

## TANSIRC 2 PROJECT Report of the webinar 25 May 2023 – Online

### *Strengthening Industrial Relations in the Construction Sector in Central and East European Countries EU funds use at national level & best practices*

#### *Introduction*

On 25 May 2023, was held the webinar **“Strengthening Industrial Relations in the Construction Sector in Central and East European Countries – EU funds use at national level & best practices”**, co-organised by the European Association of Paritarian Funds – AEIP and the social partners in the construction sector, the European Construction Industry Federation – FIEC and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers – EFBWW.

The event has been organised as part of the **“Towards A New Start of Industrial Relations in Construction in Central and East European Countries (CEEC’s)” (TANSIRC 2) project funded by the European Commission (Grant Agreement no. 101051729)**. It gathered key stakeholders in the construction sector, EU representatives and EU funds experts, to promote EU funding opportunities as well as to share best practices on their use at national level for the development of social dialogue & industrial relations.

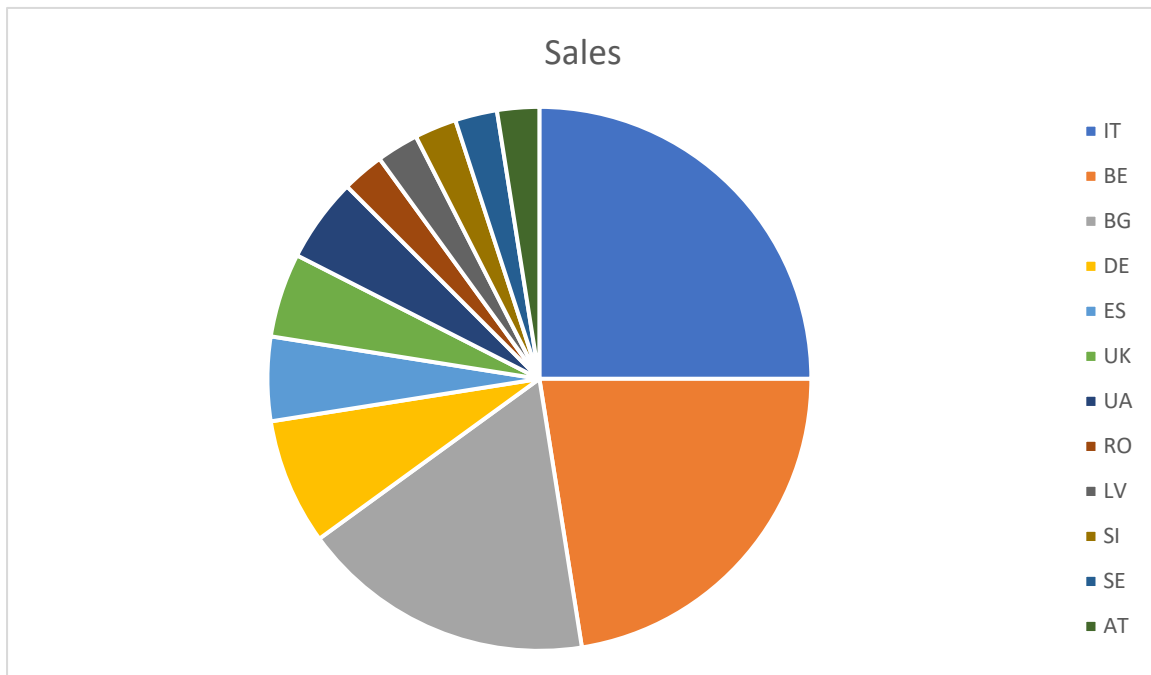
#### *Objectives*

According to project’s goals, the webinar aimed to create a stronger added value for the social dialogue in the construction industry in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and to build up the capacity of trade unions and employers federations to enter in negotiations within the national systems of industrial relations. To this end, during the event were presented relevant EU funds that can support the strengthening of industrial relations in the construction sector including the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 and Horizon Europe.

During the event were also presented best practices of EU funded project which allowed the collaboration of social partners in the construction sector on topics such as skills, provision of social protection and health and safety at work. The event targeted national social partners as well as national paritarian institutions active in the construction sector.

## Participants

The event was attended by around 50 participants from 10 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), plus two non-EU countries (UK and Ukraine) .



## Opening words

Ms. Christine Le Forestier, Social Affairs Director at FIEC, welcomed and thanked all the participants for joining the webinar and introduced the audience to the TANSIRC 2 project. She also highlighted that the webinar is a relevant opportunity to understand how different European funds could be helpful for organisations in running projects.

Mr. Jonathan Cornah, Policy Officer at EFBWW, underlined the importance of strengthening the relationship between social partners since the system of industrial relations in CEECs have deteriorated significantly in the last decade.

Following the introduction from the European Social Partners in the construction sector, Giuseppe Perretti, Policy Advisor on Healthcare and Provident Funds at AEIP outlined the agenda and opened the first session of the webinar with keynote speeches.

## Keynote speeches

### Strengthening Industrial relations in the Construction Sector in CEEC

**Ms. Adriana Sukova, Deputy Director at the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion of the European Commission**, in her keynote speech provided an overview on the DG Employment mission, namely supporting policy and funds, with a major focus in increasing the

employment rate of the European labour force. She highlighted that actions aimed at improving human capital, such as trainings, employment placements, apprenticeships and counselling are crucial, particularly for the construction sector.

She explained that the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** is the main fund put in place by DG EMPL to achieve these goals. It is part of the EU Cohesion Policy and is jointly managed by the Member States, ensuring the involvement of social partners and civil society organisations. Capacity building is a major point of the ESF+ since the aim is to improve knowledge and support the application and access to funding.

Ms Sukova introduced also to the audience the **Just Transition Funds (JTF)**, which has a budget of €3 billion for energy efficiency and budget of €3 billion covering training and upskilling. She remarked that the Construction sector has a key role in supporting the Just Transition, because the building counts for a significant amount of emissions.

Last but not the least, she gave an overview of the **Green Deal Industrial Plan** which is particularly relevant for the construction sector through specific initiatives such as the “**Critical Raw Material Act**”, the “**Net Zero Industry Act**” and the “**Pact for Skills**”.

Ms Sukova concluded her speech mentioning the two new European Commission initiatives aimed to support social dialogue in the EU:

- the **Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality**;
- the **Commission Communication on strengthening social dialogue in the EU** for managing fair transitions.

### **Main highlights from the Eurofound's Representativeness studies on the Construction Sector**

**Mr. Peter Kerckhof and Ms. Maria Sedlekova from Eurofound** presented the preliminary results of the “**Representativeness studies on the Construction**” Sector. Mr. Kerckhofs, Research Manager, introduced the study and he explained that it aims to assess the representativeness of the European social partners in the construction sector, based on their national affiliates in different EU Member States. This is important for these bodies in order to maintain information and consultation relations with the European Commission under Article 154 TFEU as well as for their ability to negotiate agreements at European level which could become binding through a directive as required by Article 155 of the TFEU. Finally, this is also an important opportunity to identify weaknesses in representation and to structure a more effective reinforcement.

Ms. Sedlakova, provided the audience with an overview of the study. She underlined that in 2019 in the construction sector in EU27 there were 12.687.246 employees, with 6.8% of the EU workforce employed. Moreover, Ms. Sedlekova showed the change in construction sector employment between 2011-2020, with a large decrease in Italy and Germany. The higher relative change is in Ireland, Germany and Hungary. She reminded that most companies are specialised in construction activities, with 7,666,800 workers of the total employment. Concerning the Eastern countries, she underlined that in Bulgaria and Romania the proportion of the national workforce employed by the largest three companies has a 6-7 average number of workers per company.

## The added value of the Paritarian Model

**Mr. Simone Miotto, Executive Director at AEIP**, provided the audience with an overview of AEIP as well as on the added value of the paritarian model and some of the challenges faced by paritarian institutions in the construction sector. AEIP is an advocacy organization based in Brussels, representing paritarian Social Protection providers, which are not-for-profit entities established and managed jointly by trade unions and employer organisations within the framework of collective agreements. The construction sector stands out as a field where paritarian organisations play a particularly significant role. This can be attributed to specific needs of the sector's workforce which are covered by AEIP members, including retirement schemes, complementary healthcare insurance, long-term care, health and safety at work, paid holiday schemes and unemployment benefit funds.

In relation to the added value of paritarian model in the construction sector, Mr Miotto explained that paritarian funds are designed by social partners to implement comprehensive social protection schemes not only providing financial security for workers and their families but also mitigating the negative impacts of job insecurity and economic fluctuations. Moreover, paritarian institutions act as a catalyst for social cohesion and stability within the industry, by bringing together representatives from both employers and employees in their management and/or supervisory bodies. This inclusive approach effectively represents societal social groups, fostering social resilience. Paritarian institutions contribute also significantly to improving working conditions through occupational health and safety schemes. By operating at sectoral and/or company level, paritarian schemes have a deep knowledge of the main risks that characterise a sector and can provide targeted solutions to both employers and employees. Lastly, paritarian institutions promote responsible business practices and ethical conduct within the construction industry by engaging employers and employees in decision-making processes and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and integrity.

To conclude Mr Miotto highlighted the main challenges affecting the paritarian institutions working in the construction sector:

1. The rise of new forms of work and self-employment.
2. Seasonal and temporary Work.
3. Health and safety risks.
4. Mobility and cross-border issues.
5. Informing and educating Workers.
6. Financial Sustainability.
7. Trade union membership is decreasing across Europe, resulting in reduced capacities for effective industrial relations.

## *EU funding opportunities for CEE countries*

### The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

**Mr. Jader Canè, Senior Expert at the Unit G.1. of DG Employment**, presented the opportunities of EU funding for CEE countries in the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**, which aims to:

- achieve high employment levels, especially for youth;
- ensure social inclusion;
- contribute to poverty eradication in particular for children;
- grow a skilled and resilient workforce ready for the transition to a green and digital economy.

He provided the audience with a general overview of the fund's architecture, explaining that ESF+ brings together four funding instruments that were separated in the programming period 2014-20:

the European Social Fund (ESF), the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).

He also remarked that the total budget for the 2021-2027 period is €88 billions euro (2019 value), divided between:

- **The shared management strand** - implemented by Member States in partnership with the Commission. These resources have a budget of roughly €87.3 billion for the programming period 2021-27
- **The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) Strand (direct management)** - implemented by the Commission with a budget of €676 million for 2021-2027.

Mr. Canè touched also upon the horizontal principles of the fund, which include targeted actions to support gender equality and promote the transition from residential/institutional care to family and community-based care.

More specifically on the ESF+ shared management strand, he mentioned that there are three main policy objectives:

1. Employment:
  - a) Access to employment of all jobseekers
  - b) Modernising labour market institutions and services
  - c) Women's labour market participation, work/life balance
  - d) Well-adapted working environment, adaptation of workers & enterprises, active & healthy ageing
2. Education and training
  - a) well-adapted working environment, adaptation of workers & enterprises, active & healthy ageing
  - b) Promoting equal access to and completion of, quality and inclusive education and training
  - c) Lifelong learning, upskilling, anticipating change and new skills requirements
3. Social inclusion:
  - a) Active inclusion
  - b) Socio-integration of TCNs incl. migrants
  - c) Socio-eco integration of marginalised communities e.g. Roma
  - d) Access to services; social protection healthcare systems and long term care
  - e) Social integration of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion;
  - f) Material deprivation

Moreover Mr. Canè mentioned the thematic concentration requirements for all Member States as social inclusion, support to the most deprived, support to youth employment, support to tackling child poverty and support to the capacity building of social partners and civil society.

Concerning ESF+, social dialogue & partnership, he explained that the efficient implementation of ESF+ actions depends on good governance and partnership between all relevant territorial and socio-economic actors, especially the social partners and other stakeholders at national, regional and local level.

Indeed, the social partners play a central role in the broad partnership due to their commitment to strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving employment and job opportunities. The partnership principle has been one of the cornerstones of cohesion policy for decades and is essential to ensure the full engagement of the partners concerned in the programming and implementation of vision policy funds, improving the quality of investments. In the process of finalizing the ESF+

regulation, it was decided to introduce the new automatic focus requirements on supporting the capacity building of social partners and civil society. Thus, this strand has been programmed for a total of 22 member states.

Mr. Cané concluded by explaining that since the inception of the ESF+, a tripartite committee was created which has equal representation of the social partners and the government. This allows social partners to be actively involved in the functioning of the ESF+ at EU and Member State level. The Committee may invite non-voting representatives, such as relevant civil society organisations, to its meeting if the agenda of the meeting requires their participation. The committee's objective is to provide relevant advice on the implementation of the ESF+ and to make the social partners and civil society fully involved in the management of the programme.

### **The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**

**Ms. Melina Boneva, Deputy Head of Unit B.2 Recovery & Resilience Task Force (SG RECOVER),** provided the audience with an overview on the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** opportunities for social partners of the construction sector in CEE countries.

RRF is the temporary recovery instrument that was set up by the European Union to help the EU and its member states recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to build back our societies in a greener more digital, more sustainable and resilient way. The Recovery and Resilience Fund regulation established the fund which is composed by 27 national member state plans. Plans have been developed by member states in very close cooperation with the European Commission and they describe how Member States are going to use financial resources until 2026 to help all sectors of their economy to recover from the impact of the of the crisis.

The plans are built on reforms and investments. Reforms include legislative changes, programmes, roadmaps and different documents which can enable various investments in multiple sectors. To be able to absorb the money in their plans, Member States have to submit payment requests to the European Commission demonstrating that they have achieved the pre-set milestones and targets. The European Commission checks whether the evidence provided justifies reaching the milestone and distributes the money to the member states on the basis of this.

National plans must focus on two main pillars, which concern the green transition and the digital transition. Furthermore, no investment in the plans should be harmful to the environment. As for the budget, the Recovery and Resilience Facility brings together a total of €723.8 billion which is divided into grants and loans.

The RRF is a temporary tool, and will last from 2021 to 2026, but it aims to have a long-term impact on green and digital transition as well as on employment and economic growth and she introduced the six pillars that compose the programme:

- Digital transformation;
- Social and territorial cohesion;
- Health and economic, social and institutional resilience;
- Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
- Policies for next generation;
- Green transition.

In conclusion, Ms Boneva provided the audience with four examples of RRP measures for the construction sector in Central & Eastern Europe:

- **Bulgaria – Digital reform of the Bulgarian construction sector:** The objective of this reform is to lay the foundation for the digital transformation of the construction sector in Bulgaria through the development and adoption of a long-term strategy to introduce the Building Information Modelling into the design, execution and maintenance of construction works, as well as a roadmap for its implementation.
- **Czech Republic - Implementation of the new construction law and zoning law:** The reform consists of institutional and procedural changes and aims to bring a high degree of digitalisation to the construction permissions process. It shall bring the decentralised structure of the building authorities and their operating conditions under the responsibility of the State. The reform shall speed up building procedures, make authorisation procedures more efficient and place them under the responsibility of a single authority – the Supreme Construction Office.
- **Lithuania - Improving tax compliance:** The aim of this reform is to improve tax compliance in high-risk sectors and to increase the transparency of transactions, including more transparency in the construction sector (sub-measure 5). This sub-measure aims to develop a digital tool (Builder’s ID system) which shall enable mandatory registration of persons working in the construction sector and identification of such persons with a special builder's identity code.
- **Romania - Development of the planning system:** The objective of the reform is to improve the overall territorial planning by simplified and digitalised spatial planning documents and procedures, increased access and transparency of spatial and territorial planning documents, and increasing the use of energy efficient and sustainable solutions in construction.

### Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027

Ms Anna Barbieri, Erasmus+ and Apprenticeship Leader, Unit B.3. at DG EMPL, provided the audience with an overview of the **Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027**. She explained that Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It is good practice and an example of success because it is the only programme where the budget, €26.2 billion, is double the funding compared to its predecessor programme (2014-2020). The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people’s participation in democratic life.

She added that one of the main objectives of Erasmus Plus is to ensure the development of the skills for the labour market for employability and social partners in the labour market can fully benefit from these programmes.

One main feature of Erasmus+ is its translational nature, therefore project proposals should include more than one Member State. The programme has both a centralised and a de-centralised management. Erasmus+ national agencies are in charge of the mobility of learners and staff in all the educational sector. National agencies are also responsible for partnerships for cooperation and for small scale partnerships.

The **European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)** in Brussels is responsible for bigger projects and it manages the online platforms for education in training, the partnerships for excellence as well as the capacity building for VET international cooperation.

Ms. Barbieri also touched upon the topic of learning and mobility, since stakeholders in the construction sector could play a key role in supporting the European Commission in raising awareness on this point. Indeed, learning mobility in the vocational education and training sector often includes a work-based learning component and practical experience to be done in a company or in another organisation, and the European Commission needs to be in contact with companies and organisations that can provide these workers learning experience.

Furthermore, the European Commission is promoting longer exchange periods as it is proved that longer exchanges are more efficient for skills development. The European Commission is also preparing a proposal for a council recommendation to increase the opportunities for learning mobility for all including apprentices. Therefore, it is foreseen an increased support for organisation offering longer exchanges and additional linguistic support for the participants.

Following, Ms. Barbieri introduced the Erasmus+ Ka1 VET mobility opportunities, among which she listed:

- Opening VET mobility to the world (outgoing mobility);
- Fostering ErasmusPro;
- Updating Learning Mobility Framework.

Ms. Barbieri outlined also the priorities for Vocational Education and Training for Partnerships for cooperation (Ka2):

- Adapting vocational education and training to labour market needs;
- Increasing the flexibility of learning opportunities;
- Contributing to innovation;
- Increasing attractiveness of VET;
- Improving quality assurance;
- Creation and implementation of internationalisation strategies.

In conclusion, Ms Barbieri presented the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)**, launched in 2013, which aims to strengthening the quality, supply and overall image of apprenticeships across Europe, while also promoting the mobility of apprentices. Since 2020, the renewed EAfA calls for new commitments on digital and green apprenticeships, focusing on the economic sectors that will be at the front line of the transition to a climate-neutral Europe.

### **Horizon Europe - Cluster 5, destination 4, Built4People partnership**

**Mr. Piero de Bonis, Policy Officer at Unit C.1. of DG RTD** presented the **EU Research & Innovation Programme 2021-2027, Horizon Europe - Cluster 5 on climate energy mobility** and in particular, its **destination 4, Built4People partnership**.

He explained that Horizon Europe is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with a budget of €95.5 billion. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.

Mr. De Bonis also presented an overview of the budget distribution in the 2023-2024 tenders, listing the six destinations (climate science; cross-cutting solutions; energy supply; energy demand; transport modes; transport and Smart Mobility services) and specifying that the one with the highest budget is D3 on energy supply.



In relation to **destination 4, the Built4People partnership**, Mr De Bonis explained that it aims to support EU ambition on energy efficiency and independence, with a stronger link between innovation in technology and practices, policy drivers and instruments as well as technological and socio-economic breakthroughs for achieving climate neutrality and the transition to zero pollution of the building stock by 2050, based on inclusive and people-centric R&I.

Between 2023 and 2024 the partnership is covering topics including energy performance assessment and monitoring, industrialisation of deep renovation, integrated technology solutions, prefabricated renovation packages, demand response, renewable intensive homes, smart buildings, design, materials and sustainability of life cycle. The European Commission planned two calls in 2023 on 10 topics with a total budget of €102 million and two calls in 2024 on 7 topics with a total budget of €70 million.

### *Best practices at national level*

#### **Key elements of EU cohesion policies 2021-2027**

**Mr. Marco Lopriore, Senior Expert at the European Institute of Public Administration (EUIPA)** highlighted two main trends within the **EU Cohesion Policy 2027**, the "**no significant harm principle (NSHP)**" and the "**push towards strategic procurements**".

The first area is a new element of cohesion policies, coming from the taxonomy regulation, it covers six areas, climate adaptation and mitigation, protection of water, circular economy, pollution prevention and biodiversity. This is a horizontal principle to be implemented across programmes and project to have the budget eligibility from the structural funds. In the European Regional Development Fund, at article 7, are listed all the elements which are considered harmful and cannot be financed. This has an impact on the project concerning the construction of roads and infrastructures. Mr Lopriore specified that the area on circular economy of the NSHP has a particular impact on the construction sector and he reported that for example construction works in Italy financed through the RRF should use the 70% of recyclable materials. Therefore, he highlighted the need to put in place monitoring bodies by ministries, region's or managing authorities to check the compliance of the NSHP.

In relation to strategic procurement, Mr Lopriore explained that the European Commission required to Member States that they should do what they can to promote and to introduce in the use of the fund Strategic Procurement. This means that they should pay more attention to green procurement, social procurement and innovative procurement. In this regard Member States adopted both a more horizontal approach, including these requirements across different programmes as well as a more targeted approach. However, some member states did not mention at all strategic procurement, such as Czech Republic or some regions in France, so this is more an option than a requirement. However, this represents a turning point in the improvement of the quality of the spending through Strategic Procurement.

## Trends in the Development of Professions and Skills in the Construction Sector. Preliminary results from the market research in Bulgaria

**Prof. Mr. Vasili Kirov and Ms. Rumiana Zheleva** presented the **preliminary results of a market research on trends in the development of professions and skills in the construction sector** that they are conducting as part of the TANSIRC 2 project.

Prof. Kirov explained the study's aim and methodology. It aims to identify what are the impacts of the twin transition of the professions and skills in the construction sector in Bulgaria to allow social partners to take action to face current challenges. To do so Prof; Kirov's team has been commissioned by the project partners to undergo quantitative research on Bulgarian construction companies through a questionnaire. The research will be finalised in July 2023.

The anonymous questionnaire investigated trends in the development of professions and skills in the construction sector, characteristics of the enterprise (activities; how long has it been operating; type; level of workers education; use of PCs; type of innovations implemented so far, etc.), employee skills (current level of skills and skills needed, reasons for training; main business benefits to be achieved by offering traineeships/apprenticeships for vocational high school students/complete novice workers, etc.), digital skills and green skills.

The questionnaire provided an overview of the company size by average number of employees on employment contract 2022, highlighting that the 44% is composed by small enterprise 10-49 employees. Moreover, it showed that according to respondents, their company did not introduce new technologies or processes for construction or related service.

Subsequently, Ms. Zheleva remarked that the most important green skills in the company for the respondents are represented by the European legislation in the field of environmental protection, energy efficiency and the circular economy in construction. To conclude Ms. Zheleva remarked the relevant observations from the preliminary results:

- the Bulgarian construction companies have been not still seriously impacted by the twin transition;
- most of the companies have been not introducing new technologies and they believe that their employees have the right skills;
- the training of employees is not as frequent as expected and rarely technology and/ptt green transition-related.

## EMECs - European Market Environment in the Construction Sector Project (EaSI)

**Mr. Feliciano Iudicone, Research Officer at the Italian Joint National Committee for Buildings Workers' Welfare Funds (CNCE)** presented the results and activities of the EaSI funded project **European Market Environment in the Construction Sector (EMECs)**, ended in 2022.

The EMECs project aimed to understand how posted workers in the construction sector have been affected by the measures introduced by Member States to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, how pandemic related obstacles to posting can be overcome and how workers can be better protected in the future under similar circumstances. In addition to the criticalities created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the social protection of posted workers could be further hindered by other factors, including:

- the little awareness on the local institutions and contexts;
- possible language obstacles;

- and difficulties in accessing emergency aids (for them remaining affiliated to social security institutions of the sending country during posting).

Mr. Iudicone explained that according to project results the main 'if' for the future lies in the ability of policy makers and of the society at large to learn lessons from the pandemic experienced in order to shape a better new normality.

In terms of digitalisation, the project highlighted that the population at large testified and experienced the quick setup and rollout of schemes easing the safe mobility of citizens while enabling to easily check their status, with the EU Digital Covid Certificate and with the Digital Passenger Locator Form.

Among the project recommendations, the need to adequately fund mental health support services is mentioned, as posted workers suffered from a double isolation in times of pandemic.

The attempt to keep activities of the construction sector running while safeguarding workers led to the introduction of specific OSH protocols adapting general health measures to the framework of construction sites. There is hope this practice will bring about a new attitude to health and safety, paying higher attention in the future not only to the need to adequately protect the respiratory system from harmful biological and chemical agents, but also on other precautions necessary to work safely.

### **SEETHESKILLS - Sustainable EnERgy Skills in construction: Visible, Validated, Valuable Project (Horizon 2020)**

**Ms. Valentina Kuzma, Senior Consultant at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia,** presented the Horizon 2020 funded project **SEetheSkills** (2021-2024).

The project aims to build upon the good foundations of previous BuildUpSkills actions, each of them notably successful on national level, in order to facilitate broader visibility and accessibility of energy skills and to enable their mutual recognition across partner countries, through their cross validation based on learning outcomes. It has three main objectives:

1. To make skills **VISIBLE** through whole value chain in building sector by implementing Integrated register of energy skills;
2. To **VALIDATE** skills relevance to standardized EE construction and interventions in renovation, by matching and levelling skills and linking them to national and EU qualification standards, to enable mutual recognition;
3. To emphasize skills **VALUE** in order stimulating market demand for energy skills in design, construction and maintenance of buildings and manufacturing and installation of EE construction materials.

Ms. Kuzma also presented some of the main project's deliverables, including the "**Integrated Registers of Energy Skills**", which would increase the visibility of energy skills. This database will be developed through chain of activities between the partners, such as: exchange of experience and training schemes between partners, transferring and replication of training schemes as well as enabling e-learning on developed/existing training schemes for the purpose of replication.

The project will also put in place two different approaches for skills validation:

- An e-learning platform, that will include the e-trainings in form of webinars on RES, BIM and cross-craft skills qualifications.

- The creation of e-RPL tool. The process of recognition of previous learning RPL, based on defined steps of identification, documentation, evaluation and certification adjusted as on-line process. This will be realized through web-based platform for e-learning.

## **WOODual - Wood sector and Dual Learning for Youth Employment and Skills Project (Erasmus+ KA2)**

**Ms. Chiara Terraneo from, Project Manager at FederlegnoArredo**, the Italian Federation of Woodworking, Cork, Furniture, Lighting and Furnishing Industries, presented the Erasmus+ funded project **WOODual- Wood sector and Dual Learning for Youth Employment and Skills (2015-2018)**.

The project aimed to proposing an integrate and complete strategy for improving youth employability and a better school-to- work transition. The project builds up a strong and continuative partnership among different stakeholders active in manufacturing and furniture sector and experts in education and training issues in order to update and improve current professional profiles in wood and furniture sector answering to the skills gap.

Ms. Terraneo listed the project's priorities:

- proposing an integrate and complete strategy for improving youth employability;
- realizing a better school-to-work transition;
- fostering the cooperation between industry and training ecosystem;
- improving opportunities and training quality for W&FVET systems.

She also underlined that the project fostered the collaboration between VET institutions and employers in the wood and furniture sector, contributing to adapt curriculum and qualification profiles and proposing a cooperation framework between enterprise/employers and training system.

Ms. Terraneo mentioned the good practice guide for students and stakeholders in the context of the Open education handbook for students, young employed and young workers enrolled in VET programmes.

Finally, she provided an overview of the lessons learnt from the WOODual project and why dual training system is effective:

- enterprises and the training system are jointly responsible for training young people;
- opportunity for company internships strengthens students' interest in the industry;
- International mobility is a level of attractiveness for educational pathways.

## **Conclusions**

Following the presentation of EU funds and best practices at national level on their use, representatives from the EU Social Partners in the construction sector, Ms Christine Le Forestier (FIEC) and Mr. Jonathan Cornah (EFBWW) moved towards the conclusion of the event providing a wrap-up of what was discussed during the day and thanking all the speakers and participants for their input and participation.