

**Annual Congress of the European Construction Industry Federation in Madrid:
Creating employment and growth,
Construction is the Solution Industry!**

The need for **prompt investment in infrastructure and energy efficiency** to combat the current downturn and promote sustainable development was the key message to come out of a conference held on 19th June in Madrid by the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) during its annual Congress, on the theme of the impact of the global economic crisis on the construction sector and its fundamental role on the road to recovery.

In front of a full audience of contractors and representatives of the EU Commission, banks, local authorities and trade unions, FIEC President Dirk Cordeel stressed that *“investing in infrastructure remains a fundamental necessity and must not become the victim of the current financial and economic turmoil”*, and also welcomed the fact that the national recovery plans include investment in energy efficiency, as well as in infrastructure. While, according to SEOPAN-ANCOP¹ President David Taguas, public investment cannot completely cover the lack of private financing, it will continue to act as a vital lever in favour of construction projects, at least in the short term.

Furthermore, acting immediately on improving the energy efficiency of buildings will not only lay the foundations of a more sustainable low carbon future, but will also generate employment and business opportunities. In this field, *“public authorities and clients can trust the expertise of the craftsmen, SMEs and large companies of the construction sector”*, said FIEC Vice-President Bernard Huvelin.

To bring this investment and the associated benefits about in the current context, *“our economies urgently need **speed of action** – that is to say: transforming political commitment into concrete actions. It is the basic condition to enable the construction sector to successfully intervene in these fields”*, stressed Huvelin at the end of the conference. *“Give us the tools and we will do the job”*, added Mr Cordeel, who recalled that this message was already the core of the recent FIEC Manifesto for the European elections².

In support to the construction industry, particularly badly hit by the crisis in Spain, Mrs Esperanza Aguirre, President of the Region of Madrid, concluded the event. Mrs Aguirre recognised the major role played by construction in employment and the economy and emphasised that this industry is not to blame for the current crisis. The message of all speakers was unanimous: construction is not part of the problem but part of the solution!

Speeches, PPT presentations and political conclusions are available on: www.fiec.eu
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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.

¹ Asociación de empresas constructoras de Ambito Nacional - Agrupación Nacional de Constructores de Obras

² see FIEC 10-point Manifesto for the European elections 2009, on www.fiec.eu