

# EFBWW NEWSLETTER

## News from the EFBWW



This section is (almost) entirely dedicated to our main event last year: our [Congress](#) on 12-14 December in Helsinki, Finland. Find out about our main decisions!

**More than 300 trade union representatives elect EFBWW new leadership**  
 From 12 to 14 December, more than 300 trade union representatives from European construction, building materials, wood and forestry trade unions met in Helsinki, Finland, for the 14th EFBWW Congress. During the three-day event, participants discussed the main achievements of the last four years, elected the new leadership and set the priorities for the next Congress period. Johan Lindholm (Byggnads, Sweden) was re-elected as EFBWW president, and Tom Deleu (Belgium) as general secretary. Brahim Hilami

(FGTB La Centrale Générale – ABVV De Algemene Centrale, Belgium), Ellen Hoeijenbos (FNV, The Netherlands), Andrea Merli (Feneal-UIL, Italy) in rotation with Claudio Sottile (Filca CISL, Italy), were elected as vice-presidents. Ramona Veleanu

**Contents:**

<b>News from the EFBWW</b>	<b>1-3</b>
<b>Projects</b>	<b>3-4</b>
<b>News from the affiliates</b>	<b>4-6</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>7</b>



(FGS Familia, Romania) was elected as vice-president for the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. This is the first time that the EFBWW has a vice-president dedicated to the CEE. The decision mirrors the will to

work. We will never work with the far-right. We support fair mobility, we support fair migration, fair treatment of mobile and migrant workers, a fair Internal Market.” More [info](#)



focus on the CEE region in the next years. Nina Kreutzman (Rakennusliitto, Finland) and Bruno Bothua (FNCSBA-CGT, France) were elected as president of the standing committee building and president of the standing committee wood and forestry respectively. For the first time, the presidium almost has a 40% share of women. Johan Lindholm: “We stand united and, when we stand united, nothing can stop us. We have a clear voice both at European and national level. We stand united to fight against exploitation of our members. We need to make the voices of our members heard: only then will they feel safe”. Tom Deleu: “We already look to the next European elections, which will determine the political and democratic context of the coming years and in which we will develop our

**Priorities for 2024-2028 adopted** The Strategic Plan, which defines the priority areas for 2024-2028, is built around two main issues: the need for social progress and for a just transition. The EFBWW will advocate for substantial changes to the current functioning and legal framework of the Internal Market, for a better regulation of subcontracting and the posting of workers, which are currently out of control. The EFBWW will also focus on the implementation of the twin transition, which offers many opportunities as a driver towards more sustainable business models, based on social dialogue, social partnership, innovation and skills, providing quality, healthy and safe jobs. More [info](#) [here](#) and [here](#)

**EFBWW launches manual for gender equality in construction, wood and forestry**

Women working in the European Union construction, wood and forestry industries continue to be severely underrepresented. There is an upward trend, but the pace is slow. This state of play needs to be altered. The EFBWW will continue to push for a Gender Agenda at the European level and to mainstream the gender perspective in every policy area. At national level, trade unions are essential to spearhead the change and to include the gender equality perspective into the national, sectoral and company levels. To help in this task, the EFBWW developed a manual for gender equality in construction, wood and forestry which includes existing good practices and policies addressing women’s needs, making it a practical and useful tool for negotiators during collective agreement negotiations. More [info](#)



**EFBWW presents its 5 main achievements – Activity Report 2020-2023**

In the last four years, unexpected developments affected Europe and the world: the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, staggering inflation causing a cost-of-living crisis, threats to democracy and attacks on human and workers’ rights. Despite the difficult context, the EFBWW and its affiliates did achieve significant progress in many areas. We presented our top five of achievements: asbestos, fight against social dumping and labour crime, just transition, organising and gender mainstreaming and health before profit in the Covid-19 context. More [info](#)

**EFBWW approves resolution to call for actions for a fair and efficient internal market**

The 14th EFBWW Congress approved a resolution on the 30 years of Internal Market. Considering that

there is not much to celebrate in this anniversary, the EFBWW will work and call for a reform of the EU Internal Market. In this context, the EFBWW will advocate for a re-balanced approach that prioritises social rights on a par with economic rights. Among other measures, the EFBWW calls for a complete ban on intermediaries in construction and for the introduction of strict limits to subcontracting, better enforcement rules in terms of social ID-cards, Inspection Services, European Labour Authority and sanctions. The resolution also aims to fight for better rules on public procurement and for migration and fair mobility. More [info](#)

**EFBWW supports the call of the European Parliament for a stronger ELA**

The EFBWW welcomed the European Parliament (EP) resolution that was adopted on 18 January, calling

to update and strengthen the European Labour Authority (ELA) mandate in cross-border enforcement. This includes increasing the number of joint and concerted inspections, providing the necessary capacity and resources for ELA to investigate complex cross-border



fraud and labour crime cases on its own initiative, and assist member states and social partners to collect fines and impose sanctions across borders. Furthermore, ELA should collect data on national inspections and their outcomes. During the ELA conference organised by the Belgian Presidency on 25

January, EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu, said: “Given the importance of the construction industry, we call on ELA and the European Commission to set up a dedicated Construction Unit within ELA. The EFBWW is also open to discuss a closer cooperation with ELA in the field of information and counselling of mobile construction workers”. More [info](#)



## Projects

All project applications introduced by EFBWW in 2023 were accepted.

### ECMIN V: From information to alert mechanism

This application concerns a follow-up of the previous projects and aims at building on the work done, with posted and migrant workers – including third country nationals - at its centre. The project will continue the investments already made in information, communication and dissemination by adding languages to increase the website use and reachability, by insisting on updating the website. The project also aims to add a new dimension: to create an alert mechanism to support workers who find themselves in a situation of distress and exploitation and to facilitate workers coming forward on safety and security issues. Also, the focus will be more on third country

nationals as there is a growing number of posted third country national workers. The EFBWW wants to develop [www.constructionworkers.eu](http://www.constructionworkers.eu) into a tool to inform workers and to help detect abuses.

### LSWC – Labour shortages in Wood and Construction

Labour shortages are an important issue that affect many countries across Europe, and there are several reasons why there is no sufficient data to study these problems. The project will explore the issue of labour shortages in the construction, woodworking and furniture sectors and develop policy recommendations to address this problem, helping workers' representatives to address labour shortage issues in the social dialogue on company, sectoral and European level.

### STEP-UP - Strengthening and organising collective bargaining

The project objective is to ensure that workers are fully aware of their rights related to pay, employment conditions and access to trade union representation. Numerous incidents across Europe have demonstrated that labour and working standards in the sectors are being ignored in the industry. Access to collective bargaining information is poor and one of the reasons why it is difficult to attract labour into the sectors. The EFBWW, its affiliates and the EWC members they represent, wish to work towards strengthening collective bargaining rights and improving working conditions in the sector. The project will conduct a mapping exercise identifying deficiencies in knowledge of collective bargaining rights, pay, terms and conditions of employment and access to trade union representation.

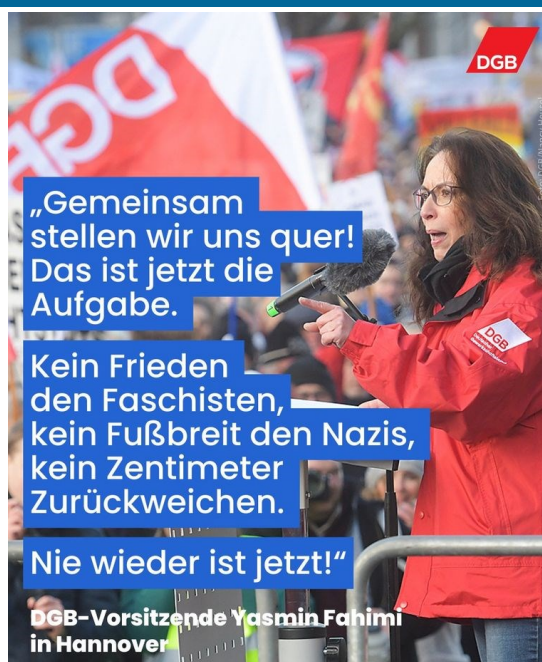
## News from our affiliates

### Germany



#### IG BAU/IG Metall support DGB demos against the far-right

The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) organised several nationwide demonstrations against the far-right in which our affiliates IG-BAU and IG Metall participated. The demos started after the shocking [correctiv.org](http://correctiv.org) revelations about the conspiratorial meeting of AfD politicians and other right-wing extremists for the deportation of millions of people currently living in



Germany. The DGB and its member unions are calling for people to take to the streets against these ideas. "Together we want to send a signal from the middle of society: We do not accept this radicalization and the defamation of people with a migration background, but rather speak out publicly against it". The EFBWW stands in solidarity against the far-right. For the European elections the EFBWW will

launch a campaign at European level against the far-right. More [info](#)

## Finland



### Finnish trade union keep fighting government's measures

The Finnish trade unions are preparing for another strike on 1 and 2 February to protest against the reduction of workers' rights implemented by the Orpo government. The Finnish government is cutting social security, limiting the right to strike and weakening working conditions. According to Rakennusliitto's president Kimmo Palonen, the trade unions have no other choice but to initiate industrial action: "The Finnish workers' employment security and unemployment benefits are being drastically cut, and at the same time the government is trying to take away from the trade unions the opportunity to defend their members". Riku Aalto, president of Teollisuusliitto warns that the strikes will bring a large part of Finnish industry to a halt. "Tough measures are necessary because reason does not seem to work. Hopefully, the strikes will bring the government back down to earth. Unreasonable cuts and weakening of employees' everyday lives are unequivocally wrong.". The EFBWW approved a resolution in its Congress to call upon the Finnish government to revoke the proposed cuts that have a profound impact on Finnish workers' fundamental rights. More info [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)

## Malta



### Trade union applauds new rules on temporary employment agencies

The General Workers' Union welcomes the changes to the legislation on temporary employment and recruitment agencies. The new law states that employment agencies will need an operating licence and

that the labour force enters the country according to demand and that the abuse of this labour force is avoided. In addition, companies that do not have this licence or lose it will be excluded from public contracts and will not be able to bring in workers from third countries. More [info](#)



that a person can only have one licence, either for recruiting people for employment in Malta or abroad, or for being part of a temporary employment agency or an outsourcing agency. From January, no one will be allowed to recruit and bring workers and offer temporary labour/outsourcing services. In addition, several criteria have been introduced to ensure that each applicant meets the requirements to be granted a licence to operate an employment agency or employment business. The trade union stated that with these new rules, the authorities have an overview of all players in the sector; they ensure

It has been a cold winter. For construction workers, these low temperatures can lead to dangerous working conditions. Life threatening, even. We gathered some news from the affiliates regarding health and safety during the cold months.

## Sweden



### Cold means increased need for risk assessment

This winter has seen unusually cold temperatures all over Sweden, and the harsh winter conditions affect construction workers and companies in several ways. There have

been work sites where work has either been put on hold for a short time or where certain tasks have been postponed. Most importantly, there is an increased need for risk assessment in the work environment, considering everything from icy surfaces that increase the risk of slips and falls to prolonged exposure to cold weather, putting construction workers at risk of cold-related illnesses and injuries. This emphasizes the need for proper protective gear. Byggnads and its safety representatives ensure that construction companies adapt to and mitigate the challenges posed by extreme cold.

## Belgium



### Employers must draw up a winter plan

In Belgium, FGTB CG and ACV-BIE warn that employers must draw up a plan to protect workers when winter arrives. All workers must be provided with appropriate equipment, and working conditions must be adapted so that work can be carried out safely. This may involve various types of measures: technical measures that affect the ambient air temperature, humidity or air speed; reducing the physical workload; alternative working methods that reduce the need to be exposed to the cold; limiting the duration or intensity of exposure; adapting working hours or work organisation; providing protective clothing; or making hot drinks available at no cost to workers. More info [here](#) and [here](#)

## Switzerland



### Unia informs workers about their rights

Unia has a campaign in place to inform its workers about their rights during the Winter. The swiss trade union has leaflets in several languages on bad weather in construction. Unia recalls that workers have the right to heated break rooms, the employer has the obligation to ensure that the next day's work can be carried out in dry clothes, and breaks to warm up must be provided and count as working time. As for temporary employees, if work has to be interrupted or curtailed, temporary employees may not be entitled to weather insurance benefits, but the leasing company must pay full salary for all the hours scheduled for that day in the working time calendar or in the assignment contract.

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](mailto:pcravina@efbww.eu).

## Miscellaneous

### ETUI launches HesaMag#28 on workers and the climate challenge

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is organising an event on 8 February for the launch of the 28th issue of HesaMag, the ETU-

I's health and safety magazine. The participants will discuss about the importance of worker protection in a shifting climate and an adapting economy. More [info](#)



## EFBWW Meeting schedule 2024

1 February 2024	RESILIENTWOOD Project: Workshop 2 - "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
15-16 February	EFBWW Presidium	Málaga, Spain
22-23 February 2024	ELA social partners workshop	Bratislava, Slovakia
27 February 2024	EWC and Company Policy coordination group	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
<del>29 February 2024</del>	<del>Social Dialogue Construction – WG OSH</del>	<del>ONLINE</del>
6 March 2024	Scaffolding project: Workshop technological developments and standardisation	TBC
7-8 March 2024	Cement Skills 2030 Project: Workshop	TBC
12 March 2024	Safety and Health Coordination group meeting	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
20 March 2027	Social dumping breakfast event (org: EFBWW, S&D, Left, EPP)	European Parliament
27 March 2024	RESILIENTWOOD Project: Workshop 3 - "Gender equality"	ONLINE
9 April 2024	Standing Committee Building	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
10 April 2024	Standing Committee Wood/Furniture/Forestry	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
16 - 17 April 2024	RESILIENTWOOD project: Workshop 4 "Increasing the attractiveness of the wood-working sector through education: student mobility and the role of an 'Erasmus for apprenticeships'"	Brussels, Belgium
24-25 April 2024	DESOCO II project: Thematic meeting on digitalisation and Sectoral Social Dialogue Construction	Vilnius, Lithuania
7 May 2024	Scaffolding project: social dialogue in the scaffolding sector	TBC
13 May 2024 (13:00-17:30) 14 May 2024 (09:00-16:00)	Executive Committee (+ reception)	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
<b>6-9 June 2024</b>	<b>Elections European Parliament</b>	<b>European Union</b>
7 June 2024	Social Dialogue Construction - WG Employment	Brussels, Belgium
4 September 2024	RESILIENTWOOD Project: Final conference	TBC
25 September 2024	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)
4-8 November 2024	BWI World Board & World Council	Geneva, Switzerland
27 November 2024	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)