

EU ADVOCACY

Focus on the main EU ongoing dossiers

This bi-monthly newsletter aims at providing an overview on some selective EU ongoing topics that are of primary interests for the woodworking industries. In order to have a comprehensive overview of the different issues, members are invited to read the correlated circular letters containing detailed updates.

Enjoy the reading!

The CEI-Bois & EOS Team

Hearings of the Commissioners-designate

Ahead of the Hearings of the Commissioners-designate, CEI-Bois and EOS Members received a summary of the mission letters for the most relevant Executive Vice-Presidents-designate and Commissioners-designate and suggestions for possible questions for the hearings of the Commissioners-designate.

The appropriate EP committee(s) is expected to invite the Commissioner-designate to make a statement and to answer questions. The hearings are organised in such a way as to enable Commissioners-designate to disclose to the Parliament all relevant information about his/her view on specific topics. In order to be appointed, the designated Commission needs, however, the consent of Parliament. EP Committees submit written questions to the Commissioners-designate before the hearings.

Both documents aimed at supporting Members in their advocacy activities at national level and facilitate an engagement with your MEPs.

NOVEMBER 2024

Informative bi-monthly newsletter
by CEI-Bois & EOS



WHAT'S NEW

EUDR DELAY

The European Council has decided to support the European Commission's proposal to postpone implementation of the new anti-deforestation regulation by one year - it was initially scheduled for 30 December 2024.

Now, the proposal must be voted on by the EP, which is expected to happen on November 13-14.



EUDR

Joint statements

CEI-Bois and EOS, together with 7 other European primary producers and various industries welcomed the European Commission's proposal to extend the implementation period of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) by 12 months.

While we fully support the regulation's objective to combat global deforestation, it is crucial to ensure that it is implemented under the right conditions to be effective and feasible.

The focus must now shift to addressing the practical challenges associated with the EUDR's implementation to prevent uncertainties and avoid supply chain disruptions.

Moreover, on 22 October, ahead of the vote of the EP on the adoption of the urgent decision (rule 170) in order to proceed voting on the Proposal for amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 as regards provisions relating to the date of application, a Joint Statement titled "Affected sectors and industries call on the European Parliament to swiftly adopt the urgent procedure for the Commission's proposal on EUDR postponement" was sent to the Members of the EP.

Beginning of October, the EC proposed a one-year postponement of the application of the EUDR, i.e., until 30 December 2025 (30 June 2026 for micro- and small undertakings). The deadline for finalising the country benchmarking system (designating countries as low, standard, or high risk - EC has indicated that a "large majority" of countries would come within the 'low risk' category- would also be postponed to 30 June 2025.

Alongside the proposal to delay the EUDR's application, the EC updated the FAQ document to provide 40+ new answers to questions raised by stakeholders and issued a detailed draft Guidance Document with the aim of clarifying the scope of application of the EUDR. The document clarifies a.o. the definition of various key terms, including "operator", "placing on the market" and "export".

The EC also published the general principles for the methodology it will apply to the EUDR country benchmarking system, in a communication on the Strategic Framework for International Cooperation Engagement.

Finally, on 16 October, the European Council agreed on its position on the targeted amendment of the EUDR, postponing its date of application by 12 months. The EP is expected to vote on the postponement, on 13-14 November.

→ **[Read the full statements](#)**



CONSTRUCTION

Working Group

On 8 November, members of the CEI-Bois Construction WG met online for the 3rd time this year and exchanged on a variety of topics, such as EU end-of-waste criteria for construction and demolition waste, the recast EPBD, the new CPR, the amended delegated regulation on reaction-to-fire performance of wood panelling and cladding, etc.

Members also received updates from the different CEI-Bois Task Forces, including the CLT Hub, the LCA Task Force, TIMBIM, and the VOC Task Force.

EVENT

Transforming our built and living environment



On 23 October, CEI-Bois and EOS were invited to give a presentation during the 8th Mediterranean Forest Week - Webinar "Transforming our built and living environment".

On this occasion, it was emphasised that building with wood offers a holistic approach to creating greener cities. Through sustainable construction practices, wood has the potential to transform urban environments, making cities healthier, more sustainable, and more livable for future generations. Its environmental benefits help combat climate change, while its natural aesthetics and properties promote human health and well-being. By supporting local economies, creating job opportunities, and fostering community connections, wood can also enhance societal well-being.

CIRCULAR CHOICES

13 November - Brussels



The transformation into a circular bioeconomy must be fair and inclusive to ensure the maintenance and creation of good quality jobs across the EU and in line with the creation of new avenues for innovation.

The forest-based bioeconomy provides the perfect framework for this. The sector is already a hub of innovation and smart concepts, offering sustainable solutions and opportunities to explore new uses for fibre and by-streams.

The further development of bio-based products and processes in the upcoming years can create new economic opportunities and jobs, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient society. At the same time, such transformation requires young talent with new sets of skills as well as reskilling and upskilling the existing human resource.

With this event, we wish to open a frank discussion on EU competitiveness and how investing in skills training and good industrial jobs is critical to boost the EU's economic growth and competitiveness, thereby contributing to building the open strategic autonomy of Europe.

→ [**Info and registration**](#)

WOODPOP

Expert Group Meeting

On 10 September, representatives from governments and organisations working on wood policies gathered in Norway for the latest European wood policy platform (woodPoP) meeting, continuing the push for a sustainable, wood-based future in Europe.

The event kicked off with a site visit in Oslo, where delegates explored the stunning timber headquarters of Save the Children and enjoyed an insightful talk by Jørgen Tycho of Oslo tre.

The journey then took the group to Brumunddal, home of the world's tallest all-timber building, where the 5th woodPoP Expert Group Meeting took place on 11 September.

Delegates worked to finalise a key document: "A wood-based circular bioeconomy for a sustainable Europe," which was officially released on 6 November in Brussels.

To wrap up the event, delegates toured a wood fibre insulation factory run by Hunton, showcasing innovative wood-based solutions in action.



WOOD POLICY AND INNOVATION CONFERENCE

The "Wood Policy Innovation Conference", was jointly organised by Wood4Bauhaus, BioRegions, WoodPop and Wood Cluster Styria on 7 November 2024 at the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the European Union in Brussels.

The conference highlighted the vital role of the wood sector as a key driver of future competitiveness in housing and the climate debate, encouraging greater recognition and support from the new EU Commission and EU Parliament. It showcased the latest state-of-the-art in building design with wood and how the public sector can support more biobased construction to combat climate change. Members of the European Parliament and their staff, EC staff and experts, policy makers, and advocacy organisations were invited to join this policy discussion and networking event, where close to 200 participants were present.

→ [**More info**](#)

TRADE ANTIDUMPING

Chinese hardwood plywood imports

The EU is launching an anti-dumping investigation into Chinese hardwood plywood imports. Specifically, the product subject to this investigation is plywood consisting solely of sheets of wood other than bamboo and okoumé, each ply not exceeding 6 mm thickness, with at least one outer ply of tropical wood or non-coniferous wood, of species specified under subheadings 4412 31, 4412 33 and 4412 34, whether or not coated or surface-covered.

The complaint was lodged on 27 August 2024 by the Greenwood Consortium ('the complainant'). The evidence provided by the complainant shows that the volume and the prices of the imported product under investigation have had, among other consequences, a negative impact on the quantities sold and the level of prices charged by the Union industry, resulting in substantial adverse effects on the overall performance and the financial situation of the Union industry.

The investigation of dumping and injury will cover the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. The examination of trends relevant for the assessment of injury will cover the period from 1 January 2021 to the end of the investigation period.

The investigation will be concluded but not more than 14 months of the date of the publication of this Notice. All imports of Chinese goods will have to be registered at EU borders. If the EU decides to levy tariffs, they would then be applied retroactively.

→ [**More information**](#)

Imports of multilayered wood flooring from China subject to registration

On 16 May 2024, the EC announced the initiation of an anti-dumping proceeding with regard to imports into the Union of multilayered wood flooring originating in the People's Republic of China. This initiation followed a complaint lodged by the European Parquet Federation on behalf of producers representing more than 25% of the total Union production of multilayered wood flooring.

On 25 October, the European Commission has published an Implementing Regulation making the imports of Chinese multilayered wood flooring from China subject to registration by the customs authorities.

The product concerned is currently classified under CN code 4418 75 00.

Imports of the product concerned may be made subject to registration for the purpose of ensuring that, if the investigation results in findings leading to the imposition of anti-dumping duties, those duties can, if the necessary conditions are fulfilled, be levied retroactively on the registered imports in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

In the complaint requesting the initiation of an anti-dumping investigation, dumping margins for the product concerned were estimated to range from 60% to 160% and an average injury elimination level was estimated to range between 40% and 50% in the period from October 2022 to September 2023.

→ [**Implementing Regulation**](#)



SPANISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Event on European competitiveness

On 8 October, CEI-Bois attended a physical event organised by the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium on Enhancing European Competitiveness: The Role of Innovation and Funding in the Net Zero Industry Act and Critical Raw Materials Act.

The event's speaker was Mr Jacek Truszczyński, Deputy Head of the Green and Circular Economy Unit at the European Commission (DG GROW).

Although the talk did not specifically address the circular bioeconomy or the woodworking industries, it offered insights into the current state of affairs regarding the EU's lagging global competitiveness, as well as into legislative and financial tools aimed at supporting the scale up of green technology.



72nd International

SOFTWOOD CONFERENCE
TAORMINA 2024 • 16th/18th October

On 17-18 October, the 72nd edition of the International Softwood Conference was held at the UNAHOTELS Capotaormina in Taormina, Italy.

The Conference was hosted by Federlegno Arredo, which co-organised the event with the two usual partners, EOS and ETTF. The event drew many participants as around 230 people, from over 20 countries all over the world, were present.

During the first day, information-packed sessions about market trends were followed with attention by the audience. This year's conference was marked by its truly global flair, with presenters focusing not just on European markets, but on North America, China, Japan, MENA, India, Australia and New Zealand. While there were regional differences, in some cases significant, it is apparent that 2024 has been overall a challenging year for the softwood industry across the world, but probably slightly better than expected at the end of 2023. The big question mark for operators in the sector is whether the market has bottomed out and 2025 can really be the year of recovery.

The second day of the Conference included 3 panel discussions on issues of interests to both traders and sawmillers. The first panel saw interesting exchanges on the wider role that forests will play in the future. The 2nd panel was about the building sector, in particular the commercial relationship between Austria and Italy. Last but not least, the 3rd panel consisted in a thorough assessment of the EUDR in the light of recent political developments.

The next edition of the International Softwood Conference will take place in Oslo, Norway from 22-24 October 2025.

→ [More information](#)

FOREST EUROPE

CEI-Bois and EOS were present at the 9th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Bonn on 1-2 October



The aim of this event was to make decisions to strengthen future cooperation on forests in Europe and share the latest findings and developments in Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) across the pan-European region. On this occasion, ministers from 44 countries, the European Commission, and key stakeholders gathered near Bonn to reinforce their commitment to Sustainable Forest Management and the future of FOREST EUROPE. The event concluded with the signing of the Bonn Ministerial Documents to reaffirm collective action for resilient forests.

Our Secretary General, Silvia Melegari, was present and emphasised the crucial role of the wood industry. She highlighted the need for our sector to be actively involved in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly affect the raw material supply. This ensures we can continue offering society sustainable, environmentally friendly, and beautiful products that support a greener future.

She reminded that:

"A reliable, predictable, and appropriate wood supply is essential for the wood industries as it forms the foundational raw material upon which the entire sector depends. A stable wood supply allows industries to optimise production, ensure employment, and make smart investments e.g. in new machinery and techniques to optimise the use of available wood, increase logs yield, reduce waste and improve overall efficiency. A reliable supply chain also helps businesses compete in a global market characterised by an increasingly distorted competition. Delays or interruptions in wood availability can cause companies to lose contracts or miss market opportunities. An unstable and inappropriate supply of wood makes prices volatile with negative effects across the value chain."

Ahead of the Bonn Conference, CEI-Bois and EOS cosigned, with 9 other organisations representing the European forest and forest-based sector, a joint statement expressing strong support for FOREST EUROPE, as a multi-government-led policy process.

→ [Read the statement](#)

CONSTRUCTION

Technical assistance on Whole Life-Cycle Global Warming Potential reporting for buildings: 1st stakeholder meeting

On 22 October, CEI-Bois participated online in the 1st stakeholder meeting taking place in the context of the Technical assistance on Whole Life-Cycle Global Warming Potential reporting for buildings. Organised by Viegand Maagoe, one of the external consultants in charge of the technical assistance on behalf of the European Commission (DG ENER), the meeting focused on:

- ➔ Input for the delegated act amending Annex III of the recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (recast EPBD) as regards the establishment of a Union methodology for the calculation of life-cycle GWP (LCGWP) of new buildings
- ➔ Input for the guidance to support Member States in developing limit value for LCGWP for new buildings

During the stakeholder meeting, a public consultation was also launched in the form of a questionnaire, covering the main aspects of LCGWP reporting for buildings. CEI-Bois replied to the public consultation on 31 October on the basis of preliminary comments shared with the consultants already before the 1st stakeholder meeting and following an internal meeting held under the CEI-Bois Construction Working Group on 30 September.

As a reminder, Article 7 of the recast EPBD (in force since May 2024) empowers the EC to adopt delegated acts to amend Annex III to set out a Union framework for the national calculation of life-cycle GWP with a view to achieving climate neutrality. The first such delegated act shall be adopted by 31 December 2025. Moreover, by 1 January 2027, Member States shall publish a roadmap detailing the introduction of limit values on the total cumulative life-cycle GWP of all new buildings and set targets for new buildings from 2030, considering a progressive downward trend, as well as maximum limit values, detailed for different climatic zones and building typologies.

Feasibility study on an EU database for construction products

On 28 October, DG GROW and a consortium of consultants hosted an online meeting on the upcoming Feasibility study on an EU database for construction products in the context of the new CPR. The goal of the study is to assess the long-term financial feasibility of establishing an EU database/system for the management of DPPS of construction products for the EC and for manufacturers, particularly by conducting a cost analysis of 3 possible options:

1. Centralised database developed, maintained, and supported by the EC.
2. Decentralised model with DPP service providers, approved by the EC based on EU common requirements that will be developed to ensure consistency, security, and user friendliness of the system.
3. Decentralised model with manufacturers' own databases and backup service providers. The manufacturers' system will comply with common requirements to ensure consistency and persistence of data, security and user friendliness for users. In addition, to ensure persistence of data (backup of the DPPs), manufacturers need to send data to third-party backup service providers.

As part of this feasibility study, a public consultation (survey) was also launched, and it is intended for 2 categories of economic operators:

- a) Organisations who will generate and issue DPPs (manufacturers).
- b) Organisations using the DPPs (designers, construction companies, public bodies, etc.).

While the survey is open to aggregate replies from Brussels-based or national associations, it is primarily directed at economic operators and their technical teams in charge of digitalisation. These are asked via the survey to explain how they are working today in this area and what the necessary resources that they currently employ are (financial, time, staff). CEI-Bois members were therefore encouraged to share the survey as widely as possible within their network, so that companies have a chance to provide direct replies reflecting the realities on the ground.

As a reminder, Article 75 of the new CPR empowers the EC to set up via delegated act a construction digital product passport system, which shall be compatible with, interoperable with and based upon the digital product passport (DPP) established by the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation. Manufacturers will be obliged to make available their DPPs by 18 months after the entry into force of the delegated act referred above (Article 22).

NEW CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS REGULATION

Full-day events organised by Group of Notified Bodies and EC

The Group of Notified Bodies (GNB) and the European Commission (DG GROW) hosted two full-day hybrid events on the new Construction Products Regulation (new CPR) on 22 October and 30 October, respectively. CEI-Bois attended both events online.

Organised in view of the upcoming official adoption of the new CPR - expected by the end of 2024, both events addressed the revised regulation's new requirements, in direct engagement with two different audiences. While the GNB event was mainly aimed at Notified Bodies and their representatives, the DG GROW event was directed primarily at economic operators manufacturing and placing construction products on the EU market.

CEI-Bois also informed its members about the DG GROW event, encouraging these to share the invitation within their networks for a wider reach and to facilitate the direct participation of woodworking sector manufacturers.

CEI-Bois response to ECHA consultation on renewal of IPBC approval

On 23 October, CEI-Bois submitted its response to the ECHA public consultation on the potential classification of IPBC as candidate for substitution in the context of the renewal of its approval.

The CEI-Bois response was prepared based on three analyses of alternatives, two of which conducted by DHI Group and Ramboll at the request of CEI-Bois Members and other Brussels-based associations such as EuroWindow.

In its response, CEI-Bois pointed out that the use of IPBC is indispensable for the European woodworking industries and its replacement by biocidal or non-chemical alternatives is not viable now or in the foreseeable future.

ECHA was therefore urged to renew the approval of IPBC for 7 years, without any use case restrictions. This is absolutely necessary for the daily operations of the woodworking industries and to avoid negative impacts on the EU economy and society, including by hampering wood's significant potential to contribute to the EU's climate neutrality targets.

Sustainability Working Group meeting of Construction Products Europe

On 9 October, CEI-Bois attended the physical meeting of Construction Products Europe's Sustainability Working Group.

The meeting covered various topics, including the new Construction Products Regulation and the latest developments around the work of the CPR Acquis Subgroup on Environmental Sustainability, the Green Claims Directive, the Carbon Removals Certification Framework, the Whole-Life Carbon Roadmap, etc.

The European Commission's DG GROW and DG ENV also attended the last part of the meeting via Mr Philippe Moseley and Dr Florian Flachenecker, respectively. The two offered an engaging presentation on circular construction, openly discussing issues such as the EU end-of-waste criteria for construction and demolition waste, secondary materials, and minimum recycled content.



DRAGHI REPORT

The future of European competitiveness - A competitiveness strategy for Europe

On 12 September, CEI-Bois and EOS members received a summary of the Report by Mario Draghi "The future of European competitiveness - A competitiveness strategy for Europe".

The report is centered on how to revive the EU competitiveness. It is very broad in scope and contains several prescriptions. An active industrial policy is fostered, and Mr Draghi sees decarbonisation at its core, as the document stresses that ambitious climate policy can and should unleash substantial industrial opportunities for the continent. But Europe's green strategy should hinge on the creation of new jobs: if decarbonisation leads to the deindustrialisation of Europe, it won't be supported by European people and industries alike.

Mr Draghi calls for €800bn (4.5% of EU GDP in 2023) in additional annual investments and a radical policy overhaul to reverse Europe's competitive decline vis à vis the US and China. The top echelons of the European Commission are expected to take into account the recommendations of the report in this legislative term and possibly beyond, but at the moment it is unclear to what extent.

It has to be noted that the report of Mr Draghi supports the introduction of building codes to strengthen green demand in the construction sector, with harmonisation across the EU to enable the development of common standards in construction and upstream industries (complementing the supply-side incentives for circularity in construction in the EU Taxonomy). It also supports low-carbon criteria and minimum environmental sustainability requirements for public procurement when applying the principle of most economic advantageous tender (MEAT) in EU public procurement directives. This can be launched by the EU for procurement values above the threshold at which EU rules apply, and later become pan-European legislation for Member States. Green public procurement can be implemented by, for example, applying adjustment factors based on lifecycle emissions to the economic evaluation of bids, or through the establishment of shadow prices for the emissions associated with each proposal

When it comes to skills, the Report underlines that demographic headwinds imply a shrinking labour force in Europe, while the US population is projected to expand in the coming decades. In this setting, a European strategy to address skills gaps - focused on all stages of education - is essential. Skills policies of the EU need to be adapted to the current challenges. Skills for the green transition, for example, need to be developed by introducing green skills in various subject areas, such as science, geography, mathematics, economics and technology subjects; and by integrating sustainability as a core aspect of curricula.

