



Brussels, 2 June 2020

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F.a.o.:

**U. von der Leyen**

Commission President

European Commission

Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200

1049 Brussels

Belgium

ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu

copy to:

**F. Timmermans**, Executive Vice-President  
responsible for European Green Deal

**N. Schmit**, Commissioner for Jobs and Social  
Rights

**T. Breton**, Commissioner Internal Market

Dear President,

We, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) contact you to express our position, concerns and demands for the upcoming phase of economic relaunch in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Covid-19 era, it is time to ensure health and safety, but it is also time to think of economic recovery. The EFBWW has prepared a motion and a document with 26 concrete demands for the coming 12 months.

The demands focus on three main subjects: occupational health and safety, the European Green Deal and posted workers.

First, the health and safety of workers must be ensured at all times and in all situations: new and better rules for occupational health and safety are needed, taking into account new hazards and new risks. The EFBWW defends the recognition of COVID-19 as an occupational disease for those workers who are disproportionately exposed to it. The EFBWW also insists that COVID-19 should be recognized as a group four risk in the Biological Agents Directive. We would welcome if the European Commission could revise its position on this point.

Second, it is time to focus also on a safe reopening and relaunching of the economy. The EFBWW welcomes the European Commission proposal to create a EUR 750 billion recovery fund, the Next Generation EU.

Speeding up the Renovation wave and making it a central action in the recovery strategy would indeed be a very good decision. We would like to see that the ambition to triple the annual renovation rate of the building stock -as was indicated in an earlier leaked Commission document on the "green recovery"- will be confirmed as it would lead to a massive reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe. It will also bring us safer and healthier buildings to live and work in. As part of

the Renovate Europe Campaign, the EFBWW has already called for a Renovation Fund for All Europeans. Accessible to all European citizens, with specific attention to affordable housing and also targeting energy poverty.

However, we should keep in mind that this ambitious proposal demands large scale funding. That is why the EFBWW urges the Commission to be more transparent on how the “Renovation wave” and the other infrastructure projects will be financed. The EFBWW is also concerned about the announced conditionalities in the different funding programs. For the EFBWW the main conditionality must be social progress: investments leading to good, stable and direct jobs. Companies applying for public contracts should respect collective bargaining with trade unions. This should be a formal criterion in the bidding process.

The EFBWW welcomes the decision of the Commission that the European Green Deal will be at the centre of the economic relaunch. The EFBWW fully supports the goals laid down in the European Green Deal and welcomes the European objectives to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that making a “greener” Europe creates many opportunities, but also many challenges for our industries.

The European Green Deal will seriously impact energy-intensive industries like cement production. In this regard, the EFBWW believes that the fundamental point of departure is that no one should be left behind. The Just Transition Fund/Mechanism and the announced carbon border adjustment mechanism will be important tools in this regard.

Third, posted workers deserve special attention as they are in a particularly vulnerable position. The COVID-19 crisis made their difficulties more visible and the need for just and equal treatment even more urgent. Posted workers cannot be treated as “second-rate workers”. Some posting companies continue to pack their workers together during transportation and accommodation. For many workers, the so-called coordination of social security schemes proved to be fiction. In most cases of abuse, the intermediary posting companies were temporary agencies. A ban on posting via intermediaries such as temp agencies, would have a positive impact on the labour market and on these workers’ lives. The Commission should also implement measures towards the optimal functioning of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) and the urgent introduction of a European Social Security Number (ESSN).

We cannot go back to business as usual after this crisis. The European Union should use this opportunity to base the new normal on social progress.

On each of the above points the EFBWW has developed specific positions and demands. Attached please find an EFBWW motion and a position document with 26 precise demands for the coming 12 months. We are at your disposal to further comment on these proposals and we remain available to assist you in your endeavours towards a more sustainable and social Europe.

Yours sincerely,

  
Johan Lindholm  
EFBWW President

  
Tom Deleu  
EFBWW General Secretary

Encls.: EFBWW motion and 26 concrete demands to direct EFBWW priorities in the coming 12 months