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European consulting engineering market: new growth seen, indicating post-crisis optimism

The latest *Industry Barometer* from the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA) shows the 12 months of the coronavirus pandemic has impacted hiring policies, order stock, turnover and profitability alike. However, as a sign of the “return to normal”, the currently largest challenge for the consultancy and engineering industry in Europe is staff shortage.

Henrik, Garver, CEO of the Danish Association of Consulting Engineers and Chair of EFCA’s Industry Barometer task force commented the release of the latest EFCA Industry Barometer, which shows biannual trends and expectations amongst European consulting engineers.

“The COVID-19-crisis is reducing its grip on the consultancy and engineering industry in Europe. Markets bounced back by 13.3 index points and order stocks per full time employee are up by 2.4 months compared to spring 2020.” says Mr Garver.

However, the underlying indicators continue to provide reasons for concern. Order stock is still below the level from pre-covid-years, employment has recovered slightly, but the EFCA employment index remains close to a historically low level. The average turnover per employee is currently at €99,371.

Mr Garver added “Lack of projects is still a high concern of EFCA Members. But as an indicator of a more normal situation, staff shortage is the most salient concern. Low fees, digitalisation and “red tape” have also gained in importance. Profitability for 2020 is expected to decline, compared to the average 5.4 percent in 2019.

The COVID-19 crisis affects all countries in the EU, and it calls for both national economic policy responses and European support measures. EFCA therefore demand a fast European approval of the national recovery and resilience plans and the completion of the ratification process for implementing the Recovery and Resilience Facility.”

EDITOR’S NOTE

The EFCA Barometer (spring 2021) is available from the website: www.efcanet.org.

EFCA has member associations in 29 countries, and is the sole European federation representing the business interests of professional engineering consultancy and related services, a sector that employs around one million staff in Europe.

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