



European Federation of the Parquet Industry
Fédération Européenne de l'Industrie du Parquet
Föderation der Europäischen Parkett-Industrie

Address: Rue Montoyer 24/box 20, BE-1000 Brussels
TP: +32 2 556.25.87 - TF: +32 2 287 08.75
E-mail: info@parquet.net - www.parquet.net - www.realwood.eu
VAT BE 0552.491.709

Brussels, 2011-01-20

Press release FEP Horizon brightening for European Parquet Industry

Following two demanding years during which the EU parquet producers faced a decline of their sales, FEP (European Federation of the Parquet Industry) in Brussels now estimates that the general picture at EU level is gradually and steadily improving. This indication is based on preliminary information received from FEP member companies according to which consumption on the European market stabilised in 2010. The reversal of the past trend fuels the hope that better times are ahead for the parquet industry and that cautious optimism towards the future is opportune. In the same line, available forecasts also point to a stabilisation of parquet production in the EU, though FEP wants to emphasise that the situation at EU level is rather diverse and that important differences exist between the member countries.

The long awaited improvement was visible throughout last year, though it has to be underscored that the upward curve has not been stable at all times and that the performances substantially vary from country to country. The influence of the large markets remains a decisive factor for the global figures, whereby it is encouraging to witness the positive rebound in Germany and the gradual consolidation in France. The situation in Spain still remains a point of concern, though here too some tendencies to the better are slowly emerging. In spite of the fact that a majority of construction businesses have seen an improvement in the past 12 months, the level of the advance is by no means satisfactory on a global plan and the construction confidence indicator is still relatively far from reaching the EU long-term average. Compiled data presently available suggest a stabilisation of the total consumption in the EU/EFTA area at around 95 million m². In conformity with past forecasts at this stage, FEP however wishes to underline that full statistical figures will yet be communicated at the General Assembly of the European Parquet Industry in May.

It is evident that the constantly improving economic climate and the generally somewhat stronger dollar versus the euro impacted favourably on the parquet business as well. The financial turmoil of 2009 has progressively slackened, bringing about a growth of overall investment readiness. Nevertheless, it is still premature to shout victory and companies are vigilant in selecting the right steps for their future business ventures. This cautious approach is fuelled by the persisting pressure from highly competitive low-cost countries, whereby the quest for a fair level playing field for EU competitors leaves a lot to be desired. High energy prices, unemployment figures that are still high in certain countries, as well as a constant and affordable raw material supply are additional points of concern for the industry. FEP is nevertheless confident that the ever improving quality parquet solutions its members are placing on the market, combined with the never ceasing inventiveness of the responsible management teams, the state-of-the-art product design pallets and the permanent focus on environmental responsibility in the context of sustainable development, are a solid basis for the industry's future stability and long term prosperity.

'The general business climate for the Euro area showed a strong surge last December. According to EC's Business Survey, the level of the business climate indicator is approaching the historical peak



reached in spring 2007, suggesting that industry recovery is bound to continue in the coming months. A large majority of Member States is already reporting improvement in economic sentiment and managers are speaking about expanding order books, higher production and growing exports. I am confident that the parquet industry, in spite of the many challenges it faces, will also find the right tools to profit from the better business surroundings and strengthen its foundation towards the future', said FEP Chairman Lars Gunnar Andersen.

Faking the original: usurpation of the parquet quality denomination for other floor coverings

The European Norm EN-13756, as it is implemented in all EU Member States, is clear in specifying that 'a wood flooring product can only be called "parquet" if its real wood top layer is at least 2.5 mm in thickness'. All the same, certain players on the flooring market still cannot resist the temptation to usurp the parquet denomination for products which do not comply with the European norm. Reference can be made, for instance, to the use of the term 'Vinyl-Parkett' on the German speaking market.

That practice misleads the customer and harms the FEP members. Indeed, a customer looking to buy parquet is deceived into buying a product which does not fulfil its key characteristic, i.e. the wooden makeup. As for the FEP members, they are confronted with –and harmed by– unfair competition of market players using the parquet denomination to sell an altogether different product at a considerably lower price. In addition, the inferior quality of certain flooring products misusing the parquet denomination harms the reputation of the genuine parquet flooring products of FEP members.

The FEP wants those reprehensible practices to be halted with immediate effect. It is of utmost concern to FEP to defend the legitimate interests of its members in this matter. FEP will take all appropriate steps to ensure that the parquet denomination is safeguarded exclusively for the benefit of the quality image of real wood floorings and is prevented from being misused for any unfair trade practice.

FEP General Assembly 2011

Following the invitation of its Croatian members, the 55th General Assembly & 36th European Parquet Congress of the European Federation of the Parquet Industry will take place on 26 & 27 May in the unique seaport of Dubrovnik, on the Croatian coast.

At this occasion and following the EU Parquet Market Survey presented at the 2009 General Assembly in Cracow, Poland, FEP shall amongst others unveil the results of a new study on *European Consumers Perceptions and Expectations towards Parquet*, which will provide an in-depth analysis of the parquet market in the Member States in the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis.

The FEP Chairman, Board of Directors and Management Team sincerely look forward to welcoming all members to the unique annual reunion in this "jewel of the Adriatic".

FEP, Brussels, January 2011.

For more information, please contact FEP (E. Varga) at +32 2 556 25 87 or via info@parquet.net.

*The European Federation of the Parquet Industry, FEP, regroups the leading European parquet producers and suppliers. Membership details are available at www.parquet.net.
For info on real wood floors, consult www.realwood.org.*