

FIEC Annual Conference & General Assembly “Building Tomorrow: Solutions for Water Resilience and Blue Infrastructure”

The European Construction Industry calls on the European legislator to deliver a Water Resilience Strategy that addresses water leakages, data availability and flood protection.

On 16th May, FIEC held its Annual Conference and General Assembly in Athens, hosted by its Greek member, PEDMEDE. Speakers and participants addressed water challenges and risk mitigation, under the theme “*Building Tomorrow: Solutions for Water Resilience and Blue Infrastructure*”, and the construction industry voiced proposals of specific measures and actions.

Water scarcity, heavy rainfall and flooding, as well as water quality concerns, have become serious problems in many EU Member States. Extreme weather events and hazardous substances are posing immense challenges to the built environment and resulting in major damages and high insurance costs. Moreover, the situation is set to get worse, with huge impacts on citizens and our economies. Since 2000, the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) is the main piece of water legislation in Europe and has been complemented by several other laws. While these policies have primarily focused on water quality and pollutants, the overall legislative framework is failing to adequately address water (quantity) management, droughts and other extreme weather events. The approach to these challenges currently lack a comprehensive strategy and vision to protect our societies and companies from physical damage and economic losses.

“With 6.5 billion cubic meters of water lost every year in the EU due to poorly maintained pipes, and with extreme weather events becoming more frequent, we face an urgent need to address water challenges. Any decision by EU legislators will require the active involvement of our sector in defining an efficient and supportive framework, and we are committed to playing our part. Let’s build the change together!”

Piero Petrucco, FIEC President

Through its 32 national member associations in 27 countries (24 EU countries, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine), the European Construction Industry Federation represents construction companies of all sizes, i.e., small, and medium-sized enterprises and “global players”, carrying out all forms of building and civil engineering activities. FIEC is officially recognised sectoral social partner in the European *Social Dialogue for Construction*.

The upcoming *EU Water Resilience Strategy* (WRS) must help to unify the framework of water legislation and provide the means to accelerate the modernisation of the water distribution system in Europe. It must develop a specific response, also addressing streamlining existing legislation and its implementation, the availability of comprehensive water-related data, as well as financing mechanisms.

“Altogether, we must build a coherent EU construction strategy for the future. Please do not leave Athens just with business cards, but leave Greece with a blue footprint for the future.”

Pavlos Marinakis, Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesperson of Greece

After the 2024 European Elections, water has been defined as a strategic priority, and FIEC supports this development. The EU institutions, namely the European Parliament and the European Commission, with Jessika Roswall as new Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a competitive Circular Economy, are getting traction in drafting a *European Water Resilience Strategy*. The strategy is expected to be presented in June 2025.

To achieve the goal of developing a sustainable future, the strategy must recognise the crucial role of contractors in building new water infrastructure and maintaining and repairing existing infrastructure for treatment, distribution, storage, and flood protection.

“Using water more efficiently is a strategy for the environment, the economic strength and industrial competitiveness. I sincerely thank FIEC for its valuable contribution to our call-for-evidence [...] that has identified the most urgent needs. Europe is investing in water through cohesion policy funds, national recovery plans and Horizon 2020, among others. The construction sector is essential to delivering solutions, and the EU can only achieve results with its partnership.”

Jessica Roswall, EU Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience & a competitive Circular Economy

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We Build the Change together

The European Construction Industry Federation is striving to deliver upon its promises, i.e. to contribute to the work of the EU legislator. At our conference in Athens, we focused on exchanging views about the future by presenting specific case studies and projects. We invited EU decision-makers to join the debate, since our sector has the expertise to build solutions and essential services in tackling water challenges.

“An ambitious strategy for water requires an equally ambitious financial framework. The EU must adopt water as a strategic priority in its next long-term budget. For this reason, a Blue Transition Fund should be established as a single access point for EU water investments, combining public investment with innovative financing.”

Paul Rübig, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) / CCMI “Blue Deal” Expert

The European Construction Industry Federation keeps on advocating for a pan-European, holistic and long-term approach to water scarcity/security and natural disasters such as droughts and floods. The [key messages](#) can be consulted in the **Joint Call for a European Blue Deal – Water Policy and the Role of the European Construction Sector**. The paper was published by FIEC and its partner EIC (European International Contractors).

Celebrating 120 years of FIEC

2025 has been a special year of happenings and memories. FIEC is at its 120th anniversary: A remarkable journey that started in 1905, with the establishment of our federation as a leading platform for dialogue among its members and representatives, and a wide range of stakeholders, the EU institutions and other international organisations.

During the 2-day event in Athens, we launched the new visual identity and logo for “FIEC at 120”. They were conceived to reflect the solidity and continuity of our membership, and on how FIEC has been fostering a spirit of commitment towards the sector, the industry and its goals, by promoting excellence, advancing sustainability and progress, thus safeguarding the future of construction. Stay tuned on our social media for upcoming highlights, and share the hashtag #FIEC120!

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