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Shaping the built environment: sector leaders deliver Joint Declaration in Luxembourg

Luxembourg – Leading voices from the European built environment design community came together today for the joint conference *“Architects + Engineers: Partnership for Resilient Design”*, co-organised by the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA), the Architects’ Council of Europe (ACE), the European Council of Engineers Chambers (ECEC) and the Order of Architects and Consulting Engineers in Luxembourg (OAI). The event brought together key players from the industry to explore how resilience, quality, and innovation can be advanced through collaboration — from planning to procurement.

Four expert panels addressed urgent challenges in the construction and design sectors, including the impact of climate change and digitalisation, and the need to reform procurement practice. The sessions underlined that resilience must be embedded from the earliest stages of planning, through partnership between architects, engineers and clients. Speakers called for proactive scenario planning to address emerging risks such as cyber threats and environmental extremes.

Digital transformation was also a key focus. While Building Information Modelling (BIM), AI, and IoT tools are already in use, participants stressed the need for clients to accept these in public contracts. Collaboration, as was emphasised during the conference, is both a mindset and a technical challenge requiring better standards and shared digital environments.

The conference concluded with the presentation of the **Luxembourg Declaration** — a joint statement by OAI, ACE, EFCA and ECEC — calling on the European Commission to fundamentally revise the EU Public Procurement Directive. The Declaration outlines four key pillars:

1. Strengthen the internal market with overarching public procurement rules beyond lowest price;
2. Better recognition of the specific nature of intellectual services;
3. Ensure quality and innovation oriented procurement procedures;
4. Improve access to procurement for SMEs and new entrants.

With the New European Bauhaus as a backdrop, the Luxembourg Declaration sets a clear benchmark: resilient, high-quality design requires strong collaboration, enabling regulation, and a procurement system that values long-term social and environmental outcomes over short-term cost.

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EDITOR’S NOTE

EFCA has member associations in 26 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.