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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Presentation by the European Construction Industry Federation (agenda item 2) at the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (High Level) on 07 May 2026

Delegations will find attached a presentation by the European Construction Industry Federation, with a view to the discussion by the Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (High Level) at its meeting on 07 May 2026.

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High Level Group on Competitiveness and Growth

7 May 2026 - Brussels



Building
the change



European Strategy for Housing Construction



Digitalisation of building permit procedures

- Towards full digital transformation
- Clear timelines, accountability and transparency in decision-making

Accelerating standardisation and innovation uptake

- Boosting innovation uptake by development of standards

Financing and public procurement

- Need for a shift towards performance-based procurement, quality criteria and support for industrialised/modular construction

Labour shortages and skills gaps

- Increasing availability of skilled workforce in construction
- Facilitating labour mobility within the EU



The "Single Market Strategy" and the "Construction Services Act"

Construction is NOT like other sectors

Local

Majority of SMEs
operating at regional/national level

Large firms establish local subsidiaries
rather than operate cross-border

Barriers to cross-border activity

Complex administrative systems

Lack of accessible information

Obstacles related to
qualifications, social security
coordination, language



The "Single Market Strategy" and the "Construction Services Act"



Building
the change

Clear red lines

- High-risk sector
- Strict requirements on H&S, skills, qualifications
- Result of long-standing social dialogue
- Any EU initiative must not lead to lower national standards

National frameworks must remain central

- Construction activities intrinsically linked to national and regional regulations
- Ensuring quality, safety and consumer protection
- Full harmonisation simply NOT feasible
- Need for better transparency and easier access to information

Mutual recognition of skills and qualifications

- Simplified, more efficient and faster procedures
- While standardisation can offer benefits it must remain voluntary and involve social partners

Access to insurance

- Improving the recognition of insurance policies across Member States
- clear EU added value

Key principle

- **Build on what exists**
- **Respect national systems**
- **Focus on concrete and workable solutions**



(Regulatory) Simplification



Simplification

- Omnibus on sustainability reporting → step in the right direction

Cost pressures and resilience

- High and volatile material costs
- Increasing regulatory requirements
- Essential to strengthen Europe's industrial resilience

Project delivery

- One of the biggest bottlenecks: complex and lengthy permitting procedures
- Need for simpler permitting processes, clear deadlines and legal certainty
- Planning rules supporting both renovation and new construction





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Thank you!

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