



European Furniture Industries Confederation

## **EFIC GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*Tuesday 13th December 2016*

**Union nationale des industries de l'Ameublement français (UNIFA)  
120, avenue Ledru-Rollin 75011 Paris**

**h. 09.00 - 15:30**

### MINUTES

#### **1. Opening and Welcome**

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

The Board meeting was attended by: Mr. Markus Wiesner (President), Ms. Roberta Dessi (Secretary General), Ms. Naima Koubaa (EFIC Advocacy and Communication Assistant), Ms. Andrea Steinegger (Austrian Furniture Industry), Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria), Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo), Mr. Mark Ruether (VDM), Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMMP), Mr. Etienne Bodin (UNIFA), Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF), Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM), Mr. Egil Sundet (Norsk Industri).

Ms. Marta Anzani (Federlegnoarredo), Mr. Joseph Cselényi and Ms. Krisztina Cselényi (Hungarian Furniture Industry), Mr. Flemming Larsen (TMI), and Mr. Abdullah Tuglu (MOSDER) 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 Budapest on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016.**

The minutes were adopted after the amendment from Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria). The following amendment from Fedustria is added to the minutes from EFIC Board meeting in Budapest on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016: *Fedustria mentioned that the subject of the flame retardants is a sensitive issue within its membership as Fedustria also represents the Belgian textile industry apart from the wood and furniture sectors. Consequently Fedustria will not be vocal on this issue.*

#### **4. Report from EFIC 2020 fourth Task Force meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

Mr. Wiesner reported on the outcome of the second **EFIC 2020 Task Force** meeting. The Task Force had a final discussion on the draft EFIC 2020 Strategy, looking at possible missing points in regard to the chapter on EFIC membership; **EFIC 2020 Task Force** decided on the contribution scheme for partners, which will be no fixed, but rather determined on a case-by-case basis. Partners can be involved in working groups without any decisional power. Their involvement will be an added value in terms of resources and expertise for EFIC.

EFIC 2020 Task Force started developing the implementation of this Strategy. The Task Force agreed on the importance of organising a promotional event in June 2017 aimed at attracting new members and assure new contributions. For this event, the Secretariat will prepare and communicate a list of potentially interested participants for EFIC members to contact.

#### **5. Introduction to the French Furniture Industry and the French federation - Cathy Dufour, UNIFA General Manager**

Cathy Dufour, UNIFA General Manager introduced herself to the General Assembly and described the activities of the French Furniture Federation.

Founded in 1960, UNIFA is composed of 350 members, mainly SMEs, out of about 12.000 companies (micro-structured companies), from crib to coffin manufacturers. Micro-companies are members of UNAMA, represented by one person and located in the same building as UNIFA's headquarters. UNIFA is also representing producers of religious instruments, such as organs. UNIFA activities are based on the strategic plan "Ambitions 2016-2021," which includes the main pillars of UNIFA's strategy as followed: improve their competitiveness, improve financing, training and learning and about collaboration along the value chain. The second axis of UNIFA's strategy concerns UNIFA's attractiveness at the national and international level. The last axis of the strategic plan is about the business model on the long term, which encompasses the help to companies to try new business models with UNIFA's role as facilitator. UNIFA works with Codifab,<sup>1</sup> professional and economic development committee, in charge of collecting taxes calculated out of companies' turnover (representing about 14 million a year). This tax contributes to the financing of technical centres involved in the wood and metals testing, for example. But this committee also participates in the financing of collective actions, e.g. by contributing to 50% of UNIFA's participation fees in international fairs in Cologne, Shanghai, Dubai, Milan, New York (next year).

UNIFA also benefits from 0.5% contribution from the Education Fund. One of UNIFA's strengths is its services offer developed for members and not members, such as support to find sponsors, financial support, logistics, and lobbying. The French furniture industry is mainly concentrated in three regions, and especially in remoted areas:

- East of France, near Strasbourg and Nancy where the technical training centre and production are located;
- In the west in Vendee;
- And near Lyon

UNIFA worked on the characteristics of their industry and defined the French furniture industry as "French touch" which encompasses elegance, creativity, good taste, and design, in other words, French *art de vivre*.

The production volume of the French furniture industry is about 8 billion EUR with a market volume of EUR 14, 1 billion. It mainly produced kitchen and bedding represent the biggest segments of their

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<sup>1</sup> Comité Professionnel de Développement Economique des industries françaises de l'ameublement et du bois

production, and domestic part (less dynamic for UNIFA). But it also encompasses fitting market, which is difficult to evaluate the fitting market as many companies are difficult to identify. The office furniture accounts for EUR +/- 1 bn. The market has been in a difficult situation since 2008, but it is slowly recovering and has the same results for 2 years. Therefore, growth is quite fragile, especially for bathrooms' furniture. The profitability is very small, but the turnover is slowly increasing. France is the 10<sup>th</sup> biggest exporter and the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest importer in the world. However, few companies work outside France, accounting for around 2 bn EUR exportation. Over 70% exports are to Europe, especially neighbouring countries. These exporting companies are gathered in the GEM, *Groupement des Exportateurs de Meubles*, in order to work more efficiently on exports at the international level. France mainly imports from China, Portugal and Poland.

UNIFA's lobbying priorities are :

- Ministry of environment: Segolene Royal with ANSES report, wood dust, Ecofilier/Circular Economy, Ecotax/EPR Scheme
- Presidency coming up (Elections in May): UNIFA is preparing priorities, e.g. to stop transposition of EU laws at a "golden player" level, increasing the demands for companies at a higher level than the one established at the European level.

One of UNIFA's biggest challenge is young labour force attractiveness caused by the location of companies in rural areas, and the lack of unattractiveness felt by the sector.

Regarding the issue of wood dust, Ms. Cathy Dufour (UNIFA) explained that small companies have great difficulties with the limit of 1mg/m<sup>3</sup> on wood dust, due to lack of resources and equipment in order to implement the legislation. This legislation has entered into force since ten years. Respecting the limit of 1mg/m<sup>3</sup> requires important and costly investment in equipment. Moreover, no machine is fully efficient. SMEs represent the vast majority of the industry.

## **6. For adoption - Discussion and adoption of EFIC position**

### **a) EFIC 2020: proposal to EFIC members on the future of EFIC**

Mr. Markus Wiesner, EFIC President explained how EFIC Vision is to establish a new structure for the future of EFIC in order to stay an independent and strong voice in EU affairs.

Ms. Roberta Dessì presented an overview of the **proposal from EFIC 2020 Task Force Strategy** on behalf of EFIC 2020 Task Force and invited the General Assembly to voice their opinions about the proposal.

- The General Assembly received very positively the Strategy.
- Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria) thanked the Task Force for their hard work. Fedustria agrees that the main priorities of EFIC lie in its lobbying activities and that the involvement in projects should be put into bracket for the moment. She stressed the need of having priorities although some flexibility is required as external factors influence the priorities agenda. She also proposed to keep the discussion on the reduced contribution for members in an EFIC internal document rather than in the Statute for more flexibility.
- Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMMP) supports the Strategy and congratulates the Task Force for their work.
- Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF) brought to the General Assembly's attention the need to invite EFIC member's chairman to EFIC General Assembly allowing them to realise for themselves EFIC work, build a forum and share ideas.
- Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) strongly supports the Strategy and explains that in the future if resources allow it, Federlegnoarredo envisages the possibility to take parts in projects with EFIC support.

- Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) affirms that the Strategy is not set in stone, but that it needs to be revised every two years enabling EFIC pro-activeness. He also added the importance of considering SMEs view and perspective when representing EFIC interests, which might be integrated in EFIC vision. The main goal is to build a “SMEs friendly policy.”
- Ms. Andrea Steinegger (Austrian Furniture Industry) asked about the possibility and timeline for the publication of the Strategy. EFIC 2020 Strategy will indeed be published soon and presented at EFIC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in June 2017.
- Mr. Egil Sundet (Norsk Industri) explained how the changes for different types of membership are to be decided by the Board Members. He also reminded the General Assembly the need to discuss the programme for EFIC General Assembly planned on June 2017.

EFIC GA voted for the adoption of the EFIC 2020 strategy. **EFIC 2020 proposal was unanimously approved by EFIC General Assembly.**

Mr. Markus Wiesner, EFIC President then opened the floor for discussion on the implementation of the Strategy, starting by explaining the first steps:

- The Secretariat will first prepare a “save the date letter” to be sent with basic information about the event and at a later stage an invitation letter with a more detailed programme.
- The Secretariat will prepare a first list of countries, national federations and companies seen as potential future EFIC members. EFIC members were called to do research on their side and identify potential suppliers and companies that might show interest in EFIC activities.
- The following responsibilities were set: Mr. Etienne Bodin (UNIFA) will be responsible for contacting UEA members, Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF) and Mr. Egil Sundet (Norsk Industri) committed to contact federations in Finland and Baltic countries.

The event would be the occasion to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary while promoting EFIC and recruit new members. High level speakers from the European Parliament and European Commission (DG ENV, for example with whom EFIC has close contacts) will be invited. The topic of circular economy was agreed as a central topic for discussion.

## **b) EFIC contribution scheme and budget proposal for 2017**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner presented the overview of EFIC 2016 budget and a preview for the year 2017. The Hungarian missing contribution from 2016 will be compensated by their involvement in the rebranding of EFIC new website. However, EFIC Board Members still need to negotiate the Hungarian contribution for 2017.

**EFIC General Assembly voted unanimously for the adoption of the 2017 budget proposal.**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner highlighted that EFIC 2020 proposal for a new EFIC Structure is aimed at increasing EFIC resources without the need to increase National members’ contribution scheme.

However, Mr. Wiesner stressed that if no change happened before the half of 2017, EFIC would not be able to keep the current structure of two people working in the Secretariat in Brussels and he would have a severe discussion with EFIC members on the need to raise the current contribution scheme.

### **c) The furniture industry and the circular economy: EFIC position paper on Circular Economy**

Ms. Roberta Dessì (Secretary General) presented the updated version of the draft on the Circular Economy position paper including the comments received by EFIC members on the first draft.

Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria) took the floor to make two comments and compliment the Secretariat for the paper. Fedustria is in favour of a voluntary scheme on information to consumers instead of a mandatory one as stated in Point 2.b. Moreover, she would prefer avoiding too much focus on chemicals as presented in point 4.e. Her first comment was directly implemented while EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner explained that hazardous chemicals are obstacles to circular economy. In fact, EFIC has to represent itself as a sustainable and environmental-friendly industry. Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMMP) added to this that supporting circular economy can only be beneficial to the furniture industry, for it allows the industry to buy cheaper products, but also grants access to a larger market. He also proposed to build a comprehensive database to keep track of our position papers' supporters in various institutions. Ms. Roberta Dessì (Secretary General) supported Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMMP)'s point arguing that it also needs input from EFIC national federations.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) suggested to send EFIC position paper accompanied with a letter signed by EFIC from national federations to their respective MEPs. He, furthermore, judged relevant to add national federations' logos at the end of the paper along with some figures of European furniture industry. This proposal found the support of all EFIC members and **EFIC Secretariat was asked to add the logos of all National federations to the description of EFIC included in EFIC papers and press releases.**

Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) supported the paper, and highlighted the fact that this paper should be firstly addressed to the European Commission.

**The position paper on Circular Economy was adopted after the amendments requested by Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria) on point 2.b and the inclusion of all EFIC National federations logos.** The Secretariat will circulate the final paper to EFIC members.

### **d) MES China: EFIC participation to AEGIS Europe for the year 2017**

Ms. Roberta Dessì (Secretary General) presented the activities of AEGIS Europe together with AEGIS proposal for an action plan for the future possible projects broadening the scope of action.

Ms. Roberta Dessì stressed that AEGIS is a very active and competent network with good expertise and was able to avoid any damaging situation. As the European Commission presented a proposal in November, discussions in the European Parliament will continue over 2017. More lobbying activities are therefore needed and AEGIS Europe is keeping the contribution fee at the same level of 2016.

Ms. Roberta Dessì also explained the proposal and ongoing discussion in AEGIS to broaden the scope of the Alliance. The proposal from AEGIS was also circulated to EFIC members before the GA. The General Assembly started the discussion by asking the difference between AEGIS and BusinessEurope as they fear the replication of a similar structure to BusinessEurope in the future. Moreover, EFIC General Assembly expressed a general fear that broadening the scope too much might weaken the existing structure. Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) and Mr. Mark Ruether (VDM) raised the lack of relevance for EFIC to be part of AEGIS, even more in a perspective of broadening the scope of AEGIS. The main question raised by the General Assembly was EFIC concrete loss if it

were to leave AEGIS. One question could help answer this question as to know how high the interests of EFIC members lie in Trade Defence Instruments. Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria) explained that there was no direct interest for EFIC to stay in the Alliance, but to keep it as an effective instrument in store. Many EFIC members stressed that EFIC should focus on other priorities as the moment, such as the Circular Economy Strategy and the Flame Retardant Case, and due to lack of financial resources it is not now in the interest of EFIC to pay the contribution fee for participating to the Alliance.

**The General Assembly rejected unanimously the option to renew EFIC participation to AEGIS Europe for the year 2017.**

**e) EFIC calendar for 2017 meetings**

**The General Assembly approved unanimously the EFIC proposal for a calendar for the year 2017.**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner and EFIC Secretary General Roberta Dessì will attend the Stockholm furniture fair in February 2017 and will meet Tomas Ekstrom, FEMB President who will be present for the event. This fair will also be the occasion to meet federations from Baltic states and Finland.

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

***Follow-up***

**7.1 Flame retardants**

**a) Update on EFIC Strategy and latest actions**

Ms. Roberta Dessì (Secretary General) reported on the latest actions and developments for EFIC flame retardant strategy.

EFIC Secretariat and EFIC rapporteur Mr. Egil Sundet have been mainly active on:

- 1) submitting EFIC reply to the UK consultation on updating the 1988 Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations and a letter to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). After contacts with EFIC, the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety & Rescue Group of the UK Parliament also asked clarifications to BEIS, which might lead to possible debate of EFIC position in the political group in the UK Parliament;
- 2) filing EFIC complaint against the UK Regulation to the European Commission. The European Commission has confirmed receiving the complaint against the UK and Irish regulations. According to the internal guidelines the Commission now has a time-frame of one year to decide whether to go forward with formal infringement procedures against the UK and Ireland. For strategic reasons, it was decided not to publish EFIC complaint, but EFIC members can receive it from the Secretariat if interested in reading it;
- 3) doing research on the policy assessment and follow-up strategy;
- 4) setting strategic meeting: EFIC Secretariat met the Permanent Representations of Sweden, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, the Danish Ministry of Environment, but also DG ENV and DG JUST;

- 5) starting contacts with press and media: EFIC's complaint was covered by three newspapers dealing with environmental and chemical issues, ENDSEurope, The Ends Report, and ChemicalWatch;
- 6) following FR-related debate and developments: The example of flame retardants is seen as a good case for the Circular Economy.

EFIC co-signed "The EU needs a Fire Safety Strategy" policy paper, Fire Safe Europe's position paper, with a broad coalition led by Fire Safe Europe. The paper calls the European Commission to work on a coordinated approach for a comprehensive European Fire Safety Strategy by setting an expert group and collecting comparable data as a first step. The alliance is committed to promote sustainable solutions. The paper includes a quote from EFIC President: "*Sustainable fire safety must take into account potential health and safety risks related to the exposure to hazardous additives like flame retardants in furniture during the entire life cycle of products.*" – Markus Wiesner, President, European Furniture Industries Confederation (EFIC).

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, EFIC met EFRA representatives, EFRA Chairman and EFRA Director. EFRA had requested a meeting, aiming at discussing the issue of flame retardants and fire safety in furniture. The meeting was useful to clearly understand EFRA position and arguments. EFIC has asked concrete scientific data, which were completely lacking from the presentation held.

**Mr. Markus Wiesner expressed the need to do research on the legal basis requiring the demands for open flame tests in public tenders. EFIC national federations need to investigate on the question.**

**b) Discussion and decision on next actions:**

**- EU-level strategy**

Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) voiced the possibility to schedule a meeting in February for EFIC with the president of the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament who is Italian and might be sympathetic to EFIC cause.

**- Mobilising Member States**

EFIC members were encouraged to go through their representatives at the Ministerial level to raise their attention on the case. Both Alliance members and EFIC members should get in touch with their national governments in order for permanent representations to feel pressure and take action at the EU level.

**- Dissemination plan and press/media strategy**

EFIC Secretariat is planning to organise a new stakeholder meeting in February 2017. One of the main items in the agenda will be the press and media strategy.

**7.2 EU Ecolabel for furniture products**

**a) EFIC members feedback on new Ecolabel for furniture**

The European Commission adopted on 28 July 2016 a Decision establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU Ecolabel for furniture. The Commission has received numerous critics on

the real need for European Ecolabels and on their assessment for specific product groups to the point that some Ecolabel criteria could be withdrawn by the European Commission.

EFIC was requested to provide feedback on the criteria and potential effectiveness of a European Eco-label for furniture products, and finally if the existence of a European label might meet the interest of furniture companies.

The general position of EFIC, explained by EFIC President, Mr. Markus Wiesner, was that Ecolabel is not necessary, but EFIC must follow up with this dossier, because of its link with the GPP criteria. During the consultation process, EFIC suggested having a European Ecolabel which is simple as furniture industry is mainly composed of SMEs, lacking resources which consequently cannot handle complex label's implementation.

EFIC Technical Working Group have been involved during all consultation process and informed the European Commission of the complexity of the proposed draft label.

Now that the label has been published, an assessment is missing from EFIC members on 1) how the European Ecolabel for furniture might be seen from companies and 2) if comments have been taken into account.

Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF) supported the general idea of having a common label, but it depends on how strict it is. Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) explained that comments provided by the industry was not taken into consideration in the Commission, hence it will be difficult now that companies will be interested in a too complex European eco-label.

### **7.3 TBT notification – CHN 1094-1095-1096**

#### **a) Update on latest developments and current status**

The TBT Committee took place on 10 – 11 November 2016. The European Commission added CHN 1094-1095-1096 to the Plenary agenda. The EU has asked China a number of key pending questions, including when the standards are expected to enter into force and with which binding force. China did not reply to the questions raised by EU, but rather stated that concerned standards “do not deviate from international standards and that they reflect the conditions of Chinese laboratories,” which is untrue according to EFIC/IKEA technical, economic and financial analysis. Regarding the information on the adoption time in China – if imminent or not- the EU asked clarification, but did not get any update from China.

At the same time, EFIC has received the information that in November official members in SAC (*technical and standardisation committee in China*) did an official vote for “mandatory or voluntary” effects of the concerned furniture standards. Apparently, the General Secretary of the National Standardization Technical Committee furniture asked all representatives to vote “mandatory” for these three standard. Result of the vote is still unknown. The Final Decision on each standard will be made at the Inter-Ministerial Meeting of Standardization Promotion and Coordination. However, according to representatives from the European Commission in China, the final decision will not deviate much from the conclusion of SAC.

Still, however, EFIC is lacking some clarification on the process that should take place in China. EFIC has solicited the European Commission to provide more information on this, as well as activating other channels.

## **b) Exchange of views on follow-up strategy**

EFIC needs to raise the attention on the case, at higher political level in the EU and if possible in China.

One way to do it could be through the involvement of the USA, and EFIC has already started a contact with furniture associations in the USA.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) suggested drafting a short statement (1 page, press release format), entitled “China is closing borders to European furniture” summarizing the consequences of TBT on the furniture sector, linking it to the position paper already existing. The statement could be supported by figures and data on negative trade balance between China and the EU.

The General Assembly agreed on the fact that this discussion needs to escalate and that has to be brought up to the general public’s attention. Another suggestion is to send an open letter to Juncker and Maelstrom’ cabinets, but the political timing is not really good with the ongoing discussion on MES China.

EFIC/IKEA collaboration will continue and seek clarification and support from the European Commission. The new drafted statement will be sent to be signed by as many stakeholders as possible, such as EFIC/IKEA/EBIA/EuroCommerce. Single companies within EFIC national federations might not be willing to sign this paper.

### **7.4 FLA and UNIFA proposal for EFIC position paper on the Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMR)**

EFIC position, proposed by FLA with the support of UNIFA, was circulated among EFIC members and inputs by all members were added in the final paper.

EFIC position paper was shared with MEPs from EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR, EFDD, ENF groups in the EMPL committee. Moreover, a joint position from EFIC-Cei-Bois-EOS-EPF was communicated to the shadow rapporteurs, in addition to all members of the EMPL committee.

The Secretariat attended the presentation of the draft report in the EMPL committee. The Swedish rapporteur has proposed the strict limit of 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> thinking that best practices, with the case of France, should be applied to all EU member states. EPP and ALDE groups were more balanced in their position taking into consideration the industry’s concerns on the feasibility of the measure. The deadline for amendments is set on 8 January 2017. At this stage, EFIC needs to redouble its efforts to maintain the limit to 3 mg/m<sup>3</sup> with the support of the national federations.

#### **Next steps: URGENCY to act!**

##### **1) Complete arguments needed**

It is crucial to collect more information and arguments about France where the smallest structures cannot afford and are unable to respect the limit of 1mg/ m<sup>3</sup>. This information will help strengthen EFIC position. Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) suggested the option to add some amendments on the recitals – “any further action should take into consideration the concern of the industry.” Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) also exposed the fact that Europe should respect the principle of “Think Small First” and this is clearly lacking in this case.

In particular, EFIC Secretariat reported to EFIC members that it is crucial to investigate on :

- a) Different testing methods in the EU for measuring wood dust:** more explanations on this point must be found, especially the differences between testing methods and the reasons for having several methods (e.g What changes and which are the concrete consequences). Mr. Bertrand Demarne stressed that in France, for example, there are four to five testing methods.
- b) Difference between hardwood and softwood dust:** this issue is the most challenging one to gather support from MEPs (also those willing to supporting higher limits). There is a need to provide explanations and good arguments on why this difference should be kept, accompanied by scientific studies if possible. In the Netherlands, there is no distinction between softwood and hardwood. In addition to this, only hardwood has been proved to be carcinogens. Therefore, softwood should not be wrongly labelled as such.

**2) Get in contact with National MEPs in the EMPL committee**

EFIC invites all national federations to actively lobby their national MEPs.

<b>8 January 2017</b>	<b>Deadline for amendments</b>	Need to get in contact with MEPs in view of presentation of amendments → share National/EFIC position
<b>28/02/2017</b>	<b>Vote scheduled in committee, 1st reading/single reading</b>	Need to get in contact with MEPs – EMPL committee in view of the vote of committee report → Find key personalities for each country/set meetings → EFIC members to contact National MEPs → Clarify some lacking/weak arguments
<b>Spring 2017</b>	<b>Plenary Session</b>	Adoption of the Parliament position

**7.5 EFIC Communication priorities: feedback on EFIC newsletter and proposal for EFIC website**

Ms. Andrea Steinegger (Austrian Furniture Industry) thought that the newsletter could be more spread over time than on a monthly basis. EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner highlighted the need to focus on the really main important things and report both on the current situations and states of play of issues dealt by EFIC. Mr. Etienne Bodin (UNIFA)’s comment was in regard with the length of the first section which could be shortened. Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM) proposed to edit the title for the first section to “EFIC, your voice in Europe.”

The General Assembly decided to adopt the proposal from the Hungarian federation for the rebranding of EFIC new website.

## *New Initiatives*

### **8. Information: general information and update on main ongoing dossiers**

#### **8.1 French decree on the labelling of COVs (following ANSES report)**

##### **a) Update on current status – E. BODIN, UNIFA**

The last meeting took place three weeks ago. UNIFA is having a good collaboration with the French government and hence judged the involvement of EFIC unnecessary at this stage. This position might, of course, be revised if UNIFA encounters lobbying issues in the future.

#### **8.2 The “EU furniture market situation and a possible furniture product initiative” - ID Card**

EFIC called for EFIC members' input. In the last meeting, EFIC proposed to set up a working group. EFIC President Markus Wiesner made a tour de table to know the importance given to this dossier in the national federations. Members were asked to express a vote from 5 (lowest) to 1 (highest):

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (CBM): 5 as there is no real discussion at the Dutch level and CBM is not really in favour of ID Card.

Mr. Mark Ruether (VDM): 5 as the situation in Germany is difficult.

Mr. Vitor Pocas (AIMMP): 1

Ms. Elizabeth De Wandeler (Fedustria): 5

Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo): 1

Mr. Markus Wiesner (Austrian Furniture Industry) : 1

Mr. Etienne Bodin (UNIFA): 4

EFIC members also made some comments. Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegnoarredo) stressed the importance of communicating the advantages, design and origin of a product. This is a whole discussion on whether there is a necessity for marketing or not. ID Card can also be a voluntary initiative. Federlegnoarredo got discouraged after the publication of the European Parliament report on the issue. She then proposed to come back to EFIC with a new proposition if a new report is made. Mr. Etienne Bodin (UNIFA) justified the little interest of UNIFA in the matter as France has a national legislative on the matter, called “France *garantie*.” EFIC Secretariat asked UNIFA to share more information on this regulation.

#### **8.3 Circular Economy: EEA study on tracking chemicals and Revision of Waste Directive**

Case study on Wiesner-Hager company – publication date tbc

The amendments on the Revision of Waste Directive will be voted in January 2017. ENVI MEPs are currently working on compromise amendments, such as on the EPRs schemes.

#### **8.4 Environmental Green Goods Agreement – EGA**

The European Commission confirms that there are no furniture-related tariff lines on the current product list of the EGA Chair. The agreement was supposed to be finalised by the end of 2016, but is postponed to the near future.

## **8.5 Green Public Procurement criteria - GPP**

The draft criteria was “lost” in Interservice Consultation. EFIC met DG Environment and asked to provide a feedback on the status quo of the revision.

## **8.6 EU Social Dialogue**

EFIC Secretariat together with representatives from UNIFA, FLA, and CBM attended the last Social Dialogue meeting which took place on 9 November 2016. The first point on the agenda was the issue on Flame retardants where Ms. Roberta Dessì presented the Case for Flame Retardant Free Furniture on behalf of EFIC and EFBWW. Among the other points on the agenda, the Social Partners exchanged views on the Multi-annual Implementation Plan of the new EU Forest Strategy, agreeing on the lacking in focus of the furniture industry, and the proposal for DIGIT-Fur project. The Social Partners also opened a discussion on the issue of wood dust in working environment as a revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive is currently ongoing. EFBWW presented its position aimed at lowering the limits at a level of 2 mg/m<sup>3</sup> until 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. EFIC raised the fact that there is no harmonized calculation method and that imposing a stricter limit might lead to high investment costs, which could be unbearable for SMEs while some segments of the sector are already facing serious financial challenges. EFBWW shared its interest in calling the EU for a wood conference, similar to the one in 2007 which had no concrete results, to further investigate this issue.

## **8.7 Technical dossiers – EFIC TWG**

There are activities under the PU Exchange Panel closely monitored by Piet Vanthournout, member of EFIC Technical Working Group. Mr. Piet Vanthournout reported that there are no new developments to report at the moment as they are waiting for the approval of ECHA.

### **f) Any other business, next meeting and closure**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner thanked EFIC members for their participation and closed the meeting wishing them best wishes for Christmas and New Year holidays.

Next EFIC Board Meeting will be on 2-3 March in Amsterdam, hosted by EFIC Dutch furniture federation (CBM).