



PRESS RELEASE

General Assembly of the European Timber Trade Association (FEBO) in Cologne resolves new organisation and direction of the association

Wiesbaden, 11.4.2007 On March 30th 2007 in Cologne under the leadership of the new FEBO President, Géraud Spire from Charleville-Mézières in France, the General Assembly passed far-reaching resolutions on the new organisation of the association and the future work of FEBO. For the next four years the General Secretariat will be based at the German Timber Trade Federation, the General Secretary is Lutgart Behets-Oschmann, responsible at GTTF for European issues and for many years German delegate to FEBO. The required presence in Brussels will be ensured from Wiesbaden.

Top of the French president's agenda are the recognition of the real matters of concern for the sector and their solution. FEBO will provide a professional platform for an open exchange amongst its members. Foremost in these discussions for example will be such questions as how CE marking of wooden products can be carried out in practice, whether terms of delivery can be harmonised within the European timber trade, how payment targets are experienced, how the individual countries perceive the demand for certified wood or how the current shortages of raw material are affecting the market.

A further major task for FEBO will be to strengthen its network externally: timely procurement of information and influence via contact with the appropriate EU authorities will form the centre point of this assignment. Above and beyond this, FEBO considers the open exchange of opinions with other European associations for the timber and forest-based industries as well as for the importing sector to be of prime importance. Another central issue will be the promotion of timber usage in Europe.

Thanks to an improvement in the general economic framework 2006, on the whole, was a good year for the timber trade in Europe. Germany, Italy and Belgium enjoyed leading positions in the timber league with two-figure growth rates whilst Switzerland and Finland, too, reported increases of up to 10%. Austria and Luxembourg lay between 4 and 6%. With the exception of the United Kingdom, most of the member countries profited from a steep rise in building investments. Some countries such as France, Belgium and Luxembourg gained extra benefits from a reduced VAT rate for trade activities in renovation work.

The European timber trade reckons with a continuation of the positive development in turnover. In countries such as Italy and Switzerland, where stagnation in the building economy is feared, firms are also concentrating on restoration work. The increasing shortages in the procurement of timber, however, alongside long delivery periods for all wooden products and the resultant rising prices are a source of concern for all member associations.



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