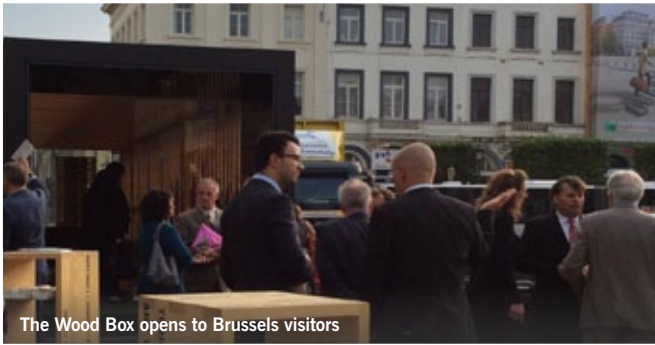


Wood Action Days build bridges with Brussels



The Wood Box opens to Brussels visitors

The Wood Action Days political lobbying and timber awareness raising initiative in Brussels marked the start of “renewed dialogue between Europe’s woodworking industry and decision makers, according to the organisers.

The event, run under the Wood for Growth campaign banner from September 22 to 26, was co-convened by the European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry (EOS), European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois) and the European Panel Federation (EPF), and supported by the ETTF.

It was attended by 230 people, including 42 MEPs, representatives of 20 trade bodies, other industry experts and national and EU policy makers, among them members of the European Commission.

“To get this many MEPs attending was a great achievement and provides a strong contact base we can take forward,” said EOS Secretary General Kimmo Järvinen.

At the opening event, the organisers presented the European woodworking sector’s Manifesto. This underlines its potential to contribute to sustainable construction and development, sets out its five-year growth vision and urges EU institutions to create the conditions for it to be realised.

“We aim to raise annual output by €2.35 billion, or 4% annually, which would generate €405 million in increased tax, create 80,000 jobs and reduce EU atmospheric CO2



Putting over the timber message

A Wood Action Day meeting

emissions by 150 million tonnes,” said CEI-Bois chairman Marc Michiels.

Immediately after the event, 17 of the MEPs had signed the Manifesto.

The WoodBox mobile timber construction display centre from Austrian industry campaign pro:Holz also featured in Brussels, while key debates focused on tackling climate change by using more wood and ‘meeting tomorrow’s housing challenge’. Chaired by Dave Hopkins of the UK’s Wood for Good campaign, and addressed by

European Parliament Vice President Olli Rehn, the latter also featured presentations from timber-specialist architects including Sweden’s Lars Johansson and the UK’s Craig White. ETTF President Andreas von Möller spoke on “Strengthening trust in tropical timber”, describing the efforts of the Sustainable Tropical Timber Coalition.

Another main event was a networking lunch hosted by the industry’s Club du Bois industry-political forum.



MEP Virkunnen backs industry’s ambition



Henna Virkunnen

Finnish MEP Henna Virkunnen backed the Wood Action Days’ ambition to generate “growth, innovation and jobs” in the timber sector as part of efforts to develop Europe as a bio-economy. One of a number of MEPs to address the event, she particularly supported the aim to boost timber construction.

“Many European cities have already discovered the benefits of building with wood, particularly in dense urban environments, and I support tackling any regulation that discourages its use in the sector,” she said. “Because of varying conditions in Europe I don’t see harmonisation of building regulation as the solution. But much could be done by setting common guidelines, for instance in fire safety regulations, helping create functioning internal markets for wood products.”