

## Topic: Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) & “Fit for 55” package

### Brief description and main aims:

The *Energy Performance of Buildings Directive* (EPBD) is the EU main legislative instrument promoting the improvement of the energy performance of buildings within the EU. It is currently being revised with the aim to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and final energy consumption in the building sector by 2030, and to set a long-term vision for an EU building sector that is climate-neutral by 2050. In this respect, the recast EPBD aims to increase the rate and depth of renovations of energy-efficient buildings, improve information on energy performance and sustainability of buildings; guarantee that all new buildings meet ambitious minimum energy performance standards; and ensure that all buildings in the future are in line with the 2050 climate neutrality requirements.

The recast EPBD builds on the *Renovation Wave* strategy of 2020, which aims to at least double the annual renovation rate in the EU by 2030.

It is part of a broader legislative package (“*Fit for 55*”) which updates – and in some cases extends – existing instruments, such as the Emissions Trading System, the *Renewable Energy Directive* or the *Energy Efficiency Directive*.

### Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

Buildings are responsible for approximately 40% of the energy consumption and for 36% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the EU. Currently, about 35% of the EU's buildings are over 50 years old and almost 75% of the building stock is energy-inefficient, while only 0.4-1.2% of the building stock is renovated each year. Therefore, the renovation of existing buildings has the potential to lead to significant energy savings. Investments in energy efficiency can stimulate the construction industry and SMEs would particularly benefit from a boosted renovation market.

The recast EPBD will also set the conditions to calculate whole life carbon emissions (WLC)/the life cycle global warming potential (GWP) of buildings. As part of the *Renovation Wave*, the European Commission committed to develop a roadmap leading up to 2050 for reducing whole life-cycle carbon emissions in buildings. This roadmap will complement the new provisions on energy efficiency.

The decisive triilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, the EU Council and the European Commission on the EPBD started in June 2023 and were ongoing at the time of writing of this report.

The “*Fit for 55*” package has large potential for the construction industry but will also have a wide-ranging impact on the construction supply chain with the proposed pieces of legislation affecting the whole life cycle of construction works. Most of the proposals have been adopted in 2023 and must soon be applied by Member States or be transposed into national law.

### Actions and key dates:

- 09/02/2023** → Committee vote in the European Parliament on the EPBD proposal
- 14/02/2023** → [FIEC reaction](#) to position on EPBD proposal of European Parliament and [Press Release](#)
- 14/03/2023** → Plenary vote on EPBD proposal
- 06/06/2023** → Start of triilogue negotiations on EPBD proposal
- 30/08/2023** → FIEC co-signs cross-sector call for swift EPBD adoption (with 31 other European federations)
- 15/09/2023** → Participation in public consultation for a roadmap for the reduction of whole life carbon emissions of buildings in the EU
- 03/10/2023** → Participation in the “*Renovate Europe Day*”

## Topic: Nature Restoration & Soil Monitoring Law

### Brief description and main aims:

The proposals for a Nature Restoration Law (published in June 2022) and the EU Soil Monitoring Law (published in July 2023) both build on the *EU Biodiversity and Soil strategies* and the *Zero Pollution Action Plan*, the *Forest Strategy*, and other communications under the *EU Green Deal*.

The Nature Restoration Law sets legally binding restoration targets for a broad range of ecosystems and aims at covering at least 20% of the EU land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures. It also aims to achieve the “*no net loss*” of green urban spaces by 2030, a 5% increase of green urban spaces by 2050, and a net gain of green space integrated into buildings and infrastructure.

The Soil Monitoring Law aims at achieving healthy soils in the EU by 2050 and at restoring the basic functions of soil so that they can contribute to address the EU’s objectives of achieving climate neutrality and becoming resilient to climate change.

Over the past decades, a weak and fragmented Member States’ response in tackling soil degradation has led to an uneven playing field for economic operators.

### Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

Despite the efforts made at EU and global level, biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems continue at an alarming rate, harming people, the economy and the climate.

This is widely documented, e.g., in reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is therefore imperative to restore nature and biodiversity in the EU by setting common EU targets. However, the proposal for a Nature Restoration Law foresees large interventions in land use and urban spatial planning without considering different societal interests, e.g., demographic growth, the great uncertainty about raw materials and the need for self-sufficiency, (social) housing, and climate resilience. In particular, setting binding targets for the increase of green areas in certain ecosystems could make it more difficult to build critical infrastructure, houses, or to extract raw materials in EU countries.

The proposal for a Soil Monitoring Law would require EU countries to regularly monitor and assess the quality and health of their soils. It introduces new EU-wide definitions for “artificial land”, “land take” and the so-called “land take mitigation principles”.

The discussions and negotiations on both proposals are ongoing at the time of writing of this report. Agreements are expected to be reached before the EU elections that are held in June 2024.

### Actions and key dates:

- 19/01/2023** → Meeting with the European Commission on EU Soil Health Law.
- 23/02/2023** → [FIEC Position Paper](#) on Nature Restoration Law.
- 27/02/2023** → FIEC letter to EU institutions on Nature Restoration Law.
- 28/03/2023** → Meeting with the European Parliament on Nature Restoration Law.
- 27/04/2023** → Meeting with the European Parliament on Nature Restoration Law.
- 20/06/2023** → General approach of Member States on Nature Restoration Law.
- 05/07/2023** → Proposal for Soil Monitoring Law published.
- 12/07/2023** → European Parliament adopts position on Nature Restoration Law.
- 19/07/2023** → Start of trilogue negotiations on Nature Restoration Law.
- 03/11/2023** → End of feedback period on Soil Monitoring Law.

## Topic: Research and Innovation

### European Construction Technology Platform (ECTP)

### European Council for Construction Research Innovation and Development (ECCREDI)

#### Brief description and main aims:

The *European Construction built environment and energy efficient Building Technology Platform* (ECTP) is a leading membership organisation promoting and influencing the future of the built environment. Founded in 2004, ECTP brings together the collective vision for a leading edge European built environment on behalf of its members. ECTP has around 150 member organisations from across the construction sector and other sectors from the whole supply chain of the built environment. Its diverse membership across 26 countries, large enterprises, SMEs, universities, research organisations and professional associations allows it to take an integrated approach to tackling all relevant issues. It connects people and organisations from across the supply chain, helping them to work collectively to improve the position on many societal and industrial issues including energy, climate change, efficiency and infrastructure.

The *European Council for Construction Research, Development and Innovation* (ECCREDI) was created in Brussels in 1995 with the signing of a *Memorandum of Understanding* by representatives of European federations concerned with construction, in its widest sense. The aim of ECCREDI is to contribute to the competitiveness, quality, safety and environmental performance of the construction sector and to the overall sustainability of the built environment – all urban and transport infrastructures – by advocating for effective construction research, technological and process development and innovation. ECCREDI adds value as a European council that connects its members and establishes areas of common interest, for which joint action is more successful than isolated approaches from individual members.

#### Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

FIEC is a member of ECTP and also has a representative on its Steering Committee. This membership enables the federation to ensure that specific research programmes are appropriate for the construction industry.

The ECTP membership is also a way of finding potential partners for projects, or for being invited to participate by other organisations in appropriate research and other EU projects. ECTP is one of the co-signatories in the *Built4People* (B4P) partnership, launched under the new *Horizon Europe* programme in 2021. FIEC is also member of ECCREDI. The current priorities related to the built environment and urban and transport network development concern: zero footprint construction, low maintenance and adaptable constructions, safe and healthy construction, digital construction, or education and wellbeing of the workforce.

#### Actions and key dates:

**December 2022 – February 2023** → Public consultation of European Commission on European R&I Framework Programmes 2024-2027

**03/05/2023** → ECCREDI Council meeting, FIEC presents “*EU taxonomy – latest developments*”

**07/06/2023** → ECTP General Assembly

**July 2023** → ECTP publishes draft *Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda* (SRIA)

**28/09/2023** → ECCREDI Council meeting

**28/09/2023** → *Built4People* Stakeholder Forum 2023

## Topic: Revised Construction Products Regulation (CPR)

### Brief description and main aims:

The proposal for a revised Construction Products Regulation (CPR) is part of the European Commission's "*Sustainable Products Initiative*" (SPI), a broader legislative package on sustainable products that the Commission presented on 30 March 2022.

The proposal aims to address the numerous shortcomings of the existing legislative framework (problems related to the development and citation of harmonised standards, problems related to the legal framework surrounding construction products, problems related to the quality of market surveillance, issues related to the absence of climate, environmental and sustainability performance requirements of construction products).

### Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

The CPR is the key legislative instrument for construction products in the EU and sets rules for the marketing of construction products in the internal market. According to FIEC's analysis, the new Commission proposal would have far-reaching, and mostly negative, consequences on contractors and construction SMEs.

The proposal extends the scope of application of the Regulation to a larger number of economic operators than before. Most notably, the proposal includes contractors into its scope when manufacturing products on-site for immediate incorporation or the direct installation of products into construction works. It also adds significant burdens on contractors regarding the reuse and remanufacturing of products. SMEs and micro-enterprises would be particularly affected by new administrative obligations related to the declaration of performance and the declaration of conformity.

The proposal also foresees that the current regulation would remain in force until 2045. The transition to the new framework would thus take more than two decades during which both the current and the future regulation would have to be applied. FIEC has identified other major problems, such as the absence of short-term or interim solutions that would allow to resolve the long-standing backlog in the citation of harmonised standards.

The decisive negotiations on the revised CPR started in July 2023, and were still ongoing at the time this report was drafted. A final agreement is expected to be reached by the end of 2023.

### Actions and key dates:

**23/11/2022** → High-level discussion on the CPR revision at the EOTA Stakeholder Conference.

**30/11/2022** → [Open letter](#) on CPR: "*The time for action is now*".

**09/12/2022** → Joint industry amendments, together with *Construction Products Europe* (CPE), *European Builders Confederation* (EBC) and *Small Business Standards* (SBS).

**18/01/2023** → Meeting with the Swedish EU Council Presidency.

**01/03/2023** → Meeting with the Spanish Ministry for Industry, Trade and Tourism.

**30/06/2023** → EU Council adopts position on CPR proposal.

**11/07/2023** → European Parliament adopts position on CPR proposal.

**14/07/2023** → FIEC letter on "*Contractors in the new Construction Products Regulation*"

**17/07/2023** → Start of triilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, the Member States and the European Commission.

**24/10/2023** → Second political triilogue meeting.