



Minutes of the EFFC AGM
held on Friday 18th October 2019 at Tango Room,
Hilton Vienna Plaza, Vienna, Austria

President: Andreas Körbler Austria
Immediate Past President: José Candela Spain

Officers:

Hans Bliss Germany
Boris Von Luebtow Germany
Fabrizio Leoni Italy
Bob Thompson UK

Working Group Chairs:

Lorenzo Alessi (Health & Safety) France
Federico Trevisani (Contracts) Italy
Chris Harnan (Sustainability) UK
David Hard (Technical) UK

Members:

Peter Ausslechner Austria
Wolfgang Hornich Austria
Thomas Pirkner Austria
Martin Sonnberger Austria
Maurice Bottiau Belgium
Jindrich Ricicia Czech Republic
Michel Coudry France
Tamas Kaltenbacher Hungary
Jaap Estie Netherlands
Peter Vroom Netherlands
Przemyslaw Nowak Poland
Wojciech Szwejkowski Poland
Carlos Vazquez Romania
Steve Hadley UK

Associate Members:

Jacek Kawalec Tensar Poland
Steve Arnold Optimise UK
Philip Wright Optimise UK
Briand Beausoleil Optimise UK

In attendance:

Eva Maria Braun Austria
Ciaran Jennings EFFC Secretariat
Aimee McDermott EFFC Secretariat
Siegfried Nagelsdiek Germany
John Clement Netherlands



Minutes		
1.	<p>Welcome & Legal Compliance statement</p> <p>Andreas Körbler advised that the EFFC are looking to engage the national federations and the working groups during the AGM. He noted that each working group would be presenting during the meeting, as well as two national federations and two associate members.</p> <p>Andreas also added that Chris Harnan had spoken to Jim de Waele and Peter Faust the previous evening and that they had agreed to making the Working Platforms document a joint paper between the DFI and EFFC. Chris Harnan noted that the DFI would like to suggest some additions, which he has given them two weeks to produce. Chris also noted that they would like the guide to be graphically designed which would cost approx. €1,000, of which the EFFC would pay half. It was agreed that this should be done. Chris advised that Jim and Peter will set up a small group to come up with an agreed document for publication.</p> <p>A legal compliance statement was made; the purpose of the meeting is to discuss collaboration to address industry issues and not to in any way engage in fixing of markets or project pricing.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Dejan Lukic (Switzerland), Frank Haehnig (Germany), Peter de Kort, Peter Arz, Serge Borel (France), Stig Weis (Denmark), Rasin Duzceer (Turkey), Hartmut Hangen (Germany) and Wim Claesen (Belgium).</p>	
Work of the Federation		
3.	<p style="text-align: center;">- Reports of the Working Groups</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a. Technical Working Group</p> <p>David Hard reported on the Technical Working group. He advised that the group had not formally met since May, however they have had members working remotely on different topics. He also noted that they have presence on quite a few Eurocode committees which they overlap in, so often see each other throughout the year.</p> <p>David advised that there is not yet a link between the Technical Working Group and FIEC; he asked Ciaran Jennings to provide a contact at FIEC for the group to discuss this with.</p> <p>David reported that in regard to Eurocodes and execution standards, Eurocode 7 is being re-written and will not be formally published until 2022/23. He advised that a formal version for comment will come out in the next month. David noted that a lot of comments came in on Eurocodes, with over 1000 on the first of fourteen sections. He noted that there are different views in each country but they ultimately need an agreement for the code to be published.</p> <p>David advised that for TC288 there are several Technical WG members on the team so the EFFC have a lot of input there. He noted that there are currently fourteen standards relating to specialist geotechnical work that are either published, under review or in draft. There is a draft execution standard for sheet-piles currently under review, as well as a new execution standard for ground freezing being drafted. David noted that at the last TC288 meeting it was decided not to revise the standard on ground anchors. He added that in 2020 there are several standards due to be assessed for revision including bored piles, diaphragm walls, displacement piling and soil nailing. David also added that the group are looking at whether these can be approved then re-opened in 2 years, rather than the usual 5 under CEN rules.</p>	Secretary



David explained that in regard to EFFC documents the group have started writing guidance on water-tightness of retaining walls. He noted that chapters on diaphragm walls are awaiting approval from the Executive committee and that working groups have been formed for the next sections on secant walls and sheet-piles. The aim is for these to be ready for approval at the next Technical WG meeting in 2020.

David explained that the group are still looking at EN206 Appendix D and the changes needed to bring this in line with the Tremie guide; they are currently collating information from the national bodies.

David noted that the Technical WG are still open to suggestions from members on future topics. He advised they have had a few suggestions such as self-drilled hollow bar anchors, corrosion of soil nails (which may be more suited to Eurocodes), and testing methods for checking the base of bored piles. Chris Harnan noted that a big part of the Support Fluids R&D project is testing methods for checking the base of bored piles.

David noted that the next Technical WG meeting will be taking place on 14th and 15th May 2020 in Italy, exact location tbc. He added that the group will continue to work remotely during this period.

b. Contracts Working Group

Federico Trevisani reported that it has been a difficult year for the Contracts WG. He noted that the group has had particularly low attendance this year and that the decision to change the format of the group has been made.

Federico advised that the group have made some improvement with the Special Conditions, with new translations uploaded to the website. He noted that there have been some slight revisions to the risk register guidelines on the basis of the latest DFI-EFFC meeting.

Federico explained that retention had been another topic of interest for the group. They had carried out a retention survey which found the average value of retention is between 5-10% and that there is no uniformity of release around Europe, ranging from 2 months up to 5 years. A few cases show there is no cash retention but a bond retention instead.

Federico advised that other topics under discussion within the group include back to back contracts and ECI collaboration. Federico noted the group also want to have more involvement in FIEC and have joined Construction 4.0, Public Procurement and EU Contract Law working groups. There was also some suggestion from the Dutch federation to condense the EFFC uncapped liabilities, soil/underground risks and retention documents into one, which they Contracts WG are going to form a task group to deal with.

The Contracts WG are also planning to have round table discussion on the standard contract conditions applied in each country, with each member having the chance to present on their local condition and the basic contractual framework in their respective internal industry.

Federico explained that the group have a lot of topics to look at, however the attendance at meetings has been particularly low. He advised that in 2020 the group would reduce to having 2 meetings, one in January and one in July, and will then create task groups to meet up separately and make progress on individual topics.

c. Sustainability Working Group



Chris Harnan reported on the Sustainability Working Group. He noted he had been unable to attend the previous meeting but had been updated by Ciaran Jennings. Chris explained that the group has a very active membership which works really well.

Chris advised that the group have come up with their aim; 'to shape the transformation of the European foundation sector to become sustainable by providing insight, tools and recommendations to contractors and engaging stakeholders at European level'. There was some discussion about the aim as some felt it should be more specific to members. Overall there was agreement with the mission statement.

Chris explained that two big issues the industry will soon be facing are zero carbon economies and digitisation. Chris advised that the EU are considering adding construction to the Emissions Trading System and that FIEC are trying to prevent this, however many think it needs to happen. There is also going to be a 2030 Carbon Tax which will impact what happens in the future. Digitisation and the drive for smart cities will also impact resource use which the industry will have to take on board.

Chris advised that Sue Arundale from FIEC had attended the last Sustainability WG meeting and had reported that sustainability is now becoming a larger priority for FIEC. Chris noted that the EFFC has sway within FIEC and this is a good opportunity to shape their agenda.

Chris noted that the critical issues for the Sustainability WG are looking at zero carbon materials and zero carbon machinery. This will be a challenge as concrete produces such large amounts of carbon, however the group are looking into alternatives which will take some research to assess the suitability. Electrification of plant is another area that needs focus.

Chris advised that the Sustainability WG have come up with a guide to sustainability which will be published on the website. The group are currently working on a roadmap of sustainability and want to establish the priorities and a programme of activity. Chris asked that if members have any information on low carbon concrete that they let the group know.

d. Health & Safety Working Group

Lorenzo Alessi reported on the Health and Safety working group. He advised that the group had redefined their aims in March and want the group to become more practical and improve visibility among members and stakeholders as well as contributing to cultural change within the industry. The group are looking to promote the "managed safely" approach and want to get away from the ruled approach, focusing on how people can be smart and have a proactive approach.

Lorenzo advised that the group have run three sessions of the EFFC Incident Investigation Training. The idea of this session is to improve the skills of members in incident investigation processes so they can improve and learn from accidents and ensure they do not happen again. The training involves learning how to gather evidence when an accident occurs, interview witnesses, root cause analysis process and how to write a proposal for corrective actions. There is also a focus on high potential events as well as actual accidents. Lorenzo added that some of the HSWG members have been trained to train, so can carry out the sessions in their own national federations and reach out to smaller companies and members who do not have these resources themselves. Steve Hadley enquired whether this training could be carried out by webinar, however Lorenzo advised that the session is very interactive and therefore would not be suitable for this.



Lorenzo also explained that the working group have decided to create an EFFC H&S Expert Guidance document looking at a selection of topics per year to then create EFFC Best Practice documents. This year the group looked at Lifting Operations and Cranes and are working on a guideline with a visual procedure on crane boom assembly/disassembly.

Lorenzo advised that the group also want to improve visibility and have realised that safety needs to be discussed more. They are looking to organise some seminars and lectures to reach out to university students and main contractors and clients to change safety culture and promote EFFC practices. They are looking to make a short seminar presentation with videos, pictures and Q&A which can then be used for promotion and education purposes. The group have already had discussion with two universities in France who would be interested in the seminars.

Lorenzo added that the group have created a SharePoint where they can share their documents internally and that they hope to make this available to the public in the future.

Lorenzo asked if it would be possible to get a small amount of the budget for the group to use on graphics for their best practice documents. Ciaran Jennings advised that this would be looked in to.

e. Support Fluids Task Group

Chris Harnan reported on the Support Fluids guide. He advised that edition 1 was published in April and urged members to read it. Chris noted that a huge amount of work had gone into the document and that the group are very knowledgeable and a good blend of majority contractors and other shareholders in the process.

Chris explained that the next stage is the Field Research Study (FRS) which will be taking place over the next 2 years. The study has four principle areas: a) acquire field data on support fluids using standard and non-standard tests, b) monitoring the support fluid during excavation c) base cleanliness and d) interface layer.

Chris advised that the group were also going to collect site data from contractors, however the analysis for this was becoming quite expensive so this has now been put on hold with the main focus on the FRS. This will then also be linked with academics working on support fluids.

Chris advised that the guide has 41 sponsors with a mix of financial and FPC equipment.

Chris explained the status of the FRS. A prototype trial in California has taken place to test out all the equipment, with aim to start site testing in December. Chris advised that from the prototype test they had found that 3 days is an achievable time limit to do 95% of the testing. They had confirmed the 3 part heavy sampler as reference sampler for fluid and interface layer. The DID works well for base cleanliness test and the Vane Shear test looks very promising.

Chris ran through the types of tool being used to test the fluids. Please see presentation [here](#) for more details.

The budget is aiming to have €247,500, however the first edition ran over by €7,000 mainly due to the prototype visit to the US. All costs are monitored and approved by the Budget Oversight Committee.

Chris advised that members could help in this process by providing sites for testing, either bentonite or polymer, over the next 18 months. He noted that the



disruption to site is not huge and that there will probably be approx. half a day's disruption over the three days. He asked that anyone with any sites in mind let him know.

f. EFFC Rig Operator License

John Clements of DNV presented on the Personnel Certification and how it is controlled in the Netherlands. John explained that the Netherlands had faced the issue of certification and that DNV had been approached by the government 5 years ago to address the topic. John noted that all high risk jobs in the Netherlands are guarded by a certifying process.

John explained that there are several factors which their system is based on including trust that drivers are competent as well as that they have been tested correctly and are re-tested every few years to ensure on-going competence. John noted that they go to sites to audit this and have spot checks for driver competency.

Please see the DNV presentation [here](#) for more information.

Martin Sonnberger presented on the EFFC Rig Operators License. He noted that the group have bought together the different standards in Europe and have found a summary of the different documents which a task group are focusing on.

Martin explained the group have created a question paper, a knock-out criteria and a theory test of 290 questions and practical assessment. He noted that the exam is flexible and can be carried out onsite or in a test centre. Examiners can choose the questions they want to ask from the 290 and the practical exam has clear different stages.

Martin explained that now the EFFC need to make some clear decisions. He asked who the owner of the document will be; it was recommended by the task group that the EFFC owns it under the head quarters of FIEC. There is also the question of who will carry out revisions to the document, with the task force recommending this be done by them under the directive of the Health and Safety WG. It was suggested that translations of the document are carried out by members.

Martin then explained that the next steps will be to train the trainers who will be a selection from the task force, volunteers, and national trainers/ experts from training centres.

It will also need to be decided who will implement this. There was some discussion about who would take this role on. It was decided that the national federations need to be consulted on this and they can then assess the situation in their countries and make a decision as to who to approach. It was noted that it would be worth approaching the testing centres in each country to see if they can align with the EFFC. It was also noted that countries will keep their own training systems and that the EFFC just want to set the minimum standard requirements for drivers operating at European level.

Lorenzo Alessi added that the next step is to get the European Commission on-board as they will be necessary to enforce this.

Martin also stressed there are a number of questions and issues that need to be resolved

- Who owns the documents of the EFFC – should these be handed to FIEC for ownership for example?
- How do we progressively add machines
- Who should revise the documents and standards on an annual basis?
- Need for translations of the documents.



	<p>Hans Bliss suggested that the leaders of the task group and a few of the Officers, as well as the President, meet to set out a roadmap for the license and receive answers in a foreseeable time frame. It was noted that Andreas Körbler, Fabrizio Leoni, Jaap Estie, Martin Sonnberger, Hans Bliss and the Secretary would meet to discuss this.</p> <p>On the subject of health and safety generally, Martin Sonnberger took the opportunity to raise two further issues:</p> <p>Digitisation of machinery manuals – FIEC are looking at how manufacturers can make their manuals far more useful to the industry as they are currently too big to be consulted when needed by machine fitters.</p> <p>Silicon dust – in 2020 there shall be a new European Commission project looking at silicon dust and how to manage it on site. There is a call for experts to participate. This should be notified to Members.</p>	
Work of the Members		
6.	<p>a) FPS (UK) – Harm reduction & Occupational health</p> <p>Steve Hadley from the FPS presented on harm reduction and occupational health initiatives currently underway in the UK. Steve explained that the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) in the UK is very powerful and that company directors can be directly prosecuted, including prison sentences, as a result of workplace incidents. Steve added that heavy fines can be imposed on companies even on the potential of an accident to cause harm. The law expects companies to protect their employees, even if an employee is directly at fault. Steve noted that the level of fine are causing some issues; FPS members have always been very open about their accidents as a source of learning, however there is now reluctance to share details as legal advice state details should be kept quiet until after HSE investigation. Steve explained that the FPS is intending to lobby the HSE in regards to this, as it prevents knowledge about accidents being shared, which in turn prevents the same accidents happening again.</p> <p>Steve advised that the FPS collects data about all their accidents and share insights every quarter. They have found that approx. 33% of incidents were related to hands and feet during manual handling operations. As a result of this finding, the FPS are focusing on harm reduction initiatives, including the automation of manual handling procedures. Members have signed up to automate manual handling wherever practicable and they want to identify the problems and work with industry partners to solve them.</p> <p>Another area of focus for the FPS is addressing the reinforcement supply. They are producing a guidance document on how cages should be supplied and have created an audited supplier standard for all associate member reinforcement suppliers to join a list of “recommended suppliers”.</p> <p>The final current area of focus is on exclusion zones. Steve explained that there are still people onsite who do not respect the correct working zones. The FPS is aiming to improve understanding by creating a document with clear graphics of restricted working ones for use by those on site. This is likely to be ready for publication early 2020.</p> <p>Steve advised that Occupational Health is another big area of focus for the FPS. He noted that it is not just onsite incidents that can cause fatalities but also things like asbestosis and silicosis, with the biggest killer of men under 40 being suicide which is a big problem in the construction industry. Steve noted that working hours and location need to be addressed.</p>	



Steve explained that the FPS have created an Occupational Health Charter to address this, as they want to build a culture of health and wellbeing which will really change people's quality of life. He noted that it is very hard to achieve gender balance in the industry when primary care givers cannot work onsite, so things like flexible working conditions are of interest whilst also avoiding zero hour contracts. Steve explained the FPS have set minimum standards for health surveillance to be audited against.

The FPS are also doing some research into fatigue and working hours. They have acknowledged that the longer people work, the more tired they are which can lead to increased accidents. Fatigue science can be used to improve production and monitor health. With this research, the FPS will look at different techniques to see when high risk situations occur. Bob Thompson added that it's not just about working hours but also helps individuals to look at how their lifestyle can impact their sleep and ability to concentrate.

There was some discussion about how mobile phones can cause issues onsite, particularly when they are being used in unsafe areas.

b) NVAF (Netherlands) – TBC- see presentation.

Jaap Estiè presented on the NVAF in the Netherlands. He advised that the federation now have 90 members, with 73 foundation companies and 17 associate members. He noted that associate members are only admitted if they have an additional value to the industry. Jaap explained the structure of the NVAF and how it is similar to the EFFC in terms of the working groups.

Jaap explained that the health and safety group are also finding safe zones and issue, particularly in public environments. NVAF also have an education and training group which is looking to develop and renew the current training courses available. They also have two technical working groups, one looking at machines and one looking at standards. Their contracts working group, led by Peter Vroom, are discussing the general terms and are checking the members' insurance policy. Jaap explained that working on barges comes under maritime law rather than land law which not a lot of people know.

Jaap also explained that the NVAF have a working group on public relations and several contact groups which meet 2 to 3 times a year to share knowledge and documents as well as doing testing together.

Jaap also noted that NVAF are running events for young professionals approx. 3-4 times a year. Ciaran Jennings advised that this is also something the FPS are focusing on and that it could be translated across to the EFFC.

Please see NVAF presentation [here](#) for more information.

c) HDB (Germany) – BIM in ground engineering- Siegrid Nagelsdiek- see presentation.

Siegrid Nagelsdiek presened on the BIM in Ground Engineering position paper created by the German Construction Industry Federation in conjunction with the Federal Department of Ground Engineering.

Siegrid explained that he is a part of the BIM working group in Germany and they have devised a BIM position paper for digitisation of the industry. He noted that for successful introduction of BIM, members need to be clear on what they want from it.



	<p>The position paper was first released in December 2017 with a target to define the requirements for other construction participants involved in the BIM process and to describe which data must be supplied when and by whom. The main chapters of the paper describe BIM use, subsoil mode, requirements for model content, quality assurance and the classification system. Siegrid explained that the technical position paper describes BIM use cases from the point of view of executing ground engineering contractors and describes various subject specific models of ground engineering.</p> <p>Please see the presentation here for more information.</p> <p>d) Polish Federation Question</p> <p>Przemyslaw Nowak asked the Members about the situation in their countries in relation to ground risk and commercial pressures. He explained that in Poland that contracts are either build to the provided design and price accordingly, or they are design and build. However, in both cases he was seeing more technical problems resulting from commercial pressures meaning designs were causing issues. He asked what control measures others had and noted there was a lack of consultants in Poland to aid the control of quality. Maurice Bottiau explained that in Belgium there were control bureaus that seek to ensure there are not quality and safety issues. Bob Thompson commented that in the UK they protect themselves by taking on element design only and not having responsibility for the whole scheme.</p> <p>Hans Bliss commented that the job of foundation contractors is to provide competence, however the problem comes if they are taking responsibility for the ground risk. His view was that this should not sit with the contractor.</p>	
Presentations from Associate Members		
8.	<p>a. Optimise – A Dummy’s Guide to Going Digital- Digital Transformation: Threats & Opportunities</p> <p>Steve Arnold presented on behalf of Optimise about the threats and opportunities of digital transformations. Steve noted that the construction sector is beginning to digitise and that what can be done with data is incredibly powerful. He noted that Members will need to act fast in owning the digital space as technology companies are now using artificial intelligence and their capital to test out the construction industry, meaning barriers to entry are starting to come down. However, these technology companies do not have the data that those already in construction have which is vital for the AI algorithms. Steve emphasised that members industry data is valuable and that they should capture it, own it and use it.</p> <p>Steve advised that Europe has over 6 million IT developers and that Europe needs to step up and get more involved with data or will be last in the race behind China and the US. Steve noted that many of the day’s presentations had mentioned data and that now is an important time to start harnessing the data available and collaborating within the EFFC to build a strong community.</p> <p>Steve noted that if any members needed further dialogue on this then Optimise would be happy to help facilitate this.</p> <p>b. Tensar – the company you can build your safe working platform with (and reduce the risk that something goes wrong)</p>	



	<p>Jacek Kawalec presented on Tensar and building safe working platforms. He advised that Tensar is a geosynthetics company with a global footprint and that geosynthetics is one of the most developing products in the construction industry.</p> <p>Jacek explained that there is not much education about geosynthetics within the industry which could be improved. He also noted that platforms should be safe, built quickly and easily and must be cheap. He advised that Tensar specialise in geo-grids and that geosynthetics are completely different to reinforcement.</p> <p>There was some discussion about geosynthetics and there use within works.</p>	
9.	AOB	
10.	Date and Place of Next Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April – Stockholm- April 22/23rd TBC• October – Budapest – October TBC	