

**The European Panel Federation strongly supports the Single Market –
EPF calls on regulators not to introduce local requirements that fragment the Single Market,
and thus damage a key element of growth and success for Europe’s citizens.**

The Single Market is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements of the European Union. It unites 28 countries and 500 million citizens, allowing goods to flow seamlessly within the territory. Common rules have allowed consumers to benefit greatly from scale, especially in the field of construction products. It is therefore with great concern that the European Wood-based Panel Federation (EPF) raises the alarm against the current threat to European harmonisation and progress posed by countries seeking to add new national rules on top of existing European regulations.

In May 2019, EPF called on regulators to support common standards for wood-based panels. EPF retains this level playing field position as a core principle of its members. Today, it resubmits this view, specifically regarding new VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) requirements being introduced in Germany. These are about to be imposed by certain Federal States as of 1 October 2019, in conflict with the harmonised rules of the European Construction Products Regulation (CPR), of CE marking, and in spite of the fact that the European notification is still ongoing (standstill date 27 December 2019).

Germany’s proposed Model Administrative Rules on Technical Building Regulations (MVVTB) version 2019/1 seeks to require manufacturers and sellers of panels to meet new national requirements. A Member State adding new demands, on top of those currently allowed, infringes CPR. This argument was upheld by the European Court of Justice in April. In addition, multiple new court cases are now underway against MVVTB in Germany, and one Federal State, Baden-Württemberg has already ruled the new VOC requirements to be illegal, as there is no proven need for them.

In the light of MVVTB 2019/1 being both potentially illegal and certainly detrimental to the Single Market, EPF urges:

- 1) Germany’s Federal States to immediately suspend any action to introduce the VOC requirements for panels expressed in MVVTB 2019/1 into their own state building codes;
- 2) The European Commission to accelerate the finalisation of a Delegated Act (already in process in DG GROW), to harmonise the classification of VOC performance in construction products.

Europe’s panel producers stand resolutely behind a harmonised set of European rules, and firmly against the fragmentation of Europe’s Single Market driven by solo actions of Member States, such as the current one. EPF calls for these urgent actions for the welfare of Europe’s half a billion citizens.