



Brussels, 2013-01-30

European Federation of the Parquet Industry  
Fédération Européenne de l'Industrie du Parquet  
Föderation der Europäischen Parkett-Industrie

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## **PRESS RELEASE FEP**

### **Times remain challenging for European Parquet Industry**

*After a year in which the European parquet Industry succeeded in stabilizing and even slightly raising the overall consumption on the European market, the first forecasts for 2012 point in the direction of a decline of close to 4%. FEP's (European Federation of the Parquet Industry) preliminary forecast is based on best estimates received from member country representatives at the recent meeting held at the DOMOTEX fair in Hannover and should be seen as a first prognosis subject to variations, in anticipation of the complete data to be communicated at FEP's annual General Assembly at the beginning of June. It should be stressed, however, that in line with the general evolution in the past few years the results vary considerably from country to country and that the overall picture is increasingly polarized rather than uniform at EU level.*

Though the ongoing struggle confronting parquet producers in certain regions gives reason for concern, the German speaking countries are performing rather well and one can only wish that the positive trend will progressively also reach the important markets in the south of the EU. "There are two major developments that fuel hope of a better future ahead", comments FEP Chairman Lars Gunnar Andersen. "On the one hand the never ceasing innovative product creativity & evolutionary design reflected in the vision of the European parquet manufacturers. This is not only a guarantee for unrivalled quality, but also a token of the growing importance of real wood parquet as an indispensable element of interior decoration of the future. On the other hand, the multiple economic forecasts for the current year converge on a more optimistic business development in the second semester, which should also give a boost to overall consumer confidence. Our industry is ready for the return of better times and market stability".

Apart from the shaky economy, major challenges for the sector result from high energy costs, continuously stiff competition, expensive transport & logistics, extremely high unemployment rates in some important EU regions and the never certain EUR/USD ratio.

The latest figures received by FEP suggest that parquet consumption in the EU/EFTA area in 2012 is slightly above 91 million m<sup>2</sup>, with the Austrian, German & Swiss markets performing solidly, whereas the situation in the southern regions remains disquieting. As regards the product mix, the market shows a strong demand for one-strip planks, the considerable success of which largely compensates the decline in some other product categories. FEP hopes that traditionally large markets such as Spain & Italy will also see stabilization in the months ahead. The overall EU parquet industry remains strong & resilient fueling the belief that it will successfully rebound as soon as the overall economic indicators take a positive turn.



## **General Assembly 2013**

As announced at last year's meeting in Istanbul, FEP's 57<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 38<sup>th</sup> Parquet Congress will be held on 6 & 7 June in the capital of Europe, Brussels – also the seat of the European Parquet Federation. FEP hence looks forward to welcoming all its members, international guests, press representatives and colleagues at this special annual gathering of our industry.

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*FEP, Brussels, January 2013*

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