

EFIC 2026 Furniture Days - Competitiveness, Trade and Innovation in the spotlight as EFIC celebrates its 20th anniversary

Press release – Brussels 16 June 2026 – European furniture industry representatives gathered on 15 and 16 June in Herford, Germany, for the EFIC Furniture Days 2026, hosted by the Verband der Deutschen Möbleindustrie (VDM), marking the 20th anniversary of EFIC. Highlights included EFIC's Advocacy Report, presentations and exchanges on global trade tensions, competition in an uncertain world and implications for Europe's furniture industry's competitiveness, ongoing preparatory work on future ecodesign requirements for furniture under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) and a focus on artificial intelligence, changing value chains and customer expectations. Participants also visited the Furniture Industry Training Factory in Löhne as well as Nobilia, the largest European kitchen manufacturer.

EFIC President Edi Snaidero & Katharina Hartmann, VDM Board member, opened the event by highlighting the importance of maintaining a strong and united voice for the European furniture industry in a rapidly changing economic and political environment. They referred to the relevance of European and national federations to represent the interests of the industry towards policymakers and in fostering a stable, predictable, and competitive regulatory environment for the many SMEs that compose the furniture sector.

Gabriella Kemendi, EFIC Secretary General gave an overview of the latest advocacy activities of EFIC, with a focus on the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and ongoing preparatory work at EU level, the EU Deforestation Regulation and latest simplification package by the European Commission, the UK revision of furniture flammability legislation, US tariffs, Indian QCOs for furniture, among others.

In a video address, MEP Bernd Lange, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade, highlighted the furniture industry's importance as an industrial sector in Germany and the EU, as well as the need to support future-oriented industrial jobs in Europe, including in the furniture sector. He stressed that strengthening foreign trade is key to ensuring the sector's competitiveness and referred to arbitrary tariff policies in the US, which leads to a decline of exports, as well as growing imports from third countries, especially Asia. The European Parliament is committed to ensuring that production conditions in Europe are maintained, that exports conditions remain stable and that there is no unfair competition.

Jürgen Matthes, Head of the Research Cluster International Economic Policy, Finance and Real Estate Markets at the German Economic Institute Cologne, analysed the implications of current trade tensions and changing global economic dynamics for European industry. Higher barriers to market entry and more volatile trading conditions make it more difficult to access key markets. The competitive environment for European furniture manufacturers has become significantly more intense.

During the subsequent panel discussion, industry representatives Edi Snaidero (Snaidero, EFIC President), Katharina Hartmann (Hartmann Möbelwerke, VDM Board), Jarosław Michniuk (Paged Meble, OIGPM Vice President) and Robert Petersson (Kinnarps, Board member of TMF) exchanged



how European furniture manufacturers can remain competitive while navigating economic uncertainty, rising costs, decreased consumer demand, growing international competition and increasing regulatory pressure. They highlighted the need for ensuring that European manufacturers are not disadvantaged and for stronger enforcement.

Daniel Hinchliffe of Oeko-Institut presented the latest developments in the ongoing preparatory study for furniture under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), providing participants with insights into the timeline, methodology and early potential implications for manufacturers. According to the set timeline, furniture specific legislation should be adopted by 2028 and implemented on the ground 18 months later. Industry representatives raised concerns on potential burdensome regulatory requirements and called for a simple framework that delivers to the environmental goals of the Regulation without disadvantaging SMEs.

Philipp Trompeter of Dr. Wieselhuber & Partner examined how AI is transforming value chains, customer expectations and business processes, highlighting the increasing importance of digital innovation for the future competitiveness of the furniture industry.

EFIC members also held extensive discussions on current policy priorities, trade developments and the broader economic outlook for the sector. Participants stressed the importance of a competitive European industrial framework that supports sustainable manufacturing while ensuring a level playing field in global markets.

On 16 June, participants visited the Training Factory for the Furniture Industry (Lehrfabrik Möbelindustrie) in Löhne, a pioneering initiative dedicated to skills development and workforce training. Members also visited Nobilia, the largest European kitchen manufacturer, where they gained first-hand insights into modern furniture production, innovation and industrial excellence.

Concluding the event, EFIC President Edi Snaidero thanked VDM for hosting this year's edition of the Furniture Days and reiterated the importance of EFIC and national federations to continue collaborating to advocate for policies that strengthen the European furniture industry's competitiveness and protect European SMEs.



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EFIC is the European Furniture Industries Confederation, representing around 80% of the total turnover of the European Furniture Industries, a sector employing 1 million people in about 130.000 enterprises across the EU and generating a turnover of over 100 billion Euros. The EFIC membership is composed of 17 national associations, one individual company member and several clusters. Further information can be found on our website: <https://www.efic.eu/>

