

Successful Conclusion of the 13th European Wood-Based Panel Symposium 2024

Mark Your Calendar for the Next Symposium on 14-16 October 2026

Brussels, 30 October 2024

The 13th European Wood-Based Panel Symposium, held from 9-11 October 2024 in Hamburg, successfully gathered experts, researchers, and industry leaders from across the globe. The biennial event provided a platform for insightful presentations and discussions, with a high-level quality programme and speakers, as well as for networking opportunities within the wood-based panel industry.



This year's Symposium focused on market trends, resources, Artificial Intelligence, recycling, resins and developments that are shaping the future of WBP. **375 Attendees from 30 countries across the globe, had the opportunity to hear from keynote speakers, participate in panel discussions, and explore the latest developments and innovations driving the industry's growth.**

In addition to expert presentations, the event featured an exhibition space, where companies showcased state-of-the-art technologies and cutting-edge solutions via interactive stands and posters.

The organising committee extends its heartfelt thanks to all speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and participants for their valuable contributions, making this year's symposium a resounding success.



Symposium Highlights and Key Takeaways

- **Opening the symposium on 10 October**, Kris Wijnendaele, EPF Technical Director, along with Prof. Dr. Raoul Klingner, Acting Director of the Fraunhofer WKI, welcomed attendees. This marked Prof. Klingner's first major event in his new role.
- **Key discussions** revolved around current developments in the wood-based panel industry.
- In the first session, **EPF Managing Board Member Philipp Sprockhoff** provided an in-depth analysis of the industry's situation across Europe, delivering data from the latest EPF Annual Report, whereas **Thomas Walther from AFRY Management Consulting GmbH** addressed the audience on the trends related to the WBP industry structure. **David Svensson from IKEA Supply Services Sweden AB** addressed future requirements for wood-based materials, with a focus on commercial and sustainability considerations, while **Max Roggemann from Enno Roggemann GmbH & Co. KG** tackled wishes of the timber trade to the wood-based material industry.
- The second session covered the theme of resources, starting with a **presentation by Chihiro Kayo from Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology** on carbon stocks of particleboard and fibreboards over the past 70 years in Japan. It ended with a **presentation by Marco Mäbert from the IHD Institute für Wood Technology Dresden GmbH** on solid wood waste and post-consumer fibreboards as raw materials alternatives for the MDF production, referring to the EU-funded EcoReFibre project.
- **The third session on Artificial Intelligence has been explored by 6 speakers: Daniel Schwartze and Jürgen Woll (Dieffenbacher GmbH), Haidin Rashid Amin and Adrien Hitz (AHX.ai), Gregor Bernardy (Siempelkamp Maschinen- und**

Anlagenbau GmbH) and Oren Yahav (Smartech Manufacturing™ Technologies). ‘AI has become an integral part of digital solutions for wood-based material plants and opens up enormous potential’, stated Daniel Schwartze and Jürgen Woll. ‘Our objective is to demonstrate that all wood panel production lines have the ability to rely on AI in their daily operation of running a line. This includes better raw material utilisation, reducing formaldehyde, and CO2 emissions’, explained AHX.ai speakers. ‘The use of AI is certainly not about replacing a plant operator! That is why it is important to involve the human operator in the introduction of such systems, to give them the opportunity to exert influence, to leave them in control and to provide them with help that they accept. (...) The successes of AI in production, experience show material savings of 1-2% or speed increase of up to 10%, can only be achieved together with people, not by AI alone!’, added Gregor Bernardy and Oren Yahav.

- **The fourth session on Recycling concluded the first day of discussions, with 3 presentations by Clemens Seidl (Andritz AG), Luca Ballarin (PAL S.r.l) and Prof Mark Irle (ESB).** ‘To bring MDF production to the next level we see not only the need for more monitoring, but also for more flexible equipment, and intelligent connection between them’, the first speaker said. During his presentation, examples were showcased on how modern instruments can measure the processes and how flexible machines should operate to get the highest yield out of the valuable raw materials. ‘Why recycling MDF? This is a necessity – not a choice anymore’ were one the introductory words from Luca Ballarin’s presentation, whereas Mark Irle presented his study of the presence of fibreboard in recovered wood in France as well as observations following an online survey of the lifespans of different MDF-based products in the framework of the EU-funded EcoReFibre project.
- **On the last day of the event, on 11 October, the 5th session on Resins and the 6th session on Developments have been at centre stage.**
- Session 5 started with Prof **Andreja Kutnar**’s presentation (InnoRenew CoE | University of Primorska) on ‘what manufacturers of fire-retardant wood-based panels should examine and communicate in their technical data sheets regarding the compatibility of their products with adhesives, veneers, coatings to prevent any discolouration of surfaces when in use.’ **Fabian Meinker**’s (Hywax GmbH) presentation focused on hydrophobic agents for the production of particleboards with bio-based binder: current research and evolution in recent years. ‘The new Internal Resin Injection System by Sunds Fibertech allows not only to reduce resin consumption but at the same time significantly simplifies plant operation and production cost. Lower water and steam consumption reduces thermal energy demand and dryer load. Electricity costs are reduced. Permanent care and maintenance of complex dosing and nozzle systems in history. The concentric flow principle can be considered a disruptive technology – not only in theory but also in real plant life’, explained **Markus Jonsson** (Sunds Fibertech AB). Bio-based, switchable adhesives for reshapable woodwood composites was the last Session 5 presentation by **Christin Koch** (University of Kassel) and **Steven Eschig** (Fraunhofer WKI).
- In the last session dedicated to developments BASF approach to sustainable amino resins was the first topic presented by **Ralph Lunkwitz**. **Bettina Meyer** (Fraunhofer WKI) and **Sandro Ciroi** (CATAS SPA) shared a debate on 10 important facts you should know about the new European formaldehyde requirements (“REACH”). **Manuel Fleisch** (Fagus-GreCon Greten GmbH & Co. KG) developed on online measurement of formaldehyde emission utilising in situlaser spectroscopy. **Moira Burnett**

(Fraunhofer WKI) explored the topic impregnation and bonding of hybrid wood-based materials in automotive body shell.



Mark Your Calendar for the Next Symposium in 2026

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that **the next European Wood-Based Panel Symposium will take place on 14-16 October 2026, once again at the Grand Elysée Hotel in Hamburg.** We kindly invite industry professionals, researchers, and relevant stakeholders to mark their calendars for what promises to be another impactful event. Organised by the Fraunhofer WKI and the European Panel Federation, in cooperation with iVTH and the support of Hywax GmbH, the event remains the largest of its kind globally, offering an invaluable platform for networking and knowledge-sharing.

For more information and updates on the 2026 symposium, visit [EWBPS official website](#).



About the European Wood-Based Panel Symposium

The European Wood-Based Panel Symposium is a biennial event that brings together industry professionals, researchers, and policymakers to discuss the latest trends, challenges, and innovations in the wood-based panel sector. The Symposium is a key platform for networking, knowledge sharing, promoting sustainable practices and technological advancements in the industry. It is designed to facilitate collaboration, with ample time for participants to engage in in-depth discussions during breaks and at evening networking events. Hosted by Hywax GmbH and other industry leaders, these gatherings do foster essential exchanges that will likely lead to future collaborations.

About WKI

The Fraunhofer WKI: Building the future with renewable raw materials. Since 1946.

Sustainability has been the central theme at the Fraunhofer WKI since its foundation in 1946. Founder and eponym Dr. Wilhelm Klauditz is considered a pioneer of the modern wood-based materials industry. Today, the Fraunhofer WKI utilizes the entire spectrum of renewable raw resources in order to develop sustainable materials, components and chemical products.

The institute, with locations in Braunschweig, Hanover and Wolfsburg, specializes in process engineering, molding and component production with biomaterials, bio-based binders and coatings, functionalization, fire protection, material and product testing, recycling processes and the utilization of renewable raw materials in buildings and vehicles. Furthermore, the Fraunhofer WKI is one of the leading research institutions in the field of indoor air quality.

Virtually all the processes and products resulting from the institute's research activities are used in industry. Through its research and development activities, the Fraunhofer WKI provides an important contribution towards the development of a bio-based circular economy (circular bioeconomy).

About iVTH

Shaping the future naturally - with wood.

As a non-profit association the iVTH (International Association for Technical Issues Related to Wood) can look back upon more than 75 years of research and development in the field of wood as a resource.

We maintain close contact to national and international research bodies and companies with practical involvement. Our close cooperation with various partners allows us to continually increase our knowledge base and establish transparency. This facilitates knowledge transfer for generations to come, as the results of our research provide factual information to support primarily small and medium-sized companies in their discussions with the world of politics and the general public. The association promotes and finances research projects both on a national basis via IGF/DLR-Projektträger and BMWK and international via CORNET. In addition to the common issues from the wood-based panel industry, projects in the fields of timber construction and adhesives have gained significance.

To us, "Shaping the Future" means profiting from the lessons learned in successful projects, developing new ideas and implementing these in practice.



If you are interested in supporting communication between research bodies and businesses with practical involvement, then please contact us.

About Hywax GmbH

Hywax is the leading specialist in innovative wax technology, offering customers all over the world a wide range of wax products of the highest quality and purity. Hywax, like the other companies of the AWAX Group, operates independently.

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 annually.

Contact us at info@europanel.org



Fraunhofer Institute for Wood Research
Wilhelm-Klauditz-Institut WKI

