

## European construction SMEs to strengthen their voice in Brussels

**Brussels, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016** – The new year started off with very positive news for the European Builders Confederation EBC. With three new members and the new role of the EBC President Patrick Liébus in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), construction SMEs enlarge their representativeness in Brussels.

EBC President Patrick Liébus said “In 2016 more construction SMEs will have their voice heard in Europe. We are pleased to welcome three new member associations in EBC: the Hungarian Association of Crafts [IPOSZ](#), the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts [HOK](#) and the French association of micro-enterprises in public works and landscape [CNATP](#). With them, EBC has broadened its geographical and sectoral representativeness.”

“Small and medium construction firms will also be better represented in Brussels and will have more possibilities to shape European policies, thanks to my new role as a member of the EESC. As a first sign of this, in February we are bringing our [photo exhibition on women and young people in construction](#) to the EESC.”

Patrick Liébus joined the Employers Group of the EESC in October 2015 for a five-year mandate. He is a full member of the EESC Single Market and Social Affairs Sections.

Patrick Liébus continued “Fair competition in the Internal Market will be one of the most important issues on my agenda. Far too many construction companies are affected by social dumping and illegal behaviour. The European Union must put an end to these abusive practices – also with the support of the EESC – if it wants to ensure its future wellbeing.

Another priority will be apprenticeship. European construction SMEs are already deeply involved in the training of the future workforce. 2/3 of the apprentices in the British construction sector and around 80% of the apprentices in the French construction sector are trained by micro-companies, with less than 20 employees. The sector is, however, facing a huge skill shortage and demographic challenges, so more has to be done!”

Patrick Liébus concluded “Last but not least, I will continue my fight for an inclusive European Sectoral Social Dialogue. [Almost half of the European construction SMEs](#), represented by EBC, currently do not have a say in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Construction. 2016 must be a turning point for them.”

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### Note to editors

Established in 1990, the European Builders Confederation - EBC - is a European professional organisation representing national associations of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises working in the construction sector. EBC is a member of UEAPME (the European association of micro-enterprises and SMEs), on behalf of which it chairs the UEAPME Construction Forum.

The construction sector is of vital importance to the European economy. With 3 million enterprises, an annual turnover of around € 1600 billion and a total direct workforce of 13 million, the construction sector contributes at around 10% to the GDP of the European Union.

99.9% of the European construction sector is composed of small and medium-sized companies, which produce 80% of the construction industry's output. Small enterprises (less than 50 employees) are responsible for 60% of the production and employ 70% of the sector's working population.

## Press contacts

**Riccardo Viaggi**, EBC Secretary General: [riccardo.viaggi@ebc-construction.eu](mailto:riccardo.viaggi@ebc-construction.eu); +32 (0)2 2801650; +32 (0)495 123 577

**Valeria Mazzagatti**, EBC press and communications officer: [valeria.mazzagatti@ebc-construction.eu](mailto:valeria.mazzagatti@ebc-construction.eu); +32(0)251423 23

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