

Fifth Annual Meeting of the High Level Construction Forum

Key messages

25 March 2025

For the fifth time, a group of now 130 participants from the European Commission, Member States and industry convened in person (together with another 105 online participants) at the DG GROW premises for the Annual meeting of the High Level Construction Forum.

Construction ranks as the 2nd largest ecosystem in the EU by employees and 3rd by turnover. It is strongly embedded in Europe's local and national economies, providing major employment opportunities, key to addressing today's housing crisis, and essential in living up to our decarbonisation ambitions.

The Forum provided a unique opportunity to position the construction ecosystem in the rapidly evolving context. It has been challenged by high inflation and unabated skills shortages, limiting its real output volumes as of late. Nevertheless, the ecosystem is quite robust and less vulnerable than others to trade disruptions. A strong call was made to reconcile sustainability with affordability.

The recently published [Competitiveness Compass](#) - with its focus on innovation, decarbonisation and addressing vulnerabilities – provides overarching principles for action. The Forum concluded that productivity remains a key challenge for the construction ecosystem, and provided an excellent space to dive into its various drivers and levers. To enhance its competitiveness, it is important to work towards solutions, such as:

- Promote simplification: legislation, standardisation and harmonisation;
- Foster the Single Market: more than ever before, there is momentum for continuing these long-standing policy efforts, especially for services;
- Address the skills gaps: Provide quality jobs and draw in new groups to the labour market (e.g. women);
- Use digitisation as a lever for raising productivity: e.g. by supporting the uptake of openBIM by all actors in the value chain, including SMEs;
- Modernise public procurement legislation: by drawing more focus on award criteria beyond price, such as green, innovative, and social aspects;
- Drive forward the circular economy: use the existing building stock and enable the reuse and recycling of materials, and make actors in the value chain collaborate;
- Offsite construction and industrialisation: both for new build and renovations.

The Forum also took stock of its ongoing efforts within the framework of the [Transition Pathway for the Construction Ecosystem](#), with already 83 pledges made and being implemented.

In the afternoon, the Forum deepened discussions on three specific topics:

- Accelerating building permits: learning from national, regional and local practices;
- Secondary building materials: bringing supply and demand into balance; and
- Facilitating cross-border construction and installation services.

In conclusion, attendants confirmed that standardisation, harmonisation, single market, collaboration, sustainability, digitalisation and productivity are areas where the Forum can act jointly to strengthen the European construction ecosystem.

Annex: Responses to the opening and closing poll of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the High Level Construction Forum.

Opening poll from the morning session:

As a group, what priorities should we have in this Commission mandate to support the European construction ecosystem (in one or two words)?

Review answers 99+ >



Closing poll from the afternoon session:

What key takeaway from today's session can we act on together to strengthen the European construction ecosystem (in one or two words)?

Review answers 61 >

