

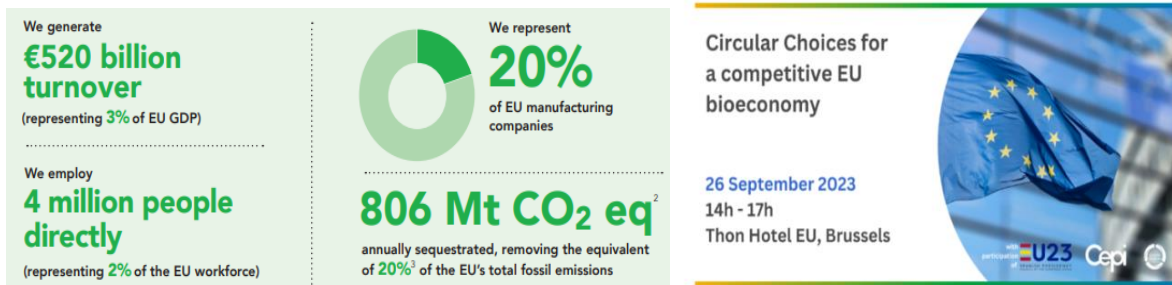


**EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION**  
WOOD - BASED PANELS

## PRESS RELEASE

### Spanish EU Presidency & Circular Choices Coalition discuss how an innovative, competitive, industrial bioeconomy can deliver the EU Green Deal

The Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU and a coalition of European trade associations representing 20% of the EU's manufacturing companies gathered on 26 September in Brussels to debate how a circular bioeconomy could enable a more strategically autonomous, resilient and competitive Europe, while at the same time helping the EU navigate through global challenges, climate change and a move away from fossils.



Keynote speaker Alberto Ruiz, Counsellor for Industry at the Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU, highlighted industrial competitiveness and innovation as the priorities of the Spanish EU Presidency. Mr Ruiz noted that the green transition can be driven by new industrial models, should be fair and must put citizens at the centre of it.

The event featured insightful presentations from innovative companies across Europe, representing providers of high-quality wood, paper and fibre-based products. These companies showcased real-life examples on how the use of renewable bio-based resource is already driving the EU's green growth engine, aligning with the objective of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.



EPF Managing Board Member and Unilin Panels CEO Veronique Hoflack inaugurated the *TED* talk-style session: *"Sustainability is not optional; it is not a nice-to-have anymore, it is a need-to-have. Transforming waste into raw materials has been part of our history and is in our DNA. We never accept the status quo and today our particleboards consist of a staggering 95% recycled wood, a symbol of what's possible when we challenge ourselves."* Mrs Hoflack called on the EU institutions to support such innovation with strong European policies supporting circular businesses and keeping industry thriving in Europe.



Ilkka Härmälä, Cepi chairman and CEO of Metsä Group, stated: *“I am proud of what the Circular Choices Coalition represents, we are a coalition of believers bringing together 20 EU trade associations to develop an open cross-sectoral cooperation. Our promise is for our sectors to mitigate carbon emissions in the EU to the equivalent of at least 30% of EU fossil emissions by 2030, if EU policy decisions are made to support this direction.”* Mr Härmälä underlined that to achieve the industry’s targets, *“attention to legislative coherence across the different policy areas as well as to the cumulative impacts of EU regulations is key.”*

Hans Ingels, Head of Bioeconomy Unit in DG GROW concluded: *“The EU Bioeconomy Strategy is key in achieving the EU Green Deal’s objectives. It is important that we work together with the industry to deliver to the next generations a new societal and economic model that is based on the circular use of biological and renewable resources.”*

*“The EU Green Deal’s success is intricately tied to manufacturing, and our coalition holds the key to shaping the next Commission’s priorities. Let’s seize this opportunity”*, Director General at Cepi Jori Ringman concluded.

#### **About the Coalition:**

The Circular Choices Coalition comprises 14 EU trade associations supported by a further six trade associations that represent EU forest owners and managers. The Circular Choices members collectively represent experts in the EU forestry sector, the wood, fibre-based paper, and board products industry, and in renewable energy provision. The coalition represents 4 million direct employees, turns over €520 billion and sequesters, stores and substitutes 806 Mt CO<sub>2</sub> eq annually, equivalent to 20% of EU total fossil emissions. We offer circular and affordable solutions to deliver a net-zero economy by optimising the use of sustainable and renewable wood and wood fibre-based products and energy in a responsible and resource-efficient manner. Caring for the EU’s forests means caring for people’s needs. Sustainable forest management has been a success thanks to the commitment and efforts of forest owners and managers. Their decisions today will echo far into the future. Find out more [here](#).

For further information, please contact EPF Administration and Communications Officer:

Mrs Isabelle Henin  
[info@europanels.org](mailto:info@europanels.org)  
+32 2 556 25 89

*About EPF - the European Panel Federation has members in 30 European countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The EU wood-based panels industry has an annual turnover of about 25 billion euro and creates over 100,000 jobs directly. Contact us at [info@europanels.org](mailto:info@europanels.org).*