



PRESS RELEASE

Train-the-Trainer Seminar on enhancing worker protection held on 19 November 2020

Brussels, 19 November 2020 - The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Wood-Based Panels Federation (EPF) jointly organised an online **“Train-the-Trainer Seminar”** on enhancing worker protection, attracting more than 200 registered participants from more than 25 countries.

This seminar is the first event in the EC financed project to stimulate the adoption and implementation of the EFBWW/EPF joint voluntary agreement, entitled “Action Guide on Formaldehyde”, at national and company level. It follows the co-signature of this voluntary agreement on 30 November 2018 on improving workers’ protection in the panel industry from potential exposure to formaldehyde.

The Seminar was an immense success with over 200 registered participants from all over Europe and beyond, mostly health and safety experts of companies, social partners from sectorial organisations and company level, and institutes for OEL measurements, plus those involved in related activities at national and company level. All major wood-based panels’ manufacturers in Europe attended.

Focus was put on the objectives of the Action Guide and on the importance of prevention. Furthermore, Mrs Gundula Wagner, Head of Central Analytic department at PFLEIDERER offered detailed explanations and training on the Action Guide in 3 specific sessions. All participants welcomed and appreciated the pragmatic nature of the Action Guide as a management system, focusing primarily on prevention and on limiting potential exposure through creating awareness, motivation and responsibility of workers, supervisors and management.

Mr Danny Scheerlinck representing DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission stated: “I am impressed by the number of participants and by the superb quality of the presentations and the organisation.” Mr Scheerlinck stresses that the Autonomous Agreement that EFBWW and EPF has signed is special in that “it has a higher status than the usual joint position that social partners generally agree asking questions to the European Commission. This Autonomous Agreement means that it is actually being implemented by the social partners at the national level.”

Mr Rolf Gehring, EFBWW H&S Policy Adviser, expressed his satisfaction with the huge turnout and the excellent quality of the seminar and in particular the very clear training by Mrs Wagner: “This was one of the largest seminars that EFBWW has ever organised and we never expected to have such a huge turnout for this online event. We look forward to the continued co-operation with EPF on this project and the joint implementation of our formaldehyde agreement.” Mr Gehring also thanked Mr Danny Scheerlinck of DG EMPL of the European Commission for his attendance and short address to the participants.

European Federation
of Building
and Woodworkers



EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION
WOOD - BASED PANELS

EPF's Technical Director, Mr Kris Wijnendaele, welcomed the excellent co-operation and superb technical organisation with EFBWW staff and members. "We are proud at EPF to enhance our focus on protection and well-being of all workers in our industry in order to help our companies prosper and contribute to the ambitions of the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan and combating climate change. It is impressive that more than 200 hundred participants invest their time and effort in attending this seminar especially during this troublesome pandemic".



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About EFBWW

EFBWW - the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers is the European Workers' Industry Federation for the following sectors: building, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades. The EFBWW has 76 affiliated unions in 34 countries and represents 2,000,000 members. Contact us at info@efbww.eu.

About EPF

EPF – the European Panel Federation has members in more than 25 countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The EU wood 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. Contact us at info@europanels.org.