



European Council
of
Civil Engineers

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Standing Committee

Development & Business Environment

Chairman: **Karlheinz ZACHMANN**

Vice-Chairman: **Aris CHATZIDAKIS**

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In his STATEMENT of the Union speech EC President Barroso launched ambitious ideas for a long term development of the EU

- a deep and genuine economic union -

In this respect the Commission adopted on 23/10/12 its Work Program for 2013.

Core objectives are:

1. Moving towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), - the Commission will table a blue print later;
2. Boosting competitiveness – through initiatives to cut costs for businesses in areas like VAT etc. and to tackle remaining obstacles in the Single Market (see the Single Market Act II with 12 new actions);



There are 4 main drivers: networks, mobility, the digital economy and cohesion. – These need still to be agreed by EP and Council.

3.Modernizing European networks by opening the energy market, boosting investment in infrastructure like broadband and making Europe's transport smoother and cleaner;

4.Getting Europeans to work better by supporting the unemployment and do the utmost to support social inclusion;

5.Using Europe's resources to boost competitiveness by framing energy and climate changes policies until 2030 – and improving air quality and waste management;

6.Building a safe and secure Europe – through a European Prosecutor's Office to protect EU's financial interests by fighting trafficking in firearms;

7.Pursuing global potential through a new generation of trade agreements.



In view of its targets 2013/14, the EC has the intention to speed up completion of the Single Market.

Commissioner Michel BARNIER presented the Single Market Act II – adopted by the EC on 3rd October 2012.

The key actions outlined are:

- Better access to finance for SMEs;
- On 12/12 EC set out modernized rules on over border business insolvency;
- Enhancing the regulatory environment for business;
(It was intended to be adopted end of 2012 by EP and Council).

The said new Internal Market Package again defines 12 levers and corresponding actions in main areas for growth, employment and confidence. These are strongly linked with the ongoing of such EUROPE 2020 flagship initiatives (such as – industrial policy, digital agenda, etc.).



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Other EC – ISSUES (b)

Not all actions foreseen are legislative in nature.
The new package focuses also strongly on social issues.

The Single Market turned 20 this year. The EU adopted nearly 280 pieces of legislation replacing national regulations by common European Law. With the SM came the free movement of people, goods, services and capital – and the abolition of internal border controls.

Within the EC policy on resources the EC has presented a plan to insure the disponibility, quantity and quality of water for citizens economic activities and environment. The Action Plan inserts in the framework directive concerning water – 2000 aiming at getting waters in the EU right (for agriculture, fisheries, energies, renewables and transport). Member States have to play their share.

Beginning 2013 IRELAND took over the EU – PRESIDENCY from Cyprus.

The new Presidency spelt out its particular priorities for the 6 months:

- Prioritize measures to promote recovery, stability, growth and jobs;
- Removing the remaining barriers in the Single Market;
- Agreement on the recognition of professional qualifications and new public procurement rules;
- Seeking new trade opportunities with USA;
- Support of the Council on the Multiannual Financial Framework;
- The EU Presidency will take forward the necessary legal framework in relation to the MFF as a whole.

The next Presidencies up to the European elections will be held by Lithuania and Greece.

- a) Since the beginning of this year ECF held two gatherings. On 28/1/2013 the main issue was the finalization and agreement of the text of the new Manifesto. This text was drafted up to the end 2012 by a small drafting panel.
- b) The Manifesto consists of one page with two columns:
- Right: what the construction sector can offer;
 - Left: decisions the EU policy makers should take.
- At the backside all the logos of the ECF – Participants are shown. This paper was circulated on occasion of the High Level Forum held on 29/1/2013 which also the ECCE President attended.

- c) The new draft of the ECF website was also considered. The blocks of the text and ECF participants will be shown – moving/ turning.
- d) The HLF is a formal and regulated procedure in order to consider the Communication from the EC to EP and Council.
 - strategy for sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises (31.7.2012)
 - The objective of the 3 HLF is to work out and define guidelines for the EC to make “Construction the leading industry to come out of the crisis”. Quite a lot of events are foreseen
 - EP and EESC. President Prof. F. Branco volunteered for the Task Force No. 1 – “stimulating investment in renovation and innovation”.

The second gathering held on 27/3/13 focused on the thematic groups deriving from the HLF, some ECF members will establish texts for contribution to the EC on: skills, resource efficiency, internal market and international competitiveness. Before the contributions are presented to the relevant EC services these will be once more considered.

The Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) is considered for construction products being the big issue. In Member States are quite different systems and product criteria imposed. – This may become an interesting subject for architects and engineers. For SMEs product requirements, relevant for new products where no standard exists yet, product insurance will rise.

The planned ECF/EP event is now in hands of FIEC who has forwarded to MEP BOTIKHOFER the ECF manifesto and the HLF “2 minutes” presentation. MEP BOTIKHOFER is establishing the EP report on EC – Competitiveness of the Construction Sector – COM (2012) 433.

The SMEs organization for standardization NORAPME is “liquidated” due to lack of EC contribution. A new tender will be issued soon. EP is pushing strongly.



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Other EU matters

The EC – Science can help to reduce natural impacts. The collapse of inadequate buildings following earthquakes or storms causes most human casualties.

The EC Joint Research Centre (JRC) therefore studies the mechanical dynamics of civil infrastructures and develops appropriate methodologies to improve resilience.

The JRC is ready to provide timely and accurate post-disaster mapping and damage assessment.

The programs available are the following:

- 1) European Drought Observatory (EDO) <http://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/edov2/php/index.php?id=1000>
- 2) European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) www.efas.eu
- 3) Global Flood Awareness System (GloFAS) <http://old.gdacs.org/floodddetection/>
- 4) Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) www.gdacs.org
- 5) Europe Media Monitor (EMM) <http://emm.newsbrief.eu/overview.html>
- 6) Medical Information System (Medisys) <http://medusa.jrc.it/medisys/homeedition/en/home.html>



On 12/12/12 the Commission set out modernized rules on cross border business **INSOLVENCY** – helping to give otherwise viable businesses a second chance. This proposal will bring the Solvency Regulation – dating from 2000 up to date with developments in national insolvency laws – in particular in terms of highly indebted firms. The proposed Regulation will go to EP and Council for consideration and adoption.

One of the points within the strategy Europe 2020 is the use of resources. With respect of the dispensability of water the EC has presented an action plan to guarantee all over the EU the dispensability of water with good quality and quantity with respect to the needs of citizens, the economic activities and the environment.

3 actions are included in the plan:

- To improve the enforcement of the existing legislation;
- To better enforce the principle of “polluter to pay”; this touches also upon the Cohesion Funds, the regional Funds and structural Funds;
- To consider the lacks of the existing instruments needed to rationalize the utilization of water.



In the discussions of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014-2020, investment in education and training is one of the key issues out stake. The medium term EU budgetary instrument is essential for investing in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in those areas most likely to create jobs and maintain our economy.

Finally after a negotiating marathon of 26 hours the EU leaders reached an agreement on MFF. The Commission's budget proposal was cut by almost 95 billion Euros!

The European Council – deal would represent a decrease – for the first time – of the EU's budget. – The EP will now have the next word to say. This launched a process of negotiations between Council and EP whose consent is required.

Trust and hope in the future is all we have!



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THANK YOU!

Karlheinz Zachmann