

## Topic: Infrastructure Maintenance

### Brief description and main aims:

Since early 2018, FIEC has focused on the crucial issue of the maintenance of transport infrastructure. The economic crisis led to enormous spending cuts although the European post-war infrastructure, especially bridges, is ageing. Indeed, the maintenance backlog, i.e. the amount of maintenance and rehabilitation that should have been completed in order to maintain roads in a good condition but has been deferred, is growing considerably. Yet, delayed maintenance results in wider costs: it impedes mobility in the internal market, increases the risk of accidents and leads to higher CO2 emissions through the transport sector. Furthermore, “savings” from delaying maintenance will be false economies as the infrastructure will degrade to the point where it must be replaced which is costly in comparison to ongoing maintenance. However, maintenance of infrastructure is mostly a Member States’ competency and few is done at national level to remedy the problem.

### Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

Infrastructure maintenance is an important source of income for the sector. Regular maintenance of infrastructure would mean continuous activity for the construction industry. At European level, several legislative files also relate to infrastructure maintenance. Regarding financing, FIEC advocates that part of EU funds that are dedicated to transport infrastructure should also cover the needs for maintenance such as the Connecting Europe Facility or InvestEU. In a similar vein, FIEC urges for a mandatory earmarking principle with regard to the Eurovignette Directive in order to allocate the revenues generated by tolls to sustainable infrastructure. FIEC also called for an ambitious revision of the Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive to better target investment in infrastructure on the basis of safety assessments. Regrettably, the Directives only foresees visual inspections of the surface while structural health is excluded from its scope.

Furthermore, FIEC is looking into the establishment of an informal network of European associations dedicated to the promotion of the topic.

FIEC is also active as regards the safety and maintenance of bridges in particular. The relevance of bridges in the transport network is enormous. Closures due to exceptional maintenance works result in considerable economic, social and environmental consequences. The collapse of the Morandi bridge in Genua in 2018 also illustrated that lives are at stake when bridges are not properly maintained. FIEC promotes the idea of a handbook for bridges that will in the end better identify safety and maintenance needs and thereby targeting investments.

### Actions and key dates:

- 23/04/2018** – FIEC meeting on infrastructure maintenance
- 12/06/2018** – Meeting with DG Move
- 25/09/2018** – Event on infrastructure maintenance within the European Parliament’s intergroup on long-term investment, co-organised by FIEC
- 26/03/2019** – FIEC meeting on infrastructure maintenance
- 29/03/2019** – Meeting with DG Move and DG Grow
- 24/09/2019** – Meeting with DG Move
- 05/11/2019** – Meeting with DG Move and DG Grow
- 18/11/2019** – Meeting with European associations
- 03/2019** – FIEC contributes to European Commission’s Study for the evaluation of the 2011 Transport White Paper
- 06/2020** – Conference on Bridge Safety in Strasbourg