

FIEC is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 32 National Member Federations in 28 countries (25 EU & Norway, Ukraine, 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.



PRESS RELEASE

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SOFTWARE COMPANIES ARE CONTROLLING CONSTRUCTION USERS

“Unfavourable agreements offered by a few dominant software companies have to stop!” says FIEC Vice President José-Michaël Chenu, as the federation publishes its position on the relationship between users and software companies. *“Contractors have little choice over the range of products and services on the market; and the terms that are being offered unfairly advantage the software provider, locking the construction company into long and inflexible arrangements, the terms of which continuously change while the costs increase”.* Mr Chenu is the President of FIEC’s Technical Commission.

Construction software and support services are increasingly important in an industry that is undergoing a rapid transformation towards full digitalisation. Contractors need constant access to critical data in the Building Information Model, which provides a live blueprint, essential to the construction process as well as other phases in the building life cycle. However, access to this data is dependent on open and interoperable systems and solutions need to take into account the specific circumstances of the industry. This has created a dependency on the software being used in construction works, but also opportunities for the software provider to exploit this dependency. Furthermore, they are frequently based outside the EU and are hosting data on servers outside of EU jurisdiction.

The EU institutions need to address the problem urgently says Chenu. *“As users, contractors should be allowed to decide where their data is stored and we want our data hosted on EU servers, under EU legislation. In order to prevent further loss of control, we also need a European cloud as soon as possible; and we ask that EU standards for interoperability and open access be applied to non-EU software services”.* *“If we don’t act quickly” he concludes, the EU construction industry will permanently lose control over its own core business. We welcome measures that will protect European competitiveness, such as the European Data Act, but we need to go further and faster to ensure that our industry not only operates in fair circumstances, but also maintains the potential for added value of the data that we generate during the construction process”.*

Press contact:

Domenico Campogrande

Email: info@fiec.eu



www.fiec.eu
info@fiec.eu
[@FIEC_Brussels](https://twitter.com/FIEC_Brussels)
FIEC EU

FIEC - European Construction Industry Federation
Avenue Louise 225, BE-1050 Brussels / Tel. +32-2-514 55 35
Transparency Reg. 92221016212-42 aisbl Nr Entreprise : BE 0688