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**JOINT DECLARATION**  
**of the European Construction Industry's Social Partners**  
**on**  
**the occasion of the European Health & Safety Summit 2004 in Bilbao**

**EFBWW**

is the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers, representing via its 50 national member trade unions in 17 countries 2.3 million workers from the building and woodworking sector. In its capacity as a European Federation, the EFBWW occupies a key position as observer of the social and economic situation in the construction sector.

**FIEC**

is the European Construction Industry Federation, representing via its 34 national Member Federations in 27 countries (24 EU & EFTA, BG, RO, TR) construction enterprises of all sizes, i.e. small and medium-sized enterprises as well as "global players", performing all kinds of building and civil engineering activities.

**EFBWW and FIEC,**

**recognised by the European Commission as the Social Partners representing the workers and the employers in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in the Construction Industry,**

- **confirming** their Joint Statement issued in Dublin on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004 and
- **considering** that the safety of workers at the workplace
  - constitutes their principal concern with respect to the conditions of employment
  - contributes both to the productivity of workers and to the competitiveness of the sector,
- 1. **re-confirm** their long-standing and on-going determination to contribute to a continuous real improvement of the sector's health and safety records,
- 2. **agree** on the following points :
  - ⇒ **the only acceptable accident figure is "zero"**. Although, realistically seen, this is an unlikely figure to be achieved, it remains a general vision, carried by a "zero tolerance" approach,
  - ⇒ **real progress** is necessary, based on good regulations,
  - ⇒ **prevention is better than reaction**: design, planning, preparation and execution, all have to take H&S into consideration
  - ⇒ changing the attitude of everyone concerned and creating a genuine H&S culture, requires the **integration of H&S into all education and training systems**, as well as regular information campaigns, in order to **increase risk consciousness and awareness**,
  - ⇒ **specific programmes for youngsters** are necessary,
  - ⇒ finally, **real progress** on construction site depends on the **committed collaboration of everyone involved**, everyone in his sphere of influence, from the client to architects, engineers and contractors to the workers most directly/ personally concerned.
- 3. **and, on the basis of their joint working programme, take a firm commitment**
  - ⇒ to undertake all necessary action at the European level, in their Social Dialogue,
  - ⇒ to urge their member organisations to take corresponding action at the national level and
  - ⇒ to use their entire communication network for disseminating H&S information

for EFBWW

**Harrie Bijen**  
Secretary General

Bilbao,  
22<sup>nd</sup> November 2004

for FIEC

**Ulrich Paetzold**  
Director General