



NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

Brussels, 11 February 2021

The European Council of Engineers Chambers represents over 300.000 European Chartered Engineers (ECEs) that are active in a broad variety of Engineering branches. It fully supports the ambitious approach set out in the European Green Deal and appreciates the New European Bauhaus as a holistic approach regarding a sustainable built environment.

What ECEs do:

The Green Deal aims are very closely related to the everyday work of European Chartered Engineers and environmental impact assessments are a major aspect of their work in all areas of expertise. Therefore, Engineering excellence in all its different forms is and will continue to be an essential factor for the Green Deal's success.

A “green façade” is on itself not a sustainable solution. The green transition process is to a high degree depending on smart engineering solutions as a base for green policy and changes of behaviour. Smart engineering solutions require broad basic scientific research as a profound basis.

Current developments show that basic research without immediate economic gains is more and more reduced in favour of contract research as this is often the only way to generate enough money.

Without underestimating the importance and the benefits of combining economy and research, the ECEC believes that the decrease of profound basic scientific research will hinder the constant development of new excellent engineering solutions in the long run.

The New European Bauhaus approach could and should help to re-enhance and secure broad basic scientific research as a crucial factor of overcoming climate change challenges.

Such research is also the basis for finding a common approach for life-cycle-cost calculations. Circularity is an important aspect of sustainability, a crucial and very complex aspect of green engineering and a key factor for the success of the green transition. The credibility of projects such as the New European Bauhaus considerably depends on their approach to circularity.

Currently, despite of positive approaches such as the “Level(s) – sustainable building framework”, approaches to calculation models of circularity are still so different that there is no common value yet. As long as results can be broadly influenced to suit different needs, the system is not working.



Making the Green Deal a cultural, human centred and positive tangible experience will also depend on good public procurement procedures based not only on price but on quality (MEAT). Thus, also for defining the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) valid and comparable calculation systems are necessary. Profound evaluation of the factors for calculation models can only be done based on basic scientific research. For example, the assessment of sustainability of building materials depending on the surroundings, the re-discovery of the sustainability of “old” materials that are available on site compared to modern plastic materials etc need to be based on scientific research in order to be valid and free of economic interests of the production sector.

So, re-thinking sustainability definitions, organizing existing approaches, making them visible and finding a common basis of calculation will have to be an important focus of the New Bauhaus think-do tank.

Another aspect hindering sustainability that might not be obvious at first sight is the problem of corruption. In the building sector there is a lot of economic interest and often decisions are not taken on the basis of quality and sustainability requirements but only on short-term economic benefits. Such decisions can be caused by corruption or by a lack of expert knowledge and in both cases, they can have disastrous results as regards quality, sustainability and life-cycle-costs of a building but also as regards safety of people (e.g. Grenfell Tower). In this context the role of Chartered Engineers as independent experts representing only the interests of their clients can help avoiding corruption and mistakes and thus enforce quality, sustainability and security of buildings.

The New European Bauhaus think-do tank should also put a focus on raising the awareness of the enormous potential negative impacts of decisions that are only based on short-term economic benefits without regarding quality, sustainability, security and long-term economic impacts.

What ECEs can learn:

Engineering work is a basis for the functioning of all aspects of daily live, yet the awareness of its wide-ranging impacts is very low in society. Raising this awareness in order to boost the uptake of new smart Engineering approaches will be a key issue for the functioning of the green transition but can't be done by ECEs on their own. It will need interdisciplinary new and creative approaches to make smart engineering solutions more visible as a “human centred and positive tangible experience”.

The New European Bauhaus can offer the ground on which such interdisciplinary learning-from-each-other processes can grow. Overcoming still remaining traditional resentments and borders between different professions and disciplines by positive experience will be a gain for all and inspire even better sustainable holistic solutions in projects.



What ECEs can offer:

- The broad concrete experience of over 300.000 European Chartered Engineers working on sustainable solutions in all fields of life on a daily basis that can flow into the New Bauhaus platforms, labs and networks and into supporting the realisation of the concrete New Bauhaus projects
- The openness to try new approaches, to get new inputs from other disciplines
- The willingness to get into dialogue with people across Europe in order to contribute to making green engineering a positive and exiting experience
- The broad ECEC network of professional engineering organisations, universities and other engineering stakeholders for dissemination and dialogue
- The European Engineers` Day – a regular European Engineering event organised with other European Engineering Organisations – as an event to discuss and disseminate projects and results of the New European Bauhaus

The ECEC would like to express once again its full support for the New European Bauhaus and its approach and believes that its success is very important for the “image” of green transition. As there are so many eyes, hopes and expectations fixed on it, the ECEC would like to stress that especially the successful realization of the best practise pilot projects will be very important and a huge challenge requiring very diligent procedures and professional implementation as any failures in this could considerably damage the enthusiasm of stakeholders and citizens.

The ECEC is looking forward to a fruitful cooperation and to many new findings, experiences, discoveries and insights!