

## **EUROFER construction Seminar: Very positive feedback from participants**

On 8 December 2011, EUROFER organised in Centre Diamant in Brussels a half-day seminar on the construction sector.

Participants from EUROFER's membership, other steel companies and the distribution chain, European associations and the steel press attended the seminar.

Following an introduction by Gordon Moffat, EUROFER's general director, an array of distinguished speakers highlighted from different angles the threats and opportunities, risks and challenges the construction market is currently facing.

The first speaker, Oebele Vries, vice-director of the Economic Institute for Construction and Housing, presented the overall outlook for the construction sector to 2014.

The next speaker was Christine Le Forestier. She works at the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and is in charge of economic and legal affairs.

In her presentation she addressed the risks and opportunities for the construction sector in Europe related to the need to improve its sustainable competitiveness and revive growth against the background of weak economic growth prospects and more difficult public and private funding for construction projects.

Colin Hautz, who is in charge of harmonising marketing efforts across the ArcelorMittal group, in particular for the groups' activities related to the construction sector, focused in his presentation on the mega trends in construction and how ArcelorMittal is dealing with the challenges and opportunities they represent for steel suppliers by offering innovative solutions to safeguard the future of steel in construction.

Bauke Hoekstra Bonnema was the next speaker. He works at Tata Steel as general manager of the Steel Construction Centre. His presentation highlighted the issue of sustainability in construction and how Tata is using the specific characteristics of steel to fulfil requirements in the field of sustainability.

The last speaker of the seminar was Eduardo Limbert, project manager of EUROFER's Sustainability for Steel Construction Products Committee. He discussed the **SustSteel®** mark, its overall framework, prospects and communication and marketing.

**All presentations have been made available on the EUROFER website.**

### **Some key take-aways:**

- A recovery in activity is not foreseen before 2013
- New construction is declining more rapidly than renovation & modernisation
- Dampening effect of public investments has disappeared
- Largest downward revision for civil engineering
- Double whammy for steel consumption because of relatively strongest growth in non-steel-intensive renovation and modernisation sector and a decline in non-residential and civil engineering activity
- Construction sector and material suppliers such as the steel industry have to adapt to and foresee changing markets conditions
- The bottom line is all about managing risks and opportunities, which are largely related to the sustainability issue
- For steel companies: innovation and value creation for the construction sector are key
- Innovative solutions show that steel is strongly positioned to be the material of choice for a sustainable future
- The **SustSteel®** mark could fulfil an important role in realising that goal