



SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR WOODWORKING

**14 June 2016
Plenary meeting
MINUTES**

The meeting was chaired by Kenneth Johansson (EFBWW), who welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda. The agenda was adopted with small modifications.

1. Adoption of minutes and reflection on the joint meeting in March

The minutes of the meeting on 18 May 2015 were adopted. Following a request from CEI-Bois the adoption of the minutes from the meeting on 11 March 2016 was postponed to the next meeting. It was already pointed out that on page 3, point 7 the abbreviation FSE should be changed into FSC.

EFBWW proposed to continue having a joint meeting with the SSDC Furniture in 2017 and 2018 and made two proposals:

- a. It suggested alternating the order of the meetings. In March the work started with a separate meeting of the furniture sector; the woodworking sector had its separate meeting after the joint meeting. Next time work should start with a separate meeting of woodworking and furniture would have a separate meeting after the joint meeting and so forth.
- b. To have enough time for the dialogue, EFBWW suggests shortening the preparatory work, enlarging the separate meetings and starting the joint meeting already before lunch.

CEI-Bois took note of the proposal and will discuss it.

2. Work programme 2016-2017

EFBWW and CEI-Bois agreed that integrating migrants/asylum seekers should be discussed in the committee and that EFBWW will propose a text to include the topic into the work programme. It was suggested to link the topic to demographic change and to focus on sector-related initiatives.

To be able to send the new work programme soon to the Commission the proposal will be sent to CEI-Bois within the next 2 weeks.

3. Report from the Commission Expert Group on Forest based Industries and information on a seminar concerning 'Wood in Construction'

The members of the Committee had received the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the expert group on forest based industries organised by DG GROW. Rolf Gehrig pointed out that this group touches on a number of issues, such as circular economy and the timber regulation, which are very important for EFBWW and potentially also the Committee. So far the expert group has not developed operational activities and the originally envisaged sub-groups have not been set up.

He was wondering whether there should be a joint initiative, perhaps research e.g. on the use of wood in construction or on wood-based materials in insulation. He suggested using the summer break to develop specific ideas for joint project activities in cooperation with FIEC.

CEI-Bois saw this in line with the new work programme which includes an agenda point on 'circular economy'. CEI-Bois has an internal working group on 'wood in construction' and had supported the initiative to work on 'wood in construction' already in the past, not necessarily seeing this as part of social dialogue. The social partners agreed that the involvement of FIEC, which seemed now more willing to engage on the subject than in the past, is extremely important. EFBWW envisaged also bringing on board architects, partly via its own membership and partly via the European level organisation of architects.

EFBWW will continue to discuss with FIEC on a seminar 'wood in construction'.

4. Potential Project on Psychosocial Hazards

The woodworking and the furniture sector had invited the construction sector to join a project application. However, the construction sector declined this invitation indicating that the mobile workplaces in construction require a treatment which would differ considerably from the mainly stationary workplaces in woodworking and furniture.

Therefore social partners plan to do the project without the construction sector. Taking into account resource constraints, social partners agreed to postpone the project application to 2017. On the content level, it was agreed that the focus should be on collection and dissemination of best practices and an inquiry in changes of working conditions.

5. Potential Project on Perspectives and Challenges for the Woodworking Industries in Europe

The social partners will submit an according project proposal under the 2016 call. Compared to the version which was submitted in 2015 some changes have been introduced. In particular the aspect of the image of the woodworking sector for young people has been included. The document now undergoes a final review, including a revision of the budget. CEI-Bois and EFBWW secretariats agreed to meet in the next days to go through the open issues.

EFBWW offered its support on the more formal aspects of the application and stressed that EFBWW is very attentive to the content of the project and in particular that working conditions are part of it.

6. OSHA Campaign on Ageing Workforce

EFBWW is a project partner to OSHA on the OSHA campaign on ageing workforce, which was launched in spring 2016 and will take two years. So far EFBWW has not undertaken activities, but asked, whether there was interest in joint activity. Linking ageing to the finalised project

about attracting young people to the sector, joint work could aim at 'keeping' workers in the sector.

Mr. Hartmann (EFBWW) highlighted that the woodworking sector so far is not prepared to employ older workers. This will need to change and therefore, it should get on the social dialogue agenda and investments would be needed. It was also pointed out that the absence of career paths in the sector was a reason for workers to leave the sector, which together with the evolving new skills requirements (e.g. low-energy constructions), could lead to substantial skill-gaps. Reference was made to a degree-programme set-up in Ireland to upskill workers and keep them in the sector.

CEI-Bois agreed to the importance of the topic and asked for a clarification which level of priority EFBWW would like to give to the topic. – As a first step EFBWW foresaw to have a project in the construction sector, where similar problems can be observed and subsequently deal with the topic for woodworking.

7. A.o.B

Evaluation of EU-OSH legislation

EFBWW reported that the Commission had some time ago launched an evaluation of the EU-level health and safety legislation, i.e. the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC and its 24 individual Directives. This work has become part of the Commission's REFIT exercise which aims at checking whether the legislation is fit for purpose and whether legislation could be made 'lighter, simpler and less costly'. The final report from the consultants (a consortium steered by COWI) is now ready, social partner are waiting for the Commission's report, which is expected to give indications on the conclusion it wants to take.

Following the publication of this report, EFBWW expects the Commission to modify the strategic framework for health and safety (2014-2020). In 2012 the committee forwarded a joint opinion to the European Commission, providing the social partners' views on the issues addressed with the strategic OSH framework. A recirculation of an updated version of this joint opinion was suggested. The partners plan to look into the documents once available and see whether there is room for a joint intervention.

Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens directive

EFBWW informed the members of the committee that the Commission has on 13 May 2016 proposed a revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (Directive 2004/37/EC), thereby taking up on social partner consultations from 2004 and 2007.

The main features of the revision are the inclusion of more substances in the directive. The proposal includes already 13 substances, including hardwood dust, and 12 more, potentially formaldehyde, are planned to be added before the end of the year.

The limit value for hardwood dust is set at 3 mg/m³, below the value of 5 mg/m³ in the existing Directive, but above the exposure limit and the methodological approach (i.e. not distinguishing between hardwood and soft wood dust) EFBWW would wish for.

Next steps in this process will be that Council and Parliament will form an opinion on the Commission proposal. This is expected for the 2nd semester 2016. Then negotiations between the three bodies on the final text could start.

Mr. Astier (CEI-Bois) reminded of the work done by the Committee, concerning the identification of good practices to prevent exposure and on the relationship with the companies producing the machinery. It was also reminded that the last conference on wood-dust organised by the Commission dates back more than 10 years.

8. Bolster-up project

In the bolster-up project the committee had identified minimum skill requirements for two core-qualifications in the woodworking and furniture sector: the upholsterer and the cabinet maker, the work was based on research in six member states. Social partners are interested to continue working on that topic. Taking into account that this requires to have a partnership before the application, introducing a project proposal in 2016 was considered premature. Cooperation with the project providers of the Eurojoiner project was envisaged.

9. Eurojoiner

The project providers gave a presentation (ppt) of this project which is financed by Erasmus+ and aims at the development of a European job profile for joiners, with according self-tests, curriculum and training material. The project does not include the development of certificate. It's main aim is to facilitate mobility of workers in this profession. A plan to disseminate the results of the project is still under development.