SMARTER **CONSTRUCTION,** STRONGER **ECONOMY,** INCLUSIVE **SOCIETY:**

THE EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY MANIFESTO FOR DIGITALISATION

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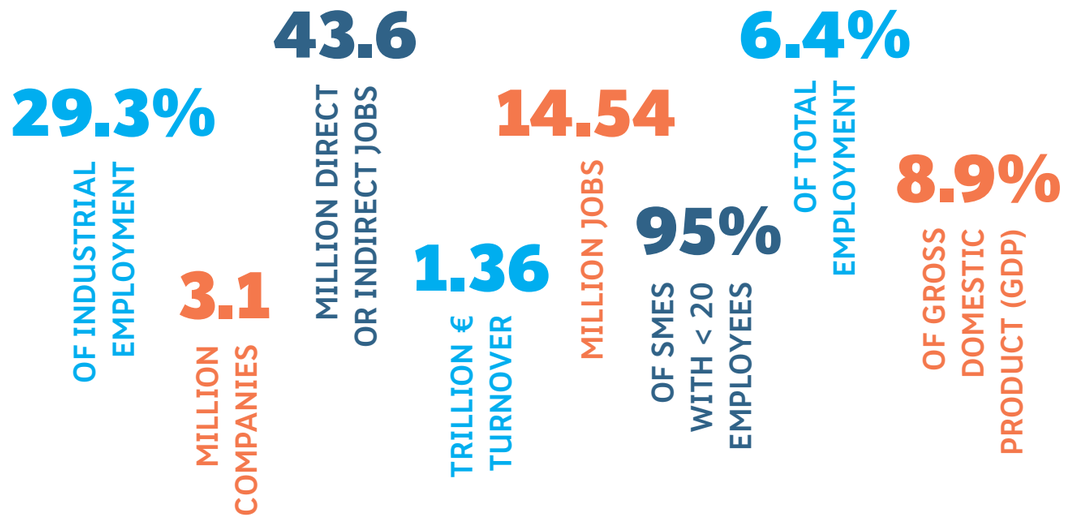
KEY FIGURES OF EU CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



To remain competitive in an increasingly globalised market, the EU economy must transform itself digitally. The construction sector is an integral part of the European economy and the digitalisation of the sector is an enabler for the transformation of that economy. Digital transformation needs to happen right across the value chain if it is to become truly embedded and business as usual.

However, this transformation cannot be done by businesses in isolation.

Indeed, the importance of the construction sector is also a result of its pivotal position at the crossroads of different economic sectors, which make up the construction value chain: product and machinery manufacturing, professional services, infrastructure, real estate and housing. The significance of the sector is also reflected in its ability to respond to the main challenges of the European Union: jobs, digital economy, energy efficiency, circular economy, climate change, demographic changes, health and safety, education, training and new personal data protection rules.

To achieve the European Union's policy goals, digitalisation is essential.

Digital technologies not only improve productivity and reduce project delays, but can also enhance the quality of buildings and improve safety, working conditions and environmental protection. This shows unequivocally that digitalisation is not a goal in itself but a means to achieve the European Union's priorities. Digitalisation makes good business sense because as well as contributing to the provision of affordable homes and higher quality infrastructure at a faster pace, it offers new services, which enhance the quality of our lives, while enabling us to protect the environment and improve our communities for the benefit of all citizens.

The industry is on the brink of a transformation that will change the status quo forever. This will be through proactive adoption of new digitally based approaches which serve clients' demands, developed in conjunction with the IT industry. Big data, data ownership and access, Building Information Modelling (BIM), cloud storage, 5, 6, 7+D design, pre-fabrication, robots, 3D printing, Artificial Intelligence, a new wave of voice recognition systems, new business models, as well as intelligent buildings and smart cities have already entered into widespread use and they are changing the way the sector operates.

To cope with the disruptive pace, we need to build strong networks which will allow the rapid transfer of knowledge, expertise and capability across sectors and geographical borders, to deliver the transformation needed.

DIGITALISATION OF THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR MUST BE ONE OF THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE EU POLITICAL AGENDA

The European construction sector is already adapting to the digital transformation. However, we need assistance from EU policymakers. Such a transformation, requires the appropriate political, regulatory and financial framework at European Union level.

1 THE EUROPEAN UNION MUST TAKE THE POLITICAL LEAD ON DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION

Digitalisation of the construction industry should be a top political priority for all European institutions and should be part of the "Digitising European Industry" initiative. Against the background of the relentless pace of digital transformation, the European institutions should respond with an agile governance culture which facilitates and supports R&D ecosystems for IT, academia and the construction industry to develop market-driven R&D programmes.

2 WE NEED AN APPROPRIATE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON DATA POLICY

Digitalisation is also disruptive in the field of data policy, creating a need for changes to traditional data management rules. For this reason, an appropriate regulatory framework should ensure better data quality and data management, address challenges around intellectual property rights and cybersecurity, establish who is responsible – and liable – for data ownership, and avoid abuse by monopolies thus ensuring a level playing field, in which SMEs can thrive and reap the benefits of digitalisation. Finally, standards, such as those for data, interoperability and BIM, as well as guidelines for co-operation and collaboration, can support the uptake of new technologies. However, these standards need to be accessible to all, neutral, and not-for-profit.

We pledge to collaborate intensively, to lead and support the industry in order to enable a successful digital transformation of the construction industry.

3 THE NEW EU BUDGET MUST FOCUS ON DIGITAL SKILLS, R&D AND DEPLOYMENT OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE

The industry has developed several bottom-up initiatives in order to embrace digital transformation. However, financial access and support are crucial to speed up the transformation process and mitigate the impact of initial low return on investments. With this in mind, the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework must focus on:

- **Digital skills:** to assess and identify skill needs in digital construction, support quality training, up-skilling and re-skilling, empower workers, and support industry initiatives to attract young talent on the one hand and avoid job losses on the other;
- **R&D:** to foster industrial leadership, remove barriers and make it easier for the construction sector to deliver innovation; and
- **IT infrastructure:** to invest in well-designed, intelligent and connected assets that ensure deployment of cost-optimal high-speed internet infrastructure.