

FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 33 National Member Federations in 29 countries (28 EU & EFTA and Turkey) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as “global players”, carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities.



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FIEC Press Release

25-01-2016

Let's make the Circular Economy a reality

■ Construction industry has a key role

Welcoming the proposals on waste, standards for secondary raw materials and reliable data contained in the Circular Economy Action Plan, which was released by the European Commission in December 2015, FIEC Vice President Kjetil Tonning says “FIEC has always supported the concept of the Circular Economy and supports the Action Plan, which should help to address resistance in the market, to use recycled and reused raw materials. The construction industry is innovative and contractors already propose the use of secondary raw materials, but clients have to agree to accept them”.

FIEC believes that the conditions have to be right for a major shift in the way materials are sourced and used. In particular, sorting and recycling facilities must be available in close proximity to construction sites. These facilities must be able to deal with large quantities of potentially recyclable and reusable building materials, generated from building renovation and demolition projects. In addition, the cost of processing such materials should not outweigh the environmental benefits and care must be taken to identify and dispose safely of dangerous substances, to reduce the risk to human health.

Contractors can do their bit, but material producers also have a huge role to play. “We expect construction material producers to manufacture in future, with the life cycle of their products in mind, including of course end-of-life and recycling. In an ideal world, the existence of building materials that end up as waste, should be reduced to zero. Taking a pragmatic view, we expect that there will always be waste, but small steps can already be taken, for example to ensure that packaging is reduced to a minimum and that toxic substances are eliminated totally from new materials.”

One huge boost for the Circular Economy could be Building Information Modelling (BIM), which is already extensively used in certain countries. BIM brings together all parties in the construction value chain and in future, it will significantly improve building deconstruction in terms of the environmental impact and will ensure that renovation and maintenance are undertaken in a way that will support the objectives of the Circular Economy. FIEC's Annual Conference in 2016 will be on the subject of BIM.

FIEC's position paper on the Circular Economy Action Plan can be found here:

<http://www.fiec.eu/en/fiec-positions/position-papers.aspx>

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