



## FIEC PRESS RELEASE – 27/11/2009

### Investing in Construction for Sustainable Growth and Jobs in the EU

*"The construction sector is the barometer of the economy at large. When the economy is booming, so is construction, and vice versa."* stated MEP Guy Verhofstadt (BE), Chairman of the ALDE Group, on 26<sup>th</sup> November in Strasbourg in a meeting with FIEC, the European Construction Industry Federation.

*"The current global economic crisis is hitting our industry hard, which represents nearly 11% of the European GDP, 3 million enterprises – most of them SMEs - and more than 16 million direct jobs"* declared Dirk Cordeel, FIEC President. *"It should not be forgotten that the need for investment in energy efficiency and infrastructure is real, without regard to the crisis, in order to secure future growth and jobs. So, we appeal to politicians of all parties and all levels to ensure that the necessary investment is actually carried out and not sacrificed for reasons of deficit reduction or election strategy."*

In addition to the need to rebuild trust in the economy and in particular in the financial markets, Guy Verhofstadt recognised the key role that the construction sector plays in the EU economy and proposed that the new Commission draws up a specific strategy for the construction industry, focusing in particular on :

- 1) the setting up of a Europe-wide strategy for pricing of construction materials, as is currently done in the US and China;
- 2) facilitating access to EU grants and EIB loans for construction projects, in particular in infrastructure, accompanied by more transparency and accountability;
- 3) increasing EU budgetary means to support SMEs in the sector;
- 4) a special focus on the new Member States, which are still lagging behind in basic infrastructure;
- 5) supporting investment in the "green economy", which constitutes a priority and also a huge opportunity for the construction industry, namely through investment in the energy efficiency of buildings and green infrastructure networks (e.g. Trans-European Networks for transport and energy mentioned by Verhofstadt).

*"The end of the recession does not mean the beginning of the recovery and therefore urgent action is needed."* concluded Guy Verhofstadt.

*FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 33 national Member Federations in 28 countries (26 EU & EFTA, Croatia and Turkey) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as "global players", carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.*

*For further information, please contact: Mr Ulrich Paetzold*

**FIEC, Avenue Louise 225, BE-1050 Bruxelles**

**Tél. +32-2-514 55 35, Fax +32-2-511 02 76 e-mail: [info@fiec.eu](mailto:info@fiec.eu) web: [www.fiec.eu](http://www.fiec.eu)**