



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Sustainable Industry and Mobility  
Circular economy and Construction

"Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises" (COM (2012) 433 final)

## High Level Tripartite Strategic Forum, 8<sup>th</sup> meeting

17th June 2020 - Key messages

**Yesterday, the High Level Forum of Construction 2020 gathered for the eight time.** Due to the COVID-19 crisis the meeting was held only online for the first time. Over 100 participants came together, representing various parts of the European construction sector ecosystem: businesses, skilled workers, the European Commission and a good number of Member State governments.

**The COVID-19 health crisis impacted not only the way we met, but also the construction sector itself.** Construction has always been cyclical – but it is now facing a unprecedented crisis with a drop of activity of 50% in Q2, 25% estimated in Q3 and 12% expected in Q4. Participants confirmed that the consequences are financial distress and liquidity concerns, particularly for SMEs. Experiences shared by sector stakeholders highlighted the difficulties encountered in their supply chains and in coping with extra sanitary measures. However the impact and expected recovery are uneven between Member States – with some much more affected than others.

Nevertheless, participants agreed that **recovery and investing in the future of Europe's built environment can be turned into a win-win opportunity** and support the long-term ambitions of **a green, digital and resilient Europe**. The Green Deal and the Renovation Wave, the Industrial strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan, and the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan will together provide public investments and strategic direction towards these goals.

**Such a recovery will require an integrated and holistic approach that brings together the whole construction sector ecosystem.** Already during the meeting, stakeholders pointed out various aspects, such as the need for the proper skills to implement the Renovation Wave, paying attention to localised value chains and having a circular economy approach, the importance of ensuring that SMEs can access funding and assessing the needs of building users and their ability to pay rents. A representative from the German Federal Government, confirmed that construction will be one of the main focus areas of the German Presidency of the Council in the second semester of 2020. Germany intends to support the promotion of sustainability and circularity in buildings, construction products and the built environment.

Many more issues were discussed and there is a clear **need to continue working towards a continued dialogue that can strengthen resilience and support recovery** – engaging the European Commission, Member States and stakeholders. Such dialogue could also help speed up the delivery of the actions needed and include ongoing initiatives (such as the funding opportunities for the built environment and the assessment of national recovery plans in this respect, construction products regulation, sustainable public procurement, etc). Right now, the European Commission is preparing the future Renovation Wave initiative and is inviting feedback and ideas from stakeholders via a public consultation.<sup>1</sup>

The presentations and speeches during the meeting gave a sense of the challenges we face and there is no doubt that we must come together for a chance to overcome them and build the environment Europeans need.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/preparing-future-renovation-wave-initiative-have-your-say-2020-jun-12\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/preparing-future-renovation-wave-initiative-have-your-say-2020-jun-12_en)