**Press release**

*Brussels, 27 May 2020*

**Building our way out of the COVID-19 crisis and greening the economy with good, decent jobs!**

Today, the European Commission revealed its proposal to create a EUR 750 billion recovery fund, called Next Generation EU. On top of a revamped long-term EU budget of EUR 1.1 trillion, if approved, and adding the other instruments and programs already launched, this would bring the European recovery effort to a total of EUR 2.4 trillion.

The European Green Deal plays a central role in the Commission proposals. The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) welcomes the focus on the renovation of buildings in the recovery strategy.

Speeding up the Renovation wave and making it a central action in the recovery strategy is a very good decision. The ambition to triple the annual renovation rate of the building stock -as indicated in an earlier leaked Commission document on the “green recovery”- must 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 and also targeting energy poverty.

EFBWW President, Johan Lindholm, underlines the important, positive impact of investments in the construction industry on jobs and on the economy: “the construction industry is a labour intensive industry. And investments in construction have a multiplier effect because they create an extra demand for services and goods such as building materials. Large construction programs have always been part of successful strategies to get out of a recession. The Renovation wave should start as soon as possible. We are ready.”

Next to the announced Renovation wave, the EFBWW calls upon European leaders to also come up with an ambitious and European wide infrastructure program to upgrade cities to smart cities and to connect major cities in Europe and create sustainable transportation hubs. This means new infrastructure, but also maintaining and updating existing infrastructure. The collapse of the highway bridge in Genoa (Italy) is still in our minds. But also rural areas should not be forgotten.

These ambitions demand 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 with investments leading to good and stable jobs. We cannot afford to go back to austerity.

Tom Deleu, EFBWW general secretary, insists that public funding should not only be spent in a green way, but also in a social way: “Public tendering and public procurement should promote the creation of 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 COVID-19 crisis has exposed how vulnerable posted and migrant workers really are. The EFBWW expects new actions at European level to end social dumping and finally guarantee equal treatment of all workers.

The EFBWW Executive Committee adopted proposals in that sense”.

The EFBWW welcomes the ambitions of the Commission and will continue to support a European Green Deal towards a just transition. However, to realize a just transition it is crucial that trade unions be actively involved in the whole process and that sectoral social dialogue can be the driver to guarantee that the transition will be social and sustainable.

You can find the EFBWW position on the European Green Deal [here](https://www.efbww.eu/stream/012a520a-b8f1-4491-9cf5-9b6e12fbfae0).

To know more about the concrete demands of the EFBWW in this COVID-19 era, click [here](https://www.efbww.eu/stream/ca761c00-21d4-4853-ad93-4c14cff69688).

The EFBWW is the European Trade Union Federation grouping 75 national free trade unions from 34 countries with members in the Building, Building Materials, Wood, Furniture, Forestry and Allied sectors.

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