

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **European wood-based panels industry signs landmark voluntary agreement with trade unions to enhance worker protection**

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EPF, the European Wood-based Panels Federation and EFBWW, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers, have signed a landmark agreement on enhanced worker protection known as the European Action Guide. The two partners signed the accord within the context of the European Commission's "Perspectives and Challenges of the Woodworking Industries in Europe" social dialogue project, on 29 November 2018. The industry trade association and the industry trade union both welcomed this voluntary commitment that ushers in a new level of safety in the workplace, estimated to be introduced up to five years ahead of any possible legislative requirement.

The Action Guide commits the European panel manufacturers to a measurement, control and continuous improvement process that is designed to ensure that worker exposure to formaldehyde is never threatening. Based on the Operation Exposure Limit value that the EU Scientific Committee has recommended (0.3ppm TWA, 0.6ppm STEL) the initiative improves protection via a colour coded zoning system. It was approved by EFBWW in mid-November and by EPF members last week ahead of the joint signing in Lisbon.

Mr Rolf Gehring of EFBWW, one of the architects of the accord, noted that the time of autocratic, hierarchical management in industry was now past. "The 'One brain, many hands' approach of the past will increasingly be replaced by cooperation, direct participation and voluntary agreements between employer and employee. The Action Guide is a model example of this". EPF and EFBWW are proud of this landmark voluntary agreement, the first of its kind in the European woodworking industry.

Brussels, 3 December 2018

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**EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION**  
WOOD - BASED PANELS

European Federation  
of Building  
and Woodworkers



Mr Kris Wijnendaele, Technical Director EPF, and Mr Justin Daerden, Director ACV, sign the Action Guide on behalf of EPF and EFBWW respectively. (Above)

Mrs Gundula Wagner, Pflaiderer, Mr Rolf Gehring, EFBWW, Mr Kris Wijnendaele and Mr Patricio Antonicoli, CEI-Bois. (Left)

About EPF: the European Panel Federation has members in 25 countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The European wood-based panels industry has an annual turnover of about 22 billion Euros, creates over 100,000 jobs directly and counts more than 5,000 enterprises. Further information: [info@europanels.org](mailto:info@europanels.org).

About EFBWW: The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) is the European Industry Federation for the construction industry, the building materials industry, the wood and furniture industry and the forestry industry. The EFBWW has 76 affiliated unions in 34 countries and represents a total of 1,600,000 members. The EFBWW is a member organisation of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Further information: [info@efbh.be](mailto:info@efbh.be).