

## **YOUNG BUILDERS' NETWORK**

Meeting Minutes: Bulgarian Construction Chamber and ANCE

**October 21<sup>st</sup> 2014**

*Attendees:* Plamen Ivanov – Deputy Chairman of BCC and Vice President of the Steering Committee  
Maria Zheleva - International Relations and Project Management for the BCC  
Mario Presicci – president of the Central and Southern Italian committee for ANCE, in charge of international initiatives  
Angelica Donati – member of the Central and Southern Italian committee for ANCE, in charge of international initiatives  
Giulio Guarracino – ANCE representative in Brussels  
Simone Baldassarri – member of the GD in Brussels and organizer of the Erasmus program for young entrepreneurs

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### **I. Agenda**

The purpose of the meeting was for the members of the BCC and ANCE to meet face to face and discuss potential synergies and the creation of an international network for young entrepreneurs in the construction and real estate business.

### **II. Points of Discussion**

The meeting began with a general introduction by Maria on behalf of the BCC and by Angelica on behalf of ANCE. We discussed our countries and the common issue of generational change within largely family-run businesses, and the need to create a new wave of young entrepreneurs to replace the old.

Simone Baldassarri then joined the meeting to present the Erasmus for young entrepreneurs, an initiative sponsored by the EU and aimed at promoting entrepreneurship across all areas of business including construction.

He highlighted that the EU is moving in two paths to promote entrepreneurship:

1. Education through the introduction of entrepreneurship as a key competence in academic curriculae in all EU states. This involves policy work and the introduction of best practices, but also teacher training and other specific projects
2. Erasmus for young entrepreneurs. It is a mobility program which allows a young entrepreneur (with less than 3 years' entrepreneurial experience, no age limit) to go abroad and be mentored by an established entrepreneur, and perhaps set up a lasting collaboration with them. This program is time flexible, and the young entrepreneur will receive a small stipend for living expenses. There is a platform for matching young and established entrepreneurs, and in the 2014-2020 cycle the aim is to fund 10,000 exchanges

Following the presentation, Maria presented the BCC to ANCE.

The BCC was established in 1991, and has been operating under its current name since 2007. It has been a FIEC member since 2008, has had a FIEC VP since 2012, and applied to the EIC in 2014. It is ISO certified for quality.

The BCC provides industry legislation support (social dialogue, collective agreements, legislation drafting support) as well as direct support to its members (professional qualifications, consultations, industry standards development, transparency initiatives such as the register of builders – similar to the SOA

system in Italy) and networking opportunities. There is a regional network with representation by local entrepreneurs.

The BCC also has a strong network of international relations. Some of its main partners are: ARACO (Romania), JCCA (Jordan), AME (Algeria), FNBTP (Morocco), ACA (Albania)

Maria and Mr. Ivanov then presented the BCC's main projects:

For all members:

- *Product Info X*: an optimization software for the construction industry, to help SMEs comply with EU regulation requirements as well as the national ones
- *Step 4 All*: Management and knowledge support on EU projects, including a who's who, fiches on all the programs and practical guidelines on project management
- *ee-Wise*: a knowledge transfer platform for the retrofitting of existing buildings for energy efficiency

For young people in the industry:

- *I Can Build*: young participants (secondary school age) are educated in construction skills and participate in a nation-wide contest for the best project. This is to spur vocational training in construction skills for adolescents
- *Education for Professionals*: this is an effort by the Chamber to build a qualification system that develops specialists for the construction sector. It will serve to create skills (while the education system creates knowledge) through an accreditation and certification system that will set industry standards. The pilot phase of this program will launch this year

In subsequent discussion, Mario touched upon the topic of energy efficiency and indicated that ANCE can provide support with our companies' best practices in the sector. There is a strong basis for collaboration, as many ANCE members are specialists in retrofitting and how to structure a public-private partnership with the local authority, a builder and an ESCO to create a zero-cost program.

Mr. Ivanov also indicated that another area in which Italian expertise is welcome is restoration, specifically of churches. Italian interiors are also in high demand.

The main takeaways from the meeting were that there are many synergies and areas of mutual interest, as well as opportunities to learn from each other.

Specifically these were:

- Education and exchange
- Energy efficiency
- The creation of a European network for young entrepreneurs

### **III. Next Steps**

Throughout the meeting, the following next steps were evidenced:

1. The BCC does not yet have a young entrepreneurs group, and ANCE can provide support and a statute for its organization
2. ANCE could draw on the BCC's expertise with the Product Info X platform
3. ANCE can share our best practices in terms of retrofitting for energy efficiency
4. ANCE has organized a meeting for all youth groups contacted so far in Rome on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Young contractors or senior contractors who wish to learn more in order to then raise awareness in the BCC are invited to

attend and ANCE will sponsor some or all of their travel and board. Following on from the day's discussion and meetings with other groups, the agenda will be as follows:

- presentations from several groups outlining the activities that they have been undertaking in their respective countries;
  - a series of presentations from European Union experts on the various funding possibilities from the EU for young entrepreneur related initiatives;
  - three round table debates, on thematic areas that have emerged as being significant to all participants (education, social dumping / tender laws, energy efficiency)
5. Maria will reach out to the BCC's international partners inviting them to the Rome meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, namely ARACO (Romania), JCCA (Jordan), AME (Algeria), FNBTP (Morocco), ACA (Albania)
  6. Mr. Ivanov has invited the ANCE representatives to visit the BCC at the end of November, to meet young entrepreneurs from Bulgaria in preparation for the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. ANCE will confirm whether they can attend shortly