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The Level(s) Interview with Benedikt Fischer



In this edition of The Level(s) Interview, we speak to Benedikt Fischer, Policy Officer for Technical & Environmental Affairs at FIEC. Benedikt tells us about how the federation is promoting Level(s) among SMEs working in construction to help achieve decarbonisation and facilitate the European twin green and digital transitions.

Could you tell us about how you are working with circularity as a key contributor to decarbonisation efforts?

At FIEC, we promote circularity as a cornerstone of resilience and decarbonisation in the construction sector. By encouraging material reuse, designing for disassembly, and embracing circular business models, we aim to achieve carbon and resource neutrality by 2050 in the construction ecosystem.

Through active engagement in EU initiatives like Level(s), we support contractors across Europe, in particular SMEs, in adopting circular practices aligned with climate goals, while advocating for enabling policies and practical frameworks that reflect the realities faced by construction companies on the ground.

How are your members and the companies you work with preparing for the inclusion of whole-life carbon (WLC) in the revised EPBD?

More and more, FIEC members are preparing to include WLC considerations in their projects, and we want to share two specific examples. Most large companies in Germany already have in-house expertise in life cycle analysis, often linked to DGNB (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltiges Bauen) certification and EU Taxonomy requirements.

However, SMEs often rely on external experts, like energy consultants, particularly when required by funding programmes provided by KfW – Germany's national development bank.

In France, WLC is already integrated into the RE2020 environmental regulation; however, there are concerns about its alignment with the revised EPBD.

First, France uses a dynamic LCA method, which weights emissions based on when they occur. Second, the changes made to the revised EU Construction Products Regulation (CPR) from 2024 will potentially impact the system of environmental declarations used for life cycle assessments.

Recent studies and initiatives in several EU Member States are looking at how to bring vacant housing stock back into the market through renovation and repurposing, instead of building new. How are your members working in this direction?

Our members actively support renovation and repurposing of existing vacant housing as a sustainable alternative to new construction. While vacant stock often exists in low-density, economically challenged areas, its mobilisation can help address housing needs sustainably. Initiatives empowering local authorities to engage property owners are important for this.

Additionally, improving the energy performance of many vacant homes, which are often rated low on Energy Performance Certificate scales, is a key focus. Doing so aligns renovation projects with climate goals and enhances the overall quality and appeal of existing buildings.

Although FIEC represents building contractors, how do you work on this subject together with product manufacturers?

FIEC closely collaborates with product manufacturers to align efforts on decarbonisation, recognising that most emissions stem from extraction and production.

We support the use of established tools like Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) – and Declarations of Performance and Conformity (DoPCs) – under the EU Construction Products Regulation, which enable informed choices at the building level.

The interplay between the revised EPBD and information about the environmental performance of materials is key to advancing low-carbon construction through GWP disclosure and performance requirements.

Innovation can bring greater material efficiency, and novel materials can contribute to the decarbonisation of the built environment. We therefore encourage EU support for R&I and market uptake to ensure the competitive edge and sustainability of the sector.

We understand that FIEC is developing a study on the methodologies used or proposed in European countries to measure and evaluate CO₂e emission reductions in public works tenders. What role do you see for FIEC in supporting the adoption of Level(s) across Member States?

FIEC is the EU-level representative of contractors. We have 32 national associations representing construction companies of all sizes, from the small family business to the large international group. As such, FIEC plays a key role in raising awareness and disseminating knowledge on tools like Level(s) across the construction sector, particularly to SMEs.

Our upcoming study on CO₂e methodologies in public works tenders will help identify best practices and challenges across Member States. By sharing these insights, FIEC supports the practical uptake of Level(s), encouraging practical approaches to carbon assessment and helping ensure that contractors are well-prepared to meet evolving sustainability requirements, while at the same time addressing regulatory challenges to EU policymakers.

Interested in more inspiring stories from the Level(s) community? Each newsletter we speak to a sustainable buildings professional who is helping Level(s) to grow!

Recently we also interviewed Volodymyr Vladyka, Policy Analyst at the Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) about the organisation's new guide to delivering the EPBD. [Read more.](#)

We're always seeking inspiration from our Level(s) community. Are you using Level(s) in a way that may inspire others or spark ideas? Would you like to be profiled too? Let us know by commenting in our [LinkedIn group](#) and we may be in touch with you!