



WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL
Europe Regional Network | 

Green Building Councils from 15 different countries across Europe celebrated World Green Building Week together with EU officials from the European Commission and the European Parliament



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As the largest independent international organization influencing the global green building market, [World Green Building Council \(WorldGBC\)](#) is the collective voice of more than 89 countries around the world. Within Europe this includes Green Building Councils (GBCs) from **21 of the 27 European Union member states** representing the interests of **more than 3,500 member companies and organizations** across the breadth of the building and construction industry.

Last week, [WorldGBC Europe Network](#) celebrated the annual [World Green Building Week](#) in Brussels, taking the opportunity to make their first steps into the policy realm of the EU.



With the evolution of EU policies and directives setting sustainability targets related to the built environment, industry led GBCs see a great potential in working with government around this common mission.

WorldGBC Europe Network's Brussels event took place on Wednesday September 21st, with special addresses from the **Commissioner for Environment, Janez Potočnik** and **MEP Silvia Adriana Ticau**, among others. The event brought together representatives from **15 countries across Europe** including; Germany, UK, Romania, Poland, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Norway, Slovakia and the Ukraine.

Paul King, Chair of the WorldGBC Europe Network and CEO of the UK-GBC kicked off the event pointing out the critical importance of the construction sector to the EU, representing more than 10% of EU GDP and being the largest single economic activity and the biggest industrial employer in Europe affecting some 44 million workers directly and indirectly. Accounting for 40-45% of Europe's energy consumption, buildings are critical to tackling global GHG emissions and meeting our European targets for carbon emission reductions.



Mr. King reminded the audience that this week in honour of World Green Building Week over **130 events** were being held by GBCs all around the world with the aim to grow awareness and support policy development that helps to create markets for green buildings in order to **deliver jobs and growth coupled with carbon reductions**.

Darcy Nicolle, Director of Government Affairs Europe at United Technologies Corporation also emphasized the important role that GBCs and the Europe Network play in driving the transformation towards sustainability and why companies such as UTC are proud to be members nationally and partners at the regional level.

In a video address, Commissioner Potočnik announced the Commission's recent adoption of the *Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe* setting targets for 2020 including;



- the renovation and construction of buildings and infrastructure will be made to high resource efficiency levels
- the life cycle approach will be widely applied
- all new buildings will be nearly zero energy and highly material efficient
- policies for renovating existing buildings will be in place so that it is cost effectively refurbished at the rate of 2% per year
- 70% of non hazardous construction and demolition waste will be recycled

The Commissioner invited us to reflect on this challenge and on ways in which we can help to achieve it, stressing the enormous part that green building can play in reaching those targets. Ending his address, the Commissioner emphasized the need for a new growth model and invited the expertise, ideas and experience of the WorldGBC Europe Network to help in meeting set targets and delivering sustainability in the built environment.

During the event we also heard from Lindsey Parnell President and CEO of InterfaceFLOR in Europe, Middle East, Africa and India. Mr. Parnell discussed what sustainability means for his organization whose goal it is to become the

world's first truly sustainable business by 2020. Through their hard work and dedication InterfaceFLOR has evolved from the industry's first carpet tile made from 100% recycled yarn to a recycling system that makes InterfaceFLOR the only carpet tile manufacturer to achieve like-for-like recycling today.



InterfaceFLOR is leading the way for its sector with its recently released Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for carpet tiles, setting a target to having EPDs in place for all of its products globally by 2012 and driving transparency across the industry.



MEP Silvia Adriana Ticau addressed the audience highlighting the importance that recently adopted legislation such as EPBD 2 and new coming initiatives announced in the Roadmap for a Resource Efficient Europe have in influencing the strengthening of the construction standard. Ms. Ticau also stressed the importance of immediate action and the potential that building sector has in the global effort to reduce CO2 emissions and energy consumption. Ms Ticau, a well-known supporter for higher level funding for energy efficiency in buildings, also reminded the audience about the possibility for public authorities to use up to 4% from the European Regional Development Fund. An urgent role for Green Building Councils would be to stress this opportunity to their national and local level public administration. Without having spent the 4% allocation it will be very difficult to negotiate for higher shares of funding for energy efficiency in buildings from 2013 onward.

The evening ended with a networking session between GBC representatives from across Europe and stakeholders closely involved in the EU policy discussions.



By bringing their event to Brussels the Europe Network was able to meet with key EU officials and hear their perspectives on current green building policies. The experience also gave the network a better understanding of the political dynamics in Brussels and how to proceed to become an information channel feeding into the Commission. The Network used these insights to strengthen the strategy of its Policy Taskforce.

Moving forward the Europe Policy Taskforce will further develop their Green Financial Structures report to include more European countries and highlight the most effective and successful initiatives. Addressing EPBD implementation, the Taskforce has recently put together a working group around the definition of

Nearly Zero Energy Buildings and the implementation of the cost optimal methodology. As a third priority the Network has begun collecting feedback on the second National Energy Efficiency Plans, which will be developed into a report in the coming months.

The event made it into press headlines both in Brussels and in countries around Europe:

EU commissioner calls for 'green' buildings:

<http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/eu-commissioner-calls-for-green-buildings/>

Project and change management jobs may follow as EU commissioner stresses importance of green buildings:

<http://insight.badenochandclark.com/project-programme-management/21/09/2011/project-and-change-management-jobs-may-follow-as-eu-commissioner-stresses-importance-of-green-buildings/6349/>

<http://allnews4all.ro/imobiliare/cl%C4%83dirile-verzi-reprezint%C4%83-un-pas-decisiv-pentru-reducerea-emisiilor-de-carbon>

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