



European Furniture Industries Confederation

EFIC BOARD MEETING

Friday 29 June 2018

FederLegnoArredo premises, Via Toscana 10, Rome

h. 09.00 - 15:00

Draft minutes

1. Opening and Welcome

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner welcomed all participants, thanking them for their presence.

The Board Meeting was attended by the following participants:

1. Mr. Markus Wiesner, (EFIC President – Austrian Furniture Industry),
2. Ms. Roberta Dessì, (EFIC Secretary General),
3. Ms. Margot Schatzl (Austrian Furniture Industry),
4. Mr. Csaba Babanecz (Butorszovetseg),
5. Mr. Markus Ring (VDM),
6. Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM),
7. Mr. Paolo Chini and Mr. Nazzareno Mengoni (FLA),
8. Ms. Reyhan Turan (Mosder),
9. Mr. Egil Sundet (Norsk Industri),
10. Mr. Paer Stenmark (IKEA of Sweden).

Mr. Kevin Snyders (Fedustria), Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMPP), Ms. Cathy Dufur (Ameublement Français), Ms. Rositsa Pesheva (BKDMP), Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF) and Mr. Jan Kurth apologized for their absence.

2. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without amendments.

3. Adoption of minutes from EFIC Board meeting held in Vienna on 9 March 2018 [Annex 1]

The minutes were adopted with the inclusion of the amendments requested by Piet Vanthournout (Fedustria).

4. Introduction of new Board members

Mr. Nazzareno Mengoni (FLA) and Mr. Csaba Babanecz (Butorszovetseg) introduced themselves.

5. Update on recruitment of EFIC Communication and Policy Officer

Ms. Roberta Dessì updated EFIC members on the ongoing process of recruitment. EFIC has hired a consultancy for running the first screening of candidates. The consultancy will present by end of June a list of 10 best candidates for the position, based on 1) CV and cover letter screening; 2) a written test.

Ms. Roberta Dessì and Mr. Markus Wiesner will be running the interview during the first half of July (planned dates are 10-11) aiming at starting the new contract in September.

EFIC Board members will be promptly updated on the process.

6. Introduction to the furniture industry in Italy and the Italian Association Federlegnoarredo

Mr. Nazzareno Mengoni presented the furniture industry in Italy and the ongoing projects run by Federlegnoarredo. The presentation is circulated together with the minutes.

Internal meeting for full members

7. EFIC 2020 strategy and future organization within EFIC

Ms. Roberta Dessì updated EFIC members on the last developments of the EFIC 2020 strategy and implementation plan.

Since last EFIC meeting (March 2018):

- EFIC Secretariat has scheduled a meeting with AzkoNobel in view of a possible partnership agreement. The meeting is planned on 11 July in Brussels. EFIC will be represented by EFIC President Markus Wiesner and EFIC Secretary General Roberta Dessì.
- The Czech furniture association (AČN) announced its intention to apply for EFIC membership. However, a formal letter of application has not been received yet.
- A number of other associations at the National or regional level showed interest, such as Cyprus and Malta as well as CENFIM.

Mr. Markus Wiesner stressed that for any partnership agreement to work there should be a common understanding of the mutual priorities and absence of conflicting interests in policy areas and industrial interests. AzkoNobel has a strong and positive reputation and this is an encouraging reason for having a partnership with them. ~~Mr. Paer Stenmark confirmed that IKEA has recently started collaborating with AzkoNobel in circular economy platforms and he confirmed that the company has a strong reputation and involvement in environmental matters.~~ **Mr. Paer Stenmark confirmed that IKEA is serving in the board of the Centre for Chemical Substitution, established by the Swedish Government, where also AzkoNobel is represented. He confirmed that AkzoNobel has a strong reputation and involvement in environmental matters.**

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk commented on the fact that at the last Social Dialogue EFIC has the first joint preparatory meeting with UEA. It was clear from the meeting that UEA had not a common and strategic view on the issues discussed.

Ms. Roberta Dessì added that CENFIM shared an open interest in becoming an EFIC member, but this implies an internal reflection in EFIC. CENFIM is a (mainly) furniture cluster from the Catalonian region. EFIC should therefore agree internally what should be the role for regional furniture cluster and how should they be considered within the EFIC structure. Mr. Paolo Chini and Mr. Kees Hoogendijk stressed that CENFIM could be a good partner for EFIC, in particular for running EU-funded projects, as they have a strong expertise in the field.

Mr. Paer Stenmark asked about EFIC's relationships with furniture associations from outside the EU, with particular regard to China. Ms. Roberta Dessì informed of having met the Secretary general of the Chinese Association recently and having had an informal discussion on common issues of interest. EFIC members shared their support for initiatives aimed at strengthening the relationship with the Chinese industry. The Chinese furniture association has now the chairmanship of the Asian furniture association (CAFA). Mosder is a member of CAFA and could support EFIC in building closer ties.

8. For adoption - Discussion and decision on EFIC position

EFIC balance 2017: final results and adoption

Mr. Markus Wiesner presented the EFIC's 2017 financial results. EFIC Secretariat had circulated a budget & results detailed analysis among EFIC full Board members ahead of the Board meeting.

In overall, the 2017 budget results are in line with the planned budget and the members subsequent decisions. In particular:

- EFIC has spent as much as agreed for EFIC employees (wages and social costs);
- EFIC has spent as much as planned for travelling/meetings/representation; for the EFIC yearly event; and for the other costs/services agreed;
- EFIC has spent more than agreed for office equipment/office costs [+/- €1,000];
- EFIC had spent slightly more than agreed for website/communication and some administrative extra costs [+/- €500];
- Debtors: The Hungarian outstanding debt for 2015 will be solved in 2018 with the service offered for EFIC website renewal.

EFIC Board members unanimously approved the 2017 final results.

Strategic meeting for full and associated members

9. Reporting on EFIC Working Groups (WG) meetings

a) EFIC Social Dialogue WG [Annex 2]

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk reported on the results of the last Social Dialogue meeting in May 2018. In particular, he reported about the presentation on the OSHA campaign, a 2-year project on substitution of chemicals. The campaign could be of interest for EFIC, also with regard to the case for flame retardant free furniture. He also informed EFIC Board about the adoption of a joint statement on the Commission communication on health and safety and a joint letter calling for a wood dust conference.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk also presented the 2018-2019 workprogramme and its main topics, which include digitalization and durable employment.

Finally, he informed that the next year the Social Dialogue's chairmanship will be on UEA. EFIC has already agreed internally that will not accept the chairmanship of UEA.

b) EFIC Circular Economy WG [Annex 3]

Ms. Roberta Dessi reported on the results of the last Circular Economy WG meeting on 13 June 2018. Starting from an action plan summarising the results of the kick-off meeting with EFIC Board in March 2018 [Annex 3], the CE WG meeting drafted a concrete work programme with 3 goals and specific deliverables. The meeting also promoted an information exchange, including a presentation on IKEA's eco-design principles and an exchange of views with the European Commission on its product policies' roadmap.

Ms. Roberta Dessi informed EFIC members that the next meeting of EFIC CE WG will take place on 9 October with a focus on the suppliers' side. On 10 December – the day ahead of the General Assembly in Brussels - there will be a joint meeting with EFIC Board members – where the EFIC CE WG will start to present results of its activity.

c) EFIC Technical WG [Annex 4]

Ms. Roberta Dessi reported on the results of the last Technical WG meeting on 26 June 2018. Members of the TWG discussed the following topics: 1) Machinery Directive and furniture products; 2) Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEE II) implementation; 3) An information sharing on Formaldehyde and VOC regulations; 4) Information and update on ISO and CEN developments, Isocyanate EU. FLA also introduced the topic of the new Californian regulation Amendment 65 and its concerns.

Ms. Roberta Dessi presented the follow-up actions agreed by EFIC TWG and summarized in the table below.

Agenda	Topics	Follow - up
Machinery Directive (MD) and furniture products	EC presentation; Application of MD and LvD to furniture; Standardisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue with European Commission • Prepare EFIC position (Germany prepare a draft) • Harmonised standards: request a mandate to EC? • IEC standard in process: a furniture representative?
Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment implementation (WEE II)	Implementation at National level; Interpretation for furniture products; Issues with German transposition rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information on implementation at National level and relevant interpretations • Investigate on relevant bodies at EU level and opportunities (WEE contacts) • Ask clarification to German authority – eventually ask European Commission on possible existence of a barrier to trade (Belgium to prepare a draft)
Formaldehyde and VOC regulations	Ongoing actions on Formaldehyde (EU, US, France, Germany) + VOC approach (CHN, ISO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue monitoring formaldehyde developments • VOC: positive reaction to a possible ISO guideline collecting the different methods and highlighting the common points (Italy to coordinate in ISO committee)
AOB: Proposition 65	New labelling rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request clarification to Californian authority (Italy to prepare a draft)

Ms. Roberta Dessì informed that the next meeting of EFIC TWG is planned to take place in the first half of October 2019.

10. **Presentation:** The upcoming **Austrian Presidency** of the Council: priorities and environmental policies [web conference]

EFIC has established a contact with Mr. Kasamas from the Austrian Ministry for Sustainability. Mr. Kasamas was unable to participate to the EFIC Board meeting but has shared with EFIC Secretariat a written statement on the Austrian priorities for the upcoming Presidency and a power point presentation on the Austrian view on the interface between chemical, products and waste. Ms. Roberta Dessì highlighted in particular two statements made from the upcoming Presidency. The presentation is circulated together with the minutes.

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner informed EFIC members that he is planning to meet Mr. Kasamas in Vienna at the earliest possibility.

11. **Strategic actions** – Agreement on **follow up** activities and discussion on **new initiatives**

Follow-up activities

11.1 Flame retardants – The Case for Flame Retardant Free Furniture

Ms. Roberta Dessì presented the update on last developments and actions. This included: a) a report on the Nordic Fire & Safety Day on 7-8 June in Norway; b) a presentation on the main lobby groups at EU level active on fire safety issues; c) the FEU/IFV report; d) the EU developments on the fire safety topic and the activities of the Fire Information Exchange Platform (FIEP). She highlighted the fact that there is a growing attention to fire safety issues at the EU level, and that furniture products (themselves or as “building content”) are a relevant part of the debate.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk commented that there is a growing concern in the Netherlands that has also led to the organization of a conference on fire safety of furniture. The Dutch Institute IFV is since many years promoting such discussion with a special focus on furniture products. At the conference they have invited IKEA to present the furniture industry perspective. The Dutch furniture companies would not support a very stringent flammability test which would highly increase the use of flame retardant chemicals.

Mr. Paer Stenmark took the floor to explain IKEA's standing on the issue of flame retardants and fire safety. He assured EFIC Board that IKEA is absolutely in line with EFIC in the goal of eliminating the use of flame retardant chemicals in furniture and since many years IKEA is directly engaged in this direction with its chemical policy. However, IKEA recognizes that there is a need to work towards safe products also from the fire safety perspective and it is actively investing in finding solutions that can meet both expectations. IKEA has a pilot project ongoing, which wishes to find a new material solution which can increase fire safety without adding unwanted chemicals. However, IKEA wishes to have a societal approach to this issue – and if for any reason the innovation IKEA is looking at would increase the use of flame retardants in the society as a whole, IKEA will not go forward. Mr. Paer Stenmark also commented that the discussion on testing methods should logically follow the one on the possible solutions in the market – as the decision on a specific test method should be a direct consequence of what is achievable. He informed EFIC members that a new authority in the UK will be established, with the task to work on standards.

Mr. Egil Sundet thanked Mr. Paer Stenmark for sharing openly the IKEA's perspective. He added that other companies as well are trying to find solution thought innovations, but still there won't be a non-chemical solution for the higher flammability demands. Mr. Egil Sundet also agreed on the importance of having a higher attention and involvement to the fire safety topics, both at the National and EU level and **he invited EFIC members to start dialogues with their National authorities on this issue. He also suggested to promote a greater involvement in the R&D (research&development) track.**

Mr. Markus Wiesner stressed the importance of having a clear political message and be ready to reply to the statements made by other lobby groups with conflicting interests. Despite the complexity of this issue, it is important to reduce the message to a clear and simple one.

EFIC Board members agreed that there should be a holistic approach which is built on the following premises: we want to increase the safety to the people/we don't want to increase the toxicity of fires nor the exposure to toxic substances/we don't have the material that is intrinsically fire proof/the solution can't be the material only.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk proposed to adopt the terminology used by the OSHA campaign on chemicals: the STOP principle. In this case, it could be translated into: Substitution (e.g. new materials) – Technology (e.g. smoke detectors) – Organization (e.g. how to manage the house that you can easily access to and escape from) – Protection (equipment). The main message should be: STOP fire deaths and STOP unwanted chemicals. He also advised to have a greater involvement as EFIC in the OSHA campaign. **He also proposed to translate this message in a one-page document to be used for communication purposes.**

11.2 Revision of the mutual recognition regulation (Goods package)

Ms. Roberta Dessì presented an update on last developments and actions taken on this file. The proposal is now being discussed by the IMCO committee and rapporteur and shadows are working on compromise amendments. Ms. Roberta Dessì commented on the most controversial issues at stake, which concern articles 4,5,6 of the proposal and the S&D position aiming at enlarging the margin for Member States to deny market access. **She asked the support of EFIC Board members in reaching out MEPs in the Parliament before a final agreement on the compromise amendments is taken** (i.e. before mid-July). The next step will be to get in contact with National Ministries and Permanent Representations in the view of triologue negotiations.

Mr. Paolo Chini added that FLA is in contact with the Italian members of the IMCO committee and a group of them presented the FLA/EFIC amendments. He also asked an open question to EFIC members, for further discussion in the next year: should the furniture industry think about harmonization in the furniture sector and eventually ask the next European Commission to act in that direction? He added that there could be some benefits in harmonizing the sector, including an easier trade among the EU and a more efficient market surveillance.

Mr. Markus Wiesner commented that in his opinion a harmonization could be beneficial and could support the industry.

EFIC members agreed that this topic could be part of the strategic reflection of EFIC and the next year – in preparation of the European election – would be a good timing for having such internal discussion.

11.3 TBT notification – CHN 1094-1095-1096

Ms. Roberta Dessì reported the last developments in this case. She presented the results of a investigation commissioned by IKEA to a Chinese consultancy in order to have a clearer understanding of the internal developments in China. The investigation brought the following information: a) CHN is revising standards and merging the three standards into one; b) there has been a general reform of the standardisation system in China with changed roles within internal actors; c) China will change its attitude towards international standards; d) CHN may opt for “*Mandatory limits (semi)voluntary test methods*” – with consequences on WTO notification; e) Lack of precise timeline.

Ms. Roberta Dessì also informed that the case was included by the European Commission in the last WTO plenary and bilateral discussion with China. EFIC/IKEA asked the European Commission to address China with a number of specific questions. EFIC Secretariat will inform EFIC members of the results of the TBT committee as soon as communicated by the European Commission.

The summary of the study commissioned by IKEA is circulated together with the minutes.

11.4 Formaldehyde strategy

- a) European strategy and ongoing ECHA initiatives
 - b) Revision of the Mutagens and Carcinogens Directive – formaldehyde
 - c) Update on French VOC labelling proposal (Ameublement Français)
 - d) US formaldehyde regulation [Annex 5]
 - e) Developments in construction sector and panel industry
- Exchange of views and next steps

Ms. Roberta Dessì presented an update on the main ongoing initiative at the National, European, International level concerning formaldehyde.

Mr. Markus Wiesner commented that there is a very wide range of approaches and limits. He added there is not yet a common approach in EFIC and this will negatively impact the industry when the different approach will continue to grow.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk stressed that there should be a political solution with the goal of promoting a level playing field. One testing should be established.

Mr. Paolo Chini informed EFIC members that the rapporteur for the Revision of the Mutagens and Carcinogens Directive (incl. formaldehyde) is Italian and FLA has been already in contact with her. He proposed EFIC to sign a joint statement together with the trade unions (EFBWW) and the panel industry (EPF) in order to consolidate the position on the proposed limit value. **EFIC members agreed with the proposal.**

New initiatives

11.5 Open point for discussion

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk proposed to add a new item in the EFIC meetings agenda: *Tour de table*: National developments. The aim is to update EFIC members on National news and promote a knowledge sharing. Each EFIC members will be invited to share news on developments in each country e.g. what is new/what are the major issues discussed/new regulations/ economic developments.

Mr. Markus Wiesner commented that a tour de table was included in the agenda in the past, but it was planned at the end of the meeting when the timing was always too tight.

EFIC members agreed to have such space at the next meetings, at the beginning of it.

- **Information:** general information and update on main ongoing dossiers

Ms. Roberta Dessì updated EFIC members on a number of ongoing files.

- **Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II)**

EFIC is part of a Coalition with: ZeroWasteEurope (ZWE), CEPI (Paper Industry), European Panel Federation (EPF), Federlegno Arredo (FLA). In this context, EFIC supports the principle of waste hierarchy and the cascading use of wood and the fact that market distortions (due to support schemes to incineration) shall be avoided. Mr. Paolo Chini updated EFIC members on the negotiations, which are now at the final steps. FLA is satisfied with the results, which reflect the advocacy efforts brought by the coalition.

- **Revision of Timber Regulation (EUTR)**

The European Commission has published the results of the public consultation (225 replies). There has been a large majority in favour of amending the products scope (+180 replies: Yes, it should be amended/Don't know - About 43 replies: No, the product scope should not be amended). The European Commission should now take a decision whether or not to amend the products' scope of the EUTR with a delegated act. EFIC Secretariat will inform EFIC members of the developments.

- **New EU Industrial Strategy**

The Industry4Europe coalition has been active on advocacy activities at EU level. This has fostered reactions at EU and National levels, including a German-French Paper on "*Enhancing the competitiveness of the EU by way of structural reforms and investments*". The coalition will now try to influence political parties' guidelines/manifestos for new elections. EFIC joined the newly established advocacy group and will try to follow its work to the largest extent possible.

- **Review of Ecodesign and energy labelling requirements for lighting products**

On 5th July the European Commission should circulate the revised text among registered stakeholders. It will then start an Interservice consultation (3 weeks) and at the end of July the revised text will be public. The next steps in the procedure will be:

- Beginning October – Vote in Ecodesign committee (ecodesign) – Member States may amend
- Scrutiny EP + Council – they can reject the text – otherwise it is published in the OJ

It will be important for EFIC to check the amended version of the text and its possible impact.

12. Any other business, next meeting and closure

EFIC Secretariat is still waiting for the documents from 3 Board members (Mr. Nazzareno Mengoni, Mr. Flemming Larsen and Mr. Kees Hoogendijk) in order to complete the registration of the new Statute in the Belgian register. **Board members are kindly requested to send the documents to EFIC Secretariat as soon as possible.**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner thanked the members for their participation and FLA for hosting the meeting. He confirmed that the next meeting will be in Budapest on 27-28 September and will also include a visit to the EuroSkills competition.

Annex 1 – Draft agenda



European Furniture Industries Confederation

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h. 09.00 - 15:00

Draft agenda

Opening and Welcome

h. 09.
09.

Adoption of agenda

Adoption of minutes from EFIC Board meeting held in Vienna on 9 March 2018
[Annex 1]

Introduction of new Board member

- Mr. Kevin Snyders, Fedustria (tbc)
- Mr. Nazzareno Mengoni, FLA
- Mr. Jan Kurth, VDM

Update on recruitment of EFIC Communication and Policy Officer

Introduction to the furniture industry in Italy and the Italian Association
Federlegnoarredo

h. 09.
09:

Internal meeting for full members

EFIC 2020 strategy and future organization within EFIC

h. 09.
10:

Update on **EFIC 2020** strategy and implementation plan

- Update on activities at EU level
- Report from EFIC members on activities at National level
- Discussion and follow-up

For adoption - Discussion and **decision** on **EFIC position**

EFIC balance 2017: final results and adoption

Coffee break

10:3
10:3

Strategic meeting for full and associated members

Reporting on EFIC Working Groups (WG) meetings

- a) EFIC Social Dialogue WG [Annex 2]
- b) EFIC Circular Economy WG [Annex 3]
- c) EFIC Technical WG [Annex 4]

Presentation: The upcoming **Austrian Presidency** of the Council: priorities and environmental policies [web conference] (tbc)

Strategic actions – Agreement on follow up activities and discussion on new initiatives

low-up activities

1. Flame retardants – The Case for Flame Retardant Free Furniture
 - Update on last developments and actions
 - Exchange of views and next steps
2. Revision of the mutual recognition regulation (Goods package)
 - Update on last developments and actions
 - Exchange of views and next steps

Lunch break

3. TBT notification – CHN 1094-1095-1096
 - Report on last developments
 - Exchange of views and next steps
4. Formaldehyde strategy
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new initiatives

5. Open point for discussion

Information: general information and update on main ongoing dossiers

- Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II)
- Revision of Timber Regulation
- New EU Industrial Strategy
- Review of Ecodesign and energy labelling requirements for lighting products
- Interface between chemicals, product and waste legislation

Any other business, next meeting and closure