

## EFIC BOARD MEETING

*Monday 26 June 2017*

Rue Montoyer, 24  
1000 Bruxelles

h. 12.30 - 16.30

### ADOPTED 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 Dessì (*Secretary General*), Mr. Manfredi Marchese (*Policy and Communication Assistant*), Ms. Andrea Steinegger (*Austrian Furniture Industry*), Ms. Margherita Miceli (*Federlegnoarredo*), Ms. Marta Anzani (*Federlegnoarredo*), Mr. Carla Borges (*AIMMP*), Mr. Etienne Bodin (*UNIFA*), Ms. Cecilia Engström (*TMF*), Mr. Kees Hoogendijk (*CBM*), Mr. Egil Sundet (*Norsk Industri*), Mr. Jon Daniel Nesje (*Norsk Industri*), Ms. Gönül Çınar (*Mosder*).

Mr. Gabor Wilhelm (*Hungarian Furniture Industry*), Mr. Flemming Larsen (*TMI*), Mr. Filip De Jaeger (*Fedustria*), Mr. Mark Ruether (*VDM*) apologized for their absence.

#### 2. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted with one amendment proposed by Ms. Margherita Miceli and Ms. Marta Anzani: Federlegnoarredo award for Mr. Markus Wiesner and for EFIC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Moreover, EFIC Secretary General Roberta Dessì proposed to move the discussion on “TBT notification – CHN 1094-1095-1096” from “Information” to “Strategic actions” due to the recent developments in the WTO TBT committee for this case.

#### 3. Adoption of minutes from EFIC Board meeting held in Amsterdam on 3th March 2017

The minutes were adopted without amendments.

#### 4. Introduction of new Board member

Ms. Gonul Cinar introduced herself. Ms. Cinar is the new Secretary general of Mosder and its representative (Board member) in EFIC. She has already a long-time experience in the furniture industry and she had been Secretary general for Mosder already in the past.

#### 5. Introduction of EFIC Policy and Communication Assistant

Mr. Manfredi Marchese introduced himself. Mr. Marchese started on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 its position as Policy and Communication assistant in EFIC office in Brussels. He has already experience in both communication and policy, being an assistant of an Italian MEP for one year before joining EFIC.

#### 6. For adoption – Discussion and adoption of EFIC position

##### 6.1 EFIC balance sheet 2016

Mr. Markus Wiesner presented in details the official results for EFIC in the year 2016.

The summary of results was the following:

- EFIC has spent less than agreed for EFIC Secretary General employment (wages and social costs)
- EFIC has spent as much as planned for travelling/meetings/event – however organising low-budget events only
- EFIC has saved costs for newsletter concept finding a non-costs solution
- EFIC had some extra expenses due to changing its office (new equipment) – still within the budget line
- EFIC has started later than expected the apprenticeship contract for EFIC assistant, therefore a part of the money planned for 2016 will be spent in 2017
- Debtors: EFIC had to deduct RUS fees for 2014 and 2016 from current budget (- 6000 euro) - HU fee for 2015 still in EFIC assets

EFIC President informed EFIC Board members that EFIC will reimburse to R. Dessí the amount of wages and social costs which has not been duly paid in 2016 due to a mistake in the calculation of the correct new<sup>1</sup> salary. This will most probably take the form of a bonus to be corresponded in 2017.

EFIC President asked EFIC Board member to vote for the formal adoption of EFIC 2016 balance sheet. **EFIC balance sheet for 2016 was unanimously approved by EFIC members (see Annex 1).**

##### 6.2 EFIC 2020 strategy update and discussion about future organization within EFIC:

Mr. Markus Wiesner and Ms. Roberta Dessí informed EFIC members of the following developments of the EFIC 2020 strategy since last Board Meeting in Amsterdam:

Regarding the possibilities for a closer collaboration between EFIC and FEMB, Mr. Tomas Ekström, - who requested the meeting with EFIC - left the position as President of FEMB. The new President is now Roman Przybylski (Nowy Styl Group). He had an informal meeting with EFIC Secretary General in Milan in April and he will attend EFIC high level conference. Mr. Markus Wiesner underlined that FEMB is not able to work in functional law and lobbying. However, Mr. Roman Pribsisky is very much aware of the benefits that these activities might bring to the table. Ms. Andrea Steinegger alerted Board Members that FEMB counts on many English members, which might create problems in the implementation of certain EFIC actions.

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<sup>1</sup> The decision on the salary change was taken by EFIC Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.

Ms. Roberta Dessi showed the list of recipients of EFIC 2020 invitations letters and federations which have already answered. EFIC Secretariat has reached all existing National federations and few companies with whom the Secretariat had direct contacts. EFIC members were invited to share invitations with their National member companies and other contacts.

Mr. Etienne Bodin informed the Board about his contact with Romanian and Bulgarian Associations and he said that Eastern countries are usually more willing to work on projects instead of doing proper lobbying activity. He suggested that, for example, Romania could be a member more involved in projects.

Mr. Egil Sundet asked the Board if a strategic plan is in force in order to follow-up with possible members. He suggested to keep on contacting them.

Ms. Gonul Cinar assured the Board that she will get in touch with Bulgaria.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk added that big companies are likely to be more interested in joining EFIC while small companies are less interested and the strategy should focus more on bigger companies. He added that a specific focus should also be on possible sponsors like suppliers of the furniture industry or other partners.

Mr. Markus Wiesner stressed on the need to increase EFIC budget. So, either we enlarge the Confederation with new members or partners, or we double the contribution fee for existing members.

Ms. Gönül Çınar also suggested to find other ways to increase EFIC budget. For example, she presented the possibility to organize networking events where companies pay for finding new trade opportunities (e.g. business-to-business meetings).

Ms. Cecilia Engström proposed to think about giving members statistics on furniture market, as FEMB does with its members. In this regard, FederlegnoArredo reminded Board members about their research center that also prepares forecasts on the market. However, such kind of activity might require additional capacity.

Both Mr. Marchese and Ms. Dessi left the meeting room and EFIC President presented to EFIC members the minimum budget EFIC would need in order to have two full-time employees in a still small and minimum-budgeted representation office in Brussels. From today's budget and contribution scheme, there is a lack that has to be covered by the end of the year 2017 at the latest.

EFIC President also reminded EFIC members that Manfredi Marchese's contract is going to end at the beginning of September. Still there is the possibility to extend the existing apprenticeship contract till the end of the year. **EFIC Board members agreed on prolonging Mr. Manfredi Marchese's contract until December 2017.**

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

### *Follow-up activities*

#### **7.1 Flame retardants**

- Communication policy and strategic actions

Ms. Roberta Dessi presented the activity carried out by EFIC in the latest months. He listed the meetings with policy makers and briefly explained the contents:

- meeting with DG Environment on GPP criteria and requirements on flammability.
- meeting with DG Grow on EFIC legal complaint against UK and Ireland.
- meeting with BBG procurement organization in Austria on Flame Retardants.

Ms. Roberta Dessi gave a general overview on the conference on Flame Retardants in York (BFR York April 2017). She presented the research carries out by Professor Richard Hull (University of Central Lancashire) on “Do flame retardants make furniture safer?

His research could be used to speed up the case for FRs Free Furniture. Additional researches carried out by a joint group research of University of Ireland, Galway and Birmingham, shows that FRs are a clear obstacle to circular economy. Last but not least, during the Conference an analysis of selected food from supermarket in Brussels was presented. It proves a wide spread of BFR concentration in Belgian food and this will be a very important argument to be presented to policy makers.

Mr. Dessi also focused on the growing interest of the UK press as well as on the development of the communication strategy for the Case for FRs Free Furniture.

EFIC members agreed on the necessity to keep a continuous flow of information and communication on this case in order to sensitise policy makers and the public.

EFIC President and EFIC Board members Mr. Egil Sundet also stressed the need to work more on this issue at the National level. Mr. Markus Wiesner reported about the meeting held in Vienna with Austrian authorities and the furniture industry. More initiatives of this level should be organized by EFIC members in the capitals.

## 7.2 French decree on the labelling of VOC.

Mr. Etienne Bodin reported on the current status in France particularly focusing on the uncertain political situation after the Presidential elections that have seen emerging the new President Mr. Emmanuel Macron.

Ms. Dessi presented EFIC reply to the EU consultation published through the EU TRIS database. The document raised many issues of concern and it particularly focuses on the possible creation of a barrier to trade to the French Market. Other issues are: creation of extensive costs for companies (especially for SMEs); effects on functioning of the EU internal market; lack of test chamber availability; emission classes; not fit for purpose regulation; lack of essential information and unclear definitions; incomplete notification under Directive 2015/1535.

EFIC position found a follow-up in the press (ChemicalWatch and Orsiad) and the full consultation reply has been included in EPF annual report.

The current status of the notification procedure was presented by Ms. Roberta Dessi. The French notification received several reactions. Five detailed opinions were presented by Italy, Latvia, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom. Detailed opinions have the direct effect to extend the standstill period of additional 3 months (new deadline is set at 20 July 2017). France has the legal obligation to reply and to explain the action that it intends to take in response to the detailed opinions.

The notification procedure also allows Member States (and EU institutions?) to present comments, which do not oblige French to reply. 3 comments were issued by the European Commission, Austria and Germany. France shall take such comments into account as far as possible.

However, Ms. Roberta Dessi underlined that a French reply will not be published in the EU TRIS portal and most probably not even the information that France has replied. EFIC Secretariat has brought this issue to the attention of the European Commission officials and will formally request access to the documents as soon as the deadline of 20 July expires.

### 7.3 Revision of the Mutagens and Carcinogens Directive – limits on wood dust

Ms. Roberta Dessi informed Board Members about the last developments in the negotiation process.

After a difficult and very tense discussion between the European Parliament (EP) and the Council, the EP has just presented a compromise proposal to the Maltese Presidency. The rapporteur proposes compromising on the issue of the distinction between wood dusts (hardwood and softwood) if a) the Commission agrees to assess the issue with an impact assessment on softwood b) the stricter limit value with a transition period is agreed to. The EP proposal is therefore to set a 2 mg/m<sup>3</sup> threshold for hardwood dust with a transition period of five years at 3mg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The next trialogue meeting where this issue will be discussed is provisionally scheduled on 28<sup>th</sup> June, but still this date is not confirmed. EFIC Secretariat warned EFIC members that most probably the Maltese Presidency of the Council will need to re-negotiate its mandate for the trialogue. It is therefore important to get in contact with national representatives in Permanent Representations, most of all in order to underline that having a number of exemption would be needed because the limit of 2 mg/m<sup>3</sup> is unfeasible in certain working situation.

#### - EFBWW proposal for a wood dust conference

Within the European Social Dialogue, Social Partners in the furniture and woodworking sectors might propose the European Commission to organize a Wood Dust Conference. The proposal came from EFBWW in the form of a draft letter to Commissioner Thyssen.

Ms. Roberta Dessi and EFIC Board member Mr. Kees Hoogendijk reported that a first discussion on this proposal took place at the furniture Social Dialogue in June. Mr. Kees Hoogendijk shared the opinion that a positive approach towards this proposal it is preferable, as it wouldn't be good to state that the furniture industry does not want to talk about this existing issue.

EFIC Board members agreed that it would be interesting to have such conference, and agreed on the need to address the following question: what are the result we want to achieve?  
Through the organization of such a Conference, EFIC could show to EU institutions the difficulties faced by SMEs in complying with the limits set by the Directive.

Ms. Margherita Miceli (Federlegno Arredo) alerted Board Members that such a Conference would not be able to influence the legislative process, because it will be already concluded. However, it could be interesting to present our views considering the 5 years of transitional period.

Mr. Etienne Bodin stated that the Conference programme must be drafted together and EFIC should suggest possible speakers in order to “drive the Conference to what we want to achieve”.

### 7.4 TBT notification – CHN 1094-1095-1096

EFIC Secretariat reported to EFIC Board members about the results of the last TBT Committee meeting in Geneva on 14-15 June 2017. During the bilateral discussion EU – China (CHN), the EU representatives raised once more the case of the three Chinese furniture standards, posing pending questions and requests for clarification. Differently from the previous meetings, this time CHN showed a clear position towards this case.

In particular, Chinese representatives stated they want to take this discussion at the **technical level** and not discuss it at the political level in the WTO TBT committee. They proposed to the EU to agree on such discussion stating that CHN is ready to send a delegation to the EU to discuss this topic or they would welcome a discussion at the Chinese furniture fair in Shanghai in September.

EFIC Board members agreed on the opportunity to have such discussion, but considered the timing in September to be too short for preparation. A meeting in the EU could be positive and EFIC should be prepared to the technical discussion with Chinese authorities. It is important to coordinate this issue with EFIC TWG and Mr. Marco Fossi is already playing an important role in this discussion.

## *New initiatives*

### 7.5 Circular Economy: “Analysis of the interface between chemicals, products and waste legislation and identification of policy options - Roadmap”

EFIC was invited to take part to a targeted stakeholder consultation on the interface between chemicals, products and waste legislation. The information together with a request for feedback was already circulated among EFIC Board and the deadline for providing comments is on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

Four main aspects are in the scope of the consultation, which are also included in the European Commission’s roadmap on this issue:

- #1: Insufficient information substances of concern in products and waste
- #2: Presence of substances of concern in recycled materials and in articles
- #3: Uncertainties about how materials can cease to be waste
- #4: Difficulties apply EU waste classification and impacts on recyclability

Ms. Roberta Dessì shared the view that it could be a great occasion to raise once more the Case for Flame Retardant Free Furniture and to broaden its scope. Moreover, other topics already agreed in EFIC would be added to the consultation reply.

EFIC Board members agreed on the need for EFIC to provide a feedback on the consultation. EFIC Secretary General reminded EFIC members to send any new feedback as soon as possible, as the deadline for preparing EFIC reply is approaching very soon.

### 7.6 Danish formaldehyde regulation notified to the EU

EFIC Secretariat informed EFIC Board members that the European Commission presented a detailed opinion and comments on the Danish notified regulation. Such documents are not public but a formal request to access these documents is pending.

R. Dessì reminded EFIC Board members that the end of standstill has been prolonged after a detailed opinion from Italy and it will now expire on 04/09/2017. If EFIC members wishes to present a feedback, it needs to be presented by that date.

EFIC was also informed by EFIC Board member TMI shared some concerns on technical level and started a discussion with the Ministry in Denmark.

Unfortunately, Mr. Larsen Flemming could not attend the Board meeting and therefore could not report Board Members on new developments in the discussion in Denmark.

### 7.7 Chinese notification on formaldehyde notified to WTO

The new Chinese regulation has been notified to the WTO on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 (Chinese only). EFIC Secretariat is still waiting for the official translation of the Chinese notification.

Following EFIC request, the European Commission provided an unofficial translation that was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and will be circulated among EFIC members. The deadline for comments is set on 28 July 2017.

EFIC members are invited to share comments on any potential issue of concern.

### 7.8 EFIC event in June: Circular Economy and the furniture sector

Ms. Dessì reported to EFIC Board Members about the organizational aspects related to the high-level conference on “Circular Economy and the Furniture Sector”. 12 speakers will be present at the conference representing stakeholders, industries and EU institutions as well.

The registration process listed 75 subscribers and it covers the overall capacity of the meeting room in Rue Montoyer 24 (Belliard).



For this occasion, EFIC Secretariat printed EFIC policy paper on Circular Economy and on the Case for FRs Free Furniture. The EFIC 2020 strategy brochure was also presented to Board Members. The Board Members decided to present the EFIC 2020 strategy during both the Conference and the lunch cocktail organized in celebration of the EFIC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of activities in Brussels.

Follow-up activities planned by EFIC Secretariat include:

- EFIC press release: to be published on the day after the conference. EFIC members are invited to publish it in their websites as well.
- Report of the event (longer): to be published by mid-July and widely distributed;
- Contacts with press to have article about the event
- Include a section in EFIC website with ppt presentations from the event (if technically feasible and if permissions are granted).

EFIC Board members congratulated Ms. Roberta Dessí and Mr. Manfredi Marchese for the good organization of the event and the well-prepared programme.

EFIC Board members exchanged views on the speakers and on the registered participants to the event.

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

### **8.1 European Social Dialogue Furniture**

EFIC Secretariat briefly reported about the discussion which took place at the last Social Dialogue meeting, including: Bolster up 2 project; Wood dust conference; Possible joint Social Partners papers (flame retardants, OSH framework, ageing workforce); First discussion on SD work programme 2018-2019.

### **8.2 Joint declaration EU Industrial Strategy**

Ms. Dessi informed Board Members about the latest developments of the call for an “EU industrial strategy” that EFIC joined together with 125 industry associations. The campaign calls on the European Commission to take legislative actions in order to adopt a European industrial strategy.

Among other issues, the joint paper was launched ahead of the Competitiveness Council in February and the EU Industry Day. Industry Ministers (FR, DE, IT, PL, ES) jointly reacted with a call on EC to adopt a European industrial strategy. There has been a positive feedback from Commissioner Bieńkowska during the press conference following the last COMP Council (but no official/written commitment). Finally, an oral question from the European Parliament to the European Commission (at the initiative of 8 ITRE MEPs) has been submitted on “*Building an ambitious EU industrial strategy as a strategic priority for growth, employment and innovation in Europe*”. Among the 5 questions raised, the Parliament clearly asks the Commission to position itself officially regarding both our Joint Declaration and the recent request of the COMP Council.

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

### **- EFIC meeting in October and December 2017**

Ms. Cecilia Engström (TMF) confirmed that the next Board Meeting will be held in Sweden on 12-13 October hosted by TMF. She is also exploring the possibility to visit the new IKEA museum in Ellwond. The closest airport would be Copenhagen and the area is reachable in 2 hours by train.

EFIC last meeting in 2017 is scheduled on 11-12 December. No location is decided yet. EFIC Secretariat invited EFIC Board members interested in hosting the meeting to inform EFIC Secretariat by beginning of October. Otherwise, the meeting will be in Brussels.

## **Any Other Business**

### **E1 and E-LES (Low Emission Standard)**

Mr. Markus Wiesner raised the issue of the E1 compulsory project. Mr. Wiesner reiterated that one and common standard should be applied and supported by the European furniture industry because having 27 different regulations would be unacceptable. Therefor – he stated - we should follow an active strategy, otherwise furniture producers will have to fulfill many different costumers requirements and the panel industry will have to produce many different levels as well.

Moreover, Mr. Markus Wiesner informed EFIC members about the voluntary standard created by EPF (E-LES), which now EPF would like to see recognized possibly by standardization bodies. One reason to talk about E-LES is that when looking at the global scenario (as the US and others) E1 is not the future anymore (E-LES is 66% of E1 and the same level of CARB).

Mr. Wiesner expressed the opinion that if such standards stay voluntary the results will be the creation of different levels where someone accept it and someone else does not. The proposal would be to accept only one standard, eventually also the E-LES at the conditions that: 1) one standard is adopted in the EU 2) this standard is mandatory in order to ensure a level playing field 3) the panel industry is able to supply all companies in the needed quantity 4) a mandatory requirement is set on the supply side and expensive full-scale measurements are not requested afterwards.

Mr. Wiesner asked EFIC Board members for their opinion about it.

Mr. Kees Hoogendijk suggested not to use E –LES as terminology. He proposed to specify it with concrete numbers like E 0,5.

Ms. Marta Anzani proposed to look at what US are doing and take inspiration from them.

Mr. Wiesner concluded that EFIC will continue the discussion with EPF and will inform Board Members about any development. He asked EFIC Board members to discuss this issue internally with their members in order to discuss on EFIC position as a next step.

### **Changes in EFIC German member Federation VDM**

EFIC President Mr. Markus Wiesner informed EFIC Board that EFIC Board member Mr. Mark Ruether left its position at VDM. VDM will inform EFIC Secretariat as soon as they have appointed a new representative.

### **EFIC award for 10<sup>th</sup> years anniversary from EFIC Italian member Federation FLA**

Ms. Marta Anzani and Ms. Margherita Miceli informed EFIC President about the award that FLA is willing to give to EFIC President at the end of the Board meeting for his highly-recognised activity as a President and in the occasion of EFIC anniversary.

In conclusion, EFIC President thanked EFIC members for their participation and closed the meeting inviting them to the dinner in Monts des Arts.



## Annex 1 – EFIC Balance sheet for 2016 as adopted

### EFIC - Financial situation as per 31/12/2016

<b>Survey of income and expenses</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salaries	59,281.92
Rent & charges Montoyer	14,020.37
Office equipments & variable office costes	7,692.10
Administrative costs	1,476.82
Fees	1,210.00
Website	61.00
Travel/representation	12,419.72
Bank costs	208.92
Accounting	2,766.83
Loss debtors	6,000.00
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>105,137.68</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Contributions	115,500.00
Various	1,667.06
<b>Total income</b>	<b>117,167.06</b>
Result	12,029.38

### Balance sheet

<b>ASSETS</b>		<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Bank accounts	56,759.18	Result previous years	38,183.76
Debtors	3,463.63	Operating result	12,029.38
Others	703.65	Suppliers	402.79
		Other liabilities or debts	10,310.53
		To be assigned	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,926.46</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>60,926.46</b>