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REPORT

Mapping of SD situation and SD national initiatives and activities – report on national SD status in 6 countries involved, covering current needs and trends in sectoral SD and comparison with sectoral multiannual SD action plan

**ITPIO, BULGARIA
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Introduction

Social dialogue (SD) is defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to include all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It can exist as a tripartite process, with the government as an official party to the dialogue or it may consist of bipartite relations only between labour and management (or trade unions and employers' organizations), with or without indirect government involvement. SD processes can be informal or institutionalised, and often it is a combination of the two. It can take place at European, national, regional or at enterprise level. It can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of these.

The main goal of SD itself is to regulate/organise the labour market by consensus building and democratic involvement among the main social partners in the world of work. Successful SD structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability and boost economic progress. It is well-documented that countries with a well-established system of industrial relations have a higher productivity and workers satisfaction.

SD is one of the key tools in industrial relations, involving employers and trade unions. The topics for negotiations on key issues are: minimum wages, supplementary social protection (such as supplementary pensions, supplementary unemployment benefits, etc.) and wage supplements, health and safety at work, vocational education and training. Over time new topics are added, such as controlling and enforcing labour market rules, promoting greening and sustainability, access to the profession, establishing labour market observatories ...

European social dialogue (ESD) refers to discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions involving recognized and representative European federations representing the two sides of industry (employers and workers). It takes two main forms:

- a tripartite dialogue involving the public authorities;
- a bipartite dialogue between the European employers and trade union organisations. This takes place at cross-industry level and within sectoral social dialogue committees.

For an organisation to be recognised as a partner in European SD, it must be organised at the EU level and capable of taking part in consultations and negotiating agreements. The European Federations should be considered as representative within most of the EU Member States. This implies that their national members must be recognised as social partners in the respective countries.

The construction industry is the bedrock of the economy in most of the partner countries of the SUSODCO project (Slovenia, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary). Behind a strong sector there are always active sectoral SD partner organizations, which are defining, fostering and developing SD.



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1. EFBWW and FIEC on the EU Skills Agenda

In the end of January 2020, **the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)** and **the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC)** made public a Joint reaction of the European social partners of the construction industry on the proposed EU skills agenda, focusing on the future skills' needs that will have a significant impact on the construction industry. EFBWW and FIEC expect that measures to address future skills challenge in the greening industries, such as the construction industry, will in the future strongly impact the non- and low-skilled workers. An overall increased demand for skilled construction workers can be observed due to several reasons: the construction industry is highly labour intensive; the significant progressive ageing demographic development of construction workers in many Member States; the continuous increase of emigration and mobility flows and the resulting skills drain in the sector in many Central and East-European Countries (CEECs); the transition to a greener, circular and climate-neutral economy, resulting in new combinations of material and new materials; the impact of automation, digitalization and other technological changes to improve resource efficiency, which will also lead to a substitution of labour in construction and the necessity to provide training to many construction workers.

In line with their observations the EFBWW and FIEC underline the positive role of paritarian vocational and education training schemes and institutions in the construction industry that already exist in many Member States. These paritarian organisations are able to organize the adequate training programmes to construction workers and companies, according to their needs. Through the system of collective bargaining the social partners, via paritarian bodies, are capable to finance and manage their programmes in the most effective and efficient manner.

The European social partners of the construction industry underline that improving the professional skills and qualifications of construction workers requires a long-term investment, vision and cooperation between the authorities, training and education partners and the social partners of the construction industry.

2. SUSODCO project

The SD partners in the construction industry from Central (Slovenia, Hungary), South-eastern (Croatia, Bulgaria) and Southern Europe (Cyprus, Greece) who are willing and committed to collaborate more actively through a consortium, have decided, on the basis of the preliminary research showing common challenges and issues, to apply for a new EU project (SUSODCO) focused on social dialogue topics, which are aimed at reinforcement and capacity building of firstly national sectoral SD and secondly in more active contribution to the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (ESD). The SUSODCO project focuses on capacity building, promotion, visibility and mutual recognition and mutual trust of SD partners in the construction industry from Central and Eastern European and South-eastern Member States. In this framework, the SUSODCO project key objectives are to reactivate national sectoral SD partners and to equip them with missing key capacities that will enable them to be more engaged in sectoral SD and strengthen their operational functions (capacities) at national level, enable their growth, development and active inclusion in sectoral ESD activities, resulting in their successful and active SD cooperation referring to next multiannual work programme for the European SD for the construction industry (2020–2023).



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2.1. Expected results

The project envisages achievement of following results:

- Tailor made SD research methodology and capacity training events that can be transferred to other sectors.
- Creation of communication tools and measures enabling effective and focused SD (communication not lost and best sectoral SD practice and initiatives not overseen, lost or being only accessible for directly involved organizations).
- Effective, focused, transparent, systematic exchange of SD sectoral related projects, initiatives in EU.
- Digitalization of SD work processes and digital literacy; it is essential for SD partners to be empowered, SD process reinforced, either on EU or national level and of course being in line with common sectoral EU manifestos and strategic documents.

The partners in the project consortium are:

- From Bulgaria – Federation of Construction, Industry and Water Supply (FCIW Podkrepa), Bulgarian Construction Chamber (BCC) and Institute for training of Personnel in International Organisation (ITPIO);
- From Hungary – Association of the Trade Unions of Construction, Wood and Building Materials Workers (EFEDOSZSZ) and National Federation of Hungarian Building Contractors (EVOSZ);
- From Slovenia – Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia (SDGD) and the Chamber of Construction and Building Materials Industry of Slovenia at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCBMIS - CCIS);
- From Croatia – Trade Union of Construction Industry (SGH);
- From Cyprus – Federation of the Building Contractors Associations (OSEOK);
- From Greece – Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE);
- At EU-level: European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW).

Supporting partners:

- European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC);
- AEIP;
- Croatian Employers' Association (HUP-UPG).

Associate partners:

- OMTSIM;
- SEK;
- OZS.

The following actions in close relation to the aim of the project are projected:

- 4 NATIONAL JOINT FOCUSED SD RESEARCHES (desk and field) and 4 REPORTS
- 4 JOINT CAPACITY BUILDING EVENTS: organization 4 regional/local specific targeted 2-day events, in compliance with the priorities for the European social partners of the construction and in line with the New Skills Agenda for Europe
- a new free tailor-made SECTORAL WEB PLATFORM dedicated to SD in the field of construction, to be designed to present key past SD initiatives and EU projects for further dissemination and



exploitation of the concepts, used methodologies, outcomes and impacts being achieved in EU. The platform will facilitate national sectoral SD organizations to cooperate effectively and efficiently in SD, to raise awareness in major issues for the sector, to promote training, to attract members, to invest in capacity building, to create synergies and eventually to foster SD in future.

3. The SUSODCO Questionnaire

3.1. Methodology

As part of the Preparatory Phase of the SUSODCO project, the partners carried out in April 2020 special tailor made desk research to obtain information about the SD situation and SD national initiatives and activities on the national SD status in the 6 countries involved (Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece), covering current needs and trends in sectoral SD and comparison with sectoral multiannual SD action plan.

In the desk research respondents were asked to fill in a special questionnaire.

The questionnaire is partly based on the TANSIRC project (SD initiative from EFBWW-FIEC and funded by DG EMPL) research and is partly an attempt to continue the TANSIRC project in that it seeks to improve the capacity for their successful and active SD cooperation referring to the next multi-annual work programme for the European social dialogue for the construction industry (2020–2023) and national SD priorities of the construction industry.

The questionnaire consists of 28 questions, addressing sectoral social dialogue topics such as key needs on the agenda of negotiations, factors contributing to effective SD, thematic groups of SD, social paritarian funds, pension schemes, undeclared labour and equal working conditions, priorities in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European SD of the Construction Industry, strengths and weaknesses of SD, social partners' plans and measures at times of crises and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.

The questionnaire combines open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions with predefined answers offering respondents the possibility to choose among several options. For some questions, an optional space was provided to elaborate on the answer. This open part is considered of great importance for this type of survey as it contributes to improving the interpretation of its overall results and provides with additional valuable material.

3.2. Respondents

3.2.1. Trade unions

- Federation of Construction, Industry and Water Supply (FCIW Podkrepa), Bulgaria;
- Association of the Trade Unions of Construction, Wood and Building Materials Workers (EFEDOSZSZ), Hungary.
- Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia (SDGD);
- Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia (SGH)

and



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3.2.2. Employers' organizations

- Bulgarian Construction Chamber (BCC);
- National Federation of Hungarian Building Contractors (EVOSZ);
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS);
- Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus (OSEOK);
- Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE), Greece)

The respondents were asked to fill in the SUSODCO questionnaire in April 2020, answering the questions from their viewpoint and collecting feedback from other national SD partners in the construction sector.

4. Social dialogue structure in participating countries

According to ILO (<https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>), prerequisite conditions which enable, facilitate and foster social dialogue are:

- Strong, independent workers' and employers' organizations with the technical capacity and the access to relevant information to participate in social dialogue;
- Political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue on the part of all the parties;
- Respect for the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining; and
- Appropriate institutional support.
-

4.1. Sectoral social partners of the construction industry at EU level

Social partners who represent SD in the construction industry at EU level are FIEC, representing employers' interests and EFBWW, representing workers' interests.

4.1.1. European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) – workers' organisations

EFBWW's affiliates are:

- GEWERKSCHAFT BAU – HOLZ, Austria
- ACV BIE - CSC BIE, Belgium
- FGTB LA CENTRALE GÉNÉRALE - ABVV DE ALGEMENE CENTRALE, Belgium
- CENTRALE GÉNÉRALE DES SYNDICATS LIBÉRAUX DE BELGIQUE, Belgium
- CONSTRUCTION, INDUSTRY AND WATER SUPPLY FEDERATION - PODKREPA (FCIW-PODKREPA), Bulgaria
- BULGARIAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS IN FORESTRY AND WOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES, Bulgaria
- FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTION TRADE UNIONS (CITUB), Bulgaria
- TRADE UNION OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY OF CROATIA
- INDEPENDENT ROAD WORKERS UNION (NCS), Croatia



- CROATIAN FORESTRY UNION (HRVATSKI SINDIKAT ŠUMARSTVA), Croatia
- FEDERATION OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS MINERS AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS (SEK), Cyprus
- TRADE UNION OF BUILDING WORKERS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC (OS STAVBA), Czech Republic
- TRADE UNION OF WOODWORKING, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC (OS DLV), Czech Republic
- BLIK- OG RØRARBEJDERFORBUNDET, Denmark
- THE CENTRAL ORGANISATION OF INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYEES IN DENMARK (CO INDUSTRI), Denmark
- MALERFORBUNDET, Denmark
- DANISH ELECTRICITY FEDERATION (DANSK EL-FORBUND), Denmark
- FAGLIGT FAELLES FORBUND (3F), Denmark
- DANSK METALARBEJDERFORBUND, Denmark
- ESTONIAN FOREST WORKERS UNION, Estonia
- GREEK FEDERATION OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES IN CEMENT INDUSTRY, Greece
- RAKENNUSLIITTO, Finland
- TRADE UNION PRO OF TRAINED PROFESSIONALS, EXPERTS AND MANAGERIAL STAFF (PRO), Finland
- INDUSTRIAL UNION (TEOLLISUUSLIITTO), Finland
- CFDT CONSTRUCTION BOIS, France
- CFTC BATI-MAT-TP, France
- FÉDÉRATION GÉNÉRALE FO BÂTIMENT, BOIS, PAPIER, CARTON, CÉRAMIQUE, France
- FÉDÉRATION NATIONALE DES SALARIÉS DE LA CONSTRUCTION, BOIS ET AMEUBLEMENT - FNSCBA-CGT, France
- INDUSTRIEGEWERKSCHAFT METALL (IG METALL), Germany
- INDUSTRIEGEWERKSCHAFT BAUEN-AGRAR-UMWELT (IG BAU), Germany
- WORKERS UNIONS (ÉFÉDOSZSZ), Hungary
- UNION OF ICELANDIC ELECTRICAL WORKERS, Iceland
- SAMIÐN SAMBAND IÐNFÉLAGA, Iceland
- SERVICES, INDUSTRIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL UNION (SIPTU), Ireland
- FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA DEI LAVORATORI DEL LEGNO, DELL'EDILIZIA, DELLE INDUSTRIE AFFINI ED ESTRATTIVE (FILLEA CGIL), Italy
- FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA LAVORATORI COSTRUZIONI E AFFINI (FILCA CISL), Italy
- FEDERAZIONE NAZIONALE EDILI AFFINI E DEL LEGNO (FENEAL-UIL), Italy
- LATVIAN BUILDING SECTOR TRADE UNION (LBNA), Latvia
- FOREST SPHERE WORKERS TRADE UNION (LMNA), Latvia
- FEDERATION OF LITHUANIAN FOREST AND WOOD WORKER TRADE UNIONS (LMPF), Lithuania
- LCGB CONSTRUCTION & ARTISANAT, Luxembourg
- OGB-L SYNDICAT BÂTIMENT, ARTISANAT DU BÂTIMENT ET CONSTRUCTIONS MÉTALLIQUES, Luxembourg
- GENERAL WORKERS UNION MALTA (GWU), Malta
- CHRISTELIJK NATIONAAL VAKVERBOND (CNV), Netherlands
- FEDERATIE NEDERLANDSE VAKBEWEGING (FNV), Netherlands
- TRADE UNION OF CONSTRUCTION, INDUSTRY AND DESIGN OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, North Macedonia
- TRADE UNION OF FORESTRY, WOOD INDUSTRY AND ENERGY OF REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, North Macedonia



- TRADE UNION IN CONSTRUCTION, INDUSTRY, TRANSPORTATION, FARMING, HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND GRAPHICAL SECTOR (FELLESFORBUNDET), Norway
- TRADE UNION FOR THE INDUSTRY AND ENERGY SECTORS (INDUSTRI ENERGI), Norway
- ZZ BUDOWLANI, Poland
- NSZZ SOLIDARNOSC, Poland
- NSZZ SOLIDARNOSC 80, Poland
- SINDICATO DA CONSTRUÇÃO, OBRAS PÚBLICAS E SERVIÇOS (SETACCOP), Portugal
- FEDERATIILE SINDICALE DIN SECTORUL CONSTRUCTIILOR DIN ROMANIA (FGS Familia)
- FEDERATIA SINDICATELOR CIMENTISTILOR DIN ROMANIA (FSCR)
- FEDERATIA SINDICATELOR LIBERE DIN INDUSTRIA LEMNULUI (FSLIL) - observer status, Romania
- AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNION OF ROAD MAINTENANCE WORKERS (SSPS), Serbia
- AUTONOMOUS UNION OF BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WORKERS OF SERBIA (SRGIGMS)
- INTEGRATED TRADE UNION ASSOCIATION (IOZ), Slovakia
- TRADE UNION OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY WORKERS OF SLOVENIA (SDGD), Slovenia
- ELA-INDUSTRY AND CONSTRUCTION, Spain
- CCOO CONSTRUCCIÓN Y SERVICIOS, Spain
- UGT FICA, Spain
- BYGGNADS, Sweden
- UNION OF FORESTRY, WOOD AND GRAPHICAL WORKERS, Sweden
- SWEDISH PAINTERS' UNION (SV. MÅLAREFÖRBUNDET), Sweden
- THE UNION FOR SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS EMPLOYEES (SEKO), Sweden
- SWEDISH ELECTRICIANS' UNION (ELEKTRIKERNA), Sweden
- UNIONEN, Sweden
- SYNA, Switzerland
- UNIA, Switzerland
- ÖZ AĞAÇ İŞ, Turkey
- CONSTRUCTION WORKERS TRADE UNION OF TURKEY (YOL-IS)
- UNITE THE UNION, UK
- GMB, UK

EFBWW has following partners:

- BUILDING AND WOODWORKERS' INTERNATIONAL (BWI)
- EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)
- SEVERAL EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS (INDUSTRY, TRANSPORT, PRIVATE SERVICES, AGRICULTURE, CATERING, PUBLIC SERVICES)
- BAT KARTELLET
- EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (ETUI)
- EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION (FIEC)
- EUROPEAN FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS FEDERATION (UEA)
- THE EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF WOODWORKING INDUSTRIES (CEI BOIS)
- EUROPEAN FURNITURE INDUSTRIES CONFEDERATION (EFIC)
- EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION (EPF)
- EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF PARITARIAN INSTITUTIONS (AEIP)



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- FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG
- EURO DETACHEMENT (ED)
- EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK (BILBAO AGENCY)
- EUROPEAN LABOUR AUTHORITY (ELA)
- THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS (EUROFOUND)
- EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION
- EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EESC)

The affiliates of project partners are:

- Bulgaria: Construction, Industry and Water supply Federation - Podkrepa (FCIW-PODKREPA); Federation of Independent Construction Trade Unions (CITUB) – observer status; Bulgarian Federation of Trade Union Organizations in Forestry and Wood-processing Industries;
- Hungary: Federation of Building, Wood and Building Industry Workers Unions (ÉFEDOSZSZ);
- Slovenia: Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia (SDGD);
- Croatia: Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia; Independent Road Workers Union (NCS); Croatian Forestry Union;
- Cyprus: Federation of Construction Workers Miners and Allied Professions (SEK);
- Greece: Greek Federation of Workers and Employees in Cement Industry.

4.1.2. European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) – employers' organisations

FIEC's members are:

- Bi Bau - Bundesinnung Bau, Austria
- FVBI - Fachverband der Bauindustrie, Austria
- Confédération Construction, Belgium
- BCC - Bulgarian Construction Chamber, Bulgaria
- HUP - Croatian Employers' Association - Construction Employers' Association
- OSEOK - Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus
- SPS - Association of Building Entrepreneurs of the Czech Republic
- Dansk Byggeri, Denmark
- EEEL - Estonian Association of Construction Entrepreneurs
- Confederation of Finnish Construction Industries RT, Finland
- FFB - Fédération Française du Bâtiment, France
- FNTP - Fédération Nationale des Travaux Publics, France
- HDB - Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie, Germany
- ZDB - Zentralverband des Deutschen Baugewerbes, Germany
- PEDMEDE - Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works, Greece)
- ÉVOSZ - Építési Vállalkozók Országos Szakszövetsége, Hungary
- CIF - Construction Industry Federation, Ireland
- ACB - Israel Builders Association, Israel
- ANCE - Associazione Nazionale Costruttori Edili, Italy
- Partnership of Latvian Contractors, Latvia



- LCA - Lithuanian Construction Association, Lithuania
- GEBTP - Groupement des Entrepreneurs du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics, Luxembourg
- BNL - Bouwend Nederland, Netherlands
- BNL - Byggenaeringens Landsforening, Norway
- EBA - Norwegian Contractors Association,
- FEPICOP - Federação Portuguesa da Indústria Construção e Obras Públicas, Portugal
- ARACO - Romanian Association of Building Contractors
- ZSPS - Zvaz Stavebných Podnikateľov Slovenska, Slovak Republic
- CCBMIS - Chamber of Construction and Building Materials Industry of Slovenia
- CNC - Confederacion Nacional de la Construcción, Spain
- Byggföretagen, Sweden
- TCA - Turkish Contractors Association, Turkey
- CBU - Confederation of Builders of Ukraine
- EFFC - European Federation of Foundation Contractors, Europa
-

4.2. SD body/commission/partner of the construction industry at national level

4.2.1. Bulgaria

- Chamber of Builders in Bulgaria (EO);
- Bulgarian Construction Chamber (EO);
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policies of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

The main negotiations are for the Labour Code, the Safe Working Conditions Act, the Civil Servant Act.

4.2.2. Hungary

Tripartite forum:

- Versenyszféra és a Kormány Állandó Konzultációs Fóruma - FVK
(Permanent Consultation Forum of the Government and Private Sector)
- <https://szakszervezetek.hu/vkf/11986-ma-ul-ossze-a-versenyszfera-es-a-kormany-allando-konzultacios-foruma>
- NGTT – Nemzeti Gazdasági és Társadalmi Tanács
The National Economic And Social Council Of Hungary - <http://ngtt.hu/en/>

Recommendations for the Labour Act; Minimum Wage Decree; OSH Law.

4.2.3. Slovenia

Tripartite SD

The Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Slovenia (ESC), formed by:

- employers' representative organizations (EOs);
- employees' representative organizations (TUs);
- the Government of Slovenia

(More info at: <http://www.ess.si/ess/ess-eng.nsf>).



Social partners at national level negotiate via CCIS (not as sectoral CCIS department: CCBMIS) for the following important national legislation acts:

Employment Relationships Act:

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5944>

Minimum Wage Act: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO5861>

Pension and Disability Insurance Act:

<http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6280>

Health Care and Health Insurance Act:

<http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO213>

Collective Agreements Act:

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4337>

Other Laws connected to Labour rights

4.2.4. Croatia

The Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Croatia is composed of:

- representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia;
- Croatian Employers' Association (HUP);
- Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH /UATUC)

Social partners at national level negotiate on the Labour Law, Minimum wage law, OHS Law, etc. via the TU confederation.

4.2.5. Cyprus

A tripartite SD is always held on labour matters in the same form both at national level, as well as at sectoral level, between:

- OSEOK, representing Employers in the construction sector,
- The Trade Unions (PEO, SEK, DEOK), representing Employees in the construction sector, and
- The Department of Industrial Relations (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance) representing the State.

Since 2017, OSEOK has been negotiating at national level for the enactment of a law providing for the implementation of the main clauses of the construction industry's collective agreement. The said Law, entitled "The Construction Industry's Employees (Basic Employment Terms Law of 2020" L.52(I)/2020], entered into force on the 28th May 2020.

4.2.6. Greece

Employee representative confederations (TUs):

- the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), representing private sector workers;
- the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY), representing public servants

Employers' organisations (EOs):

- the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), representing big businesses;
- the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce & Entrepreneurship (ESEE), representing commercial enterprises;
- the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSVEE), representing micro, small and medium enterprises, and self-employed



Social partners at national level negotiate on Law 1264/1982 – for the manifestation of the trade union movement and their securing trade union liberties of workers, codified, as in force today
Government Gazette 27 A / 1990 - Law 1876/1990 – Collective bargaining
Government Gazette 79 A / 1982 Law 1264/1982-Cooperative Freedoms of employees
Greek Constitution – Right to Work

4.3. SD partners at sectoral level – involved organizations

4.3.1. Bulgaria

Trade unions:

- FCIW Podkrepa - Federation Construction, Industry and Water Supply (TU)
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Construction (TU)
- Chamber of Builders in Bulgaria (EO);
- Bulgarian Construction Chamber (EO)

Influence is exerted by decrees of the Council of Ministers for determining the minimum wage, acts of the Council of Ministers concerning the payment of overtime and night work, health and safety at work, working hours, etc.

4.3.2. Hungary

- Építőipari Ágazati Szociális Párbeszéd Bizottság
(Construction Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee)
Members: ÉFÉDOSZSZ (TU) and ÉVOSZ (EO)

Recommendations for the Wage tariff; Minimum Wage Decree; Minimum overhead hourly rate; OSH Law; Vocational Education - as a member of the Vocational Innovation Council and the Construction Sector Skills Council

4.3.3. Slovenia

Bilateral SD

Signatories of Collective agreement for the construction industry

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=KOLP428>:

CCIS CCBMIS and ZDS (EO); SDGD SLOVENIJE and PERGAM (TU)

Their web links:

CCIS CCBMIS: www.gzs.si/zgigm

ZDS: <https://www.zds.si/sl/o-zds/organi-upravljanja/odbori-sekcij/sekcija-za-gradbenistvo/>

PERGAM: <http://sindikati-pergam.si/pergamovi-sindikati/>

SDGD: <https://sdgd.si/>

Slovenian social partners at sectoral level can have a direct influence only on Collective agreement for the construction industry:

<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=KOLP428>



4.3.4. Croatia

SGH (TU) and HUP-UPG (Croatian Employers' Association-Construction Employers' Association (CEA CEA).HUP-UPG (EO)

SGH and HUP-UPG sign the Collective agreement for construction

4.3.5. Cyprus

OSEOK's views on matters affecting the special conditions existing in the construction industry have been taken into consideration upon issue of decrees/acts/schemes/laws/decisions aiming to:

- Support employment (restore posts) and enterprises encountering the corona virus (financial) consequences in case of enterprises (complete or partial) suspension of works (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance).
- Strengthen the recovery and to maintain cash flow in the sector and SMEs, e.g.:
 - Instructions to the competent authorities to announce bids for all mature development projects, regardless of their planned budgeting period.
 - Interest rate subsidy scheme on business loans.
 - Scheme to cover part of the rent and operating expenses. (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Finance).

4.3.6. Greece

PEDMEDE as employers' representative

PEDMEDE, as an employers' association has the right to participate (in special legislative committees or even to electronically posted legislation) in the negotiation of executional acts and decrees (called secondary legislative acts, as opposed to the voted law which creates primary obligation and rights) for the application of the law.

PEDMEDE participates in legal negotiations, in order to prepare the secondary legislation, on issues which refer to specific matters concerning the construction (health and safety, minimum wages, working conditions (weather issues), use of hazardous materials etc.) with the other federations or associations.

Employees' representatives:

- Federation of Associations of Technical Business Employees of Greece (OSETEE)
- Greek Technical Employees Association (STYE)
- Greek Federation of Workers and Employees in Cement Industry (OMTSIM)
- Greek Federation of Builders and relative professions
- Federation of operators of engineers and drilling drivers (OXMGE)



5. Data collected from respondents

5.1. Bulgaria

The Federation of Construction, Industry and Water Supply – Podkrepa (FCIW Podkrepa, TU) and the **Bulgarian Construction Chamber (BCC, EO)** are both involved in industrial relations at tripartite sectoral level and bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level, while the former is also involved in industrial relations at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national confederal level.

Both the Podkrepa Federation and BCC describe SD as including all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It can exist as a tripartite process, with the government as an official party to the dialogue or it may consist of bipartite relations only between labour and management (or trade unions and employers' organizations), with or without indirect government involvement. Social dialogue processes can be informal or institutionalised, and often it is a combination of the two. It can take place at the national, regional or at enterprise level. It can be inter-professional, sectoral or a combination of these. The main goal of social dialogue itself is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work.

The two Bulgarian social partners specify the current economic situation in the sector as follows: "Construction industry output in 2019, according to the preliminary data of the National Statistics Institute, has registered a growth of 8.3% compared to 2018. The construction enterprises' revenues for 2019 will be published on 30 November 2020), however, the expected share of residential construction is 27.3% of the construction industry total operating revenue, of non-residential construction – 29.9% and civil engineering – 42.8%. The direct foreign investments in the construction industry for 2019, as per preliminary data, increased by € 39.1 million, compared to 2018."

For Bulgarian respondents the key needs in the construction industry on the agenda in stakeholders' latest (last 12 months) discussions were: fighting the undeclared work pattern; negotiating conditions of decent work; providing life-long learning methods for the sector (*Federation of Construction, Industry and Water supply - Podkrepa*), Professional qualification, vocational training and employment; Energy efficiency in the construction sector; COVID-19 emergency measures and industry impact (*Bulgarian Construction Chamber*).

The Podkrepa Federation conducts SD at regional and national level most often and identifies the following factors contributing to effective SD in the construction sector:

- Factor no.1: Awareness of the need for SD;
- Factor no.2: Understanding the arguments of both parties;
- Factor no.3: Mutual trust between the parties;
- Factor no.4: The economic situation of the construction sector;
- Factor no.5: The level of the grey sector in construction and its transparency

The Bulgarian branch organization in the construction sector conducts SD mostly at national and European level and points to the following factors contributing to effective SD:

- Factor no.1: Solidarity;
- Factor no.2: Research, Analyse, Understand and Act;
- Factor no.3: Consistency;
- Factor no.4: Inclusion



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Annually or once every two years, a Branch Collective Bargaining Agreement between the social partners is signed and a Sectoral Council for Tripartite Cooperation, made up of workers' and employers' representatives and representatives of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is operating.

The Podkrepa Federation reports there are no specially created thematic groups for SD and points to several important topics: Remuneration of labour; Qualification and retraining of staff; Health and safety at work.

The Bulgarian Construction Chamber, however, identifies six thematic groups:

1. Professional qualification and VET, improving the image of the sector;
2. Undeclared work and posting of workers;
3. Health and safety;
4. Energy efficiency in the construction;
5. Minimum insurance thresholds in the construction sector;
6. Sectoral collective agreements.

No **social fund** exists in the construction industry in Bulgaria at present. The Podkrepa Federation is considering establishment of a 'bad weather fund' in the sectoral collective agreement, intended to provide monetary compensation for workers in cases where construction work is impossible due to bad weather, but no action in that direction has been taken so far. In addition to a 'bad weather fund', the Bulgarian Construction Chamber is also considering the establishments of a 'health and safety fund', explaining that discussions on the need for **paritarian funds** have been on the agenda for a long time, but there is no clarity so far on how to establish them and create their legal framework. The dialogue on this matter is conducted at sectoral, national and European level.

There is no supplementary **pension scheme** in the construction industry in Bulgaria. The supplementary pension insurance in the country is implemented at national level. There is a legal framework for its implementation. Supplementary mandatory pension insurance is the second pillar of the pension system which gives the right to a second supplementary pension to people born after 31 December 1959, as well as an opportunity to receive a pension for early retirement of workers under the conditions of the first and second category labour. This type of insurance is regulated in Title Two of the Social Security Code (CSR) and is implemented through participation in universal and/or occupational retirement funds, which are established and managed by licensed pension insurance companies. In the construction sector there is no special professional retirement fund. The contribution to the universal retirement funds is 5% of the insurance income for 2020, with 2.8% being covered by the employer and 2.2% by the employee. The funds are accumulated in a personal account, from which the personal supplementary pension is later paid.

Responding to the question if measures for vocational education and training are implemented for employees in the construction industry with the support of social partners, the Podkrepa Federation replied that both the trade union and the employers' organisation have training centres for the advanced training and retraining of construction workers and specialists.

However, the Bulgarian Construction Chamber underlines that even though the social partners are collaborating in this field and have implemented some projects together, the VET and the trainings are mostly implemented at organizational level. For example, BCC has set up a subsidiary – Construction Qualification EAD to finance the training and qualification of member companies' employees which is free of charge for the companies.

Describing the role of social partners in the construction industry for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions the Podkrepa Federation notes that precarious work is quite often met when working in



construction; providing the needed tools and equipment is more than crucial and the Federation feels quite strong about ensuring healthy and safe working conditions for (and not only) its members. It should not be a matter of negotiation but a concrete and regular right for an employee to be provided with everything needed so accidents can be prevented to the highest possible degree.

BCC adds that in its attempt to promote a culture of occupational health and safety (H&S), which has a strong social impact, given the alarming statistics of the Labour Inspectorate on the percentage of occupational accidents in the sector, BCC is actively involved in the process of design and the implementation of the H&S policies at national level. In order to ensure the quality implementation of the provisions of the H&S legislation in the sector, the Construction Qualification EAD, exclusively devoted to the implementation of the professional qualification strategy of the Chamber, organizes and conducts H&S trainings in accordance with Art. 281, paragraph 5 of the Labour Code and Article 6, paragraph 1 of Ordinance RD-07-2 / 16.12.2009 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Currently, the following three trainings are conducted:

- Health and Safety Officer;
- Construction Health and Safety Coordinator;
- Control over the quality of construction performance and compliance with the construction products used in the construction works.

Combating undeclared work is among the priorities of the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry. The Podkrepa Federation underlines that the construction sector is quite vulnerable regarding the undeclared labour issue. Therefore, the fight against it is one of the core topics in every negotiation and collective bargaining agreement in the sector. BCC is actively involved in the discussions related to undeclared work and equal working conditions for the Bulgarian construction workers abroad. These activities are often related to the implementation of EU projects, such as EU Post Lab and ISA, both referring to the Posting of Workers Directive, and TANSIRC project. BCC has already conducted two surveys, researching on the working and posting of workers conditions in the EU, and has organized events to combat undeclared work.

The Podkrepa Federation outlines the following priorities at national level in the construction industry that are most in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry:

1. Attracting new members, building new trade union structures;
2. Reducing the share of the grey sector in the industry;
3. Signing a new branch collective agreement and extending it to all those working in the construction sector;
4. Implementation of “Bad weather” fund;
5. Increasing the qualification and retraining of the employees in the industry;
6. Participation in national and international projects;
7. Gaining and implementing good practices from our partners and affiliates

The respective list of the Bulgarian Construction Chamber is as follows:

1. Vocational training (anticipating skills needs);
2. Fostering a culture of H&S;
3. Social protection, combating undeclared work and improving the process and the conditions for posting of workers;
4. Ageing workforce (currently, BCC is partnering in two projects).

Asked about the **strengths and weaknesses of SD** in the construction industry at national level, the **Podkrepa Federation** pointed to these:



Strengths

- No one denies the benefits of social dialogue;
- Countries are currently listening to their problems and approaching a moderate compromise to find a solution;
- The common problem of lack of qualified staff mobilizes countries for common action.

Weaknesses

- Often, the commitments between the parties are not implemented in practice.

BCC specified the following:

Strengths

- Strong legislation acts;
- Good public discussions;
- Laws protecting the workers against dismissal;
- Freedom of bargaining.

Weaknesses

- The Collective labour agreements have a very limited impact - only 30–35% of the workers are included.
- The payment inequalities are rather high.
- The measures are channelled at direct social benefits, instead of at the implementation of thorough and complex social strategies at industry level.
- Lack of united policies, combining the efforts of all stakeholders.

In the last few years, the frequent change of leadership of the BCC has led to inconsistent policies set by the parties in social dialogue. The current leadership of BCC has shown strong positions to continue developing the Social dialogue, which would offset this weakness.

According to the Podkrepa Federation, the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry are at inter-company level, explaining that the companies operating in the grey sector do not want to follow any rules and agreements between the parties in social dialogue.

The Federation also says the most common difficulty faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue is the lack of resources, both financial and human, to achieve common goals.

BCC, on its part, specifies that the most common barriers are:

- a. Inter-company: The SD at this level in Bulgaria is very limited.
- b. Regional: The SD is mostly conducted at sectoral level.
- c. National: Efficient and sustainable SD is very limited without the active support of the state. At times, relevant and strong SD initiatives cannot be implemented due to slow and/or insufficient involvement of the government and the respective ministries.
- d. European: The EU SD initiatives are easier implemented in Bulgaria. Rarely, however, is Bulgaria initiating SD initiatives having an impact for the European construction sector.

BCC points to the following most common difficulties faced by social partners when participating in SD:



1. Dependent on EU funds;
2. Sluggish implementation at national level;
3. The SD is a complex and time-consuming process. Its impact is more likely to get visible in the long run.

For both social partners the lack of financial resources and dependence on EU funds is among the most common difficulties faced by social partners when participating in SD. They could act together to implement complex social strategies at industry level.

5.2. Hungary

The Association of the Trade Unions of Construction, Wood and Building Materials Workers, Hungary (EFEDOSZSZ, TU), is involved in industrial relations at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level, and the **National Federation of Hungarian Building Contractors (ÉVOSZ, EO)** – at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level.

ÉVOSZ says that SD is a direct dialogue between employers' representatives and trade unions that could provide a framework for concluding sectoral and collective agreements and for consultation of the social partners.

EFEDOSZSZ and ÉVOSZ describe the current economic situation in the construction sector in Hungary:

“In 2019, the construction industry carried out construction and installation work in the amount of HUF 4.430 billion at current prices, and that was 21.7% more in volume than in 2018. Producer prices in the construction sector in 2019 were on average 9.7% higher than in the previous year. 21,127 new homes were built in 2019. However, the number of issued housing permits and simple notifications/permits for the construction of new dwellings was 35,123. According to the data of the National Labour Office's population survey, the number of employed in the sector was 343.3 thousand, which is 7.61% of the employed in the national economy as a whole. Of this, the number of employees is 156.7 thousand. However, because of the current virus situation a decline is expected.”

According to respondents from Hungary, the key topics/needs in the construction industry on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions are: Vocational training and education; Occupational health and safety; Public procurement in the field of construction investments; Housing (EFEDOSZSZ), Stimulating the investment market, expanding orders of the public sector; Financing the activities of construction companies; Public procurement in the field of construction investments; Housing; Vocational training in construction and further training of the employees; Employment and labour issues in the construction industry; simplification of construction and official procedures; Improving professional standards and efficiency; Standardization in construction industry (ÉVOSZ).

Both EFEDOSZSZ and ÉVOSZ conduct SD at inter-company and national level and distinguish two main factors contributing to effective SD:

Factor no.1: Improving the position of the construction industry (productivity, working conditions, profitability).

Factor no.2: Mutual interests and common understanding.



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SD in Hungary is conducted by social dialogue committee in accordance with the law: 2009. LXXIV.) The thematic groups for SD activities are:

1. Vocational education – Sectorial Skill Council
2. Occupational Health and Safety issues
3. Minimum overhead hourly rate

The National Federation of Hungarian Building Contractors is represented in the 1st and 3rd thematic group.

No **social fund** exists in the construction industry in Hungary but EFÉDOSZSZ is considering the establishment of a social paritarian fund to promote and facilitate vocational education in the construction industry.

There is no supplementary **pension scheme** in the industry. Voluntary and personal solutions are existing but not typical in the industry. ÉVOSZ specified that in 2010, the government significantly restricted the operation of existing private pension funds and that move significantly reduced public confidence in pension funds. Currently, it is possible to operate Voluntary Pension Funds, Pension Insurances and Pension Savings Accounts.

In Hungary, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, together with the National Chamber of Industry and Commerce has set up two working committees to promote VET reform. The members of the Sectorial Skills Council are representatives of construction companies and the trade union (ÉFÉDOSZSZ). The Vocational Innovation Council is not a sectorial organisation; its members are representative of employer organisation, major Hungarian companies, churches, and trade unions. The Construction Sectorial Skill Council made a proposal to define the range of basic construction professions, to select experts to develop the new curricula of these professions and commented on the developed curricula.

The role of the social partners is mainly informative. ÉVOSZ and ÉFÉDOSZSZ have implemented several joint projects on this topic aimed at informing employers and employees. Various information materials have been prepared as well as a website (www.nincsbaleset.hu).

According to ÉFÉDOSZSZ, the main role of social partners for reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the construction industry would be the creation and adaptation of a generally binding collective agreement. Unfortunately the current legislation prevents this. ÉVOSZ says that social partners could make recommendations for decision makers, e.g. ensuring VAT reclaim for residential constructions and renovations because in most cases this is done through undeclared work.

Respondents from Hungary have replied that their activities do not follow directly the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry.

According to ÉFÉDOSZSZ, there are no real strengths of social dialogue in the construction industry at national level due to the low level of representation, which is one of the weaknesses, the other being the lack of legal background and support due to historical reasons and the fact that the government does not treat social partners as important stakeholders.

The employers' organisation ÉVOSZ shares the opinion that there are no real strengths of social dialogue in the construction industry in Hungary due indifference on the part of the government. ÉVOSZ pointed to the relatively low level of conciliation on sectoral issues in Hungary as a weakness, which has primarily historical reasons. Upon accession to the EU, a collective agreement for employees was concluded in accordance with EU recommendations. But the role of social dialogue is still incomplete compared to Western European conciliation. The reason:



In 2015, the organizational background for the Sectoral Dialogue Committees was restructured and the government significantly reduced its support for the functioning of the social dialogue. Conciliation of interests is irregular and ad hoc.

ÉFÉDOSZSZ says the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry are at the following levels:

- a. Inter-company: low organization rate especially at smaller companies;
- b. Regional: no regional organization;
- c. National: no proper institutional background;
- d. European: lack of capacities.

Both ÉFÉDOSZSZ and ÉVOSZ point to the lack of capacities as the most common difficulty faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue.

The most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry for ÉVOSZ are at the following levels:

- a. Inter-company: At the SMSs there are few union members.
- b. Regional: There are no proper forums, no proper institutional background.
- c. National: There are no proper forums, no proper institutional background.
- d. European: The lack of personal conditions.

5.3. Slovenia

The **Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia (SDGD Slovenia, TU)** is involved in industrial relations at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level, and the **Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS, EO)** – at tripartite (employers, trade unions and public authority) national confederal level, tripartite sectoral level and at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level.

The Trade Union describes SD as bilateral (bipartism) or tripartite (tripartism) collusion between representatives of labour (trade union organizations), capital (employers' organizations) and the state (government), who, as agents of different interests, give up part of their demands in order to reach a common social agreement. for the benefit of the entire community. It is, therefore, a means of enabling different interests to be taken into account and to generate broad development consensus. Partners in the SD agree about basic rights and obligations. It provides companies and employees with a stable environment in which they can thrive, but also contributes to anticipating and successfully managing change. Undeniably, social dialogue, based on mutual respect and the search for compromise, is an effective means of promoting the interests of the trade union's members. Social dialogue is an integral part of the European social model and a content of European legislation, notably social work. Social dialogue is also a dominant element in industrial relations in Europe. Social dialogue is finding distinctive and tailor-made sectoral solutions related to different social issues and topics, underlines the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia and describes the current economic situation:

“The economic situation was improving in construction in last decade from 2010–2020. At the moment situation is worsening due to COVID-19 measures. Another national issue is that our public procurement system widely tolerates social dumping from the contractors which originates from non-GPA WTO countries. Some public investments will be postponed, some will be delayed and some cancelled for this year budget.”



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The key topics/needs in the construction industry on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions for the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia are: The need of a new wage system and wage increase; Paritarian funds and Migrant workers' rights.

For the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia these are: Stable market and survival of construction companies, Fair competition, Invitation of construction companies from third countries (by the Slovenian state-owned companies and some public authorities).

The trade union in the sector usually conducts SD at inter-company and national level and outlines the factors contributing to effective SD:

Factor no.1: equality of partners

Factor no.2: high level of confidence

Factor no.3: mutual respect

Factor no.4: responsibility for the implementation of what is accepted

The employers' organization is engaged in SD both at national and European level and is opinion the factors contributing to effective SD are:

Factor no.1: state support of sectoral SD is missing

Factor no.2: extended validity of the collective agreement

Factor no.3: common and sound SD priorities

Factor no.4: flexibility and adaptation to economic situation

Factor no.5: high level of confidence

Factor no.6: equality of partners

Factor no.7: mutual respect and understanding

SD in Slovenia is conducted by the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the Employment Relationships, the Collective Agreements Act, and the Minimum Wage Act.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia specifies six thematic groups for SD activities:

1. Collective agreement and labour law
2. Living and working conditions
3. Health and safety at work
4. Social security and healthcare
5. Pension and disability insurance
6. Education and training

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia distinguishes the following thematic groups:

1. MAIN IMPORTANCE AND FOCUS: existence of social dialogue and signed collective agreement and labour law fit to economy situation;
2. establishment of paritarian fund covering holidays, pensions, VET, bad weather, layoffs payments...;
3. right skills and competences acquired (education and training);
4. attraction of youth and image of the sector, labour shortages;
5. sectoral productivity growth (digitalization, developments, innovations, green solutions put in place);
6. social security and healthcare, occupational S&H;
7. pension and disability insurance



No **social fund** exists in the construction industry in Slovenia. The Trade Union and the branch organisation in the sector are starting activities, trying to change legislation (prepare foundations for paritarian funds in the legislation) and educating all the involved parties.

There is no special sectoral **pension scheme** in the construction industry in the country. The Slovenian pension system is a three-pillar system, with the dominant role still played by the first, public pillar. This part of the system is mandatory. Benefits are calculated in line with the pay-as-you-go mechanism and financed through contributions paid by employees. The second pillar (voluntary occupational pension plan) is in Slovenia represented by pension funds mostly financed by employers and supported by the state with tax incentives. It is a form of saving for old age by which the insured person or the employer finances a monthly or yearly premium.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia is included in the system of national vocational qualifications and education and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia supports VET and lifelong education and training as this is a basis for growth of productivity. Many EU and national funded projects are going on, offering different VET, covering social skills, vocational skills, occupational H&S skills, green skills, etc.

The role of social partners for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions involve participation in the legislative process, requesting stricter occupational H&S measures which have to be recognized and paid by the investor, guiding and informing construction companies about trends, new legislation, free tools and materials developed and ready to be used, communicating with occupational S&H inspectors and reacting accordingly, sharing good practices etc.

The viewpoint of the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia is that the most important roles of social partners for reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the sector are to inform workers and prepare reports to inspectors.

According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia: “In properly regulated EU (west) countries and with a good average standard this does not present any problem. However grey economy is national theft and should be minimised. Decent work following at least minimum social standards and decently paid services should be national priority.”

The Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia points out three priorities at national level in the sector which are most in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry:

1. New wage system
2. Change legislation of collective agreements
3. Establish paritarian funds

The priorities for the other social partner – the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia are the following:

1. Fair competition on national market, third countries should not be favoured due to lowest tenders price for construction projects
2. Support of the sector by the public procurement authorities and respect of valid collective agreement regulations
3. Establish paritarian funds
4. Adaptive and flexible social dialogue

Both of the Slovenian respondents pointed to the long tradition of collective bargaining as a strong point of SD in the construction industry in the country and to the small number of members on both sides of



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the social dialog as a weakness due to the fact that the majority of larger companies were crushed in the last economic crisis. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia added as a weakness unfair public procurement.

According to the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia, the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the sector are at inter-company level because small companies don't have a trade union and at national level because not enough companies are members of the social partners institution. The opinion of the trade union is that the most common difficulties faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue are the unwillingness to negotiate on certain topics and the poor involvement of companies and workers in interest organizations – representative problems.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia says that the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry are at national level (not enough companies are members of the social partners institution, lack of support from ESS). They believe it would be of great help if the sectoral umbrella organisations in Brussels (SD partners at European level) would be more active and cooperated more closely with organisations at the national level, especially in activities with public authorities.

5.4. Croatia

The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia is involved in industrial relations at tripartite (employers, trade unions and public authority) national confederal level and at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level.

The other SD partner at national is the Croatian Employers' Association (HUP-UPG) and supporting partner in this project.

The key topic on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions for the Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia were the negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for the sector and establishing a model for monitoring CBA from the labour inspectorate.

The Trade Union conducts SD at inter-company and national level and believes that the factor contributing to effective SD dialogue in the construction industry is partners' awareness that they can arrange some topics better than in Labour law.

There is no regulatory framework for conducting social dialogue in the Construction Sector at national level in Croatia. SD is going on in two thematic groups:

1. CBA negotiations
2. Social committee for construction industry

No **social fund** exists in the construction industry in Croatia. The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia and the Croatian Employers' Association- Construction Employers' Association ran EU project SOGRADI 2015-2017, to research and find interests in construction sector for setting up a social fund.

There are no supplementary **pension schemes** in Croatia and no legal framework either.

VET in Croatia is organized by employers without the participation of social partners.



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However, they do participate in many joint activities for raising awareness and promoting the establishment of social fund for health and safety.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia claim that social partners demand respecting CBA for the sector, while many employers pay and report minimum salary and the rest of the remuneration is undeclared.

Further on, the sectoral trade union specified the following priorities at national level that are most in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry:

1. Fostering a culture of H&S
2. Improving the functioning of the labour market, fighting against social fraud, Strengthening industrial relations and the capacity of social partners
3. Vocational training

According to the Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia the fact that social dialogue has existed for 25 years is a strong point, while the low density of both social partners, without a proper recognition by the government, is a weakness of social dialogue in the sector at national level.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia sees the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the sector at national level because of low density and the most common difficulty faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue – the lack of a social dialogue framework (it is only ad hoc).

5.5. Cyprus

The **Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus** (OSEOK, EO) is involved in industrial relations at tripartite sectoral level.

The Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO), the Cyprus Workers' Confederation (SEK) and the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK) are the trade unions' participants in SD in Cyprus.

The key topic on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions for the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus is the Legislation of main provisions of the Sector's Collective Agreement – Gradual replenishment of worker's wages having been deducted during the period of the financial crisis – Renewal of the sector's Collective Agreement.

The Federation conducts SD at national level and identifies the following factors contributing to effective SD in the construction industry:

- Factor no.1: Talks in good faith
- Factor no.2: Mutual understanding
- Factor no.3: Willing to negotiate
- Factor no.4: Success in deciding on issues of agreement and on issues of disagreement
- Factor no.5: Respond to Minister's mediation
- Factor no.6: Willing to compromise

The Industrial Relations Code (Procedures to be followed in case of disagreement) is the legal framework for conducting SD in the construction sector at national level.



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The Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus specifies six thematic groups for SD activities:

1. Argumentation on Trade Unions' demands/claims
2. Argumentation on Employers' demands/claims
3. Decision on issues of agreement and/or disagreement
4. Evaluation of Trade Unions' demands/claims
5. Evaluation of Employers' demands/claims
6. Decision on final Vice-versa proposals

No **social fund** in the construction industry exists in Cyprus, whilst a Provisional Fund Scheme was implemented on a voluntary basis, until the Law of the Establishment, Activities and Supervision of Professional Pension Institutions, [Nr.10 (I) /2020] entered into force on 10.02.2020.

The Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus is of the opinion that supplementary **pension schemes** are absolutely important in the absence of legal frameworks, whilst in many cases building workers facing myoskeletal problems (due to the nature of the work) have to retire earlier. Similar clauses regarding contractors are met (but not implemented) into the Contractors Associations Statutes.

Measures for VET in Cyprus include seminars, funded or co-funded by the Human Resource Development Authority of the Ministry of Labour Welfare and Social Insurance (with the Employers monthly contribution on payrolls).

The role of social partners for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions in the construction sector in Cyprus is to initiate trainings and inspections by the Ministry, aimed to reduce the number of work accidents and to ensure safe and healthy workplaces. Health and safety awards are given to successful companies, to encourage taking H&S measures and training on H&S issues.

Reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the construction industry is considered an issue of high importance in Cyprus, too, and social partners have set up a permanent committee, to take measures and actions in common, to combat undeclared work in the country.

According to the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus the priorities at national level in the construction industry that are most in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European SD of the Construction Industry are:

1. Tackling undeclared work
2. Promote digitalisation in the construction industry
3. Promoting a positive image of the construction industry
4. Implementation and application of the European Green Deal
5. Assessing the impact of (digital) platform work in the European construction industry
6. Third countries companies on the EU construction market
7. Promoting sustainable employment, and tackling the challenges of ageing workforce

The Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus identifies the vice-versa presentation of claims/demands based on experts' evaluation, and professional support thanks to the availability of professional/experts' advice as the strength of social dialogue in the sector at national level. A weak point, according to the Federation is the "take it or leave it" effect, in Ministry's Mediation procedures, leading to final Ministry's proposal and the reason for it is the lack of a second level board of jurisdiction, (e.g. construction court).



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The Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus says the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry is at inter-company level due to unfair competition & conflict of interest amongst MEs, SMEs and SEs. The Federation points out the following most common difficulties faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue:

Difficulty no.1: To represent the interests of companies of all sizes

Difficulty no.2: To take in account the companies' needs and difficulties

Difficulty no.3: Productivity to be taken in account for the improvement of wages

Difficulty no.4: Threat of strikes

Difficulty no.5: Implementation and application of the European Green Deal and Promoting sustainable employment and tackling the challenges of ageing workforce are not SD issues yet.

5.6. Greece

Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE, EO), Greece is involved in industrial relations at tripartite sectoral level and at bilateral (= only employers and trade unions) national sectoral level.

The General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) are the trade union participants in SD in the country.

PEDMEDE points to the following key topics/needs in the construction industry that are on the agenda in stakeholders' discussions: Digitalization of the construction sector; Building Information Modelling (BIM); Circular economy in the construction sector, including Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) Management; Renovation and maintenance; Energy efficiency; New generated skills needs and related training provision; Tackling undeclared work; Health and safety at work; Competition between European and Chinese construction market/ third countries entering the EU market; Making construction sector attractive for young people, so that they choose to get involved and therefore tackle the ageing of workforce.

The Association conducts SD at both national and European level and points out the following factors contributing to effective SD in the construction industry:

Factor no.1: Mutual understanding of the issues and topics encountered by all sides of negotiation parties, as well as demands expressed by both parties to be logical and feasible.

Factor no.2: Accordance and compliance with the National regulatory framework.

Factor no.3: The existence of a stable and effective regulatory framework in National context, that promotes, enables and supports SD.

Factor no.4: Mutual trust and reliance between the parties involved, i.e. industrial relations actors (employers' representatives and trade unions) and government representatives occasionally.

Factor no.5: The capacity for cooperation and coordination with a view to expanding particularly the content of SD to address new issues.

Factor no.6: Establishment of developing a comprehensive common vision for labour relations in the country in full conformity with the principles of freedom of association and the effective recognition of collective bargaining.

Factor no.7: To establish a functioning model of SD on all issues of concern with a view to promoting collective bargaining, social cohesion and social peace in full conformity with the Convention



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Source used: Evaluating the effects of the structural labour market reforms on collective bargaining in Greece, ILO, 2016

Collective bargaining law 1876 / 1990 - Free collective bargaining and other provisions are part of the legislative framework for conducting SD in the construction sector in Greece.

Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works (PEDMEDE), Greece, specifies that the following committees operate and are active currently, organized in thematic groups as follows:

1. Committee of Extroversion and International issues
2. Committee of the legislation framework in construction sector
3. Committee of Insurance issues
4. Committee of Taxation issues
5. Committee of Innovation and communication

The aforementioned committees deal with the respective issues encountered in the Construction Sector, including Social Dialogue activities.

No **social fund** exists in the construction industry in Greece and the Association claims that despite the enhanced awareness in establishing a social paritarian fund in the construction sector, this concept and process is still in a very initial stage and it is not mature enough to become an action plan.

Public pensions in Greece are designed at national level to provide incomes to Greek pensioners upon reaching retirement. They are provided by public funds and pensioner's contributions during working years. Still, there are no supplementary pension schemes applying in the construction sector.

Under the Lifelong Learning Act (Law 3879/2010), the specialties offered in public vocational training and the sectors under which they are classified is determined by decision of the Minister for Education in accordance with the needs of the national and local economy and proposals of regional administrations, competent ministries and social partners.

In Greece, businesses and the social partners play an active role in continuing vocational training. The social partners implement vocational training programmes for their members and for other groups of citizens. Most of these programmes are covered by co-financing from the European Social Fund. The social partners have lately assumed an even larger role in planning and implementing vocational training actions funded by the European Social Fund. These actions address sectoral or local/regional labour market needs and combine training with guidance and counselling services and work placements to provide on-the-job experience.

Source used: Vocational education and training in Greece, Cedefop, 2014

The practical experience reflected by the personal view of representatives of PEDMEDE is the following:

The Greek VET system (Non-formal VET) lacks a holistic approach that embraces sectorial labour market demands, especially for the construction industry. Occasionally, social partners in the construction, as well as the rest sectors submit proposals for training needs/ training programs upon several calls for proposals EU funded (mainly funded by the European Social Fund, in the framework of NSRF). Overall, VET is not been implemented in Greece in an organised level and upon an action plan that focuses in meeting the sectorial challenges in education and training, but through potential training programmes that cover partially the existing training needs.



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Commenting on the role of social partners for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions in the construction industry in Greece, PEDMEDE specifies that a new National Occupational S&H Strategy for the 2016-2020 period has been recently introduced,

responding to the vision for "creating safer, healthier and more productive workplaces in the private and public sector that will ensure the health and will promote the well-being of workers, while contributing in parallel to the sustainability of the enterprises and supporting the development of the economy", and launched by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in order to establish officially the "National Occupational Health and Safety System".

Among the key priority axes highlighted in the Strategy for ensuring OSH and consequently for establishing the new National OSH Strategy 2016-2020 was that of strengthening the role of the OSH social partners and of the workers participation (Axis 11th).

Special emphasis on the involvement of social partners is placed on undertaking specific initiatives for the general promotion of OSH issues and in particular the promotion of new legislative interventions or the strengthening of the implementation of the legislation at local, National and European level, as well as in sectoral and company level.

The ways of empowerment mainly include the upgrading and reorganization of the consulting institutions (SYAE and SKEEE), the cooperation with institutes and research bodies of the social partners, the active participation of the social partners in the consultation on OSH issues, along with the State for planning and implementation of policies and actions for the promotion of OSH issues.

Source used: OSH system at national level – Greece

Undeclared work has always been a significant feature of the Greek economy, characterised by a relatively high level of self-employment and a large share of micro- and small businesses. Addressing undeclared work is a complex task, particularly for a country in a difficult socioeconomic situation marked by high unemployment, a poor business environment and a high tax burden.

Undeclared work is widespread in the construction sector, Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works points out. Considering this, construction sector's social partners have raised awareness on the subject matter. Undeclared work in the construction sector is included in the top priority themes in the agenda of the construction sector issues, as well as predominant in collective bargaining discussions.

Source used: Country Report Greece 2019 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic Imbalances, European Commission (available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/2019-european-semester-country-report-greece_en.pdf).

Factsheet on Undeclared Work – GREECE, European Commission (available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ret=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewiu8P-zx9jpAhVlo4sKHeOnBYYQFjAAegQIBxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fsocial%2Fjaja%2FBlobServlet%3FdocId%3D18164%26langId%3Den&usg=AOvVaw2IFuLEyyMjQJrK8JznTJ_r).

Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works has indicated the following priorities at national level in the construction industry that are most in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European SD of the Construction Industry:

1. Strengthen, reinforce and promote industrial relations in the construction industry at all levels



2. Contribute to the implementation and application of the European Green Deal in the European Construction Industry
3. Promote digitalisation in the construction industry
4. Promote a positive image of the construction industry
5. Initiatives for attracting and retaining young and female workers in the construction industry
6. “Greening” of the economy and jobs
7. Validation of informal and non-formal training

PEDMEDE specifies the following strengths and weaknesses of social dialogue in the construction industry at national level:

Strengths

- Significant influence on policy makers in several cases.
- Strong relationships and closer links with the government are gradually being cultivated.
- Autonomy of social partners to social dialogue in bilateral level.
- Involvement in European social dialogue is encouraged gradually by social partners in the construction industry, considering the major challenges that the construction sector faces.
- Facilitation of the involvement of social partners on formal consultation and policy-making boards.
- The existence of the Organization for Mediation and Arbitration (OMED) for dealing with disputes in specific issues, between employers’ and workers’ side.
- Lately, establishing a sectoral collective bargaining framework along with an affective social dialogue seems to be reactivating, with significant initiatives and willingness from social partners of both parties.

Weaknesses

- Lack of representation, declining membership in social partner organisations difficulties to attract new members, considering it is not obligatory. The transition to voluntary membership has negatively affected both employers’ and workers’ representative organisations in construction industry.
- The level of commitment by public authorities to involve workers' and employers' organisations is low.
- The low degree of consensus among the different parties along with heterogeneous approaches makes it difficult to come to a common ground.
- The reforms that took place during the crisis period resulted to low collective agreement coverage (mainly in national level, and very limited in sectoral level) and social dialogue has not been a common/regular practice.
- The antagonistic positions of several social partners in the construction sector (multiple trade unions and employer’s organisations) put a strain on social partner relations and the overall model.
- Limits in organisational and operational capacity.
- The lack of human and financial resources often prevents the social partners from carrying out more extensive situation analysis which is necessary in order to provide grounds for one or another decision, measure or initiative they propose. This also results to lack of commitment in a long-term involvement.
- Lack of training sessions and capacity building programmes on the topic for social partners.

Source used: The role of social partners in the design and implementation of policies and reforms, European Commission (available at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16464&langId=en>).



According to Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works, the most common barriers to social dialogue in line with the national priorities in the construction industry at the following levels:

- a. Inter-company: The SD at this level in Greece is very limited.
- b. Regional: The SD is mostly conducted at sectoral level.
- c. National: Efficient and sustainable SD is very limited without the active support of the state. At times, relevant and strong SD initiatives cannot be implemented due to slow and/or insufficient involvement of the government and the respective ministries, or/ and the active involvement of social partners.
- d. European: The EU SD initiatives are easier implemented in Greece.

PEDMEDE specifies the following most common difficulties faced by social partners when participating in social dialogue:

Difficulty no.1: Lack of representation, declining membership in social partner organisations difficulties to attract new members, considering it is not obligatory. The transition to voluntary membership has negatively affected both employers' and workers' representative organisations in construction industry.

Difficulty no.2: The low degree of consensus among the different parties along with heterogeneous approaches makes it difficult to come to a common ground.

Difficulty no.3: The antagonistic positions of several social partners in the construction sector (multiple trade unions and employer's organisations) put a strain on social partner relations and the overall model.

Difficulty no.4: Limits in organisational and operational capacity.

Difficulty no.5: The lack of human and financial resources often prevents the social partners from carrying out more extensive situation analysis which is necessary in order to provide grounds for one or another decision, measure or initiative they propose. This also results to lack of commitment in a long-term involvement.

5.7. Comparability between country results

The following conclusions have been made by comparing country results.

Common strengths

- Slovenia, Croatia, Greece and Bulgaria identify the long tradition in SD. All these countries have established a sectoral collective bargaining framework and enjoy freedom of bargaining.
- Bulgaria and Greece declare that strong relationships and closer links with the government are being established with good public discussions. The parties are listening to their problems and approaching a moderate compromise to find a solution.
- Only Croatia identifies the professional support due to experts' advice as the strength of SD in the sector at national level.
- Only Hungary shares the opinion that there are no real strengths of SD in the construction industry.

Common weaknesses

- Low level of representation (BG) and lack of representation (GR);
- The government does not treat social partners as important stakeholders; indifference on the part of the government (HU); not enough recognized by the government (CR);
- The Collective labour agreements have a very limited impact – only 30-35% of the workers are included (BG); low collective agreement coverage (GR);



- Small number of members on both sides of the SD (SL); declining membership in social partner organisations (GR);

The other identified weaknesses are specific and diverse and no common conclusions could be reached. The common problem of lack of qualified staff mobilizes countries for common action.

Recommendations:

Comparing the most common barriers and difficulties specified by the respondents, the following recommendations could be made:

- SD at Inter-company level should be expanded, attracting smaller companies which are not represented by trade unions as members of the social partners' institutions;
- Reducing the share of the grey sector in the industry should be a priority;
- Policies have to be made, projecting measures against unfair competition & conflict of interest amongst MEs, SMEs and SEs;
- Encouraging the establishment of regional organisations;
- Active support of the state is needed for an efficient and sustainable SD;
- EU level SD partners need to be more active at national level, especially in activities with public authorities;
- Implementation and application of the European Green Deal, promoting sustainable employment, tackling the challenges of ageing workforce are not should become SD issues;
- Speed up implementation of trade unions' recommendation at national level;
- Diversification of financial and human resources;
- Application of flexible approached to negotiate on key topics of SD interest;
- Setting up a stable SD framework;
- Attracting new members;
- Support the organisational and operational capacity.

6. The construction industry at times of crisis

On 21st April 2020, EFBWW and FIEC published **joint recommendations “to counteract the negative impact and consequences of the current COVID-19 crisis for the construction industry”**, prioritizing the health, safety and hygienic conditions of the constructions workers.

EFBWW and FIEC underline that the focus of the national, regional and local social partners of construction should be on ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for contractors, workers and society, in accordance with national health, safety and hygienic recommendations. EFBWW and FIEC underscore the necessity to discuss the current COVID-19 situation in good faith and trust between workers and management in each construction company, with the aim of finding the best possible solution for all, allowing activity to continue without jeopardizing workers' health and safety.

EFBWW and FIEC urge all employers' and workers' organisations of the construction industry to work together with the national, regional and local governments in order to do everything possible:

- to absorb and curb the negative social and economic consequences of this COVID-19 crisis and its possibly longer-term impact, in order to avoid job losses;
- to keep construction companies viable and functioning where possible, fully respecting the health, safety and hygienic measures in place;
- to ensure that specific measures are put in place so that all contractors and construction workers are adequately protected against all health, safety and hygienic hazards at the workplace.



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Therefore, EFBWW and FIEC strongly urge the national employers' and workers' organizations of the construction industry to negotiate jointly and with the national/regional/local authorities swift practical solutions in order to allow a continuation of construction activities, in strict compliance with the national restrictive measures, during the current exceptional circumstances. Where needed, these measures will have to be defined in the strictest and most precise way by the social partners (e.g. through a concerted risk analysis prior to the restart of activities) always keeping the health and safety of workers, and therefore of society as a whole, as the highest priority.

For EFBWW and FIEC the first priority is that work can continue in a safe way. Therefore, they urgently ask all their affiliated organisations to take the current COVID-19 threat very seriously and take all precautions needed which simultaneously guarantee the sustainability and viability of the construction companies, while securing income, social protection, well-being and health of their construction workers.

When implementing strategies for exiting the COVID-19 crisis, the highest standards of occupational safety and health need to be guaranteed. For this the EU health and safety Directives (amongst them the 89/391 Directive on health and safety), need to be respected. In this respect, the European social partners of the construction industry ask the European Commission to issue guidelines on preventive measures, e.g. risk assessments and prevention plans.

EFBWW and FIEC ask for an open dialogue with the European institutions and between the national social partners of the construction industry in order to identify and implement appropriate measures allowing a quick recovery after the crisis, inviting their national affiliates to do the same at their level. Meanwhile, the construction sector remains committed to effectively play its key role in the long-term sustainability of the European economy and in the achievement of the goals of the Green Deal.

In his recent video message, Mr. Tom Deleu, General Secretary of EFBWW, specifies the next steps to prepare the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, underlining that 'workers and trade unions in the construction sectors are going through difficult times at this moment, and the hard and long recession ahead of us, indicated by European statistics.

"The EFBWW, together with its affiliates will step up its lobby work and other activities to support affiliates and to push the European institutions in a more social direction", says Mr. Tom Deleu.

The EFBWW has prepared a motion and a document with 26 concrete demands for the coming 12 months to guide the economic recovery in the COVID-19 era. The Executive Committee adopted these documents at its meeting on 26th May, 2020. The demands focus on three subjects:

- Occupational health and safety
- European Green Deal and economic relaunch
- Better protection and treatment of Posted workers

All the 26 EFBWW demands can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3h4nmk>

National trade unions' representatives posted their views on the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath on EFBWW's LinkedIn portal <https://www.linkedin.com/company/efbww>.

Most of them share the opinion that new framework conditions in the interests of workers should be created, respecting international labour standards. COVID-19 endangers the health of workers in all aspects of working life and the social partners must adopt a joint strategy and take coordinated action to protect all the workers. There is a lot to be done at a national level, but the institutions within the EU must be pushed to work in a more sustainable and social direction, according to the syndicates in the sector which are on the frontline to help workers. Trade unions are adamant they will take steps to



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influence the economic and political agenda, taking up their responsibility to help and find sustainable answers for the construction industry companies to survive.

It's worthwhile quoting Mr. Johan Lindholm, Vice President for Europe of Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI):

“We continue to do everything that is possible to support our members around Europe. We can hopefully force companies and governments to secure income and safe working conditions for our members. It is our job to ensure that our members don't become the victim of the economic effects of this crisis. Nobody can solve this situation alone. That's why it's crucial that we stay connected and we are dedicated to do that.

I'm convinced the construction sector can lead the way to economic recovery. How do we boost our economies? How do we keep the workforce going? The right Government policies and their programmes are needed quickly.

I urge politicians to take this opportunity to invest in a more inclusive and sustainable development, prioritize and invest in green infrastructure and better working conditions.”

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and its overall impact on the economy and on the construction industry in particular, ITPIO has included in the Questionnaire some questions regarding social partners' plans and measures for reaction in a state of emergency, at times of crisis and unforeseen situations like the on-going pandemic of coronavirus disease, as well as approaches to mitigate the coming economic crisis and recession.

None of the respondents from all the six countries have developed plans for reaction in a state of emergency, at times of crisis and unforeseen situations in order to protect stakeholders in the sector.

The **Podkrepa Federation** points to the following **urgent measures** that have already been taken by the social partners in the construction industry at national level for operation at times of crisis:

1. Change in safety and work plans for construction and assembly activities during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. List of measures to be implemented by the state at national level for overcoming the crisis in the construction industry
3. Holding bilateral and tripartite meetings to discuss economic recovery measures for the sector

The respective **urgent measures** indicated by **BCC** are the following:

1. Creating lobbies for the protection of the interest of the construction companies
2. Donations in case of crisis (floods, incidents, etc.)
3. Willingness for rapid organization of the construction industry in cooperation with the government for emergency response during crises

BCC has also projected measures at national and European level:

National level measure no. 1: BCC expressed its position that the construction should nevertheless proceed in line with the strong anti-epidemic measures. The sector is systemically important for the country's economy and employs more than 200,000 workers and employees. Suspending construction activities would mean that the workers and their families would not be able to pay loans, bills and buy basic goods and medicine. As for the large EU infrastructure projects, the suspension may result in extension of project duration and financial corrections.



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National level measure no. 2: BCC advised that the public authorities should not cancel tenders for public procurement where possible.

National level measure no. 3: BCC circulated a guide of binding measures to prevent and restrict the spread of coronavirus in construction companies, construction sites, storage areas, office buildings, logistics centres, etc.

National level measure no. 4: BCC also presented measures to limit the spread of coronavirus during the work process, at the work premises, warehouses areas, office buildings, logistics centres and construction sites.

European level measure no. 1: BCC is actively participating in the COVID-19 debates and its impact on the construction sector, through its vice-presidency in FIEC. At EU level, BCC is raising the flag that the investment activities and the construction works should continue with the strict adherence to the health and safety requirements at work. BCC managed to convince its French, Italian and Spanish colleagues that putting the construction at hold might have severe impact on the European economy.

The Podkrepa Federation proposes the following measures at EU level:

European level measure no. 1: Continuation of all European Union funded infrastructure improvement programmes

European level measure no. 2: Determining the construction sector as a priority for EU

The social partners have already outlined more than 20 concrete measures to overcome the effects of the crisis. In the tripartite dialogue in which the state also participates, the views of trade unions and employers are the same. However, the mitigation measures are impossible without the State's support, which might be one of the barriers to quality crisis measures in Bulgaria, BCC underlines.

The Hungarian respondents – the trade union EFEDOSZSZ and the employers' organization ÉVOSZ – point to recommendations to reduce health and business risks as an urgent measure. According to EFEDOSZSZ, no further extraordinary measures are needed at present since the construction industry kept on working throughout the state of emergency and no increased number of diseases were reported.

At EU level, EFEDOSZSZ will propose public investment programmes to keep jobs and ÉVOSZ proposes boosting public and community orders.

EFEDOSZSZ is of the opinion that social partners are not capable to implement flexible approaches to mitigate the coming economic crisis and recession in the construction industry because they lack the money, the personnel and the influence.

Social partners in Slovenia – **the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia** and **the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia** have already taken some **urgent measures** at national level at the current time of crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Partial salary compensation
2. Write-off of payment of contributions and taxes
3. Compensation for all workers

Both the trade union and the employers' organisation have proposed measures at national level for operation of the construction industry with regard to the extreme working conditions like those imposed by the coronavirus:

National level measure no. 1: urgent measures should apply to all workers, in all forms of employment

National level measure no. 2: companies that do not comply with preventive measures must be stopped until the security conditions are in place



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National level measure no. 3: the employer must arrange for the living conditions of the migrant workers to meet the security requirements

National level measure no. 4: opening the borders for posted workers (in EU)

National level measure no. 5: protect social dialogue achievements in public procurement in Slovenia

National level measure no. 6: special analysis prepared for contractors how to make additional OSH costs recognised and claimed those back (from investor) due to extreme working conditions and unprecedented condition of work due to implementation of work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Deadlines in contracts are set and delays will most probably occur due to reorganization of process of work on the construction site with regards to ensuring social distance (1,5 m) when working, eating, disguising, resting, changing equipment etc. Business conditions are limited and harsher. Investors are afraid of a tight financial situation and will try to save even more resources, most probably they will also procure less since budget will be reduced and new investment priorities set.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia proposes the following measures for operation of the sector with regard to the extreme working conditions imposed by the coronavirus at EU level:

European level measure no. 1: recognition of higher declared construction costs due to work process being dramatically changed, productivity reduced, costs for PPE unprecedentedly increased (force majeure confirmed and followed)

European level measure no. 2: execution of penalties withheld

European level measure no. 3: continuation of investments across Europe

European level measure no. 4: protection of EU market (construction, building materials industry)

According to the employers' organisation, however, the social partners have not cooperated scientifically yet on these topics and we will soon need to address them. Projections are that COVID-19 will probably last for at least a year or two. Till then, new (temporal – with limited duration) solutions fit for both sides to enable survival of construction companies and decent work and regular salaries to employees will have to be found.

The Trade Union notes that they are poorly prepared for any kind of crisis and emergency. In such situations, redundancies usually occur. They often do not even receive payment for work already done. That is why they also encourage the creation of paritarian funds, as they would help mitigate situations in a crisis.

People can only overcome a crisis if they agree with social dialogue how they will do it and how to share their burdens fairly. Well-developed social dialogue is key to getting out of the crisis and a prerequisite for faster development.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia underscores that COVID-19 is a totally new challenge for social partners in the construction industry, for which nobody was prepared. The Chamber appreciates FIEC activities collecting practices and experiences across EU and lobbying for employers' and employees' interest to continue working in accordance with the national public health institutions' instructions.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia pointed to the cutting of salaries in 2012 as urgent measures that have already been taken by the social partners in the construction industry at national level at times of crisis.

Measures that the trade union will propose at national level for operation of the construction industry with regard to the extreme working conditions imposed by the coronavirus include:

National level measure no. 1: Tripartite agreement or collective agreement

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National level measure no. 2: Suspension of payment of profits and dividends to shareholders

However, no joint measures have been projected by social partners and different proposals have been sent.

In **Cyprus, urgent measures** that have already been taken by the social partners in the construction industry at national level for operation at times of crisis include:

1. Ensure employees posts (Governmental Scheme)
2. Support to construction companies (Governmental Scheme)
3. Protection measures against COVID-19
4. Provision of protection means against COVID-19
5. Suspension/ reduce of tax payments.

Urgent measures 1-5 resulted to the sufficient operation of the construction sector, which under the COVID-19 circumstances, remains the only sector able to operate and contribute to the GDP and to employment.

At national and European level, the following measures will be proposed:

- Measure no. 1: Ensure and promote co-funded projects
Measure no. 2: Support construction sector able to continue operating
Measure no. 3: Extend the duration of supporting Schemes

Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works, Greece specified the following **urgent measures**:

1. Measures supporting the economy, including aid package amounting to 6.8 billion euros – or 3.5% of GDP – and including a 800-euro benefit for 1.7 million private-sector employees that have been suspended from their employment contracts and a freeze on their value added tax and debt payments to the state for four months. The aid is meant to buffer 800,000 affected businesses on the condition that there are no dismissals. Additionally VAT and tax debt payments of businesses had been suspended for April. The measures also foresee the extension of financial aid for 700,000 self-employed and small business owners.
2. Labour contractual issues: In case (a) the employees are entitled to a special purpose compensation of € 800 paid by the State. The employees will receive full social security insurance provided by the State.
3. Special allowances for self employed (800€) directly affected by the crisis.
4. Tax provisions to businesses affected by the crisis, including expansion of deadlines concerning Social Security contributions, commercial cheques, rental payments.

Especially for the construction sites, strict measures have been taken and announced by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport to limit the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites and public works, focusing on special safety and hygiene measures that workers and all persons involved in construction sites and works should follow.

The aforementioned measures were taken by the Greek Government at National level. The measures concern all economic sectors, with strong emphasis on the sectors and the type of business mostly affected by the economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the construction one.

Social partners and especially PEDMEDE highlighted the direct impact of the crisis in the construction sector, such as difficulties faced in construction sites, difficulties in transportation for construction works purposes due to the restriction in circulation (an obligatory measure imposed by the Government for all



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citizens), the consequent delay of the delivery of construction works and projects and so on. In this light, special effort was placed in encouraging policy makers to integrate measures to deal with the above-mentioned issues.

The Greek respondent pointed out two measures to be proposed at national level: National level measure no. 1: Adjustment of the effects of contract delays due to COVID-19 (force majeure)

National level measure no. 2: Special compensation for the contractual issues that have arisen in the executed Public Contracts due to the increased execution costs due to the strict hygiene and safety measures and the costs of restarting and reorganizing the construction sites.

The projected measures at EU level are as follows:

European level measure no. 1: Creating added value jobs and positively contribute to the recovery of local economies

European level measure no. 2: Delivering the growth strategy of the European Green Deal and transforming the EU into a carbon neutral continent through, amongst others, a Sustainable Built Environment.

European level measure no. 3: Renovating the EU building stock and ensuring a better quality of living for people as citizens by increasing comfort, better air/indoor environment quality, energy efficiency, affordable and accessible housing, easy mobility and connectivity.

European level measure no. 4: Improving competitiveness, mobility across Europe and the safety of EU citizens through the maintenance of existing infrastructures and the construction of new infrastructures.

PEDMEDE underscores that in general, lack of capacity and resources of social partners, along with absence of a well-structured, a well-organized and a stable framework for establishing social dialogue among social partners (both sides) and the government are core barriers that result to less flexibility of social partners in the construction industry, as well as lack of potential for immediate reaction in emergency cases.

7. National SD Activities and comparison with the EU level document Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry

In their Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry (2016 – 2019) the European social partners, EFBWW and FIEC confirm the importance of a strong and autonomous European social dialogue for the construction industry in order to develop a sustainable construction industry. EFBWW and FIEC underline the key role of the construction industry to the EU economy, creating new jobs, driving economic growth, and providing solutions for societal, climate and energy challenges.

EFBWW and FIEC have set several main priorities in the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry: demographic changes, taking account of an ageing workforce; initiatives for youth employment; vocational training; fostering a culture of H&S, and improving the functioning of the labour market.

The demographic changes and in particular the ageing of the population and of the workforce, combined with the difficulties observed in several Member States to attract and maintain young people in the construction industry, are becoming important challenges both for companies and for workers, EFBWW and FIEC point out.



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Just a few of the respondents to the SUSODCO Questionnaire, however, have mentioned tackling the challenges of ageing workforce as a priority: the Bulgarian Construction Chamber, the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus, and Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works, Greece. At the same time, the employer's organisation from Cyprus confesses that this is not among SD issues yet.

Demographic changes, with an ageing workforce and difficulties in attracting young people into the sector highlight the need of training schemes in order to reduce the 'skills gap', i.e. the difference between the skills available and the ones that are effectively needed by the work process. Addressing the issue of anticipation of skills needs is of significant importance both for the competitiveness of construction companies, as well as for employment in the sector.

The need for professional qualification and VET has been recognized by all respondents. The Podkrepa Federation says these have been topics on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions and the Bulgarian Construction Chamber points to vocational training while anticipating skills needs as its first priority in the SD and social partners are collaborating in this field, implementing projects together. Nevertheless, the trainings are mostly implemented at organizational level, BCC adds.

According to respondents from Hungary, VET is also among the key topics in the construction industry on the agenda in stakeholders' latest discussions and specific steps were taken in the country by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and the National Chamber of Industry and Commerce for promotion of a VET reform, a proposal being made to define the range of basic construction professions, to select experts to develop the new curricula of these professions and to comment on the developed curricula.

Both the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia identify VET as a thematic group for SD activities, underlining that this is a basis for growth of productivity and the importance of the acquisitions of right skills and competences. Many EU and national funded projects are going on, offering different VET, covering social skills, vocational skills, occupational H&S skills, green skills, etc.

In Greece, businesses and the social partners play an active role in continuing vocational training. The social partners implement vocational training programmes for their members and for other groups of citizens, planning and implementing vocational training actions that address sectoral or local/regional labour market needs and combine training with guidance and counselling services and work placements to provide on-the-job experience.

However, representatives of PEDMEDE are of the opinion that the Greek VET system (non-formal VET) does not embrace sectorial labour market demands, especially for the construction industry and overall, VET is not been implemented in Greece in an organised level and upon an action plan that focuses in meeting the sectorial challenges in education and training, but through potential training programmes that cover partially the existing training needs. Therefore, validation of informal and non-formal training is one of the priorities at national level in the construction industry that are in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry. Initiatives for attracting and retaining young and female workers in the construction industry are also among PEDMEDE's priorities.

The Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus specifies that measures for VET in the country include seminars, funded or co-funded by the Human Resource Development Authority of the Ministry of Labour Welfare and Social Insurance.

In Croatia alone VET is organized by employers without the participation of social partners.



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Despite the overall reduction in the number of work-related accidents, improving health and safety in the workplace continues to be an important field of action for the construction sector and is therefore, one of EFBWW's and FIEC's main priorities. It also remains a priority because of the dynamic of construction work that potentially produces new emerging risks.

The improvement of health and safety can also be achieved through promoting the development of a real culture of health and safety within each company, with the involvement of all the concerned stakeholders and in particular the workers.

Health and safety at work is an important topic for SD with a strong social impact. Both the Podkrepa Federation and BCC recognize the significant role of social partners in the construction industry for promoting a culture of occupational health and safety (H&S). They are actively involved in the process of design and the implementation of the H&S policies at national level. BCC, however, notes the alarming statistics of the Labour Inspectorate on the percentage of occupational accidents in the sector and is working to ensure the quality implementation of the provisions of the H&S legislation in the sector. BCC is actively participating in the COVID-19 debates and its impact on the construction sector, sharing its stance that investment activities and construction works should continue with strict adherence to the health and safety requirements at work and the Podkrepa Federation urges for a change in safety and work plans for construction and assembly activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Hungary, occupational health and safety is a key topic on the agenda of discussions in the construction industry. However, no special measures regarding the COVID-19 crisis have been mentioned by the social partners.

Health and safety at work is an important topical subject of SD in Slovenia where the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry have proposed measures at national level for operation of the construction industry with regard to the extreme working conditions due to the coronavirus.

The role of social partners for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions in the construction sector in Cyprus is to initiate trainings and inspections by the Ministry, aimed to reduce the number of work accidents and to ensure safe and healthy workplaces. H&S measures and training on H&S issues are being encouraged. In the present context of the coronavirus pandemic, urgent protection measures against COVID-19 are taken.

A National Occupational S&H Strategy for the 2016–2020 period was introduced in Greece, aimed to create safer, healthier and more productive workplaces in the private and public sector that will ensure the health and will promote the well-being of workers, while contributing in parallel to the sustainability of the enterprises and supporting the development of the economy. Social partners are undertaking specific initiatives to promote occupational S&H issues and actively participate in consultations on these issues.

Improving the functioning of the labour market is among the main priorities in EFBWW's and FIEC's Multiannual Action Programme, including: Posting of workers; Combating undeclared work; Fighting against social fraud; Strengthening industrial relations and the capacity of social partners, Third countries companies on the EU construction market, etc.

The EFBWW and FIEC apply a policy of zero tolerance against unfair and illegal practices in the construction industry and address the issue by appropriate measures for combating 'undeclared work' as well as initiatives to this end at national and European level, in a broad partnership with the various actors concerned, i.e. labour inspectorates, national authorities or social funds.



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Fighting the undeclared work pattern is one of the key topics of SD discussions and a priority in the SD in the construction industry. Combating undeclared work is among the priorities of the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Construction Industry. According to the Podkrepa Federation, the construction sector is quite vulnerable regarding the undeclared labour issue. Therefore, the fight against it is one of the core topics in every negotiation and collective bargaining agreement in the sector. Reducing the share of the grey sector in the industry is also among the priorities of the Podkrepa Federation. BCC is actively involved in the discussions related to undeclared work.

According to ÉFÉDOSZSZ, the main role of social partners in Hungary for reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the construction industry would be the creation and adaptation of a generally binding collective agreement. Unfortunately, the current legislation prevents this.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia is of the opinion that the most important roles of social partners for reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the sector are to inform workers and prepare reports to inspectors.

The Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia claims that social partners demand respecting CBA for the sector, while many employers pay and report minimum salary and the rest of the remuneration is undeclared.

Reducing undeclared labour and ensuring equal working conditions in the construction industry is considered an issue of high importance in Cyprus, too, and social partners have set up a permanent committee, to take measures and actions in common, to combat undeclared work in the country. According to the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations of Cyprus, tackling undeclared work is a key topic on the agenda in stakeholders' discussions and the No 1 priority at national level in the construction industry, in line with the Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European SD of the Construction Industry.

Undeclared work has always been a significant feature of the Greek economy, and is widespread in the construction sector, Panhellenic Association of Engineers Contractors of Public Works points out. Undeclared work in the construction sector is included in the top priority themes in the agenda of the construction sector issues, as well as predominant in collective bargaining discussions.

Social protection and improving the process and the conditions for posting of workers have been mentioned among the priorities at national level of the Bulgarian Construction Chamber. **Fighting against social fraud, strengthening industrial relations and the capacity of social partners**, are some of the priorities of the Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia. The 1st priority for PEDMEDE is to **strengthen, reinforce and promote industrial relations in the construction industry at all levels**.

Third countries' companies in the EU construction market are on the list of priorities of the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations, Cyprus, while the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia points as its 1st priority fair competition on the national market, saying third countries should not be favoured due to lowest prices in tenders for construction projects.

Promoting a positive image of the construction industry and digitalisation in the sector are priorities for both the Federation of the Building Contractors Associations, Cyprus and PEDMEDE, as well as **implementation and application of the European Green Deal** in the European Construction Industry.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia also indicate as a priority the **establishment of paritarian funds**, while for the Podkrepa Federation a priority is the establishment of a 'Bad weather' fund.

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Branch collective agreements are in the focus of the Podkrepa Federation, the Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia, that sets as a priority a change of collective agreements legislation, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, insisting on respect of valid collective agreement regulations.

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1. Multiannual Action Programme for the Sectoral European social dialogue of the construction industry (2016–2019)