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EFCA advocacy activities discussed at Oslo meetings

The annual EFCA meetings offer industry representatives the opportunity to learn about what EFCA is undertaking to ensure that EU policies and rules are not negatively affecting the engineering consultancy businesses.

This year's General Assembly Meeting was hosted by RIF, Rådgivende Ingeniørers Forening, in Oslo.

The meeting approved the elections of Liv Kari Skudal Hansteen (Norway) as Vice-President and Bernard Gilliot (Belgium) as Treasurer.

Kari Harsunen (Finland) serves for a second term of three years as Director whilst Nicola Matic (Serbia) joined the EFCA Board to represent the Balkan region.

Committee Chairs highlighted a series of policy wins and presented future plans for discussion.



The spring 2015 EFCA Barometer report shows a further stabilisation of markets in southern Europe following five years of decline, and the apparent slowdown in the markets of central and northern Europe. The sector in general is reflecting the gradual growth of European economies and their investment activity in gross fixed capital formation.

<http://www.efcanet.org/Portals/EFCA/EFCA%20files/PDF/Report%20EFCA%20Barometer%20Spring%202015.pdf>

Speakers at the '€315 billion' Conference addressed an interesting scope of business topics from varying perspectives: the high-level national politician, recognising the

relevance of long-term planning and value for money over the European legislator, explaining the aims of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), to professionals, setting out a scope of visions on the industry's challenges, opportunities and business models.

<http://www.efcanet.org/MeetingsEvents/ArchiveDetail.aspx?detailid=16413>



Ketil Solvik-Olsen, Minister of Transport and Communications

35 enthusiastic participants in the May 2015 YP Forum in Oslo

Under the theme 'Interdisciplinary communications and processes in engineering design projects', inspiring speakers brought together diverse perspectives and triggered lively debates.



The opening statement of the YP Forum set the tone: simple and efficient

communication helps to solve or avoid seemingly complicated issues in projects.

Rune Semundseth convincingly demonstrated that one should aim at gaining influence by asking questions instead of giving orders.

The next speaker, Torstein Borch Skolseg described how to move from words to action, whilst Lars Pettersvold showed that communication is a key to great design.

The critical roles of verbal feedback and trusting signals from others were made clear in an interactive communication game.

Sebastiano Lombardo concluded the YP Forum with a lecture on creative constraint-handling strategies in engineering design.

During the Award Ceremony for the 2015 Young Professionals competition, EFCA President Flemming Pedersen congratulated all candidates for their valuable proposals.



YP award ceremony

Very proud of her achievement, winner Anne Moloney, thanked the Danish association FRI for putting her forward in the European competition, her employer Rambøll, for the confidence put in her, and all her project colleagues for their hard work, dedication and support.

EFCA President Flemming Pedersen presented the competition awards also to the two runners-up, Francesca Del Din

(Denmark) and Marek Foglar (Czech Republic).

Certificates were presented to José Manuel González Parejo (Spain), Steffen Enersen Maagaard (Denmark), Kim Aleksander Haukeland Paus (Norway), Harmen Kievit (The Netherlands), Dirk Schlarmann (Germany), Ana Contreras Escribano (Spain) and Jan Losko (Czech Republic).

EFCA invited to provide reality check of the Services Directive

The single market is more relevant than ever: making the internal marketplace work is a lever to boost growth and create jobs.

The Commission is seeking information on strategic services sectors. These sectors with significant impact in economic terms (potential leverage effect) include engineers, architects, accountants and lawyers. This assessment will help the Commission in identifying (other than regulatory) routes to long-term growth policies and smart initiatives to open up markets and facilitate cross-border activities.

In this context, DG GROW, the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, invited the engineering consultancy industry to report 'real life stories' and specific difficulties when providing services to (private) clients in another EU country. Consequently, DG GROW developed a concise questionnaire.

Please contact the secretariat (vdalle@efca.be) before Friday, 26 June 2015 if you are interested in providing your experiences

EFCA welcomes three positive DG DEVCO actions

1. Since decades, EFCA emphasised the importance of training, which represents an investment in both staff and company competence.
A novelty in the upcoming PRAG 2015 concerns the political 'Youth for Development' initiative.
 - All contracts above € 500.000 (and per tranche of € 500.000) are to provide for 1 trainee for a 3 months to maximum 1 year period (18-30 years old; nationality: EU member state or partner country) on top of the team. These trainees will be treated as reimbursable expenses.
2. DG DEVCO's Sustainable Growth Directorate is increasingly covering more sectors than transport and electricity namely, agriculture (supply chain and rural electrification) and sustainable development of cities. Investments are catalysed through blending instruments that use EU grants and loans in a strategic way to make large energy infrastructure projects bankable.
 - Engineering consultancy services are required for the preparation of bankable projects (financial, procurement and environmental and social expertise, directly related to the investment) for promoters (e.g. rural electrification).
3. Blending is an increasingly important instrument to deliver EU grants to partner countries. Our industry advocated that the same type of information should be made available by all European donors in a timely manner and in a single platform.
 - European Financing Institutions and Development Agencies using blended funds will re-bounce their tenders and pre-information notices on the Official Journal website (TED).

EIB (European Investment Bank) increasingly important as potential client

EFCA's European External Aid Committee learned about the opportunities for consultants to work for the EIB from Stefan Kerpen, Head of Technical Assistance Unit of the Bank's Advisory Services Department.

The EIB is providing support to economic recovery in Europe, whilst it is also supporting the EU development aid and cooperation policies.

In the latter context, the EIB is increasingly working jointly with European Development Finance Institutions (EDFI's), International Financial Institutions (IFIs), Investment Fund Managers and Promoters.

The largest proportion of EIB activity is to provide long-term financing for infrastructure projects (in both the public and the private sectors). Examples of TA operations linked to major infrastructure projects are the assessment of recipient's needs and the development of ToRs.

The Bank's private clients directly hire consultants themselves.

Procurement notices are published on the EIB website (with a link to the EC Official Journal).

A system is being set up for framework contracts as well as for the reintroduction of information on upcoming projects and contract awards.

<http://www.eib.org/projects/index.htm>

Business world commits to climate action

FIDIC partnered in the Business and Climate Summit in Paris on 20-21 May 2015 and co-signed the private sector's call for reaching an ambitious climate agreement with 'robust and predictable carbon pricing'.

At the event, FIDIC President Pablo Bueno highlighted the need for engaging

independent consulting engineers in projects in the built environment.



Far left: Pablo Bueno

Together with city leaders, standardisation organisations and international agencies, FIDIC organised a side-event on sustainable cities. At this event, UNEP announced the publication of the international glossary on sustainable cities.

<http://www.khl.com/magazines/construction-europe/detail/item108199/Common-language-for-smart-cities>

FIDIC is now recognised as a reliable partner among thinkers on the urban future.

In a joint declaration, signed by 25 international networks representing 6.5 million companies (from both industry and the financial sector) from 130 countries, the private sector engages with climate action, while also emphasising the need for re-directing and mobilising investment flows to allow for the transition towards a low-carbon economy.

http://www.efcanet.org/Portals/EFCA/EFCA%20files/PDF/20150521_BCS%20FINAL%20press%20release_Final_17H30.pdf

E F C A A G E N D A

FIDIC-EFCA Sustainable Development Committee

Brussels

23.06.2015



Dubai

13-15.09.2015

Board of Directors meeting

Brussels

25.09.2015

Internal Market Committee

Brussels

01.10.2015

European External Aid Committee

Brussels

06.10.2015

D&S meeting

Sardinia

23.10.2015

Board of Directors meeting

tbc

27.11.2015



EUROPEAN BRIEFING

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Juncker plan: MEPs and ministers strike deal to bridge investment gap

'Squaring the circle: Improving European infrastructure financing'

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES p6

Work plans of TEN-T European Coordinators published

EU commitment to Sustainable Energy for All: ElectriFI

New category of private funds to encourage long-term financing of the economy

€279 million development programme for Liberia, €103 million for Congo, €560 million for Malawi and €615 million for Mali

More than €1.3 billion EU support for regional programmes in Southern, Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean

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Innovation in Europe needs new boost

European Report on Development 2015

EU is the world's largest donor of development assistance in 2014

2015 EU Aid Transparency Review

Single-member private limited liability companies

Neighbourhood policy: 'Some progress' in a difficult year

Persisting trade and investment barriers despite prospects of global recovery

INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE

Juncker plan: MEPs and ministers strike deal to bridge investment gap

The architecture of the Juncker plan to unlock €315 billion public and private investments in the real economy in 2015-2017 can be put to a European Parliament vote on 24 June and the investment programme can kick off in the summer.

The co-legislators have clarified the legal details of the new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). It will take a few more months before this new instrument can start financing high-risk projects across the EU.

The selection of EFSI projects will be based on compliance with EU policies, economic viability and their potential to attract private investment. The fund will also allow the implementation of a series of projects that, until now, would not have been able to attract sufficient investments.

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/jobs-growth-investment/plan/efsi/index_en.htm

www.fi-compass.eu

<http://europa.eu/!cn47JG>

The EIB already approved financing for a number of investment projects as part of the Investment Plan for Europe, in which it is the Commission's strategic partner.

<http://www.eib.org/about/invest-eu/index.htm>

'Squaring the circle: Improving European infrastructure financing'

The Roland Berger Strategy Consultants study on behalf of United Europe proposes six key elements for mobilising private investment in infrastructure.

<http://www.united-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/RB-Study.pdf>

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

Work plans of TEN-T (trans-European networks - Transport) European Coordinators published

The 11 work plans will guide the development of the transport corridors in the short and longer term.

They set the framework for investment in transport infrastructure - from public and private, European and national sources.

The time horizon is 2030, in accordance with the completion target of the core network.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/news/2015-05-28-coordinator-work-plans_en.htm

EU commitment to Sustainable Energy for All: ElectriFI

ElectriFI is a financing mechanism for rural electrification projects to reduce energy poverty and ensure viable access to affordable energy services.

Through the ElectriFI initiative, EU grants will complement private financing, bridging potential financial gaps in order to make a project bankable. This will provide the security that investors and banks are expecting to boost investments.

If investments are successful, the grants will be converted into loans, at a concessional rate, and the EU will be 'reimbursed'. The EU will then be able to reinvest its grants in new projects, allowing more and more people to get access to electricity services.

A total of €270 million have been earmarked for the next few years to support this effort.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/energy/energy_en

New category of private funds to encourage long-term financing of the economy

The regulation on European long-term investment funds (ELTIFs) lays down rules to protect professional and retail investors.

ELTIFs aim to boost the finance available to companies that need long-term capital for projects relating to energy, transport as well social housing, schools and hospitals.

http://ec.europa.eu/finance/investment/long-term/index_en.htm

€279 million development programme for Liberia, €103 million for Congo, €560 million for Malawi and €615 million for Mali

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica signed the National Indicative Programmes with Liberia, Congo, Malawi and Mali for the 2014-2020 timeframe.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/tags/national-indicative-programme-nip_ro?page=6

More than €1.3 billion EU support for regional programmes in Southern, Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean

The 2014-2020 EDF (European Development Fund) funding to South and East Africa and the Indian Ocean has more than doubled since the last financing period.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regional-indicative-programme-eastern-africa-southern-africa-and-indian-ocean-2014-2020_en

MISCELLANEOUS

Innovation in Europe needs new boost

The 2015 Innovation Union Scoreboard reveals that while innovation in Europe has remained stable overall, there has been a drop in the number of innovative firms, venture capital investment, SME innovation, patent applications, export of high-tech products and sales of innovative products.

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/innovation/facts-figures/scoreboards/index_en.htm

European Report on Development 2015

The European Report on Development 2015 (ERD 2015) presents the framework for implementation of the global post-2015 development agenda.

The ERD 2015 sets out a new conceptual structure for thinking about development finance and its relation to policy.

<http://www.erd-report.com/>

EU is the world's largest donor of development assistance in 2014

The European Union and its member states continued to be the world's largest aid donor, providing more than half of the Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The EU increased its official development assistance to €58.2 billion in 2014 (up 2.4% from 2013).

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/development-aid-stable-in-2014-but-flows-to-poorest-countries-still-falling.htm>

2015 EU Aid Transparency Review

The report, issued by 'Publish What You Fund', examines the performance of the major international donors, including the European Commission.

<http://publishwhatyoufund.org/files/2015/06/2015-Aid-Transparency-Review.pdf>

<http://www.aidtransparency.net/>

The European Commission publishes a wide range of information in accessible and comparable formats, including through the EU Aid Explorer website.

<https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/>

Single-member private limited liability companies

One year after it was tabled by the Commission, the Council reached a general approach on the directive on single-member private limited liability companies (Societas Unius Personae' or SUP).

In order to facilitate cross-border activities and the establishment of single-member companies as subsidiaries in other member states, the proposed directive introduces a common framework governing the formation of single-member companies.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/28-29-compet-single-member-private-companies/>

Neighbourhood policy: 'Some progress' in a difficult year

Many of the 2014 progress reports for 12 out of the 16 neighbourhood countries make for a rather grim reading.

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/progress-reports/index_en.htm

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004, had been revised in 2011, in the wake of the Arab spring.

The Commission conducts a public consultation – until 30 June – to adapt the policy to the developments that took place since then in the neighbouring countries.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/consultation/index_en.htm

Persisting trade and investment barriers despite prospects of global recovery

The fifth edition of the Trade and Investment Barriers Report concludes that the EU's strategic economic partners – Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia, and the United States – maintain a variety of barriers that significantly hinder international trade and investment opportunities of EU companies.

http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/march/tradoc_153259.pdf

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