

European Federation
of Building
and Woodworkers



Work Programme for the Sectoral European Social Dialogue of the Woodworking Industries

2020-2021

Introduction

The European social partners, EFBWW and CEI-Bois confirm the importance of a strong and autonomous European social dialogue for the woodworking sectors in order to develop a sustainable and prospering woodworking industry and will continue to reinforce their collaboration in order to achieve this.

Our social dialogue is acting in an ever more interdependent world on all levels, economic, political, as well as cultural and others. We are convinced that conflict or problem-solving processes are more and more depending on the involvement of all concerned parties into any action and on the recognition of ambiguous interests. For our own field of action this means to recognize the interests of the various types of workers and companies, but also recognizing the true interests of end-users, suppliers and the population.

On the European level and in the framework of their joint initiatives, EFBWW and CEI-Bois will take into account the repartition of responsibilities between the European and National level and will respect the role and autonomy of the national social partners in determining their labour market and terms and conditions of employment by themselves.

This two-year working programme serves as a guideline for the activities of the European social partners of the woodworking sectors for the years 2020-2021. However, EFBWW and CEI-Bois may, according to the developments in the EU agenda decide to tackle other issues than those contained in this programme, amongst others in the framework of the consultations of the social partners that will be launched by the European Commission during this period.

During this period the EFBWW and CEI-Bois will in particular strive to give a stronger visibility and follow-up to their joint actions, statements and projects.

Main priorities for the period 2020–2021

Strengthening industrial relations

Performing industrial relations are a major element of a level playing field for economic activities. Shaping working conditions in all its aspects by joint agreements is a cornerstone in this respect and the best guarantee to avoid and to fight competition by wage dumping or other kind of dumping related to working conditions.

EFBWW and CEI-Bois will therefore pay a particular attention in the strengthening of autonomous industrial relations within the woodworking sectors. They also reaffirm the primary responsibility of the national sectoral social partners, through autonomous industrial relations, for finding a common understanding about the organisation of their national labour market.

CEI-Bois and the EFBWW will continue to support the establishment of autonomous sectoral industrial relation systems for the woodworking sectors in all the Member States and in this respect, they will examine specific needs or demands from national social partners and, where needed, jointly develop specific capacity building initiatives. Furthermore, we intend to foster and support the strengthening of social partner structures in Central and Eastern European countries

Improving the functioning of the labour market

As most industries, the woodworking industries has been hit significantly by the crisis, which is still affecting many Member States. Unfair competition occurs and this is due, amongst others, to a legislative framework that is sometimes unclear, difficult to enforce or signed by difficulties in implementing adequate controls, especially in the case of cross-border operations. Ensuring a level playing field for companies and fighting against social fraud is an aim shared by the social partners. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the European Labour Authority (ELA). In addition, where appropriate the necessary initiatives should be taken, in a broad partnership with the various actors concerned, i.e. labour inspectorates, national authorities and social funds.

Industrial policies and the Green Deal

Wood is the solution! When talking about a greening economy or a circular economy, the consumption of renewable raw material, energy consumption or the efficient way to use raw material are paramount. In this respect, forestry and the forest-based industries play a significant role, today and in the future. The Communication of the European Union's Green Deal (COM[2019]640) also underlines this prominent role. Beside the task of delivering raw material, our sectors provide new type of material for various sectors and industries, amongst other in the construction industry. The latter is also pointing on the need for a future fruitful collaboration between science, employers, employee representatives and other stakeholders aiming at the creation of innovation clusters.

Changes in the demand due to the “greening” of the economy and jobs represent, on the one hand, a significant opportunity for the woodworking sectors regarding the creation of new jobs. On the other hand, they will also have an impact on the organisation of work (new market opportunities, new skills needed, etc.) and on working conditions (additional/new training, adapted Health and Safety conditions, etc.).

The EFBWW and CEI-Bois are committed to address these issues in the framework of their joint activities and to reflect the voice of workers and companies more closely in the debate on a strengthened competitiveness of the forestry and woodworking sectors at national, European and international level. In this respect, EFBWW and CEI-Bois will explore opportunities related to the expected “Renovation Wave” and the Post 2020 Forestry Strategy. We also pay particular attention to the need for an industry-wide dialogue between employers and workers at every level, as well as to the need for continuous sustainable financial investments and strengthening of lifelong learning.

Demographic changes: taking account of an ageing workforce

The demographic changes and in particular the ageing of the population and the workforce, combined with the difficulties observed in several Member States to attract and maintain young people in the woodworking sectors, are a growing challenge, both for companies and for workers.

The EFBWW and CEI-Bois will address the impact of such demographic developments from the various angles of its components (image of the sector, health and safety, employment issues, etc.) by gathering examples of national best practice and identifying potential topics for action at the EU level.

Initiatives for youth employment and the quality of apprenticeships

The crisis which has hit the EU since 2008 has had and continues to have a significant impact on the levels of employment in most Member States and is particularly affecting young people. Despite the efforts of member countries but also the EU, employment prospects for young people in the EU are bleak. One in five under 25 years old who is looking for work cannot find a job. Approximately 7.5 million young people between 15 and 24 are neither working, nor in education or training.

In addition, in most Member States the woodworking sectors are still suffering from a relatively negative image which affects its attractiveness and which, to some extent, explains the difficulties in hiring and retaining young people as well as skilled workers. Therefore, improving the attractiveness of the wood industry towards young people can provide an important contribution in fighting against the extremely high levels of youth unemployment that the EU is facing nowadays.

The development of high quality vocational education and training (VET), in particular so-called “dual forms”, combining elements of training at the workplace, in training centres and in schools, has been high on the EU agenda for some time and is considered an important mean for facilitating the transition from education and training to work.

EFBWW and CEI-Bois will develop actions aiming at increased attractiveness of our sectors and the promotion of apprenticeships amongst woodworking companies of all sizes both quantitatively and qualitatively, through the creation of strong partnership involving employers, trade unions, paritarian funds, VET institutes as well as local or regional authorities.

Anticipating and influencing the skills needs

In several Member States, independently of whether the forestry and woodworking industries were strongly affected by the crisis or not, there are changes in the use of technology and new work processes, often summarized under the title Digitalisation. In turn companies partly find it difficult to find workers with the appropriate skills.

The so called “skills gap”, i.e. the difference between the skills available and the ones that are effectively needed by the work process is a serious obstacle to economic growth, creation of jobs and competitiveness. In order to reduce this “skills gap” there needs to be on the one hand a better “market intelligence” aiming at better anticipating the changes in technology, tools, material and work processes and the skills needs and, on the other hand, a constant adaptation of the training schemes and the respective work organisation. Addressing the issue of anticipation of skills needs is of significant importance both for the competitiveness of woodworking companies, as well as for employment in the sector.

EFBWW and CEI-Bois would therefore like to gather the experiences of Member States and see how added value can be created by a better coordination at the EU level, in particular as regards mutual learning, creation of synergies and exchange of best practices between national stakeholders. EFBWW and CEI-Bois believes that economic crisis post-COVID-19 and the increased digitalisation of the economy will lead to an increased level of new skills to switch jobs and more general upskilling in a new work environment. For this reason, the Social Partners will engage in the discussions related to the EU Communication “A Pact for Skills” expected in November 2020.

They will also try to set the basis for a more structured cooperation/coordination between national stakeholders (companies and workers, national observatories, public and private research centres, academics, etc.).

Fostering a culture of H&S

Despite the overall reduction in the number of work-related accidents, improving health and safety in the workplace continues to be an important field of action for the woodworking sectors and therefore one of our main priorities. The improvement of health and safety at work very much depends on knowledge and a proper legal framework, also providing a level playing field for companies, but can also be achieved through promoting the development of a real culture of health and safety within each company, with the involvement of all the concerned stakeholders and in particular the workers.

The Social Partners of the woodworking sector are focusing their activities for the next two years especially on:

- Assessment of the EU H&S legislative framework
- Operational action for better working conditions, including joint projects
- Support for companies to implement EU legislation
- Addressing potential new hazards and precautionary prevention strategies
- Collaboration with the OSHA Agency in Bilbao

In order to strengthen and give concrete expression to their cooperation in the above-mentioned areas, EFBWW and CEI-Bois commit to redouble their efforts in designing and implementing joint demonstration projects; such a collaboration will give effective evidence of their capacity to use the Social Dialogue frame as the most operative incubator for the Woodworking sector industrial relations.

The following annex is tabling the specific planned activities, also indicating aims, responsibilities and timing.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE WOOD - Work programme 2020-2021

Policy Area	Topic	Aim	Period	Responsible
Industry policy Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow up of the PCWIE Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fostering cross border collaboration and the attractiveness of the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influencing the EU initiatives and policies in the wood industries 	The general aim is to jointly define an industry policy for the various covered sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020-2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demographic changes / Aging Workforce in the woodworking industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving working conditions and the attractiveness of the sector / possible project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats / Working Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussions about joint initiatives to strengthen the competitiveness of the Forest-based industries in the framework of the post 2020 Forestry Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Getting more influence in the framework conditions for the economic activities of the sector. Call for recognition of the forest-based sector and bioeconomy in meeting the goals of the European Green Deal and therefore EU's climate, energy and environmental objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Renovation Wave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As the EU building stock is the largest single energy consumer in Europe with 40% of energy consumption and 36% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020-2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All

		of EU GHG emissions, the ‘renovation wave’ initiative is the occasion for promoting wood and wood-based products, for their sustainable and environmentally friendly features.		
Environmental policies	Circular Economy	Joint position paper	▪ 2020-2021 (ongoing activities)	▪ Plenary meeting / Secretariat
Training and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EU policies in the area of VET, including the “A pact for Skills” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observing EU policies in the area / improving our capacity to influence on the European level ▪ Identification of the future needs of the EU’s timber industry ▪ Call for high-quality vocational training in eco-construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats/ Working party
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement of the quality of vocational education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fostering the concept of European Core Qualifications (Bolster Up Project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats/ Working party
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New Community strategy on OSH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influencing the design of the strategy – Joint declaration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats / Plenary meeting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wood Dust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring and update on National Implementation of the new exposure limit value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats/ Working Party

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychosocial Hazards at the Workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mutual information on facts, developments and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats / Working Party
Industrial Relations and the Labour Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for national affiliated organisations to improve their capacity for Social Dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collecting information about the respective national situation and giving support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2020 - 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariats

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