



AN UPDATE OF FEFPEB'S LATEST ACTIVITIES AND RELATED STORIES FROM AROUND EUROPE



## Packaging wood price continues to climb

**Reports from across Europe show prices of packaging wood have continued to move upwards. A joint report from French forests federation FNB and wooden pallet association Sypal, for example, says economic growth in France and other parts of Western Europe is creating demand for sawn timber. The French construction market will drive growth and demand for timber for at least the next three years, said the report. Meanwhile, demand for pallets is increasing in many parts of Europe.**

According to the FNB, the pallet industry has absorbed raw material price increases but now has to increase the price of its end products. This will also affect the market for repaired pallets, the organisation said.

Meanwhile the Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) has reported price rises affecting the UK and Ireland. The CIPs/Markit report issued at the beginning of January showed that the price of pallet timber has now increased for 17 consecutive months; which the Pöyry report TIMCON commissions also demonstrates.

In a recent announcement, TIMCON said: "Our industry has absorbed many of these successive hikes, and the TIMCON reported at the end of last year that these input cost increases have now unfortunately worked their way through to push the price of pallets and packaging to our customers up. Pallets, packaging and nails are all up in price."

FEFPEB's pallet timber price index for Quarter 4 shows a further trend in the increase in price for pallet wood in Europe. Full data and graph can be found [here](#)

## "Trust in the Future": Dutch industry welcomes 68th FEFPEB congress

Hosted by EPV, the Dutch wooden packaging association, FEFPEB's 68th annual congress took place in Maastricht, The Netherlands, in October. The three-day event consisted of tours to PKF/Post Pallets BV and Meilink BV, a full-day business session, sponsored lunches and dinners, and cultural highlights of this influential European city. It attracted approximately 180 guests representing FEFPEB member countries.

The congress was welcomed to Maastricht by dr Theo Bovens, governor of the province of Limburg, followed

by an address by FEFPEB president Rob van Hoesel, who reminded delegates of the 70-year history of wooden pallets and packaging. While no-one should take their business for granted, he said, the signs for wood were increasingly positive. Plastics is struggling to solve its waste problem, while wood remains the only material with no negative footprint on the environment. Borrowing a slogan from the recent Dutch election, van Hoesel said in spite of the challenges, the industry should "trust in the future".

## FEFPEB ISPM15 Report

FEFPEB has completed a new study of ISPM 15, to understand the differences and similarities between implementation in member countries - and help develop common strategies. The last study took place in 2013.

The countries surveyed were: France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, UK, Belgium and Lithuania; with a partial response from the Czech Republic.

The conclusions and recommendations of the report were shared with the EU expert group attended by phytosanitary experts from the 27 EU member countries. An action plan to increase the awareness of phytosanitary risks with a focus on wood packaging material is to be developed during 2018."

Full results are available to members from FEFPEB.

## FEFPEB consults with Plastics Europe

FEFPEB had a constructive meeting with Plastics Europe in January to discuss the organisation's announcement that from January 1st this year it will enforce regular professional inspections of companies with a licence to produce CP pallets.

FEFPEB's stance is that is in favour of action by Plastics Europe to improve the quality of the CP pallet range. However, it wants to see an adequate consultation period with the European pallet industry before enforcement.

### Specifically, FEFPEB will be clarifying:

- Is the licence renewal requirement legal? It also needs to be phased in properly.
- What are the rules on inspection and by which companies?
- What penalties will be enforced?
- What are the rules for repaired pallets?
- What are the advantages of the new regime for manufacturers, repairers and users?

FEFPEB will keep members informed of further developments.

## DIARY DATES

### 24th to 25th May 2018:

FEFPEB meetings, Lille, France, hosted by Sypal. All members, Policy & Technical Committee, Industrial Packaging, Pallet Pools, PR-committee

### 18th to 20th September:

Interpal 2018, Minneapolis (Minnesota, US)

### 69th FEFPEB congress:

9-11 October 2019, Hamburg (Germany), hosted by HPE

## EU increases focus on wood to ensure sustainable economy



**Addressing FEFPEB delegates at the congress, Marianne Muller of the European Commission's department of the environment, said European authorities are increasingly considering wood as a cornerstone for developing sustainable business policies.**

As part of her update on the Circular Economy Package and the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 94/62/EC, which has been underway since mid-October, Muller said: "What better example of circularity. This is the sector where we have the most striking example of what a circular economy means."

The concept of circularity is now a priority in Europe, she said, and is becoming increasingly important, meaning that

rather than being mutually exclusive areas, environmental protection and economic growth are now interlinked with one another.

In questions after her presentation, former EPV President Peter Rikken said the EU needed to go further in its support for wood, which he said was the only truly renewable and sustainable material. "I don't understand why wood is still in the same summing up as the other materials – glass, metals and plastics - which are synthetic and made with huge amounts of energy," he said.

He added that in a recent Dutch raw materials lifecycle analysis, the worst performing wood products performed better than the best performing plastic products. "Wood is the only material that grows from the earth. It's the only material that absorbs CO2 from the environment," he said.

## What is Europe? Making a success of the EU.

In a presentation entitled The EU: 25 years since the Maastricht Treaty/The future of the EU, Mathieu Segers, professor of contemporary European History and European Integration at the University of Maastricht asked the question What is Europe? He argued that successful industries such as pallets and packaging are the bi-product of a clear political idea of what Europe is - and should be. In a world of growing uncertainties such as Brexit, he said, it is imperative to reengage with European ideals and "rediscover European integration as a source of strength that can help us to weather today's storms."

The issue of Brexit was also covered by speaker Jeroen Lammers, director economic affairs of the Netherlands employers' umbrella federation, said the Dutch could play a key bridging role between the UK and the EU to ensure Brexit was executed in a positive manner and which avoid a cliff-edge scenario that was not in anybody's interests.

"We have a lot at stake and a lot to lose," he said. "We need member states to give a bit of room to the UK. Offer them a warm shoulder instead of a cold shoulder and see if we can get something in place so we are not heading for the cliff edge."

## Provisional Inter-institutional Agreement on Revision of Waste Directives.

**FEFPEB has lobbied the EU for realistic recycling targets and calculations methods for wooden packaging. Triologue negotiations EU Council/ European Parliament/European Commission on the revision the Waste Directives, including the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive, did result in a provisional agreement.**

FEFPEB advocated realistic recycling targets and calculation methods for wood. Recycling targets for wood are currently set at more than 25% by 2025 and more than 30% in 2030. More information about a final agreement will be expected soon.

[Please see here for more information.](#)

## ISPM 15

FEFPEB is liaising with US partner association NWPCA, after stricter penalties were introduced for non-compliance to ISPM 15 marking. A customs' announcement at the end of September last year advised industry to consider alternatives to wooden packaging materials - although quick intervention ensured this advice was withdrawn the following day.

FEFPEB wants to ensure that the new regime is not impacting negatively on the smooth flow of trade and specifically, the use of wooden packaging.

NWPCA has advised that it is speaking with US Customers (CBP) to understand the current impacts and the results of the change in policy.

National association members are asked to keep FEFPEB's secretariat updated on any issues reported by exporters caused by this issue.



Secretary General Fons Ceelaert, updated the congress on FEFPEB's ongoing work, in areas including ISPM 15, where it is campaigning for more harmonisation in the wood marking schemes of different countries; industry statistics; public relations; and liaising with the industry worldwide, not least as a part of the Global Forum, where FEFPEB is taking a central role in defending wood as a raw material across the world.

Other presenters included:



Delegates at the congress

Professor Walther Ploos van Amstel from the University on Amsterdam on logistics of the future.

Jan Kurth, secretary general of German trade association HPE on software calculation programme CASE Express.



Mathieu Segers and Fons Ceelaert

René van Vliet, CAPE, on Robotics and automisation in the manufacturing and repairing of pallets.



Rob van Hoesel

Jan Oldenburger, managing director of Probos, on Dutch forests and the forest sector in the bio economy/scenarios until 2030, with an international bio-economy perspective.



FEFPEB delegates on the professional tour

Gabriel Robert, Institut Technologique FCBA, on further development of an infra-red spectroscopy tool for ISPM 15 compliance.

Next year the FEFPEB community joins global partners at Interpal in Minneapolis (USA) on 18 – 20 September 2018

FEFPEB members can find more information on the congress, along with photographs and presentations from the business session, at [www.fefpebcongress.com](http://www.fefpebcongress.com)

## FEFPEB congress: Thanks to our sponsors:

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**Gold sponsors:** BES Bollmann/KARA Energy Systems, Cape, CHEP Equipment Pooling, Ecoblocks, Eirebloc, EPAL, Euroblock, Itech, Corali, Storti, NWPCA, Cathild Industrie and the NWPCA.



### Silver sponsors:

Houtimport Kuhn, Lonza, Baltic Block, Joh. Friedrich Behrens AG, BASF Wolman and LPR, while the professional tour lunches were sponsored by Conne3, Lubox, Smartt and Deltahout.



### The German federation HPE has released new guidelines for using and producing wooden pallets under the name 'HPE-Palettenrichtlinie'.

Beginning by the end of September users of wooden pallets in the whole supply-chain will get assistance in choosing the right pallet for their special needs. Assisting this new guideline HPE is also launching a special group of producers who will be audited by an independent body to prove the accordance to the guideline.

## Packaging from Nature upgraded



FEFPEB's online campaign to promote the benefits of using wood in packaging and pallets has been updated with a new website. Six years after it was launched, the Packaging from Nature campaign site has been redeveloped with a new look and text. It has also been configured to be mobile-responsive to enable browsing on tablets and smart phones.

The new site is already available in English, with six summary websites planned in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

The Packaging from Nature campaign was launched as a cost-effective and effective way to tackle an increasing amount of mis-information about wood, largely by the plastic packaging industry. The website aims to present the facts about the huge benefits of using sustainably produced wooden packaging and pallets over any other materials.

With thanks to FEFPEB members for providing content for this newsletter.

For more information, please contact FEFPEB or RED Communications.



FEFPEB  
Postbus 4076  
NL-5004 JB Tilburg  
+31 13 594 48 02  
[www.fefpeb.org](http://www.fefpeb.org)



RED Communications Ltd  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1480 465953  
Email: [dominic@redcomm.co.uk](mailto:dominic@redcomm.co.uk)