

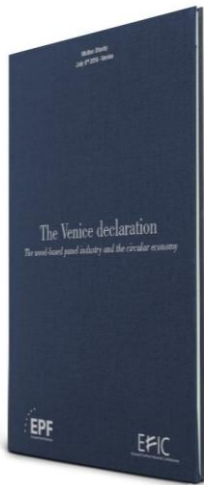
Brussels, 14th July 2016

Press Release: The Venice Declaration

On the occasion of EPF's Annual General Meeting in Venice on 7th & 8th July, and in the presence of MEP Simona Bonafè, MEP David Borrelli, Mr Carlo Mari Medaglia of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, captains of the European panel industry and their suppliers, the Chairman and President of the Composite Panel Association of North America and members of the trade press, Dottore Paolo Fantoni, Chairman EPF, and Mr Markus Wiesner, Chairman EFIC, co-signed the 'Venice Declaration on Cascading Use of Wood'.

This landmark document presents the views of the European wood-based panels industry, supported by the European furniture industry towards the Circular Economy, and in particular the concept of the cascading use of wood. The declaration is a two page appeal to European Institutions and governments to embrace and promote the multiple or "cascade" use of wood, especially for material products such as panels and furniture. This is considered to be the best way to make optimum use of this valuable resource for Europe. The text of the declaration is reproduced below.

The Venice Declaration



“The bioeconomy is increasingly viewed by policymakers as a golden time to develop opportunities that will facilitate economic and employment growth whilst delivering solutions that address the global challenges presented by climate change and energy security. The wood-based panel and furniture industries are proud to be part of the bio-economy.

Parallel to the bio-economy, a central platform of European climate policy is to develop a role for bio-energy as a means of mitigating climate change through the substitution of non-renewable fossil-based fuels with sustainable alternatives. Whilst supportive of the overall policy objectives, the wood-based panel and the wood-based panel furniture industries are concerned by the potentially negative consequences that such policies, intended to develop one industry, can have on another.

Inherent in their activities, wood material producers embrace many of the climate imperatives through growing the carbon store, maximising carbon life, recycling, and recovering the energy at ultimate end of life. Bio-energy production from woody biomass is ostensibly a destructive process that relies on converting wood from the solid to either a gas or liquid in the shortest space of time. Policy must ensure that the conversion is done with as little impact as possible to those processes that are inherently seeking to extend the carbon life, and as a consequence are utilising such a valuable raw material in as resource-efficient a manner as possible.

In this 'Venice Declaration' EPF, the European Panel Federation, has developed a core set of principles for the Circular Economy to help ensure the continued contribution of the wood-based panel industry to Europe, whilst still allowing for the conversion of woody biomass waste to energy at the end of its material life. EFIC, the European Furniture Industries Confederation wishes to emphasise its support for these policies intended to support the growth of wooden furniture manufactured in Europe. EPF and EFIC together call upon the European Institutions to integrate these policy principles into future legislation”.



THE VENICE DECLARATION

THE WOOD-BASED PANEL INDUSTRY AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

To ensure efficient and optimal use of biomass resources, in line with the principle of cascading use of wood

- Balance the pressure on wood availability:
 - Determine a level that can be sustainably supplied in the long term;
 - Impose criteria taking into account resource efficiency and competition with different wood users;
 - Cap the bioenergy share of fulfilling the RED overall quota;
- Create a level playing field by removing market distortions:
 - Discontinue the financial incentives for woody bioenergy jeopardising the material use of wood;
 - Use correct full carbon accounting for biomass by implementing the rules in the LULUCF decision;
 - Remove multiple accounting in the ILUC Directive;
- Enhance the role of wood in the circular economy:
 - Stimulate wood availability by promoting segregation at source particularly from construction and demolition (selective deconstruction).
 - Increase the recycling targets for wood packaging waste, and introduce targets for wood recycling from other waste streams.
 - Remove legal barriers impeding the material use of urban wood.
 - Cap the total maximum of wood waste going to landfills leading to future ban of wood from landfilling.
- Create a market pull for wood products:
 - Prefer products manufactured from wood in public procurement for building construction;
 - Increase awareness regarding growth in carbon stock or extension of carbon life when using wood products in furniture and construction;
 - Stimulate the increase of the pool of harvested wood products in use thereby extending the carbon sink from the forest.

Dott. Paolo Fantoni
Chairman EPF

Mr Markus Wiesner
Chairman EFIC

Venice, July 2016

Earlier in the day the cascade use of wood had received further support from Commissioner Karmenu Vella in a video address during which he confirmed the useful role that cascading should and will play in the future of the circular economy:

“You might also have noticed that biomass and bio-based products are priority sectors in the circular economy package. We encourage cascading use, if it's appropriate, and when it's cost-effective. That's the best way to minimise impacts on the environment, and keep the value of materials in the economy for as long as possible. The Commission is also concerned with the specific characteristics of local markets. That's one reason we are working on a guidance document to promote the good practices that optimise the cascading use of biomass”.



After signing the Venice Declaration on Cascading Use of Wood, Dott. Fantoni and Mr Wiesner presented a copy to MEP Mrs Simona Bonafè, rapporteur to the European Parliament for the circular economy package, who expressed the hope that the circular economy will be at the heart of the European woodworking industries.

About EPF

EPF, the European Panel Federation, has members in 25 countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The European wood-based panel industry has an annual turnover of about 22 billion Euros, creates over 100,000 jobs directly and counts more than 5,000 enterprises in Europe. For more information, please contact:

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About EFIC

EFIC, the European Furniture Industries Confederation, is the voice of the jointly united European Furniture industries. EFIC was founded in 2006 by seven national federations representing the furniture industries in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey and it was later joined by Portugal, Sweden, Austria, Russia and Norway. Furthermore, Hungary, The Netherlands and France joined EFIC in 2015. EFIC now represents more than the 70% of the total turnover of the furniture industries in Europe, a sector that employs about 1.1 million workers in close to 130,000 companies. For more information, please contact:

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