

EU year of skills: EBC talks about construction skills in SMEunited conference and REHVA Summit

In line with its action during the European Year of Skills (EYS), EBC was invited to bring a construction perspective at various events addressing the skills needs of the European Union this month.

On 30 November, SMEunited discussed skills and training, starting with a first panel dedicated to the effort of European Social Partners on the future of training policies to maximise take-up, lifelong learning, and employability, with the participation of SGI Europe and ETUC.

In a second panel, EBC Secretary General **Fernando Sigchos Jiménez** exchanged with SME representatives Thomas Mayr from the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber WKÖ, André Weiss from the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts ZDH and Silvia Miró from the Catalan SME employer's organisation PIMEC. The focus was on concrete examples in terms of upskilling and reskilling in SMEs, specific incentives and solutions that work for SMEs, and how to increase the take up of training by entrepreneurs and workers.

He explained that deconstructing persistent stereotypes about construction and highlighting the changing nature of professions are daily activities of construction SMEs. He pointed out that construction is fertile for entrepreneurial venture and offers a guarantee of employment with attractive remuneration, with the need to showcase the added value of contributing to combat climate change by making our buildings climate neutral. To conclude, he explained the Construction Blueprint project and the Pact for

skills in construction, activities conducted in close collaboration by EBC, FIEC and EFBWW at the European sectoral level.

Earlier this month, on 13-14 November, the REHVA Brussels Summit included discussions on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ), training needs and the skills shortfall in the digital transition among others.

EBC Policy Officer **Spyros Mathioudakis**, presented EBC's engagement for a stronger skills policy framework at EU level to support and guide the national and local authorities, as education and training are national competence. He referred to the efforts to secure stronger provisions on skills in European legislation such as the EPBD and the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), as well as EBC's active role in bridging the gap between innovation and research in construction and SMEs through its involvement in the training approaches of several Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ and LIFE projects.

He then exchanged with Amandine De Coster-Lacourt, Project Adviser at the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency CINEA, REHVA Vice-President Livio Mazzarella, and Laure Itard, coordinator of the Brains4Buildings project in the session devoted to the importance of reshaping renovation skills for a Digital-IEQ shift. ■



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