



Floor Forum International, N° 20,
Sept. Photo Adesiv

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Editorial



Rafael Michavila (president of EFPI)

**"We are competitors joined by a
number of mutual interests"**

The European Federation of Parquet Importers (EFPI) is an association of leading European importers of engineered and solid wood floorings. EFPI aims to promote and represent the industry in Europe, provide a voice towards key audiences on European legislation and standards, and act as a source of information and advice for members.

"Despite of its recent creation, the EFPI has become a trusted organisation contributing to the development of policies, and its awareness among key stakeholders is constantly growing", said Rafael Michavila.

The EFPI looks into the relevant policy and legislative initiatives as regards standards and trade policy. EFPI's main concerns include issues such as the EU actions against illegal logging and trade (we have just issued a statement on FLEGT that can be found on our website www.efpi-europe.eu), import duties and potential anti-dumping cases, the implementation of CE Marking, problems with uniform implementation of tariffs across member States, etc.

As indicated by the annual EFPI statistics, wooden floor imports in Europe have steadily increased in the past years and that will be the trend for the near future. This applies to both solid wood and engineered floors. Does this mean more competition for manufacturers? "Definitely not", insists Rafael Michavila, president of EFPI. "Our primary aim is to promote wooden floors, and this also benefits manufacturers". On the occasion of the EFPI general assembly, Floor Forum took the

opportunity to talk to the members of the board. In addition to Rafael Michavila (Euro Covering), we also met vice-president Ruud Steenvoorden (Fetim), treasurer Frode Overa (Oscar Peschardt & Co), and Valeria Fagone (Interell), the secretary general in charge for the daily management.

Ruud Steenvoorden comments: "Wooden floor importers are doing well and hope to continue doing so. This is possible if we work together to defend a number of mutual interests". The EU, following the most recent enlargement, has become increasingly complex in recent years, but it is increasing its efforts to secure and promote the free movement of goods. One of these initiatives is the Building Products Directive which stipulates that goods without CE marking may not be sold within the EU. "This is something that manufacturers outside Europe need to be aware of and comply with," testifies Frode Overa. "We cannot import without CE marking". CE marking is only one aspect of the complex European regulations. Valeria Fagone says: "EU regulations are changing and expanding all the time and, it is one of our core missions to be closely involved in the decision-making process". EFPI plays different 'notes' to achieve its objectives: close contact with EU institutions, relevant CEN working groups, maintaining relations with industry, collecting and processing statistics, etc. Various marketing activities are on the programme with a view to promoting the use of wooden floors and consolidating growth. "Now that the organisation itself is well set, we can gradually start work on promoting awareness", concludes Rafael Michavila.

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Lay-out:
Upsilon Advertising - Gent (B)

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Plus Point - Blankenberge (B)

Floor Forum International
is a publication of FFI bvba

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