

**JOINT DECLARATION OF UEA AND EFBWW ON THE EMISSION
OF FORMALDEHYDE FROM PANELS USED IN THE
PRODUCTION OF FURNITURE**

The European Furniture Manufacturers Federation (UEA) and the European Building and Wood Workers (EFBWW), jointly declare their concern about the formaldehyde emissions from materials used in the production of furniture.

The first concern of both the furniture manufacturers and the workers in the industry is the health and safety of the persons who work in the industry and of the persons who use the products of the furniture industry. In the long term they want emission levels in wood based products to be on the same levels as natural wood.

For that reason both organizations warmly welcome the ongoing European discussion on appropriate legislative action.

They recognize the assessments concerning formaldehyde issued by IARC and SCOEL and accept the principles stated in the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 98/24/EC of 7 April 1998 on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work, with particular attention paid towards the Employer's obligations stated in Section II.

They call on the European authorities to formulate a legislation requiring that all materials used in furniture put on the market in the EU have the lowest possible emission level based on the best available technology.

A European legislation is needed in order to avoid distortions of trade within the EU and to assure that also the rapidly increasing import of products made from panels gives the same level of safety to the consumers.

Taking into account the aspects mentioned before, and with respect to the best possible protection of workers as well as consumers, as well as for ensuring a fair competition on the furniture market, the EFBWW and the UEA are in favor of putting formaldehyde on the new list of Indicative Occupational Exposure Limit Values (IOELVs).

In parallel to legislative action the Commission should carry out some accompanying measures. among others:

- Considering the specific conditions for SMEs, the European commission should take action to enable SMEs to reach and fulfill its obligations within the transition period of a new IOELV list.
- Advice for technical and personnel protection measures ensuring compliance with the limit value.
- Examination as to which extent SMEs depend on technical advice and support for the necessary changes in their production.

The EFBWW and the UEA are recognized social partners in the European Social Dialogue Furniture.