

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORKFORCE

### Contribution to Industry 5.0 and EU Skills Agenda

Brussels, 02/10/2023 –

The cement industry in the European Union adds EUR 15bn to the European economy and directly employs 39,000 people. The industry's end-product, concrete, serves the larger construction ecosystem which represents 10% of Europe's GDP.

As an energy-intensive industry, the cement sector has taken up its responsibility in driving down CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality over the cement-concrete value chain by 2050. The levers for getting to carbon neutrality are laid down in the CEMBUREAU Roadmap. As part of its carbon neutrality ambition, the cement and concrete industry contributes to a sustainable built environment by bringing low carbon products to the market and fostering a circular economy approach throughout its activities.

Innovative technologies and changing business models also require a strong focus on the social aspect of the sustainability agenda. The cement industry is eager to contribute to the 5.0 industry initiative that reaches beyond the optimisation of single businesses and looks at actions that are needed at value chain and ecosystem level for the benefit of society at large.

The ongoing transformation of the industry to respond into the climate change, biodiversity, and growing resource scarcity challenges of today requires a reskilling and upskilling of the cement industry's workforce.

#### **a. Profiles needed**

Cement companies are currently in the process of defining the exact profiles they will need for this transformation but it is already clear now that knowledge about **sustainability requirements** will figure in job descriptions for all functions throughout the industry. With 42% of the cement industry's emission reductions coming from carbon capture and storage/use, an increased substitution of fossil fuels as energy input by alternative fuels using a variety of waste streams and the focus on a circular value chain in a life cycle approach to the built environment, specific skills will be needed in each of these areas.

In addition to sustainability, **digital expertise** will be another transversal skillset required. It is to be noted in this regard that a digital skillset goes beyond the digitalisation of processes and the value chain. Data are increasingly becoming a key raw material to our industry and this results in a strong need for **data analytics** profiles. Within that same context, there is a need for further reflection on the way in which **artificial intelligence** can be integrated in job descriptions, including roles in public affairs, communications, and HR.

While some functions may be plant-specific, there will also be a strong need for these profiles at regional and global level and in corporate functions as companies set out and execute their sustainability strategies. Besides, the sector shall keep its attributes to create jobs and social local inclusiveness.

## ***b. Education and training***

A matching between the content of curricula and qualification (VET) at universities and professional schools with the new profiles in demand is essential. At this point in time, there is often a lack of connection between the educational system and the skill needs on the factory floor. Cement companies are engaging with academia for curricula to become more pragmatic, practical, and efficient. **Apprenticeships** can be a useful complement to the education system but should not be a replacement for skills not taught during the academic education.

Therefore, in the context of the European year of skills, the cement industry urges the European Commission to foster a stronger cooperation between academia and industry and to assist in making curricula and qualification fit better the development of future skills in the context of both the digital and decarbonisation transitions.

From an organizational perspective, the design of curricula allowing for 2-3 days per week courses on campus combined with the remaining days spent in a company apprentice could be of significant added value. Such **practical education programmes** already exist in Germany and similar initiatives are on the way in Ireland. In Cyprus, there is a 2-year “industrial technician” education program along those lines.

## ***c. Access to skills / shortages***

Beyond the needs triggered by the green and digital transformation, the demographic evolution already results in an overall **shortage of a variety of profiles** including drivers, technicians, electricians, and mechanical workers.

An additional factor that deserves attention in the recruitment process, is the **language skills**. Plus, adequate transport infrastructures to access workplace would support mobility. Those are not only important for an increased geographic mobility of workers but are essential for access to further knowledge and training.

In that respect, CEMBUREAU is already working with Social Partners and Trade Union EFBWW to map together scenarios of future skills’ needs till 2050, starting via an EU co-funded project in 2023-2025.

CEMBUREAU and its Members, including HR experts from companies, are ready to interact with the European institutions and to contribute to the Skills Agenda and the reflection on Industry 5.0.

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