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International conference concludes engineers will drive climate resilience

Consulting engineers, policymakers and other experts met in Rome to discuss how to climate proof the built environment in Europe, through a collaborative effort combining targeted policies on one side and the technical design expertise of the sector on the other.

Three panels kicked off with a timely discussion on the reconstruction of Ukraine. This was opened by two officials at the highest level, who are closest to the issue. In a message, Anna Jarosz-Friis, Acting Director of the European Commission's Ukraine Unit in DG NEAR stressed the importance of harnessing the collective expertise and resources of the engineering community to drive the successful reconstruction of Ukraine: "When it comes to the recovery of physical infrastructure, the role of the engineering community will be crucial: be it designing and constructing critical infrastructure objects, shaping urban planning or promoting sustainable practices in the recovery of energy systems." Her message was followed by a contribution via live link from Kyiv. Oleksandra Azarkhina, Deputy Minister for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine highlighted the importance of cooperation and best practice sharing to successfully build back better. She specifically asked international partners for support in implementing independent technical supervision in Ukraine. Both speakers underscored the need for collaboration and emphasised the critical role of engineers. From designing critical infrastructure to shaping urban planning and promoting sustainable energy systems, engineers will be indispensable. The panel then continued the theme, discussing how to provide EU support in the way most likely to achieve the best results and the application of standards, including those in place to meet EU sustainability goals for the built environment. The other panels, which featured experts from the EFCA community as well as public procurement and academia delved into *The Role of Digitalisation in Structural Resilience* and the perspectives and opportunities for consulting engineers arising from the urgent need for greater climate resilience.

Closing the conference, Benoît Clocheret, EFCA President looked ahead to 2024, an election year for the European Parliament. "What the new European Commission and Parliament do in the next political term will have a massive impact on whether consulting engineers are able to accelerate the effort to achieve climate change" he remarked. "EFCA needs more than ever to work in close partnership with the EU institutions, to support the policy agenda and make sure that measures aimed at climate resilient buildings and infrastructure have a sound scientific and technical basis."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

EFCA has member associations in 28 countries and is the sole European federation representing the business interests of professional engineering consultancy and related services, a sector that employs more than one million staff in Europe.

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