



Country : BELGIUM

Organization : CSC-ACV BIE

Date :30/04/2020

1/ What is the current situation of economic activity in the construction/construction material and wood/forestry/furniture sectors?

We only have a few figures on the construction situation following the COVID-19 crisis. In March and April 2020, there were unemployment claims for 60 to 70% of workers, but this is only an estimate based on employers' claims, not the actual volume of work. Furthermore, a press release, of April 27, from the ERMG indicates declines in turnover by sector.

The "construction" surveys indicate for March 2020 that *"the demand forecasts are down, as is the recent evolution of the order book. Nevertheless, the assessment of the latter remains favourable for the period of the year."*

This decline in optimism is confirmed by the construction confederation: *"According to a survey by the Confederation Construction published in mid-February, order books forecast work for the sector for 6 months, a record for 10 years. A few weeks later, the situation changed completely. 39% of construction companies saw their order books fall sharply, while 33% are facing a sharp reduction in their planned work. Only 23% of companies have not experienced any changes, according to a survey of 346 construction companies by the Swiss Confederation Construction. Robert de Mûelenaere, Managing Director of the Confederation Construction: "In a short period of time, the construction sector has undergone a real upheaval. Until the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis, our sector was in good, even excellent, health. Not only were order books full, but growth in our sector of 2 to 3 percent would have been higher than for all other sectors combined. Whereas two months ago, business confidence was still high, today that confidence is in serious jeopardy. "66% of construction companies are now at a standstill or have slowed down considerably, according to the survey conducted by the Swiss Construction Confederation. The industry federation wants to work now on restarting the entire sector"*

2/ What are the specific agreements, measures or regulations that were adopted to fight the COVID-19 situation in our sectors; Related to what topics ?

https://www.lacsc.be/docs/default-source/acvbie-cscbie-document/algemeen-général/20200423-guide-generique.pdf?sfvrsn=c79326e6_2

3/ What is the current situation of migrant and mobile workers in the construction and wood/forestry/furniture sectors? Is it possible for you to monitor the situation effectively?

The situation is really difficult to monitor.

Many migrant / mobile workers returned to their homeland during the COVID-19 crisis. The signals are that they are now returning. The situation is difficult to monitor and this is a major concern

4/ Is there an exit strategy plan on sectoral level? Are sectoral trade unions involved in the discussions and /or implementation of the exit strategy plan (sectoral level)?

On April 16, the Belgian trade unions (3) concluded a first sectorial agreement in the construction industry which is applicable until May 3. In this agreement, it was agreed to draw up a draft memorandum of understanding by 21 April at the latest in order to enable construction activities to be resumed/continued from 4 May.

On 23 April FGTE signed its memorandum of understanding with the employers. The CSCBIE and the CGSLB refused to sign this protocol.

A new meeting is scheduled for 7 May in order to find a new sectoral agreement.

5/ What are your ideas / proposals to fight the COVID-19 crisis and its effects

- Related to Health and Safety for specific occupations/work processes and conditions

*** Multiple construction actors on the same site / customers**

- a. Inform PREVIOUSLY and on TIME about measures applicable within the company/on the site
Before starting up activities, the companies contact each other to make clear agreements on the course of the (re)start-up of the activities. The safety coordinators are involved as much as possible
- b. Compulsory compliance by external parties
- c. Indicate contact person (SPOC Single Person Of Contact)
- d. Organize daily toolbox meeting

*** Work in buildings occupied by residents and users**

- a. Voluntariness (see sector agreement)
- b. Procedure to determine hygienic condition and state of health of residents/users on site (see checklist);
- c. Prior consent of the occupant or user required
- d. Anytime:
 - * Residents/users are asked to ventilate the workplace 30 minutes before the arrival of the employee
 - * Residents/users are asked to make the installation/workshop easily accessible
 - * Residents/users must be in a different room
 - * Limited in time
 - * Training (e.g. on correct use of PPE)
- e. Which PRM? Differentiate according to type of activity ?
In case of an urgent activity in a contaminated zone, at least :
 - * Mask type FFP2 or FFP3, protective goggles, disposable suit and shoe protection (see measures for asbestos).The infected customer shall also wear a mouth mask throughout the duration of the work

- **Related to income protection**

- **Related to an economic relaunch of the construction and wood/forestry/furniture sectors**

- **Related to better protection of workers in our industries**

- Social distancing
 - Certainly as long as non-essential companies and essential companies are involved, the existing obligations concerning 'social distancing' will remain fully applicable:
 - Non-essential companies: at all times
 - Essential companies (PC124 urgent work and interventions, see sector agreement (to 3/5): as far as possible infringement limited to the strict minimum. Employers make appropriate protective equipment available. Workers wear them. See sector agreement (to 3/5).
 - Afterwards, maintaining social distancing. If 1.5 m cannot be respected, work can only be started/continued when legally permitted. Employers shall provide suitable protective equipment. Employees wear them.
- Transport
 - Individual
 - If not possible: maximum number of persons based on 1.5m distance (plexiglass only if legally and for safety reasons)

- Social consultation: maximum

Consultation on a regular basis on the measures to be taken/adopted with the CPBW or trade union delegation and with the employees themselves (according to powers)

- **Related to specific protection of posted and migrant workers in our sectors**

- a. Comply with the same measures as permanent employees
- b. Information in native language
- c. As far as possible, separate work from workers who have not left Belgian territory
- d. Do not interrupt the working period to return home in the meantime
- e. Strict compliance with the rules governing entry into Belgian territory
- f. Employer certificate
- g. Housing