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EC meetings on the CoST Initiative

Together with representatives of CoST (Construction Sector Transparency Initiative), EIC (European International Contractors) and FIEC (European Construction Industry Federation), EFCA discussed with Directorate General (DG) for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO) and DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (DEVCO) possible ways on how CoST may complement the Commission's anti-corruption initiatives.

CoST is a partnership between participating countries and international stakeholders, aiming at strengthening transparency and accountability in public construction.

Industry supports CoST because its approach is even handed: it focuses on creating a business environment in which corruption is less likely to occur.

DG REGIO officials explained the preventative measures in the administration of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds that mainly concern the increase in public procurement capacity and identification of anti-corruption measures.

The meeting with DG DEVCO concluded that the CoST initiative could play an important role if and when EU aid is delivered in the form of budget support.

Industry feedback on PRAG 2014

EFCA and FEACO share feedback on the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions (PRAG) with Representatives of the Permanent Representations.

EFCA and FEACO (European Federation of Management Consultancy Associations) reported about the experiences acquired in the field with the present version of the PRAG.

The following concerns were highlighted and will be brought to the attention of the Commission:

- reintroduction of the request for too detailed references (name/profile of main staff)
- disproportionate and excessive liability (and insurance) requirements
- change of the 'per diem' system
- excessive financial reference criteria.

The meeting also held an open discussion on a just developed draft EFCA policy paper on the use of country systems. The paper underlines the importance of monitoring and

controlling the public procurement process, and it explains the practical difficulties that European firms face (including difficulties to enter external markets) and concerns about the lowest-price award (and consequently the lower quality of work).

The policy paper is expected to be finalised at the October 2014 meeting of the European External Aid Committee.

Moving to a circular economy



The July 2014 issue of 'the Voice of EFCA', the federation's newsletter that disseminates our industry's viewpoints on policy matters to the decision-makers in the European Institutions, is explaining the contribution that

engineering consultants can make towards the transition to a circular economy.

At the same time, the European Commission adopted the Communication 'Towards a circular economy: a zero waste programme for Europe'.

Key focus areas are research and innovation, design, unlocking investment and financing, supporting business and consumers, and modernising waste policy and targets.

To help the circular economy become a reality, the Commission announced other initiatives, including a European approach to common indicators for the assessment of the environmental performance of buildings.

http://www.efca.be/Portals/EFCA/ELOKET/13402/340007_Voice%20of%20EFCA%2012.pdf

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/>

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eusdd/buildings.htm>

EFCA President meets with Nordic associations

All Nordic associations articulate actions to increase their influence in relevant national policy debates and improve the industry's visibility.



The engineering consultancy associations of Denmark (FRI), Finland (SKOL), Iceland (FRV), Norway (RIF) and Sweden (STD) invited EFCA President Flemming Pedersen and FIDIC Managing Director Enrico Vink to the 2014 RINORD meeting in Reykjavik.

High on the national agendas are the challenges thrown up by the new EU public procurement directive and the possible significant changes to the missions that will be assigned to engineering consultancies.

The discussion also showed that Young Professionals are an integral part of the goals and future strategy of the national associations.

Flemming Pedersen highlighted priorities in the 2014-2017 EFCA Forward Plan for increasing influence and the EFCA-FIDIC cooperation.

Enrico Vink discussed commitments to integrity and business transparency as well as the extended use of FIDIC forms of Conditions of Contract.

Successful first 'Train the Trainer' session on sustainability tools

Some twenty people participated in the first-ever international 'Train the Trainer' Course on Sustainable Development Tools, organised by FIDIC and UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) in cooperation with EFCA.

The one-and-a-half day course included a description of the various strategic programmes and initiatives, together with an explanation of, and instruction for the use of some of the developed tools in practice.



Working with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD): Opportunities for Consultants

EFCA and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) organise a one-day bespoke workshop in Brussels on 13 November 2014.



Senior representatives from the EBRD will provide guidance and lessons learned on the HOW, DOs and DON'Ts of obtaining consultancy contracts with EBRD and its clients in the EBRD countries of operation.

Participants will hear about strategies for winning contracts and the main differences between the EBRD's Procurement Policies and Rules (PP&R) compared to the Practical Guide for EU-financed External Aid Contracts (PRAG).

Sessions will be interactive.

In 2013, the EBRD and its clients awarded more than 2,800 consultancy contracts with a total value of in excess of € 173 million in all fields related to consultancy advice.

The programme will be available shortly at <http://www.efcanet.org>

Maximising synergies between EFCA and national associations: Flemming Pedersen to discuss with Presidents and CEOs

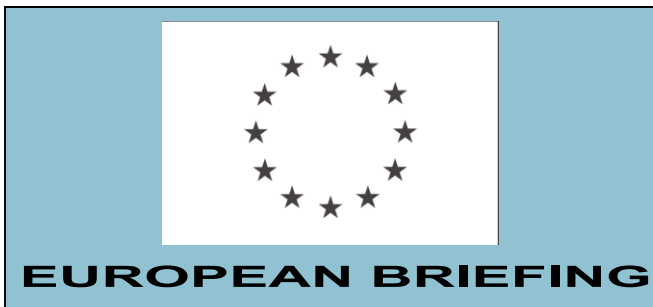
In order to secure the federation's place as influential body and to help strengthening the European businesses, the EFCA President invites his national peers and the European industry's leaders to a meeting in conjunction with the major global FIDIC meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

The short and concentrated meeting in Rio on 1 October 2014 will discuss strategies to strengthen the effects of the initiatives that are developed for the firms at national, regional and global level.

The outcome of the open dialogue will be helpful for the progress and result of the federation's work.

E F C A A G E N D A

Internal Market Committee	Brussels	04.09.2014
Board of Directors meeting	Rome	11-12.09.2014
FIDIC 2014 Conference http://fidic.org/node/970	Rio de Janeiro	28.09-01.10.2014
		
EFCA meeting with Presidents & CEOs	Rio de Janeiro	01.10.2014 (10:00-11:30)
European External Aid Committee	Brussels	14.10.2014
D&S meeting	Malaga	07.11.2014
EBRD - EFCA SEMINAR	Brussels	13.11.2014
		
Board of Directors meeting	Madrid	27-28.11.2014
Internal Market Committee	Brussels	11.12.2014
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	20.02.2015
Board of Directors meeting	Brussels	24.04.2015
Board of Directors meeting	Oslo	28.05.2015
EFCA GAM & Conference	Oslo	29.05.2015



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EU Member States who joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 tend to underperform.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/performance_per_policy_area/public_procurement/

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

Up to € 25 billion in finance for SMEs mobilised

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Europe will soon have access to up to € 25 billion in additional finance in the form of both loan guarantees and equity.

The EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) will fund guarantees for banks in order to help them provide more loans and finance leases to SMEs. A part of the COSME budget will also be invested in funds that provide venture capital for the expansion stage of SMEs, in particular those operating across borders.



The Access to finance portal provides detailed information on how SMEs can apply for finance supported by the EU, via one of approximately 1 000 banks and other financial institutions. The portal is accessible in all EU languages and for all EU and candidate countries.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/initiatives/cosme/index_en.htm

<http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/funding-grants/access-to-finance/>

New EU broadband funding and support

The 'Connected Communities' initiative will support a number of innovative pilot projects for deploying high speed broadband.

INTERNAL MARKET

EU countries dismantle barriers to the European Single Market

The Single Market Scoreboard presents an overview of the state of implementation of Single Market legislation in the member states and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries. For the first time this year, its scope was extended to the policy area 'public procurement'.

The European Commission examined the participation rate of bidders, which gives an indication of levels of competition and red tape; the accessibility of tenders to bidders; and the efficiency of procurement procedures.

The best EU performers in this regard were Sweden, Luxembourg and Finland; the worst were Italy, Greece, and Cyprus. Overall, in the areas analysed, 8 of the 12

The initiative will map potential European broadband projects, and identify the most mature ones, which will be prioritized for "technical assistance" services under the Connected Europe Facility (CEF), in partnership between the European Commission and the World Bank.

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) is another important source of broadband funding besides ECF.

The Commission has developed a Digital Agenda toolbox for the use of the ESIF in the area of broadband.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/node/70418>

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/digital-agenda-toolbox-european-structural-and-investment-funds>

Five JTIs publish their first Horizon 2020 calls

Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs) are public-private partnerships involving industry, research community and public authorities to pursue common ambitious research objectives.

The first round of funding, €1.13 billion in public funding, which will be complemented by a comparable amount from the private partners will go into projects that will improve quality of life as well as boost international competitiveness of Europe's industry.

The competitive calls are open to the participation of companies, SMEs, universities, research organisations and others.

The best projects will be selected for funding through peer review.

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>

€ 415 million support to Africa's continental integration

The total allocation of the Pan-African Programme will amount to € 845 million from 2014 to 2020.

The major innovation of this programme is that it allows the EU to link up the cooperation it has with Northern Africa, South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/c_2014_5375_1_annex_en_v1_p1_771842.pdf

European Trust Fund for the Central African Republic

The Békou Fund, the first EU Trust Fund set up by the European Commission, Germany, France and the Netherlands, is to promote the stabilisation and reconstruction of the Central African Republic (CAR).

The new Financial Regulation authorises the European Commission to set up and manage European trust funds under an agreement concluded with other donors.

These trust funds are designed to mobilise various sources of EU financing and to collect contributions from a number of donors, in particular the EU, its member states, third countries, international organisations or private donors such as foundations or citizens to provide support to agreed objectives.

CONSULTATIONS

What urban agenda should the EU adopt?

The Commission launched a public consultation that will run until 26 September.

Should the future urban agenda target a few key priorities or be designed as a broader general framework, meant to draw attention to the urban dimension of policies?

The purpose of the consultation is to widen debate to all stakeholders and to gather their ideas on the need for an EU urban agenda, what its objectives should be and how it could function.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/urb_agenda/index_en.cfm.

MISCELLANEOUS

Towards a data-driven economy

A Commission Communication describes the features of the data-driven economy of the future and sets out operational conclusions to support and accelerate the transition towards it.

The document also raises the issues of barriers to the circulation of financial data and ownership and liability of data provision.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/making-big-data-work-europe>

Directive on maritime spatial planning adopted

Member states will have to set up maritime spatial plans by April 2021 based on an ecosystem approach.

The directive must be transposed into member state law by 2016.

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime_spatial_planning/index_en.htm

EBRD leads the way on e-procurement

The Bank's new cloud-based online platform will replace its current paper-based procedures for invitations to tender, tender documents, clarifications and evaluation reports.

The system will greatly speed up transaction time and reduce processing costs for the clients and suppliers, increase opportunities for competition and improve transparency. The system is expected to go live in a pilot phase before the end of 2014.

<http://www.ebrd.com/english/pages/workingwithus/procurement.shtml>

Higher and achievable energy savings for 2030

The European Commission proposed an EU-wide energy efficiency target of 30% for 2030.



It is estimated that reaching this target will require additional investments in energy efficiency of € 89 billion annually, with the bulk of this money expected to come from private investors.

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/efficiency/events/2014_energy_efficiency_communication_en.htm

EU candidate status for Albania

Albania is one step closer to the European Union.

Major challenges still lie ahead for Albania to further advance on its EU-integration path: the country will need to continue and consolidate its systematic approach to reforms and tackle remaining EU-related challenges.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detail-ed-country-information/albania/index_en.htm

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