend. Therefore, and as in the past, EFBWW is partner in the campaign.

During the campaign period, we will regularly report to the OSH Network and to the Standing Committees on aspects relevant to them.

In addition, the campaign will be a topic for the social dialogues. FIEC is also a campaign partner and we may consider running some joint action in the framework of the campaign.

EFBWW office closed

EFBWW office will be closed from 23rd December to 7th January 2023. We wish you fantastic Winter holidays!



Provisional calendar 2024		
16 January 2024 (TBC)	RESILIENTWOOD Project: Workshop 2 - "Expected technological changes"	Nantes, France
1 February 2024	RESILIENTWOOD Project: Workshop 3 - "Outlook of the woodworking industry in times of crisis"	Gothenburg, Sweden
6 February 2024	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - Joint woodworking and furniture session	ONLINE
13 February 2024	Scaffolding project: Workshop Training in the scaffolding sector	TBC
22-23 February 2024	ELA social partners workshop	Bratislava, Slovakia
28 February 2024	SIDE CIC project: Steering group 2	Rome, Italy (TBC)
29 February 2024	Social Dialogue Construction - WG OSH	ONLINE
6 March 2024	Scaffolding project: Workshop technological developments and standardisation	TBC
7-8 March 2024	Cement Skills 2030 Project: Workshop	TBC
12 March 2024 (full day)	Safety and Health Coordination group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
March 2024 (TBC)	EWC and Company Policy coordination group	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
March 2024 (TBC)	DESOCO II project: Thematic meeting on digitalisation and Sectoral Social Dialogue Construction	LT/EE (TBC)
9 April 2024 (full day)	Standing Committee Building	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
10 April 2024 (full day)	Standing Committee Wood/Furniture/Forestry	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
16 - 17 April 2024	RESILIENTWOOD project: Workshop 4 "Increasing the attractiveness of the woodworking sector through education: student mobility and the role of an 'Erasmus for apprenticeships'"	Brussels, Belgium
7 May 2024	Scaffolding project: social dialogue in the scaffolding sector	TBC
13-14 May 2024 (2 full days)	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
21 May 2024	Social Dialogue Wood - Plenary	Brussels, Belgium
22 May 2024	Social Dialogue Furniture - Plenary	Brussels, Belgium
4 June 2024	Scaffold project: Final conference	TBC
7 June 2024	Social Dialogue Construction - WG Employment	Brussels, Belgium
10 June 2024	Cement Skills 2030 Project: Steering group 2	ONLINE
25 September 2024 (full day)	OSH Open Expert Meeting	Brussels, Belgium
4 October 2024	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - Joint woodworking and furniture session	Hybrid
16 October 2024	Social Dialogue Construction - WG VET/YOUTH	ONLINE
October/November 2024 (TBC)	DESOCO II project: Thematic meeting on labour shortages and Sectoral Social Dialogue Construction	RO/BG (TBC)
27 November 2024 (full day)	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)