

Spanish plywood imports continued to climb

The growth in Spanish imports of non-tropical softwood and hardwood plywood registered as early as the third quarter of 2005 continued into the fourth quarter of last year, too. By contrast, imports of tropical plywood grades were lower compared with the same quarter one year earlier. As a result, Spanish tropical plywood imports were around 1% lower in a year-on-year comparison at 16,487 (2004: 16,647) tonnes during 2005 as a whole, the Madrid-based Spanish wood importers association (AEIM) reported; the value of imports fell correspondingly by 1.1% to €11.5m (11.7m). On the other hand, imports of non-tropical plywood rose by 8.1% in volume terms to 66,196 (61,525) tonnes and by 3.5% in value terms to reach €61.8m (59.7m).

In the case of non-tropical grades, shipments from Finland to Spain had risen especially substantially during the final quarter of the year. Following an 8.9% downturn in the nine months until September, imports rose by 8.2% over the year as a whole to reach 35,199 (32,530) tonnes. The value of plywood deliveries from Finland even jumped by some 17% to €35.3m (30.0m). However, deliveries from France were well below the previous year's level with a 17% decline in volumes and a 32% drop in value.

The decrease in imports of tropical plywood grades into Spain was primarily fuelled by lower delivery volumes from Brazil, which declined by some 14% to stand at 5,331 (6,163) tonnes. Conversely, Chinese imports were almost 29% higher at 8,972 (6,958) tonnes. □

Fibreboard imports into Spain decreased in 2005

Spanish fibreboard imports recovered slightly in the final quarter of the year although overall import volumes fell over the year as a whole. According to the Spanish wood importers association (AEIM), headquartered in Madrid, some 5.6% less or 426,524 (2004: 451,925) tonnes of fibreboard was imported into Spain than in the previous year. In the nine months through September, the decrease had stood at 6.5%. The value of imports reached €182.6m (179.1m), a 2% drop over the previous year. In the first nine months of the year, a 2% fall had been registered.

Deliveries from Portugal, France and Britain fell significantly

As regards the main supplier countries in volume terms, considerable decreases in deliveries from Portugal, France and the UK contrasted with higher imports from Poland, Rumania, Germany and Belgium. For example, fibreboard imports from Portugal dropped significantly by 32% to 120,116 (176,479) tonnes, while deliveries from France plunged by 23% to 39,204 (50,953) tonnes. Deliveries from the UK were around 61% lower at 14,100 (36,410) tonnes, whereas Polish fibreboard suppliers were able to expand their deliveries to Spain by almost 36% to 103,106 (76,002) tonnes. Imports from Rumania had multiplied from a low level last year to reach 42,340 (4,615) tonnes. German suppliers increased their deliveries of fibreboard to Spain by 17% to 33,487 (28,724) tonnes, while imports from Belgium were up 8.1% over the previous year's level at 32,701 (30,253) tonnes. □

Euparal has applied for EFPI membership

The parquet importer association Euparal of Dordrecht/Holland submitted an application for membership in the European Federation of Parquet Importers (EFPI) in Brussels at the beginning of February 2006. The move had already been discussed by the two associations at the flooring fair Domotex held in mid-January 2006 in Hanover/Germany. At the next EFPI annual general meeting on 25 April 2006, being held in Maastricht/Holland on the occasion of the flooring fair Europarket 2006, a formal vote is to be taken on the application. Thereafter Euparal will be registered as an individual member under the umbrella of the EFPI. The association's structures remain unchanged. Euparal's chairman Harri Siukonen is hoping EFPI membership will bring such benefits as a larger network through which members can obtain better access to other markets in general but to the Chinese market in particular.

Overseas companies can meanwhile become Euparal members, too

The parquet importer association Euparal based in Dordrecht/Holland was founded in 1989. Whilst Euparal had initially focussed on European importers, overseas companies can meanwhile become members as well. Euparal currently comprises the following 14 members: Torlys Inc. (Mississauga/Canada), Timberman Denmark A/S (Hadsund/Denmark), Tradewoods Ltd. (Lancashire/UK), Lincona Konsult AS (Tallinn/Estonia), Triofloor OY (Vantaa/Finland), Hatibo Flooring BV (Lisse/Holland), Hardvidarval ehf Ltd. (Reykjavik/Iceland), Chetham Timber Co Ltd (Dublin/Ireland), Cavinato S.P.A. (Vicenza/Italy), Eurowood A/S (Larvik/Norway), Listor Lda. (Linda-a-Velha/Portugal), McKay Flooring Ltd. (Glasgow/UK), Alpod d.o.o. (Cerknica/Slovenia), and Otto Parquet S.L. (Cervelló/Spain).

The EFPI was founded in Bremen in July 2005. At that time Jürgen Fruchtenicht, managing director of Amorim Wood Supplies GmbH of Bremen, was elected president of the association. The members were officially introduced at the Domotex fair for the first time. When Euparal joins, the EFPI will represent a total of ten members. The association's objective is to provide European parquet importers with a common platform for information and to perform lobbying work. In this way the EFPI notifies its members of such matters as changes in import guidelines, packaging requirements, and customs regulations. The association also intends to take care of marketing measures and to gather and publish statistical data about its members' imports of parquet flooring. □

Spain: Imports of plywood

(t)	January - December		% Change
	2005	2004	
Softwood and hardwood plywood			
Finland	35,199	32,530	+ 8.2
Russia	6,862	7,115	- 3.6
France	5,416	6,493	- 16.6
Latvia	3,921	4,343	- 9.7
Portugal	3,170	2,360	+ 34.3
Germany	2,647	2,190	+ 20.9
Italy	1,794	1,297	+ 38.3
Others	7,187	4,924	+ 46.0
Total	66,196	61,252	+ 8.1
Tropical plywood			
Brazil	5,331	6,163	- 13.5
China	8,972	6,958	+ 28.9
France	749	1,136	- 34.1
Ivory Coast	116	95	+ 22.1
Others	1,319	2,295	- 42.5
Total	16,487	16,647	- 1.0

(Source: AEIM, Madrid)