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European Federation of the Parquet Industry
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PRESS RELEASE FEP

European parquet market still awaiting stabilisation

After a year in which the overall consumption figures of the European parquet Industry contracted by 5.88%, the first forecasts for 2013 seem to follow a similar trend. Indeed FEP's (European Federation of the Parquet Industry) preliminary forecast for the year which just ended indicates a similar scenario of a further contraction in the order of 5%. This percentage is based on best estimates received from member country representatives at the recent Board meeting held at the DOMOTEX fair in Hannover. It 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 in Malaga.

As was witnessed in the past few years, the results show some variation from country to country and even from quarter to quarter. However, the overall picture does not seem as polarized as it once was. Indeed, countries which were performing rather well and driving the markets upwards also seem to lose momentum.

From a regional perspective, it can be stated that markets in the south of the EU (e.g. Spain, Italy, and France) still face serious difficulties, with losses which could reach double digits. In the north, the situation is somewhat better but developments are still slightly negative or, in the best case, stable (e.g. in Sweden). Central Europe remains the best performing region, where Switzerland confirms its status of steady "parquet country" with an expected growth of 6%. Both Austria and Germany should however also see a consumption evolution for 2013 just below zero. These figures and tendencies have to be seen in the light of the major challenges which the sector faced in 2013 and still faces today, notably the continuously stiff competition, extremely high unemployment rates in some important EU regions and the never certain exchange rates, especially the EUR/USD ratio.

Though the ongoing struggle confronting parquet producers in certain regions gives reason for concern, the latest economic forecasts of the EC gave more optimistic expectations for the year to come. This should give a boost to overall consumer confidence throughout Europe. All Board members moreover strongly stress the conclusions of the FEP consumers' perception studies, which confirm that "parquet is a great natural product, very much valued and desired by consumers, who see real wood parquet as an indispensable element of interior decoration of the future." In this context, FEP Chairman Lars Gunnar Andersen commented: "We have all the reasons to believe that the current trend is a cyclic evolution but not a structural change. We are witnessing a downsizing of the market, which does not mean that it is altogether absent. Even if the exponential growth witnessed between 1991 and 2007 has seen downward corrections in the recent past, there is no doubt that better days are ahead of us."



General Assembly 2014

As announced at last year's meeting in Brussels, FEP's 58th General Assembly and 39th Parquet Congress will be held on 5 & 6 June in Malaga, Spain. The Spanish member federation and companies as well as FEP look forward to welcoming all its members, international guests, press representatives and colleagues at this unique annual gathering of our industry.

FEP, Brussels, January 2014

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