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GF: New smart air valve combines reliability & hygiene in drinking water networks

At IFAT 2026 in Munich, Georg Fischer unveiled the new VAG DUOJET® @ON Smart Air Valve, the first solution to combine automated hygienic flushing and intelligent network monitoring in a single valve. It addresses two key challenges for water utilities: maintaining drinking water quality and improving operational reliability.

+GF+ KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The system automatically flushes stagnation-prone sections of the network at configurable intervals, helping utilities maintain drinking water quality and comply with hygiene standards while significantly reducing manual maintenance efforts and operating costs.

In addition to its integrated flushing function, the valve combines three key functions in a single high-performance unit: air intake during draining, air release during filling, and continuous air release during operation. It ensures reliable and efficient removal of both large and small volumes of air, even at very high air velocities.

Integrated sensors continuously monitor pressure conditions and valve status, providing operators with real-time alerts and valuable insights into network performance. This enables early detection of issues such as pressure anomalies, unauthorized access, or potential pipe failures.

With encrypted one-way communication, high IT security, and maintenance intervals of at least three years, the VAG DUOJET® @ON supports more reliable, efficient, and sustainable drinking water network operations while paving the way for condition-based maintenance and advanced network analytics.



Illustration of a VAG DUOJET® @ON Smart Air valve ©VAG

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HIX Publishing, Dipl.-Ing. Jutta Hix, 58332 Schwelm /Germany, Tel. +49 (0)2336 / 40 66 42, www.kwd-globalpipe.de. **Subscription rates:** 40 issues per year EUR 250,00 (Germany: + VAT). Subscription will be renewed automatically for a further year unless cancelled in writing 8 weeks before expiry date. Up to 5 persons of the ordering company can receive KWD-globalpipe. © **KWD-globalpipe**. All rights reserved. **Editor in Chief:** Dipl.-Ing. Jutta Hix, **Assistant Editors:** Michaela Hamich-Helbrecht, Achim Seydel.

To learn more about the **VAG DUOJET® @ON Smart Air Valve** and how it can enhance hygiene safety and operational efficiency in your network, visit <https://www.vag-group.com/en/>.



Contact: Georg Fischer AG, Switzerland, www.georgfischer.com / [Full press release](#)
VAG-Group (VAG – a GF brand), Germany, www.vag-group.com

BRUGG Pipes: Certified gas-tightness for FLEXSTAR heat pump pipe

With FLEXSTAR, BRUGG Pipes offers the first and only pre-insulated PEX pipe system with certified gas-tightness according to FHRK GE 101 (quality level D01).

BRUGG Pipes KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026.
The independent system test was carried out by iro GmbH Oldenburg and confirms gas-tightness against positive internal air pressure.

The tested variants include FLEXSTAR DUO 32+32/105 with EPDM end cap as well as with DHEC shrink end cap – each in combination with defined accessories.

Especially for building entries of heat pump systems, gas-tight execution plays an important role for system safety. It supports compliant planning and installation of heat pump systems with regard to applicable building and safety requirements as well as regulations concerning refrigerant systems.



FLEXSTAR, first and only pre-insulated PEX pipe system with gas-tightness certification
© BRUGG Pipes

A [tested gas-tight pipe system](#) solution can help prevent the ingress of leaking refrigerant into buildings and thus increases overall system safety.

Contact: BRUGG Pipes, Switzerland, www.bruggpipes.com

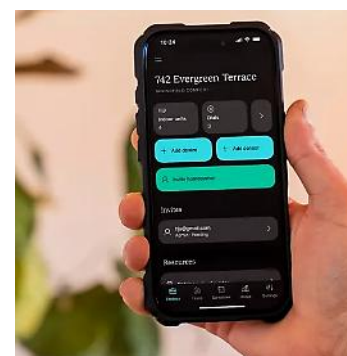
QUILT unveiled the technician app Toolbox to simplify HVAC installations

Quilt has introduced Toolbox, a new mobile app designed to support HVAC technicians throughout the installation and service process. The platform brings installation guidance, troubleshooting resources, and system management tools together in a single application.

Quilt KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. Available through the existing Quilt app for iOS and Android, Toolbox helps technicians manage installations from start to finish, including system setup, refrigerant charge calculations, troubleshooting, and homeowner handoff. By consolidating technical documentation, training content, and workflow tools in one place, Quilt aims to reduce installation time, improve service quality, and minimize callbacks.

The company also plans to expand the platform with remote diagnostic capabilities and installation monitoring features later this year, further strengthening support for its growing network of certified HVAC partners across the United States and Canada.

“Before Toolbox, our technicians were piecing together the installation process from multiple sources: manufacturer docs, phone calls, their own notes. It worked, but it cost time on every single job. Now everything is in one place, and our team moves through installs with a confidence and speed we haven’t seen before. Quilt clearly understands what it takes to run a successful installation



New Quilt Toolbox brings installation guidance, troubleshooting resources, and system management tools together in a single mobile app.

© Quilt

business, and we're excited to see what they build next," said Robert Johnston, owner of Comfort Zone Heat and Air.

Contact: Quilt Systems, Inc., USA, www.quilt.com / [Full press release](#)

WATTS simplifies LEED v5 product selection with new digital tool

As the transition from LEED v4 to LEED v5 approaches, Watts has introduced a new Product Selection Tool designed to help building professionals identify products that support sustainable building certification.

WATTS[®] KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The online platform provides architects, engineers, consultants and contractors with a straightforward way to find LEED-relevant solutions across the Watts portfolio and streamline project planning.

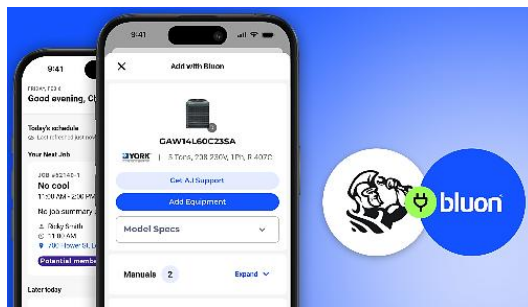
With LEED v5 becoming the standard for new projects from June 2026, the new Watts [LEED v5 Product Selection Tool](#) helps users quickly identify products that contribute to specific LEED credit categories. Searches can be performed by credit category, product category or Watts brand, while integrated sustainability data shows how each product supports certification goals – either directly or as part of a broader building system.

The tool also enables users to generate downloadable project summaries and request LEED documentation or technical support, making it easier to navigate the new certification framework and accelerate sustainable building design.

Contact: Watts Water Technologies, Inc., USA, www.wattswater.com

BLUON integrates AI-powered HVAC support directly into ServiceTitan platform

HVAC technology provider Bluon has announced a new integration with ServiceTitan, enabling technicians to access AI-driven troubleshooting tools and equipment data directly within their existing field service workflows. The integration also incorporates Bluon's PartsConnect.



KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The embedded solution is designed to streamline service operations, improve productivity, and reduce the need to switch between multiple applications.

With the new integration, [ServiceTitan](#) users can identify equipment, review technical specifications, access troubleshooting guidance, and locate compatible replacement parts without leaving the platform. Bluon's AI engine, trained on more than 150,000 live HVAC technical support

calls, supports technicians working on a wide range of equipment, including mini-splits and chillers.

The integration also incorporates Bluon's [PartsConnect](#) functionality, helping contractors quickly source replacement parts and distributor availability. For more details, read the full press release.

Bluon is the leading and most trusted provider of accurate technical data and AI powered technical support for HVAC-R contractors, distributors and software platforms serving the built economy.

Contact: Bluon, www.bluon.com / [Full press release](#)

QUILT launches AI powered marketing platform for HVAC partners

With a new AI-driven marketing platform, Quilt aims to help HVAC contractors create highly localized, multi-channel campaigns in just minutes. The solution automatically generates marketing assets tailored to each partner's market, brand, and promotional offers.

Quilt KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The platform provides Quilt Certified Partners with ready-to-use content for Meta and Google ads, email campaigns, blogs, radio and CTV spots, as well as social media posts. According to Quilt, the AI tool considers local climate conditions, housing characteristics, and current promotions to create campaigns that resonate with homeowners in specific regions. The company says the platform can generate a complete seasonal marketing campaign in less than two minutes, helping contractors save time, improve lead generation, and reduce reliance on external agencies. The solution is now available to Quilt's network of more than 130 Certified Partners across the United States and Canada.

Read the [full press release](#) for more details, published by heatinghelp.com.

Contact: Quilt Systems, Inc., USA, www.quilt.com/partners

Plumbing companies need an AI search strategy – Digital PR should lead it

Generative AI tools increasingly rely on media coverage, reviews, expert insights and other third-party content when recommending companies.

KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. As a result, businesses need to look beyond traditional search engine optimization (SEO) and focus on building authority across multiple digital channels.

Generative AI tools – such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini – increasingly rely on media coverage, reviews, expert insights and other third-party content when recommending companies. The article explores how digital PR (Public Relations) can help HVAC and plumbing businesses strengthen their authority, improve visibility and remain competitive in an AI-driven search environment.

Practical measures include publishing project case studies, expert articles, customer success stories and structured company information that can be referenced by AI systems. According to the author, a consistent presence across industry media, local news outlets and digital channels is becoming an important factor in online discoverability.

Source: www.phcpro.com / [Full article](#)

Applied AI for Distributors 2026 in June: Turning AI into a competitive advantage

Artificial intelligence is no longer a future trend – it is already transforming the way distributors operate, compete and grow.



KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. From pricing optimization and demand forecasting to sales enablement and customer service, AI is rapidly becoming a practical business tool that delivers measurable results. Yet many companies are still uncertain about where to start and how to move from experimentation to successful implementation.

Applied AI for Distributors 2026, taking place June 23–25 at the Marriott Chicago O'Hare, is designed to help distribution leaders bridge that gap. Now in its fourth year, the conference brings together industry experts, technology providers and distributors who are already leveraging AI to improve efficiency, streamline workflows and strengthen customer relationships.

Attendees will gain valuable insights into real-world AI applications, proven implementation strategies and the practical steps required to build a successful AI roadmap. The event will showcase how distributors are using AI to reduce costs, accelerate decision-making and solve operational challenges across their organizations. Participants will also have the opportunity to connect with leading AI specialists and technology partners with extensive experience in distribution environments.

For companies looking to stay competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace, Applied AI for Distributors 2026 offers a unique opportunity to learn from early adopters, understand emerging trends and discover how AI can create lasting business value.

Contact: Applied AI for Distributors 2026, <https://appliedaifordistributors.com>

CHARLOTTE Pipe & Foundry celebrates expansion of its Wildwood, Fla. facility

Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Company, in partnership with Sumter County Economic Development, hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, June 16, marking the official opening of its newly expanded facility.

CHARLOTTE PIPE AND FOUNDRY COMPANY KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The event brought together dignitaries from the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners, the City of Wildwood, and other partners to celebrate the plant expansion and the positive impact it will have on Sumter County's economy.

Originally opened in 1999, the facility was expanded by 54,700 square feet to meet the growing demand from fast-growing Southeastern states, especially Florida. The Wildwood plant employs 60 associates who produce PVC pipe for plumbing and irrigation applications. The capital investment for this project is approximately \$25 million.

"The expansion of our Wildwood plant makes it possible for us to continue to grow in the great Wildwood community and around the state," said Hooper Hardison, CEO of Charlotte Pipe and Foundry. "The expansion also offers growth opportunities for our associates and businesses that support our operations. We are grateful for the local government and civic leaders who continue to make us feel like part of the community."

Contact: Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Company, USA, www.charlottepipe.com / [Full press release](#)

WESTLAKE expands with acquisition of PVC and VCM plants in Germany

Westlake Corporation announced that its German subsidiary, Westlake Vinnolit GmbH & Co. KG, has completed the previously-announced acquisition of a PVC and VCM (vinyl chloride monomer) production site located in Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

Westlake KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The Wilhelmshaven plant, which was previously in insolvency administration, has the capacity to produce 380,000 metric tons of PVC per year.

"This acquisition strengthens our Performance & Essential Materials business by expanding our global chlorovinyls manufacturing footprint and complements our existing chlorovinyl production facilities in Europe and North America," said Jean-Marc Gilson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Westlake. "The Wilhelmshaven plant, which is located in Lower Saxony on Germany's North Sea coast, benefits from advantageous logistical infrastructure, including a deep-water dock that enables efficient raw-materials supply. We look forward to welcoming the site's employees to our Westlake family."

Contact: Watts Water Technologies, Inc., USA, www.wattswater.com

BSRIA strengthens marketing team to drive digital transformation

The Building Services Research and Intelligence Association (BSRIA) has expanded its marketing team as part of a wider strategy to enhance its digital capabilities, increase industry visibility and improve access to technical expertise for building professionals.

BSRIA KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. The organization is investing in new marketing resources to support professionals throughout the building lifecycle, from design and specification to commissioning and operation. Key initiatives include expanded digital services, online knowledge platforms, direct access to technical experts and AI-assisted customer support.

The move comes as the building services sector faces growing regulatory and compliance requirements, including those arising from the Building Safety Act and forthcoming Future Homes and Buildings Standards. BSRIA aims to make its research, engineering expertise and market intelligence more

accessible, helping industry professionals deliver safer, higher-performing and more compliant buildings.

The appointments form part of BSRIA's broader digital transformation program and follow several recent strategic hires across technology, publications, marketing and professional services.

Contact: BSRIA Ltd., UK, www.bsria.com/uk/ / [Full press release](#)

International Code Council: Modernizing pipe sizing with new ICC 815 Standard

For decades, water supply and drainage systems have been designed using sizing methods based on research from the 1940s. The new ICC 815 Standard aims to address this gap by introducing a data-driven approach that reflects modern building designs, changing occupancy patterns, and today's water efficiency requirements.



KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. Developed by the International Code Council (ICC) and the University of Miami, ICC 815 (Sizing Water Distribution, Sanitary Drainage and Vent Piping Systems) uses extensive building and usage data to improve the prediction of peak water demand and drainage loads.

This new standard will mark a turning point for water supply and sanitary drainage pipe sizing, which together haven't received a meaningful update since the 1940s.

Supported by the new DRIPS™ simulation software, the standard enables more accurate pipe sizing based on building-specific characteristics rather than traditional assumptions. The result is greater design accuracy, lower installation costs, improved water hygiene, and enhanced water and energy efficiency.

Read the [full article](#), which originally was published on Plumbing & Mechanical Magazine, to learn how ICC 815 is set to redefine plumbing system design for modern buildings.

Contact: International Code Council (ICC), www.iccsafe.org

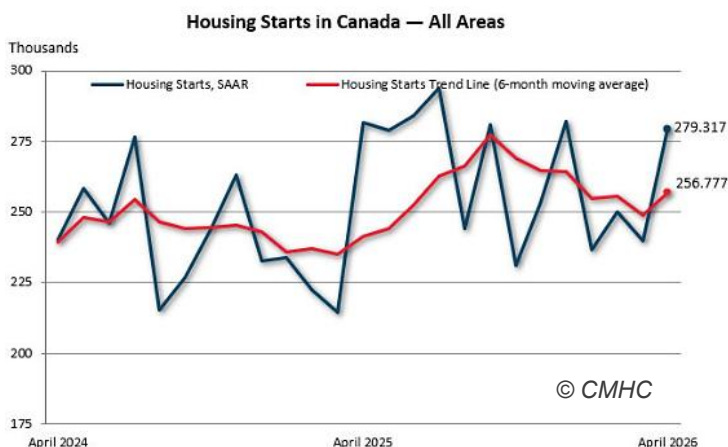
CANADIAN building permits provide early signal of residential construction activity

The six-month trend in housing starts was higher in April, with an increase of 3.2% to 256,777 units, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The trend measure is a six-month moving average of the seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) of total housing starts for all areas in Canada.



KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. "While the six-month trend in housing starts rose slightly in April, it follows several consecutive months of decline, underscoring the uneven nature of current construction activity, and month-to-month volatility. Building permit data provides additional context for this pattern, pointing to a construction pipeline that remains subdued, in line with CMHC's Housing Market Outlook," said Kevin Hughes, Deputy Chief Economist at CMHC.

Actual housing starts were down 1% year-over-year in centers with a population of 10,000 or greater, with 21,805 units recorded in April, compared to 21,938 units in April 2025. The year-to-date total was 71,011 units, up 6% from the same period in 2025, driven by higher starts in British Columbia and Ontario.



The total monthly SAAR of housing starts for all areas in Canada increased 17% in April (279,317 units) compared to March (239,747 units).

New to this release, CMHC is publishing building permit data and additional data from the Starts and Completions Survey (SCS). This includes approved units awaiting housing start, as well as the under-construction inventory and the number of units completed. These indicators show a complete view of the residential construction pipeline and are available for centers with a population of 50,000 or more.

“Building permits provide an early signal of future residential construction activity, while housing starts capture construction that has begun and offer the best indication of future housing supply. Together, these measures show how development intentions translate into real construction activity, providing a more complete picture of the residential construction market’s trajectory,” said Mathieu Laberge, CMHC’s Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President of Housing Insights. “This is why CMHC is proactively releasing building permits data alongside Starts and Completions Survey data.”

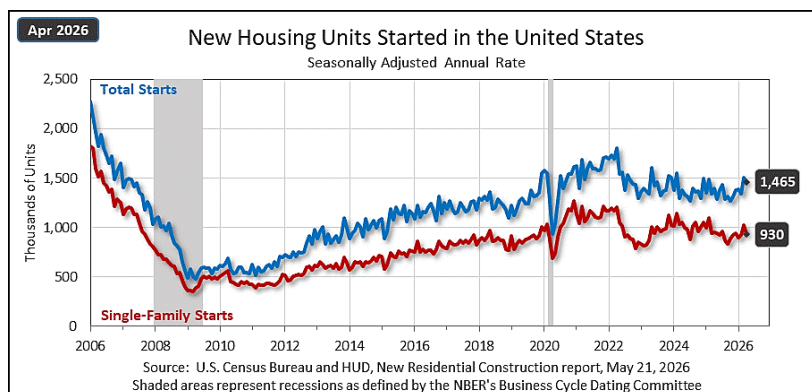
The website for the full article and further links such as Revised Housing Starts, Revised Residential Conversions and Demolitions as well as Housing Market Information Portal can be found [here](#).

Contact: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca / [Full press release](#)

US residential construction activity in April remains steady despite mixed trends

April's residential construction data point to a more cautious pace in the U.S. single-family housing market. While home completions increased, both new building permits and housing starts moved lower, indicating softer momentum in future construction activity.

United States Census Bureau KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. Recent residential construction data shows a mixed picture across key housing indicators. Building permits, housing starts and completions moved in different directions, highlighting varying trends within the housing market. Overall, the latest data points to stable residential construction activity, with stronger permit issuance and completions offsetting softer housing start figures. The housing sector continues to be supported by both single-family and multi-family development activity.



Monthly new residential construction in April 2026

- **Building permits** – Privately-owned housing units authorized by building permits: 1,442,000 (seasonally adjusted annual rate), up 5.8% from the revised March rate, but 0.2% below the April 2025 rate / Single-family authorizations: 872,000, 2.6% below revised March figure / Multi-family (5+ units): 514,000 in April
- **Housing starts** – Privately-owned housing starts: 1,465,000, 2.8% below the revised March estimate, but 4.6% above the April 2025 rate / Single-family housing starts: 930,000, 9.0% below the revised March figure / Multi-family (5+ units): 529,000, 14.3% above March
- **Housing completions** – Privately-owned housing completions: 1,449,000, 4.8% above the revised March estimate, but 2.0% below the April 2025 rate / Single-family completions: 903,000, 1.0% below the revised March rate / Multi-family (5+ units): 529,000

Regionally, construction activity declined in the South (+9.1% to 794,000), the West (-11% to 723,000), but increased in the Northeast (+16.1% to 180,000), the West (+5% to 356,000) and the Midwest (+2.5% to 206,000).

Contact: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov / [Full press release](#)

EUROCONSTRUCT Conference: Europe's construction sector continues to recover

101st EUROCONSTRUCT Conference on 4-5 June 2026 by EUROCONSTRUCT, Forecon, Finland: The outlook for the European construction sector remains cautiously positive, but growth is forecast to be slower than previously expected.



KWD-globalpipe, 23.06.2026. Since the EUROCONSTRUCT forecast in Nov 2025, the operating environment for construction has changed in many ways. War of Iran and the situation in the Strait of Hormuz has a significant impact on the global economy, energy prices, inflation and interest rate trends – all factors that weigh heavily on demand in the construction sector. Consumer and business confidence in the future has fallen, and economic forecasts have been revised downwards in several countries over the spring. It is likely that this uncertainty will continue.

In the EUROCONSTRUCT countries (EC-19), gross domestic product grew by 1.5% in 2025. Between 2026 and 2028, GDP is forecast to grow by an average of 1.2% per year. Growth in 2026 will remain weaker than previously estimated, at 1.1%; in 2027, it is set to be 1.3%. However, none of the EC-19 countries is forecasting negative economic growth.

Significant differences between sectors – civil engineering remains the strongest

- Construction sectors have developed unevenly in recent years. Between 2023 and 2025, **residential construction declined significantly**, non-residential construction remained broadly stable, while civil engineering recorded solid growth. Looking ahead to 2026–2028, all sectors are expected to expand.
- A key finding of the latest forecast is the shift in growth drivers. **New construction and civil engineering are more clearly the drivers of growth** than previously, while renovation remains stable but in a phase of slower growth. The counter-cyclical role of building renovation has weakened compared to the years of the energy crisis and the energy efficiency boom, when subsidy schemes and regulation boosted the market more strongly. Economic & consumer uncertainty is now weighing on renovation, while investment is benefiting new construction.

Developments remain highly varied by country

Construction trends across different parts of Europe continue to diverge significantly. In the Nordic countries and Austria, total construction output fell sharply in 2023 and 2024 and will not return to 2022 levels during the period. In these countries, the primary underlying factor is a sharp collapse in new residential construction.

The **strongest growth** in construction between 2025 and 2028 is forecast for **Ireland, Poland, the UK and Portugal**. Growth is **weakest in Slovakia, Italy and Belgium**.

Ireland continues to stand out as the fastest-growing market, thanks to strong public investment and steady demand. Poland is also benefiting from strong medium-term growth, although forecasts have been revised slightly downward. Spain and Portugal, in turn, are benefiting from broad-based growth in both building construction and civil engineering. Germany, France, Austria and Italy continue to suffer from weak housing demand, high costs and limited financing.

	Forecasts				Outlook		
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Austria	-2,1	-4,5	-5,2	-1,3	0,0	0,8	1,0
Belgium	0,6	-1,2	0,0	-0,3	1,3	-0,2	0,2
Denmark	1,4	-12,0	-4,3	1,2	2,0	2,9	2,3
Finland	-0,4	-12,4	-6,2	1,0	4,7	5,5	-1,0
France	1,9	0,0	-1,8	-3,0	1,1	2,2	1,4
Germany	-5,1	-3,2	-2,9	-1,0	1,0	1,3	1,0
Ireland	3,7	7,6	-4,8	11,7	5,3	5,8	6,2
Italy	12,2	3,3	-1,7	-2,6	1,6	-0,1	-0,8
Netherlands	4,0	0,8	-2,7	1,3	2,2	3,4	3,1
Norway	1,0	-5,3	-5,7	1,1	2,3	0,0	2,8
Portugal	1,9	5,3	4,1	6,1	4,4	3,6	3,3
Spain	3,3	2,4	2,8	4,3	3,2	2,4	1,8
Sweden	-2,1	-10,7	-3,0	3,2	4,0	2,4	3,8
Switzerland	-6,6	-0,7	-1,4	-0,3	1,9	1,5	1,3
United Kingdom	6,9	0,4	-0,2	1,8	2,4	4,3	5,1
Western Europe (EC-15)	1,6	-1,0	-1,7	0,1	1,9	2,1	1,9
Czechia	1,0	1,8	-1,7	4,6	2,5	2,5	2,8
Hungary	1,3	-7,6	-2,7	0,5	-1,5	2,4	5,0
Poland	5,5	6,4	-0,9	2,2	6,4	4,9	3,1
Slovakia	0,5	5,4	-5,8	1,9	-2,9	-1,9	-0,5
Eastern Europe (EC-4)	3,3	2,8	-1,7	2,5	3,6	3,5	3,1
Euroconstruct Countries (EC-19)	1,7	-0,8	-1,7	0,2	2,0	2,2	1,9

Evolution of construction output in the EUROCONSTRUCT 19 area
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Contact: EUROCONSTRUCT, www.euroconstruct.org / [Full press release](#) / [EUROCONSTRUCT forecast reports](#)