



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

Address: Rue Montoyer 24/box 20, BE-1000 Brussels  
TP: +32 2 556.25.87 - TF: +32 2 287 08.75  
E-mail: info@parquet.net - www.parquet.net - www.realwood.eu  
VAT BE 0552.491.709

Brussels, 2009-01-30

## Press release FEP

### Global Economic Crisis halts Growth in Parquet Sector

*After several years of steady growth, 2008 saw a decline of parquet sales on the European market. FEP, the Brussels based European Federation of the Parquet Industry estimates that based on preliminary information obtained from companies in its member countries, parquet sales in 2008 backslided by close to 7 % in comparison with 2007. Indications are that the decrease is proportionate to the relapse witnessed in the flooring market in general. In the same line, a regression in parquet production volumes was also apparent in the global EU area.*

This new development does not come as a surprise, as the steadily weakening tendency has been observed throughout the course of most of last year, and especially during the last quarter. The slackening performance of the traditionally largest markets (Germany, Spain and France in particular) induced to an important degree by a sharp drop in local construction businesses – impacting both the delivery of new dwellings and to a lesser degree the renovation segment – is certainly one of the major factors behind the general market decline. Available data presently point in the direction of a total consumption in the EU/EFTA area of around 112 million m<sup>2</sup>. FEP wishes to stress, however, that complete statistical data will only be available at the federation's General Assembly next June.

The reasons for the unfavourable business climate which left a mark on the EU parquet industry as well can no doubt be attributed to the steadily declining consumer confidence induced by the large scale recession and of late unprecedented turmoil on the financial markets, prompting a climate of uncertainty, distrust, and low level investment readiness. Persistent and fierce pressure from competing low-cost markets, rising energy and supplies costs through most of last year, concerns about raw material availability & pricing, stiffer bank-loan policies as well as the generally overrated Euro further amplified the existing challenges for the industry. FEP hence calls for swift and focused measures at all relevant levels to safeguard the EU parquet industry's competitiveness, and help insure its sustainable functioning and future stability.

"It is now more than ever time to close ranks, use opportunities to exchange ideas about what this business can do to avoid simply undergoing the downside of the economic cycle and pro-actively take initiatives to successfully confront the rapidly changing environment. How fast the better season will actually return depends to a great extent on the creativity, the sense for innovation and the true entrepreneurial spirit of all of us", said FEP chairman Dieter Betz.

### Living on Wood Initiative sees further expansion

In line with the decision taken at the last General Assembly in Bad Blumau, Austria the FEP Board has launched a 6 month media pilot project on the German market with a view to further enhancing the image and publicity of the Real Wood campaign, as a preamble for possible introductions in other member countries. The project entails a close media partnership with "Das Haus" and the creation of a permanent "InfoMall Parquet"-channel, carrying the complete editorial content of the Real Wood campaign. The first results of an online visitors' evaluation are most encouraging.

Meanwhile, the number of officially licensed Real Wood-logo companies at the end of December 2008 has further risen to 53, compared to 42 at the beginning of the year.



## **CE-marking for parquet**

After two previous extensions of the co-existence period regarding EN 14342 and as things stand at the time of release of the present communication, the CEI-marking obligation for parquet and wood flooring products is expected to officially enter into effect on 1 March 2009. FEP trusts that the postponements in question have granted the necessary time for parquet producers to carry through the required steps for reaching conformity with the norm in question.

FEP will inform its members should any change still occur concerning the foreseen CE-marking schedule.

## **General Assembly 2009**

FEP's 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly and 34<sup>th</sup> European Parquet Congress will be held on 11 & 12 June in the beautiful city of Cracow, Poland. As on past occasions, the FEP Board and Management team look forward to a large attendance by member companies of this one and only forum of the European Parquet Industry.

\*\*\*\*\*

*FEP, Brussels, January 2009.*

*For more information, please contact FEP (E. Varga) at +32 2 556 25 87 or via [info@parquet.net](mailto:info@parquet.net).*