



# High Level Tripartite Strategic Forum on construction 14th April 2016

*Reporting on the main discussion points*

**Rapporteur**  
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## **Sustainability in construction: closing the gap** ***Boosting the attractiveness of the construction industry ('Appeal')***

- A need to further improve the attractiveness and image of the construction sector (as a high tech sector – Smart construction?)
- Not as an aim but a tool to close the skills gap along the value chain ('defuse the skills time bomb')
- Make apprenticeships work (e.g. apprenticeship pledge initiative, apprenticeship 'ambassadors', 'youth for construction', learning from practices in other MS)
- Recruiting beyond standard target groups – including women and young people (role models)
- A need to associate the sector more to trust, confidence and quality (e.g. step up inspections, Master Builder Awards, certificates)
- A dilemma: public versus private quality control
- Bring in the consumer dimension in the sector– boost consumer confidence and trust in the sector (e.g. insurance-backed warranties, guarantees/certificates)

### **Key conclusions pertinent to the Ministerial meeting on Construction**

1. More efforts are needed by all to increase the appeal of the construction sector and to contribute to modernisation – and make use of existing good practices in MS
2. Reach out beyond traditional stakeholders: media, consumers, women, youth

## **Sustainability in construction: closing the gap** ***Buildings and infrastructure as enabler ('Holistic')***

- Buildings and infrastructure are taken for granted – they should not as buildings do not last forever and as there is a building mismatch (health and safety, energy efficiency in existing buildings)
- A need for a life cycle approach and apply circular economy principles – a large share of building costs relate to operation and maintenance
- A need to look at costs and benefits of measures across the whole value chain; much information is lost and much scope for spectacular gains (BIM)
- Cooperation can pay off: e.g. shared equipment, inter-trade set-up
- Digital technologies can help to improve productivity along the value chain: but roll-out of BIM requires compatibility of software, standardisation and training
- A need to see how the sector can better contribute to broader policy goals (e.g. energy efficiency – a need for full use of tools and instruments e.g. public procurement)

### **Key conclusions pertinent to the Ministerial meeting on Construction**

3. A holistic approach helps the construction sector itself but also to contribute to economic and society ('to do good')
4. Construction sector a major ally for building the circular economy (life cycle costing)

## **Sustainability in construction: closing the gap**

### ***A need to raise innovativeness and productivity, especially amongst SMEs ('Innovate')***

- The good news: European construction is innovative world-wide
- A lot of innovation is simple and readily available, but needs to be shared and promoted in order to increase take-up – technological institutes can help!
- Barriers to innovation: regulation as well as culture (from cost avoidance to gains)
- Areas of progress: modular construction, 3D printing, BIM, certification
- Innovation in construction is a priority for all stakeholders (including clients) – as it brings about quality and long term benefits for all
- Innovation in work organisation: e.g. sharing of equipment
- Digital technologies: much catching-up to do (design, 3D printing, workflow planning) e.g. in public procurement
- Implement new tools and techniques: BIM Building Information Management

#### **Key conclusion of pertinence to the Ministerial conference on Construction**

5. Innovation is key - much scope remains for increasing the take-up of innovation: ICT and BIM, Alliances for Innovation (Smart Construction)

## **Building a supportive environment**

### ***A need for good governance and good policies ('Smart' regulation)***

- A need for good regulation due to risk, health and safety, energy and resource use, etc.
- But also a need to streamline permits and regulation – the way to go
- A need to tackle transaction costs
- Streamlining building sustainability frameworks
- A need to anticipate public investments
- Modern public procurement policy implementation requires a change in mind-set of all actors involved
- A Single Market for construction can bring competition and drive down costs – need for EU-wide standards

#### **Key conclusion of relevance to the Ministerial conference on Construction**

6. Good practices exist amongst MS governments to coordinate policies affecting the construction sector; a need to share and promote these

7. Better buildings and infrastructure require that modern public procurement policies are effectively implemented at all levels (e.g. resource efficiency criteria, life-cycle assessment, cost measurement, etc.)

8. A Single Market for construction can bring competition as well as innovation – but requires EU-wide standards?

## **Building a supporting environment**

### ***Involve all stakeholders along the policy life cycle ('Engage')***

- A need to strike a balance between business-friendly and consumer friendly
- Developing policy (e.g. building regulations) by engaging with stakeholders leads to consensus, prevents mistakes and supports implementation
- Stakeholders include contractors, suppliers, designers, operators/building maintenance and consumers (affordability)
- Transparency pays off (e.g. participative planning, market consultation in public procurement)
- A crucial role for local and regional governments to align to national strategies

#### **Key conclusion of relevance to the Ministerial conference on Construction**

9. Involving all stakeholders in policy preparation results in better rules (including consumers)
10. A need to promote synergies between EU and MS initiatives