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Visionary presentations, bringing a challenging picture of current and future changes for the industry, wrap up the 2016 Conference



Enthusiast speakers convincingly translated how the exponential technological progress, especially in information technologies, is impacting on the daily work of engineering consultants.

Kristoffer Bugge (Norconsult) presented the dizzying 'paperless project'.

Maurizio Boi (Tecnolav Engineering srl) explained why a new kind of organisation of the engineering consultancy firm, one that is not only able to manage such accelerating change but also thrive on it, is needed.

In the last presentation on 'Digital Transformation in the Networked Society', Milena Matic (Strategy, Marketing & Communications Manager, Ericsson SEE) stated that 'the pace of change will never be this slow again'.

All the conference presentations, including the ones on the Balkan region investment environment, and the topics that both the implementing agencies and the industry addressed, are available at <http://www.efcanet.org/MeetingsEvents/ArchiveDetail.aspx?detailid=16460>

Committee Chairs tell about EFCA advocacy activities at Sofia meeting

The annual EFCA General Assembly meeting offers industry representatives the opportunity to learn about the activities EFCA is undertaking to ensure that EU policies and rules are not negatively affecting the engineering consultancy businesses.

This year's General Assembly Meeting was hosted by BACEA, Bulgarian Association of Consulting Engineers and Architects, in Sofia.

The meeting approved the elections of Kevin Rudden (Ireland) as President-Elect

and Paweł Zejer (Poland) as Director for a second term of three years.

Committee Chairs highlighted a series of policy wins and presented future plans:

- Anya De Bie summarised the findings of the Barometer Spring 2016 report. She called on her colleagues to provide consistent data and to use the report in debates with national policy makers. Peter Boswell presented the broader statistical picture of demand for engineering consultancy services;
- Jaap de Koning highlighted the Internal Market Committee's wide range of actions that are aimed at giving greater leverage to move away from the lowest price award and to capitalise on the 'value for money' approach of the 2014 EU public procurement rules;
- Christophe Castaing explained the focus of the BIM Task Force on CEN, and strategic aspects of BIM and BIM standardisation for the business;
- Jean Félix invited the national associations to support actively the Sustainable Development Committee;
- Ines Ferguson outlined the mandate and broadening focus of the European External Aid Committee. She ended with the Committee's 2016-2017 roadmap.



Anya De Bie - Jean Félix - Jaap de Koning

The audience's comments and discussion proved a testimony of the fact that the Committees and Task Groups are operating as very relevant and collaborative networks that hold up the Federation.

Kristoffer Bjerg Sørensen (Denmark) wins seventh edition of the EFCA Young Professionals competition



Kristoffer Bjerg Sørensen – Maurizio Boi
Winner 2016 YP competition
EFCA Board member & Chair of jury

Kristoffer Bjerg Sørensen, project manager and specialist in cooling and energy systems, showed a very high degree of professionalism, focused project management and strong communication skills.

A total of 13 young professionals from 8 countries entered this year's high-level contest.

All projects were of remarkably high quality, which made the evaluation much more difficult for the jury.

EFCA and FIDIC are currently streamlining the format and coordinating the submission and evaluation of entries for their respective YP competitions.

Kevin Rudden appointed President-Elect of EFCA for the term 2016-2017



Kevin Rudden (IRL) is the CEO of GARLAND, an international consulting engineering firm based in Ireland, providing civil and structural consulting engineering services, safety management, and economic development consultancy services.

During 2005-2006 Kevin Rudden represented EFCA at the European Construction Safety Forum. In 2014, he was elected on the EFCA Board of Directors. He has recently completed his term as President of The Association of Consulting Engineers of Ireland.

In his speech of thanks, Kevin Rudden stated that 'he will foster the strength of the, collaborative and business-focused network that EFCA is. EFCA will continue advising the European regulators on the development a business-friendly environment to ensure our firms competitiveness in the global market'.

Spring 2016 EFCA Barometer: lack of qualified staff and investments as well as low fees are main challenges

The latest EFCA [Barometer](#) report shows that the fragile stabilisation of the European market continues, though still at a low level in many countries in southern Europe. Expectations are slightly positive for the coming six months.

Economic recovery in southern Europe continues while Central Europe stabilised in terms of orders. Only Greece and Turkey show negative order stock expectations.

Eighteen countries reported increased order stock in the last six months and as many believe increase will continue in the next six months.



According to the [Spring 2016 Economic Forecast](#), economic growth in Europe is holding up despite a more difficult global environment.

E F C A A G E N D A

European External Aid Committee	Brussels	28.06.2016
Task Force on BIM	Brussels	05.09.2016
Internal Market Committee	Brussels	08.09.2016



Board of Directors meeting	Stockholm	17.10.2016 (tbc)
D&S meeting	Bucharest	21.10.2016
Board of Directors meeting	Budapest	24-25.11.2016
2017 EFCA GAM & CONFERENCE	Copenhagen	1-2.06.2017



EUROPEAN BRIEFING

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Over €7.5 million investment for blue growth
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INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE

Investment Plan for Europe showing results

So far, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has approved 64 projects for financing under the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), which represent a volume of financing of €9.3 billion.

The European Investment Fund (EIF) has approved 185 SME financing agreements, with total financing under the EFSI of €3.5 billion.

Some 141,800 SMEs and Midcaps are expected to benefit. Together, these operations are located in 26 member states and they are expected to trigger total investment of over €100 billion.

EFSI is a guarantee facility from the EU budget, which is managed by the EIB as one of the three pillars of the Investment Plan for Europe.

The [European Investment Advisory Hub](#), the second pillar of the Investment Plan, is delivering valuable advice to make projects attractive for investors throughout Europe.

Investment Plan - updated state of play, including a break-down by sector and by country:

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/publications/investment-plan-results-so-far_en

European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to be extended

A [Communication](#) is setting out concrete proposals for the future of the EFSI, building on its positive results so far.

The Commission launched also another element of the Investment Plan, the European Investment Project Portal ([EIPP](#)).

EIPP is an online platform bringing together European project promoters and investors from the EU and beyond. The Portal will increase the visibility of projects to invest in across Europe.

INTERNAL MARKET

First industry-related package under the Digital Single Market strategy

Building on and complementing the many national initiatives for [digitising industry](#), the

Commission plans to use its policy instruments, financial support, coordination and legislative powers to trigger further investments in all industrial sectors.

The goal is to ensure that Europe is ready for the emerging challenges of digital products and services. This will require sustained and coordinated investment from the [private and public](#) sectors.



Commission requests 21 member states to transpose EU procurement rules

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Spain and Sweden have not notified their measures to transpose the public procurement and concessions directives to the Commission on time (18 April 2016).

New standardisation approach to respond to the changing business environment

In line with the Commission's [2015 Single Market Strategy](#) and the [EU standardisation package](#) adopted on 1 June 2016, the [Joint Initiative on Standardisation](#) sets out a shared vision for European standardisation.

The Initiative is bringing together public and private institutions and organisations in a collaborative dialogue process.

The shared objective is ensure that standards are timely, market-driven and produced to promote innovation, increase competitiveness of European firms and support Europe's leadership in international standardisation.

VAT Action Plan: measures to modernise VAT in the EU

The [Action Plan](#) sets out ways to reboot the current EU VAT system to make it simpler, more fraud-proof and business-friendly.

The current VAT system was intended to be a transitional system. It is fragmented, complex for businesses operating cross-border and leaves the door open to fraud.

The Commission will present proposals on all issues in 2016 and 2017.

EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

2016 Call for Proposals for LIFE Action Grants

The [call](#) covers proposals for both LIFE sub-programmes: Environment and Climate.

€200 million for the Neighbourhood Investment Facility

The [Neighbourhood Investment Facility](#) (NIF) is an instrument that combines EU grants with financial resources from the public and private sectors, including loans and equity financing.

The grant will allow the mobilisation of €2 billion in investments for critical infrastructure covering transport, energy and environment, as well as the development of social and private sectors in neighbourhood

partner countries [east](#) and [south](#) of the EU's borders.

Over €7.5 million investment for blue growth

The calls 'Blue careers', 'Blue labs' and 'Blue technology' will respectively help enhancing career opportunities in the maritime economy, stimulating the creativity of young researchers and encouraging cooperation that will help bring research results to the market in promising blue growth technology areas.

14 projects under the Partnership Instrument approved

The projects, supported by a combined budget of €73.5 million, will underpin the EU's strategic objectives in external relations.

Through the [Partnership Instrument](#) the EU cooperates with partners around the world to address global challenges of mutual interest.

The Partnership Instrument funds activities that carry forward the EU's priorities, translating political commitments into concrete measures.

€125 million funding for Afghanistan

The funding will support the government's reform agenda towards sustainable economic development and state building.

This support is in line with EU's bilateral development programme for [Afghanistan](#) for the period 2014 – 2020.

€55 million support for the people of Burundi

The €55 million [package](#) will help strengthening access to health services and improving food and nutrition.

€100 million development package for Sudan

The €100 million Special Measure will be implemented under the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#).

The EU Emergency Trust Fund, made up of €1.8 billion from the EU budget and European Development Fund, combined with contributions from EU member states and other donors, was launched in 2015 to tackle instability and the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.

AIIB expands partnerships



The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) agreed to broaden cooperation to support investment in strategically important projects, seek to jointly finance projects and increase cooperation in countries where both institutions are active.

AIIB and the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) (EBRD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), setting out a framework for strategic and operational cooperation.

An agreement with the [Asian Development Bank](#) (ADB) sets the stage for jointly financing projects. AIIB and ADB are already discussing projects for co-financing in the road and water sectors. The first of these projects is expected to be Pakistan's M4 highway project, a 64-kilometer stretch of motorway connecting Shorkot to Khanewal in Punjab Province.

The AIIB and the World Bank are discussing nearly one dozen co-financed projects in sectors that include transport, water and energy in Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia.

Under the agreement, the World Bank will prepare and supervise the co-financed projects in accordance with its policies and procedures in areas like procurement, environment and social safeguards.

Development aid rises again in 2015

According to official data collected by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) development aid totalled USD 131.6 billion in 2015.

Official development assistance (ODA) from the 28 countries in the DAC rose by 6.9% in real terms as aid spent on refugees in host countries more than doubled in real terms to USD 12 billion. Stripping out funds spent on refugees, aid was still up 1.7% in real terms.

MISCELLANEOUS

Urban Agenda for the EU

The development of 12 [partnerships](#) on identified urban challenges will be at the heart of the [Urban Agenda](#) for the EU.

The partnerships will allow cities, member states, EU institutions and stakeholders to work together on an equal basis to find common ways to improve urban areas in the EU.

Offshore wind energy potential

The North Sea and the Irish Sea hold great potential for producing [renewable energy](#), shoring-up Europe's economic growth and creating sustainable jobs. And the best way to tap into this potential is for EU countries bordering these seas to work together, a [study](#) finds.

On 6 June 2016, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden [agreed](#) to further strengthen their energy cooperation.

Innovation Deals for a Circular Economy

[Innovation Deals](#) (IDs) will allow innovators to swiftly address legislative obstacles, shortening the time between moment of inspiration and market uptake.

The Commission launched a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the pilot phase of the Innovation Deals for a [Circular Economy](#).

Implementation of Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

The 2016 [report](#) 'Implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) – Featuring Country Reports' analyses and compares implementation of the Directive across the 28 EU Member States and Norway.

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