

wood in sustainable development

CEI-Bois Roadmap 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Contemporary Art and Contemporary Life, United Through Wood

Art and Industry, Wood and Policy: A Successful Display of Productive Synergy

Brussels, 17 December 2012. Enhancing the competitiveness of the European woodworking sector is an essential element in tackling climate change and assuring a green economic growth for the European Union.

Few days after the conclusions of the UNFCCC Doha negotiations, the woodworking sector wants to stress –one more time- its important contribution in reducing atmospheric level of greenhouse gasses through the use of wood and wood products.

The same message was given to the visitors of the spectacular exhibition “Tackle Climate Change: Use Wood”, that took place in the European Parliament during the first week of December. Indeed, works and installations of renowned European artists using wood -Stephan Balkenhol (Germany), Gorzo Dumitru (Romania), Arne Quinze (Belgium), Philippe Ramette (France) and Richard Long (UK) - were displayed in a specially conceived “wood garden”, and highlighted a selection of the best harvested wood products art can produce.



Members of the European Parliament were invited to visit this unusual setting. The artists Ramette, Gorzo and the art curator Mr Hoet were present so as to give detailed information on the art exhibition to the Members of the European Parliament.



Mr Ladislaus Döry, Mrs Antigoni Papadopoulou, MEP, and Mr Gaston Franco, MEP

The European Commissioner for Trade Karel De Gucht participated in the event and he expressed his high appreciation to this unique initiative. “It is therefore unsurprising that wood is the preferred material of a lot of artists, both traditionally and amongst contemporary artists. It is at the same time the most recognizably natural, the most authentic matter to work with”, the Commissioner stated.



Commissioner De Gucht visiting the exhibition with Mr Gaston Franco, MEP, and other participants

As part of the programme, sponsored by the Chairman of the Club du Bois of the European Parliament, Gaston Franco MEP, a workshop about the uses, availability and climate sequestration potential of wood was organised on 5 December. Serge de Gheldere, Belgium Climate Ambassador to the former US Vice-President Al Gore, and Prof Udo Mantau, Head of Centre of Wood Science of the University of Hamburg took part in the debate and discussion providing scientific proves of the benefits related to increasing the pool of harvest wood products in everyday life.

Mr de Gheldere drew a clear picture of the role of harvested wood products in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He underlined how the European Union can achieve its ambitious environment targets simply enhancing the use of wood products and substituting - whenever possible- wood with other more energy-intensive construction materials. "These are the ten most important years in history", said de Gheldere, "with a strong push in carbon sequestration paired with energy efficiency in existing buildings we are still on track to prevent the global temperature rise to unmanageable levels".

Prof. Mantau underlined the importance of respecting the life cycle of wood in order to prolong its carbon sequestration. "Only burning wood in the last part of its life cycle, once its utilisation has been maximised, can guarantee the extension of the carbon stored in wood during the photosynthesis occurred during the tree's life".



"In order to tackle climate change and reducing CO₂ in the atmosphere, nature's recipe is simple: lock carbon in forests. What mankind has to do is to continue the process by using, re-using and re-cycling wood. At the end of its useful life, wood can be burned and the energy recovered.", confirmed Ladislaus Döry, President of EPF and Vice-Chairman of CEI-Bois, "The longer the pool of harvested wood products exists, the longer carbon is stored; European policy makers are invited to enhance the use of wood

products in everyday life. Moreover they are invited to remove all unnecessary restrictions to building with wood." Matti Mikkola Chairman of CEI-Bois requested.

The exhibition was co-organised by the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois), the European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry (EOS) and the European Panel Federation (EPF) with the great support of the Honourable Member of the European Parliament, Mr Gaston Franco.

With more than 100 participants present in Brussels on 4 December, the multimedia exhibition "Tackle climate change: use wood" was declared opened at the European Parliament.

Hosted by MEP Jean-Pierre Audy, President of the French delegation in the EPP Group, in representation of the Club du Bois Chairman Gaston Franco, MEP, the reputed art curators Jan Hoet, founder of the City Museum for Contemporary Art (Ghent) and curator of Documenta IX (Kassel, Germany), and Dany Vandebossche, Honorary Member of the Flemish Parliament, explained to this audience the common ground we all share around a material that is capable to convey emotions and closeness in such a unique way.



Mr Jean-Pierre Audy, MEP, during his speech together with Mr Ladislaus Döry and Mr Jan Hoet

Mr Jean-Pierre Audy (MEP), in his opening speech, stressed the importance of using wood: "We have to promote the use of wood as a natural and renewable material."

"It really is a simple and effective way to reduce atmospheric CO₂. Wood is an asset to "meet 25% reduction in CO₂ emissions required by the Kyoto Protocol.", added Mr Audy.

Mr Audy added that he believes that the wood must be primarily a material "for use in construction, furniture, packaging, art" but at the end of its life, we should not "neglect its energy potential".

Mr Audy closed his presentation by expressing his wish that "this exhibition is an appeal to the European institutions and the governments of Member States "to realise the potential of the wood and to work to not sacrifice one area (the wood) at the expense of another".

Amid this spectacular setting, the public met also with artists whose work is on display. Philippe Ramette and Gorzo Dumitru met with diplomatic representatives from their countries as well as with

members of the Parliament and representatives of the European Commission and the woodworking industries.

Mr Jan Hoet stated: "In this exposition, the present artists try their link with nature, and bring us a provocative message : they push us to think about the function AND the future of wood".

The subtitle of the exhibition is 'Plant a second forest', referring to the carbon stock from the forest that remains in harvested wood products. Carbon captured by the trees will remain in the products we use daily, until the end of the recycling cascade.

The European Parliament provided an exceptional setting to communication between policy-makers and those who have a stake at their decisions.

Close to half of the audience were European woodworking industry representatives, as their confederation CEI-Bois held its general assembly in Brussels on 5 December. "We are conscious of the importance of being here at the EP, our industry's future depends for a large part on coherent and informed policy decisions", said Ladislaus Döry, vice-chairman of CEI-Bois and President of the European Wood Panel Industries Federation EPF.

For more information and pictures of the exhibition, please visit www.secondforest.eu

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Graphic and video materials: High-resolution visuals of the individual art work and of the exhibition concept are available by contacting Dany.vandenbossche@telenet.be or kris.wijnendaele@europanels.org