



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**

**After a difficult year, European Parquet Producers now focus on a brighter future**

*FEP, the Brussels-based European Federation of the Parquet Industry presently estimates that on account of preliminary information received from affiliated companies in the member countries parquet sales on the European market in 2009 have declined in excess of 15% when compared to the year before. It should be underlined though that the relapse is not uniform for all countries and that certain markets have performed rather well in these strenuous times. As regards parquet production volumes, a general decrease is observed as well in the EU. Nevertheless, the increasingly positive economic indicators of late fuel the hope that the tide is gradually turning and that a market stabilisation process will gain momentum in the course of the current year. FEP wishes to stress that complete statistical data will only be available at the federation's General Assembly next May and that variations are possible.*

The overall developments in the parquet sector are by no means surprising and are in line with the general decline in consumption also witnessed in various other EU industrial sectors. Finding the actual reasons for the relatively weak performance does not require a thorough search either: a deeply rooted global economic crisis and subsequent drop in consumer confidence and spending; constantly rising unemployment figures; a seldom observed crash of the construction segment in some of the traditionally leading markets with, as a consequence, a slackening business performance; further stiffening competition and pressure from market players in low-cost countries outside the EU; often inflexible lending policies; and, not to forget, a strong Euro and hence an underrated USD, creating additional export barriers for European parquet producers as well.

There is no time to look back though, what counts is the future. Throughout the present crisis most of our companies have displayed an exemplary degree of resilience and this boosts the conviction that the sector will bounce back at the first signs of an ease of the market tension. And, although not all forecasts are evenly bright, there are founded reasons for cautious optimism: growing consumer confidence, improving industry confidence indicators and even a shy, but nevertheless apparent, stabilisation in the construction and building market in the EU27. This, together with the ever expanding creativity, inspirational design, innovative spirit present in the parquet industry's ranks and the never ceasing aspiration towards manufacturing state-of-the-art quality products in the best interest of the end-consumer, is a trustworthy bill of exchange for the future.



### **FEP's pan-European Consumer Research Study receives noteworthy media coverage**

The project which was finalised in time for the federation's last General Assembly in Krakow has meanwhile produced a considerable echo in the international press. The results of the market consultation with respondents in 8 major EU markets have been recognized as an instructive guideline and tool for member parquet producers to facilitate the evaluation and better understanding of the EU consumers' perceptions and expectations towards parquet. "Above all, the conclusions of the study clearly underscore that parquet is and remains a much desired and often favoured flooring solution in EU households" says FEP Chairman Lars Gunnar Andersen. "There is a promising future ahead for quality wood flooring products and this inspires confidence in the improving opportunities and performance of our member companies in the days to come".

### **Real Wood Initiative further strengthening**

FEP is pleased with the status which the European project has achieved in only a few years time since its introduction. The RW website is now accessible in 8 languages - others still to follow – and the number of visits is growing. In addition, 2009 has seen a further rise of officially licensed parquet producing companies carrying the RW-logo to 57 at present.

### **CE-marking to be effective on 1 March 2010**

At the present stage and on the date of this release, it can be assumed that after several previous extensions of the co-existence period for EN 14342, the CE-marking constraint for wood flooring will officially come into force as per 1 March of the current year. FEP hopes that the extra time created by past postponements has provided the members with the opportunity to implement the required measures in order to fully comply with the relevant legislation. Any new developments or changes in this matter will be communicated to FEP members.

### **General Assembly & European Parquet Congress 2010, Rome**

The annual FEP forum of the European Parquet Industry will take place on 27 & 28 May in the unique city of Rome. FEP's Chairman, Board of Directors and management team look forward to welcoming a large number of representatives from member parquet producing companies at this informative and enriching meeting, in continuation of past tradition.

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*FEP, Brussels, January 2010.*

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