

**Brief
Information
Business
Memo**

Concrete perspectives



Construction Sector

Construction sector production decreases

In the construction sector, seasonally adjusted production rose by 0.1% in the euro area (EA17) and by 1.6% in the EU27 in May 2012, compared with the previous month. In April 2012, production decreased by 3.7% and 6.9% respectively. The highest increases were registered in the United Kingdom (+6.3%), while the largest decreases in Slovenia (-17.5%).

However, in June, compared with May 2012, the production in construction decreased by 0.5% in the euro area and 1.7% in the EU.

[European Commission – Press Release \(18 July 2012\)](#)

[Eurostat – Press Release \(20 August 2012\)](#)

European Commission published new action plan to boost the competitiveness of the European Construction sector

On 31 July 2012, the European Commission published an action plan for the competitiveness of the European construction sector.

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News in brief

In May 2012, compared with April 2012, the industrial producer price index fell by 0.5% in the euro area (EA17) and by 0.7% in the EU27. Among the Member States for which data are available, the largest decrease in the total index was recorded in the United Kingdom (-2.0%) and the highest increase in Cyprus (+2.1%).

[European Commission – Press Release](#)

On 4 July 2012, the European Commission published the figures for regional unemployment for the EU. The rates varied widely across the EU, the lowest rates were recorded in the regions of Tirol and Salzburg (both 2.5%) in Austria, while the highest one was registered in the regions of Andalucía (30.4%).

[European Commission – Press Release](#)

In the first part of the paper, the Communication gives an overview of the European construction market and identifies key problems and market failures.

“...the construction sector is confronted by a number of structural problems, such as a shortfall of skilled workers in many companies, low attractiveness to young people due to the working conditions, limited capacity for innovation and the phenomenon of undeclared work...”

In the second part, the Commission proposes actions to make the European Construction market more competitive. The proposed actions are perfectly in line with the strategy presented by Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship in Istanbul on 8 June 2012. Actions are proposed for “short” and “medium to long term”.

Please click [here](#) to read the BIBM article on the new strategy.

As an important point, the Communication concludes that Member States and stakeholders should facilitate the transfer of best practices and experiences.

Furthermore, it states that each policy intervention will be monitored and assessed against a number of indicators.

For further information, please read the following links:

[European Commission - Press Release Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises](#)

« ...The construction sector... generates almost 10% of GDP and provides 20 million jobs... »

Live from the European Union

Cyprus takes over the Council's presidency

From 1 July 2012, Cyprus took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The new presidency considers that the way out of the current crisis is the deepened European integration, stronger social cohesion and better quality of life for European citizens. Having in mind these goals, the presidency determine four priorities:

1. More efficient and sustainable Europe

In line with the Europe 2020 strategy, green growth will be promoted through the sustainable management of resources, especially water. The harmonised implementation of EU climate change, energy and environment policy is also a priority.

2. Better performing and growth-based economy

Fiscal consolidation, sustainable economic growth measures, promoting entrepreneurship and the competitiveness of SMEs are in the core of actions.

3. Stronger social cohesion

The presidency will put emphasis on youth employment and active ageing while the most important priority shall be job creation without doubt. As a concrete measure, the posting of workers directive, designed to improve workers' mobility while maintaining decent working conditions, the directive to improve worker protection against electromagnetic fields and the social programmes will be a key file.

4. Better neighbourhood with neighbouring countries

The Cyprus presidency will make the best use of its geographical and cultural advantages to expand and deepen trade relations with the southern Mediterranean countries and hoped to begin free trade negotiations with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia soon.

[Website of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council](#)
[Priorities of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council](#)

News in brief

On 11 July 2012, in protection of antitrust rules, the European Commission confirmed that it undertook unannounced inspections in several Member States in the sector of plastic pipes and plastic pipe fittings used in the sewage industry. The Commission has concerns that the companies concerned may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices.

[European Commission – Press Release](#)

On 12 July 2012, the Industry, Research and Energy Committee of the European Parliament approved the deal on the proposed EU energy efficiency directive. The plenary vote of the directive is scheduled for September 2012.

[European Parliament – Press Release](#)



Helsingin Asumisoikeus Oy Kaanaankatu 6 and Kumpulan Kiinteistöt Oy Kaanaanpiha 4- Finland

National Award Winners – Finland 1

The Finish Concrete Facade of the Year 2011 Architectural Award was won by the apartment building of Helsingin Asumisoikeus Oy Kaanaankatu 6 and Kumpulan Kiinteistöt Oy Kaanaanpiha 4 (see picture above). The project architects were SAFA Risto Huttunen, Paula Leiwo and Mikko Blomberg.

Small details make the building an interesting and versatile whole. The details play with light and shadow on the facades giving them many different expressions depending on the time of the year and the time of the day. Art columns designed by sculptor Pekka Kauhanen and cast in white concrete are an integral part of the facade construction.

The town plan called for redbrick street-side facades built on the site. The facades facing the internal courtyard are based on repetition and mirroring of precast white concrete elements composed with flashbacks to Arabic ornamentals. The technically demanding production and installation of the precast elements has been successfully implemented and complements the high standard of the outward appearance of the building.

1 Source: Confederation of Finnish Construction Industries RT

News in brief

On 16 July 2012, the European Commission proposed to provide €2.9 million from Globalisation Fund for Dutch construction workers in Gelderland province, Netherlands. The aid aims at re-orientation into employment 435 redundant workers in the construction sector, strongly affected by the economic and financial crisis. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers for their approval. [European Commission – Press Release](#)

On 9 August 2012, the European Commission proposed to provide €1.5 million from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to help redundant workers in the aluminium industry (from Zalco Aluminium Zeeland Company NV and two suppliers) with their re-integration into the labour market. The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers will examine now the case. [European Commission – Press Release](#)

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 2.6% in August 2012, 0.2% higher compared with July 2012, reported Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union.

[European Commission – Press Release \(June\)](#)

[European Commission – Press Release \(July\)](#)

[European Commission – Press Release \(August\)](#)

In August, the economic sentiment declined in both the EU and the euro area. Among the largest Member States, sentiment worsened in Spain (-4.9), the UK (-3.1), Italy (-2.4), Poland (-1.8) and Germany (-1.0) while it improved in France (+0.4) and the Netherlands (+0.6). In both areas, the loss in confidence was particularly strong among consumers, retail trade and construction managers.

[European Commission – Press Release](#)

AGENDA

SEPTEMBER

11 September 2012
Notified Bodies SG13
 Stockholm, Sweden

13 September 2012
SAFECLADDING kick-off
 Brussels, Belgium

18 September 2012
BIBM Board meeting
 Bilbao, Spain

26 September 2012
European Construction Forum
 Brussels, Belgium

OCTOBER

10 October 2012
BIBM Directors meeting
 Brussels, Belgium

10 October 2012
BIBM Communication Commission
 Brussels, Belgium

10 October 2012
ECP Board meeting
 Brussels, Belgium

10-11 October 2012
ECP Promotion Officers Conference
 Brussels, Belgium

17 October 2012
BIBM Environmental Commission
 Brussels, Belgium

18 October 2012
Notified Bodies – Conference on CPR
 Brussels, Belgium

22-23 October 2012
CEN/TC 104/SC 1
 Berlin, Germany

NOVEMBER

6 November 2012
BIBM Technical Commission
 Brussels, Belgium

23 November 2012
BIBM General Assembly
 Stockholm, Sweden

News in brief

According to the figures released by the European Commission on 31 August 2012, the euro area (17) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.3% in July 2012, stable compared with June 2012. The EU27 unemployment rate was 10.4% in July 2012, also stable compared with June 2012.

[European Commission – Press Release](#)

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