The European Green Deal: Towards a greener furniture industry

"What the European Green Deal can bring is the chance for the European furniture industries to be more efficient, more sustainable and closer to European consumers" **Markus Wiesner, President of EFIC**

The European Furniture Industries are pleased to see the high ambitions behind the announced European Green Deal and particularly welcome the initiatives to support the industry in achieving a climate neutral and circular economy, the goals to create a toxic-free environment and to preserve and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, as well as the focus on skills and digital transformation. In particular:

1. Achieving a climate neutral and circular economy is of outmost importance for a smart and efficient European furniture industry. Design for reparability, for reuse and remanufacturing (including clear definitions for these concepts), together with a responsible and efficient use of materials and chemicals should be a main focus to reduce the environmental footprint of products already from the early design stage. Hazardous and legacy chemicals have no place in furniture production. Clear and harmonised information tools are needed for consumers to be able to make informed choices and when it comes to the end of life of products, sustainable waste management systems should be put in place coupled with extended producer responsibility schemes.

2. The zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment to ensure the protection of human health and the environment together with the announced Chemicals innovation strategy for sustainability is an excellent opportunity to address the unnecessary and unwanted use of toxic flame retardants, which have been documented to have harmful effects and be dangerous for human health, animals and the environment. Removing toxic flame retardants is key in supporting the transition to a cleaner and safer circular economy in the furniture sector, enabling an increase in quality and durability of these products, but also, a safe and trusted environment for material reuse and end-of-life treatment. EU-wide action is needed to avoid the use of toxic flame retardants in furniture and to achieve harmonisation of flammability standards.

3. Forest-based industries have a great role to play in the path to decarbonise Europe by eradicating waste in the circular economy, by closing material loops and substituting critical or CO_2 intensive raw materials and fossil energy with forest-based alternatives, among others. The Forest-based Industries vision 2050 provides a number of recommendations to achieve these goals and can largely contribute to the goals of the European Green Deal regarding forest strategy and industry policy.

4. European Furniture Industries support the recently published [Joint Paper](#) of the Industry4Europe Coalition, showing willingness to contribute to the Commission's long-term strategy for Europe's industrial future and promoting business friendly policies, sustainability, upgraded skills, R&D and funding, a reinforced single market and improved market access, recalling as well the challenges and opportunities that the uptake of digital technologies represent for the EU industry.

To the end of mainstreaming sustainability with all ways and means, EFIC is ready to engage with the EU Institutions to identify gaps in accomplishing the goals of the Green Deal and opportunities that this shift will bring to the industry.