

FIEC attends EU-Ukraine Business Summit 2026: concrete steps for infrastructure and SMEs

FIEC attended the **EU-Ukraine Business Summit 2026 – On the Road to URC**, held in Brussels on 22–23 April. The event brought together representatives from the European Commission, the Ukrainian government, international financial institutions and industry to discuss how to accelerate Ukraine's recovery and strengthen its economic integration with the EU.

Among the discussions, two panels were particularly relevant for the European construction sector: the one on **transport and critical logistics infrastructure**, and the one on **SMEs, business environment reforms and investment support instruments**.

In the transport panel, **Magda Kopczyńska (DG MOVE)** stressed that integrating Ukraine into the EU transport system has become a strategic priority. This notably involves extending the TEN-T corridors towards Ukraine, developing standard-gauge rail connections compatible with the European network, and upgrading border crossings and logistics hubs. She underlined that projects linked to the TEN-T network benefit from stronger political backing and are more likely to attract EU funding, which provides much-needed visibility for investors and contractors.

At the same time, the discussion highlighted very concrete bottlenecks on the ground. Border crossings remain a major constraint, with long waiting times, limited operational capacity and administrative burdens significantly slowing down freight flows. The difference in rail gauge continues to create inefficiencies and additional costs, requiring transshipment and complex logistics. In this context, speakers pointed to immediate improvements that could make a tangible difference, such as the digitalisation of customs procedures and better staffing and organisation at border points. Over the longer term, the focus clearly lies on rail interoperability, the development of multimodal terminals and the use of public-private partnerships to accelerate road and logistics investments.

The second panel, focusing on SMEs, provided a complementary perspective. **Outi Slotboom (DG GROW)** emphasised that Ukraine's recovery will not only depend on large infrastructure projects, but also on the capacity of SMEs to operate, invest and integrate into European value chains. She highlighted the central role of the **Ukraine Facility and its Ukraine Investment Framework**, which aims to mobilise both public and private investment through guarantees, blended finance and technical assistance. A significant share of these instruments is dedicated to SMEs, including through lending programmes implemented via local banks and export credit guarantees supporting EU companies trading with Ukraine.

Beyond access to finance, the discussion made clear that regulatory alignment and standards will be decisive. The ongoing work on conformity assessment and the gradual alignment with EU rules are essential to allow Ukrainian companies to participate in European supply chains and to facilitate cross-border business. At the same time, support mechanisms such as cluster partnerships, business networks and digital innovation hubs are expected to play a key role in connecting companies and improving their competitiveness.

FIEC will continue to engage with EU institutions and partners to support a practical and efficient contribution of the European construction industry to Ukraine's recovery.

LINK : <https://ebsummits.eu/our-summits/eu-ukraine/2026/programme/>