



European Construction Industry Federation

*Building Solutions together: our mission, your future*

## Answer to a call for evidence

Brussels, 15/12/2025

# Construction Services Act

- The construction sector **cannot be compared** to other sectors because of the local nature of the construction activities and the high share of SMEs.
- A full harmonisation of existing technical standards is **not feasible** due to differences between Member States.
- **Facilitating the recognition** of OSH certificates and professional qualifications should never lead to **lower existing standards**.
- **FIEC would be strongly against a construction site card imposed from the EU level.** Instead, FIEC would welcome a support from the European Commission to better interconnect existing and emerging cards while respecting the existing schemes and taking a bottom-up approach.

In May 2025, the European Commission announced in the Single Market Strategy that “a **Construction Services Act to lower barriers to cross-border market access for construction and installation services**” would be presented.

DG Grow, leading the work on this file, published in November 2025 a Call for evidence for an impact assessment, outlining the political context and the different policy options.

The rationale behind a proposal for a Construction Services Act is, according to the European Commission, the fact that there are only limited cross-border operations in the construction sector. The European Commission points out that “*the trade integration for construction sector services was estimated at only 1%, compared to 6% for services*”. FIEC considers that this low level of integration of trade in construction services is mostly explained by the **local nature** of construction services. There are indeed construction companies that operate cross-border within the Internal Market, however, **the construction sector is mainly composed of SMEs operating essentially at local or regional level. Even some big construction companies opt for local branches rather than cross-border activities.** Therefore, FIEC is of the opinion that the construction sector should not be compared to other sectors in this respect. Furthermore, there are instruments that have been put in place (e.g. Social ID cards) in order to ensure the proper enforcement of labour, social and health and safety rules.

FIEC would also like to raise a point on forthcoming proposals from other services of the European Commission which might recreate new barriers to cross-border services (e.g. on subcontracting). The European Commission should make sure that the Construction Services Act and other EU initiatives are aligned.

FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, which through its 32 national member associations in 27 countries (24 EU countries, Norway, Switzerland, and Ukraine) 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.

## Identification of the issues

In the framework of this Call for Evidence, the European Commission identifies **three issues** which could be seen as barriers to the cross-border provision of services in the construction industry.

FIEC highlights that there are measures under the three scopes that have been implemented **to promote higher standards in the industry**, to improve the functioning of the construction labour market, to prevent shadow economy and to monitor compliance with applicable regulations and collective agreements. This is the case for example for occupational safety and health (OSH) standards. OSH is of key importance to our industry and lowering the existing national standards will put at risks the safety and health of the workers.

In addition, social ID cards, in place in several EU countries (see [SIDE-CIC project](#)) have been adopted and often negotiated by employers' and workers' representatives. Their scope varies from one country to another but they all aim to improve transparency on worksites, fight against undeclared work and record and accredit workers' training, .... The added value of these cards has been proven and must be preserved.

Finally, regarding the lack of recognition of qualifications, FIEC agrees that this can be improved to facilitate the mobility of workers, as long as this doesn't affect the level of existing standards. This must be done in collaboration with training providers and social partners, to ensure that training content remains relevant at national level, while also being easily recognised in other Member States. But limitations in the recognition of qualifications exist also because the Member States have different legal systems, built heritage, uses, climate, users' expectations, insurance and liabilities rules, etc. Therefore, the mutual recognition of qualifications will only be possible within the limit of what is comparable between two countries.

FIEC highlights that in addition to those issues addressed by this call for evidence, other challenges could hinder the provision of cross-border services. These include issues regarding public procurement, the administrative requirements for the posting of workers, tax law, social security and portability of pensions.

## Policy options

The European Commission proposes four options to respond to each of the issues identified.

*Issue 1: Lack of or limited mutual recognition of national authorisations, certificates and proof of competence in areas such as occupational safety and health, energy efficiency and environment.*

In the area of OSH, FIEC is not in favour of a harmonisation of national certificates. High standards in health and safety at work are very important and specificities at national level can exist. Improving and facilitating the recognition of OSH training can be envisaged but this should never lower the existing standards.

When it comes to promoting cross-border construction services, it is imperative that measures consider the structures and resources of SMEs and therefore do not add additional bureaucratic burden. At the same time, simplification in this area must not lead to a lowering of quality standards, guaranteed through different provisions in several areas. This includes, for example, differences in national technical standards, which the Single Market Strategy does not currently address.

National building codes and technical standards are rooted in local and regional contexts, conditions and heritage of each Member State, and we are concerned about potential interference through legislative action. However, a balanced approach to addressing this fragmentation may be appropriate. At present, contractors must adapt their projects to local regulations in order to comply with national building codes.

A full harmonisation is not feasible given differences in legal systems, practices, climate conditions, user expectations, and insurance and liability rules. For example, in some Member States, legislation defines the building codes and references technical standards, while in others, there are good practice guides in place established by the sector.

FIEC recommends therefore to follow **options 1.2 and/or 1.3.**

*Issue 2: Challenges in accessing national construction site cards, used for example to monitor compliance with health and safety regulations or control access to construction sites, for companies established in another Member State and lack of recognition of home Member State construction site cards.*

Social ID cards are tools adopted voluntarily in some Member States, developed in most cases by the social partners. FIEC and EFBWW, the European social partners for the construction sector, have concluded the SIDE-CIC project which looked at how existing cards could be interconnected. The study has shown that this is feasible but requires a strong political will and support. Indeed, freedom to provide services could be facilitated if access to and information about these card systems are simple, and without unjustified bureaucratic or technical hurdles

In their recommendations, FIEC and EFBWW recommend that the European Commission promotes efforts towards interoperability, in respecting the existing schemes and a bottom up approach, through financial and administrative support for pilot projects or bilateral agreements as well as technical assistance so that systems are compatible with ongoing EU digitalisation efforts (like ESSPASS and the EUDI Wallet).

**In this regard, FIEC would be strongly against a construction site card imposed from the EU level (option 2.4).**

*Issue 3: Limitations to professional mobility due to the high number of regulated professions in the sector and challenges related to mutual recognition of professional qualifications to access regulated professions.*

The lack of recognition of qualifications and/or professions can prevent a company from providing services in other Member States. At the same time, FIEC stresses that the regulated access to professions can be justified when it ensures a high quality and sustainability of services. This is particularly important for the construction sector, which is crucial for a successful transition towards decarbonisation, as also pointed out by the EU Commission with its Single Market Strategy. FIEC would therefore be in favour of a European approach on this topic, e. g. by using digitalisation to accelerate recognition procedures.

Furthermore, mutual recognition of qualifications would only be feasible within the limits of what is comparable across Member States. Recognition of training contents could be a solution as it will require to make sure that training contents are comparable. FIEC would like to stress that this should never lower the existing standards at national level. **A full harmonisation of national requirements for access and exercise of construction services activities (option 3.4) would therefore not be desirable. The role of the EU should be supportive, not legislative.**

**FIEC advises to adopt option 3.2 or 3.3, keeping in mind that there will also be several initiatives at EU level to foster the recognition of qualification and skills in the coming months.** The European Commission has announced in the Union of Skills a legislative initiative on skills portability. This would be important to not multiply the initiatives but rather to have a coherent and comprehensive approach.



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