



European Furniture Industries Confederation

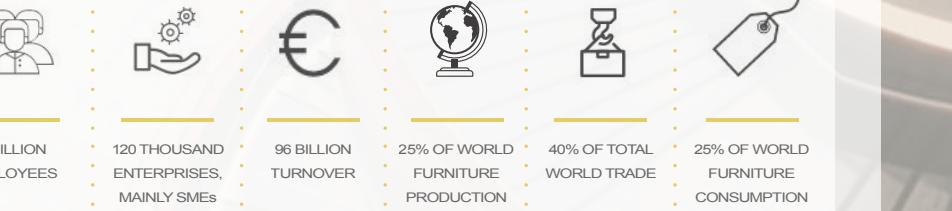
EUROPEAN FURNITURE INDUSTRIES MANIFESTO EU TERM 2019-2024

WHO WE ARE

EFIC - the European Furniture Industries Confederation - is the voice of European Furniture industries. EFIC now represents about 70% of the total turnover of the furniture industries in Europe and is composed by national associations and single company members*.

*EFIC members at: <https://www.efic.eu/about-our-members>

EU FURNITURE SECTOR



CALL FOR ACTIONS

1.

HARMONISATION AND A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD IN THE EU INTERNAL MARKET

EFIC believes that untapped potential exists for European SMEs and that clear and easy legal requirements are essential. Companies operating in the furniture sector are faced with a number of obstacles within the EU internal market, which hinders them from focusing their power on exports. Different national regulations, standards, certification schemes and labelling requirements constitute a barrier for EU producers and bring disproportionate costs for companies. EFIC therefore calls for harmonised rules at European level, which will help ensure the free movement of goods in the EU internal market and a level playing field for furniture producers. To list some examples, EFIC looks forward to the harmonisation of formaldehyde emissions levels, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes and legislation on Flame Retardants. As a matter of fact, EFIC calls for rules on flammability standards and requirements to be harmonised to a level where the use of Flame Retardants is not required by any EU Member State. Last but not least, it is important that harmonised EU rules are applied in the same way by all Member States, to prevent time and resource intensive administrative burdens for companies. For example, under the EU Timber Regulation, Member States define 'acceptable due diligence systems' in different ways. This makes it difficult for operators to efficiently meet the requirements without changing the process for each Member State. This, combined with inconsistent enforcement and auditing procedures (at times procedures varying from case to case within the same Member State), is inefficient and expensive for everyone involved.

2.

HARMONISED STANDARDS AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT AT EU & INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The furniture industry should be regarded as a key player in the development of standards affecting the sector. In addition to harmonised EU standards, EFIC highlights the need for standards and conformity assessment at European & international level to be harmonised as well, in order to save European furniture manufacturers from going through costly type-approval procedures when exporting to third countries. This would enable EU furniture manufacturers to be more competitive outside the EU internal market.

3.

FAIR AND FREE INTERNATIONAL TRADE

EFIC highlights that rules-based trade and cooperation are key. Removing obstacles to trade not only within the EU internal market but also towards third countries, as well as avoiding new trade barriers is of outmost importance to boost the involvement of our smart and agile SMEs in the international market. However, third country importers should strictly comply with European rules and standards when placing their products on the EU internal market. Environmental and social responsibility should also be proven by importers.



CALL FOR ACTIONS

4.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND NON-TOXIC ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

EFIC calls on the EU to advance the Circular Economy agenda and to establish harmonious, smart and simple, but at the same time effective regulations to implement a circular economy. Firstly, EFIC highlights that legacy chemicals bring both reuse and recycling into question, especially given that one of the main features of the furniture industries is the long lifetime of their products. EFIC believes that harmful chemicals such as Flame Retardants constitute an obstacle from a Circular Economy perspective and that Substances of Concern should be reduced to a minimum level. As a matter of fact, EFIC believes that furniture products should not contain any harmful chemicals and that only hazardous substances should be measured, with clear and harmonised limits for all product types in the EU market. Secondly, furniture producers are strong supporters of a circular product design, with clear Eco-design requirements, as well as of a strong EU policy framework for sustainable products and circular business models. As such, EFIC calls for the creation of tools at EU level to compare the environmental and climate performance of products and to promote, incentivise and support circular and sustainable products. Thirdly, re-manufacturing, re-use and refurbishment of furniture products is very much encouraged by furniture producers as well, together with EPR schemes to ensure efficient waste management. As such, EFIC calls for a harmonisation of EPR schemes at EU level.

5.

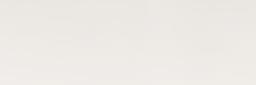
SKILLED WORK FORCE

EFIC highlights that shortage of skilled labour force is a challenge for the furniture sector and believes that education programmes and digitalization are important drivers to help tackling the matter. Collaboration with social partners is also key to render the EU labour market more dynamic and to strengthen ties among technical teaching institutes, design institutes, universities, schools and companies.

6.

ENHANCING DEVELOPMENT OF FURNITURE INDUSTRY

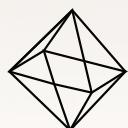
Furniture production is driven by innovation and R&D, design and digitalization. As such, EFIC would welcome concrete proposals in these areas, as well as financial support, especially for SMEs, for innovative design and product development.



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Creativity



Innovation



Design

EFIC - European Furniture Industries Confederation

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