

The Latvian Presidency: a focus on the construction sector

The Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union will have a clear focus on the construction sector, which is considered particularly important for Latvian economy.

The **Inter-ministerial Conference** that the Latvian Presidency will organise **on 4th and 5th June 2015 in Riga** will address the role of SMEs in the creation of local jobs and of apprenticeship as a way to fill the competence gap, with a special attention to the construction sector. In connection to this, CEN and CENELEC will also organise their **Annual Standardisation Summit from 3rd to 5th June 2015 in Riga** on the issue of construction. The Summit will provide an opportunity to stress Latvia's priorities and answer to how standardisation can further the transition to a cleaner and smarter economy.

In order to discuss this very welcome focus on the construction sector and the common goals, EBC met with Mr. Dainis Matulis, Counsellor for Technical harmonisation and Internal Market in the Latvian Permanent Representation in Brussels.



MEP Catherine Stihler, MEP Annaliese Dodds and MEP Anthea McIntyre exchanged their ideas with other construction sector's representatives during a dinner debate organised by the [European Masonry Alliance](#) on 27/01/2015

EBC encourages apprenticeship pledges in construction

In the context of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship, the European Commission invited key actors – particularly companies and national industry associations – to make an **apprenticeship pledge to strengthen the supply, the quality and the image of apprenticeship**. Several companies and associations of different sectors have already made a pledge.

EBC and other construction sector representatives have been contacted by the Commission with a view to encouraging **sector-specific pledges from the construction industry**. The Commission would like to promptly kick-start this initiative to deliver the **first awards for the apprenticeship pledge in construction** at the Latvian Presidency Inter-ministerial Conference on 4th and 5th June 2015 in Riga.

This is an important occasion that small and medium-sized construction businesses should not miss, as they are a key component in training young people and in apprenticeship.

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Simplified measures of the CPR are not properly implemented yet

The European Commission is carrying out a study of the [Construction Product Regulation](#) (CPR)'s implementation. Following a consultation, EBC gave some insights on the practical use of the simplified procedures.

One of the main problems is linked to the concrete applicability of articles 37 and 38, which mentions the **Specific Technical Documentation** as a simplified means to demonstrate the compliance of a product with the legal requirements. The unclear and burdensome situation rules out benefits for micro-enterprises, which were specifically targeted by these measures included in the CPR.

On the contrary, the **practice of cascading and sharing test results** (art 36) provide many benefits for SMEs. Indeed, certain positive points coming from the CPR and which takes into account the needs of SMEs should also be reflected in the way standards are drafted.



Improving posted workers' conditions and fair competition in the Internal Market

EBC attended the final seminar of the **EuroDétachement** project, on the 27th and 28th January 2015. EuroDétachement is a project aiming at improving collaboration between social partners and public authorities in Europe regarding posting of workers.

The different sessions dealt with topics such as the **evolution of the legal framework and the role of social partners**, with practical examples of actions against abusive situations by the national organisations and trade unions.

EBC stressed these main points:

- Proper implementation of the **posting of workers directive**
- Setting up the **European Platform against undeclared work** to effectively carry out administrative cooperation between countries
- Creating an **online database** to help businesses to get verified information on the respect of social legislation by subcontractors

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