

Complementary position on DG Enterprise's "Sustainable Competitiveness of the Construction Sector Questionnaire April 2014"

The Federal Chamber of German Architects is the national organisation of the 16 architects' chambers of the German states, which are the competent authorities for the profession. It represents the interests of more than 125,000 architects, landscape architects, interior designers and urban planners in Germany.

The chambers of architects of the German states' mission is inter alia, to ascertain the interest of the general public in the quality of architects' services and in the public safety of buildings.

Please note: *The questionnaire on "Sustainable Competitiveness of the Construction Sector – April 2014" directly addresses employees. Since the Federal Chamber of German Architects represents the entire profession the questionnaire has been answered in a way that represents the whole profession. The answers are to be seen as statements describing the general state of education and skills within the profession.*

This position paper is provided as a supplementary view, complementing the statements expressed in the questionnaire.

Position:

The European Commission is seeking to gather information on the main potentials related to skills and competences particularly with a focus on those areas that could trigger a greater pace of energy-efficiency renovation and foster the development of sustainable construction.

For construction projects – not only – in the field of energy-efficiency renovation, there is a clear need for interaction between academic and non-academic professions. This interaction is vital for a successful delivery of such projects.

The Federal Chamber of German Architects welcomes any training regime for non-academic professions and in the vocational training sector alike that enhances the skills and holistic understanding of on-site construction workers in order to contribute to a successful delivery of projects in the field of energy-efficiency renovation and sustainability. On the other hand, it is highly questionable if this exercise is necessary for the academic field. Architectural education in Germany is well prepared to suit the named demands as has been expressed in the reply to the questionnaire.

Architects in Germany undergo **intensive forms of higher academic education** to be able to meet the demands of an increasingly complex technical, organizational and judicial system creatively and economically. Architectural qualifications ensure that certified professionals are responsible for public safety and act as the guardians of a robust construction culture that enhances the built environment including all elements of sustainability.

The German system for the education and regulation of the architectural profession in order for architects to **achieve, maintain and upgrade their professional competences** foresees a combination of university education (minimum of 4 years), professional, supervised training (minimum of 2 years) and a system of mandatory continuous professional development (CPD). This enables every architect to acquire specialised knowledge and skills in every desired field of the profession by education and training in the respective sector.



Skills that are acquired this way are attested either already by the architect's degree or later by CPD certificates. This way a customer asking for a certain expertise is able to commission an architect that has the necessary and verifiable skills for them. This is an effective tool to foster consumer protection.

Compulsory continuing professional education for architects in Germany combined with German building laws and regulations as reformed in the last 20 years have for a longer time made knowledge in energy efficiency and sustainability a prerequisite for architects to meet market demand. Privately offered CPD courses and curricula offered by the German states' architects' chambers are continuously monitored and further developed in order to adapt to the needs of the market and to reflect recent developments. Energy efficiency and sustainability is a key playing field for architects and life-long learning thus of major importance. The German market and the architects' chambers of the German states with their CPD programs are well prepared for the educational demands of their members and by that make sure that architects are able to acquire all the needed skills for this market.

Eventually, the Federal Chamber of German architects is highly critical of any dilution of educational standards as maintained in the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC as last amended by Directive 2013/55/EU. Any further amendment to the said directive or within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) by way of the Construction 2020 initiative is not in the interest of the architectural profession.

Federal Chamber of German Architects (Bundesarchitektenkammer e.V. - BAK)
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