



**SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEES FOR WOODWORKING  
and FURNITURE**

**20 March 2017  
Joint working group meeting  
MINUTES**

**WOOD SPECIFIC TOPICS**

Chair : Mr Patrizio ANTONICOLI (CEI-Bois)

**1. Opening of the meeting – Adoption of the agenda – Adoption of minutes dd. 9 November 2016**

In his introduction, Mr Vitor POCAS, President of CEI-Bois, welcomed the participants and wished them a fruitful social dialogue meeting. The agenda was adopted, as well as the minutes of the previous working group meeting .

**2. Project : Perspectives and Challenges of the Woodworking industries in Europe**

The project was accepted for funding by the European Commission at the end of last year. CEI-Bois announced the preparations for the first steering group meeting.

**3. Wood in construction**

The social partners discussed the organisation of their seminar on "Wood in Construction". It will be open for participants at EU level, without restriction to social dialogue. The event shows a clear link to the CCMI, in which CEI-Bois is also represented. The seminar is expected to focus on innovation, sustainability and worker-friendly developments.

CEI-Bois announced that the agreed date of 26 June is not any longer feasible for them.

**4. AOB**

The EU social partners presented the printed version of their 2016-2017 action programme, that can be used in discussions with external stakeholders and EU decision-makers. A draft update for 2018-2019 will be discussed in the autumn SSDC meeting.

**JOINT MEETING WOODWORKING – FURNITURE**

Chair : Mr Kees HOOGENDIJK (CBM-EFIC)

**1. Opening of the meeting - Adoption of the agenda – Adoption of minutes dd. 9 November 2016.**

The agenda and the minutes were adopted. The meeting started with a presentation (attached) of the AGM (Advanced Gateway to Meetings) registration system by Rares BULARCA. The system will be used for registering and reimbursing the participants to the SSDC meetings.

## 2. Industry policy

### a) Expert group for the Forest-based Industries (F-BI)

Mr WALL (DG GROW) announced that it is DG GROW's intention in principle to hold a meeting during the first half of the year, followed by one in the autumn. He also reminded members that the Expert Group should also be the flow of information in several directions across the network of EG members, both amongst themselves and moreover in their home constituencies (industry sectors and member states).

At a request from EFIC and EFBWW on the possibility of setting up a furniture sub-group, Mr WALL informed the meeting that sub-groups can be set up on temporary basis, provided that there are compelling reasons and topics. EFIC pointed at the complexity of the furniture sector, due to the variety of materials and their innovation potential, which was acknowledged by Mr WALL.

### b) Commission Consultative pour les Mutations Industrielles (CCMI) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

Following the introduction during the previous meeting, EFBWW invited the participants to come up with proposals related to wood as material in other sectors (without limitation to the construction sector) and its innovative value. The objective is to develop a concept on secretariat level, which may become the subject of a proposal to the CCMI. Such a proposal, which may be submitted up to 4 times a year, may become the basis for a CCMI opinion. EFBWW proposed "Wood in Construction" as a possible item, but EFIC considered this not to be a furniture related topic. The European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry (EOS) proposed to discuss the challenges faced by the hardwood sawmills. Another subject could be industrial changes, in particular in the context of Industry 4.0.

### c) Joint initiatives

Due to the lack of resources, nothing is to be announced at this stage.

## 3. New projects

### a) Psychosocial hazards in the woodworking sectors

The social partners discussed a revised project description with a more positive approach. According to EFBWW, the project now focusses more on working conditions and work organisation as a whole, covering aspects such as working time, communication, information etc. that may be linked to stress.

CEI-Bois reiterated the need for further discussion on the content and on the term "mental health", while EOS (European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry) asked to include the unemployment risk as a stress-related factor, which was backed by UEA. Replying to this, EFBWW confirmed being in favour of a holistic approach, also aiming at improving the reputation, competitiveness and quality of the sector, but without mixing with the unemployment theme.

Finally, EFIC informed the participants not being able to participate in the steering group due to capacity problems. EFBWW pleaded to maintain the cross-sectoral approach, although the workshops would have a sectoral angle. The project would be submitted for funding by the "Social Dialogue" call for proposals in June 2017.

EFBWW invited the other partners and individuals to send amendments to one of the secretariats. Based on the comments the secretariats shall revise the draft and present it again during the plenary meetings scheduled for 12 and 13 June.

*b) Bolster up project*

EFBWW proposed to enlarge and revitalise the outputs of the Bolster-up project. More in particular, the aim would be to include new countries and other professions. The project is based on bilateral cooperation with training institutes. The other participants expressed their interest in the concept of the project.

**4. Aging workforce**

The social partners agreed to address this issue at regular basis during the SSDC meetings. A holistic approach, including i.a. aspects related to young workers, attractiveness, health and working conditions will be envisaged. Mr HOOGENDIJK stressed the importance of genuine policy actions, possibly supported by joint statements, which would increase the leverage of the discussions.

**5. Occupational Safety and Health**

a) Following an explanation of the background of Communication COM(2017)12, Mr GEHRING (EFBWW) enquired about the possibilities for operationalising the document in the context of social dialogue. More in particular, the employers' view was requested on issuing a single joint opinion for both the furniture and the woodworking sectors. In general, the employers side seemed fairly positive.

b) In the context of the Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD) the social partners discussed the recently submitted list of limit values (COM(2017)11 final and SWD (2017)9 final). The list contains seven new substances, without formaldehyde or diesel particles being included. These two substances will need further discussions, and CEI-Bois suggested including machine producers in the process.

EFBWW launched the idea to invite the Commission to organise an international conference on wood dust, similar to the event organised in 2006. The conference should include discussions on machines and measurement methods.

**FURNITURE SPECIFIC TOPICS**

Chair : Mr Kees HOOGENDIJK (CBM-EFIC)

**1. Flame retardants**

Ms DESSI (EFIC) reported on her organisation's activities regarding the public consultation on UK and Irish legislation. EFIC has lodged a complaint against the specific requirements in this legislation regarding flammability of furniture. These requirements are considered to act as unjustified trade barriers. Meanwhile, the alliance on the use of flame retardants has developed strategic issues during stakeholder meetings. EFBWW reacted by saying that activities they have internally proposed are focussing on awareness-raising at national level.

**2. Digit-Fur**

The project, managed by CENFIM, (see powerpoint attached) will study the impact of digitalisation on training and occupational safety and health (OSH) in the furniture sector, with a view on the entire value chain including software development and value chain optimisation. It has been selected for funding by the social dialogue budget line. European Social Partner organisations are project partners. The Delphi survey will include experts who are not linked to the sector, but who will be selected

in function of their knowledge. EFBWW insisted on the necessity to include OSH stakeholders. The kick-off meeting for the project is scheduled on 21 March 2017.

### **3. AOB**

The social partners presented the dissemination version of their work programme for 2016-2017 that can be used in discussions with external stakeholders and EU decision-makers. For the next work programme and for the functioning of the SSDC in general, Ms DESSI called for increased joint activity and more focus on joint statements, in order to increase the impact of the discussions.

Annexes :

- List of participants
- Presentation "AGM"
- Presentation "Digit-Fur"