

Press release

EFIC General Assembly takes place in Alicante in the framework of a cooperation agreement on IP rights protection

Brussels, 5 July 2023 – Representatives of the furniture industry convened last week in Alicante to attend the European Furniture Industries Confederation’s (EFIC) General Assembly, hosted by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in the context of a joint collaboration between the EUIPO and EFIC initiated in 2021. Through EUIPO’s network [Ideas Powered for Business](#), which EFIC is part of, EFIC and EUIPO work closely together to raise awareness about tools to protect design and Intellectual Property (IP) rights. Design is a key aspect for the furniture industry and the protection of intangible contents remains a priority to preserve its competitiveness.

The joint EUIPO-EFIC meeting on 27 June was opened by Inge Buffolo, Director of the Customer Department at EUIPO. EUIPO representatives presented supportive initiatives for IP rights protection addressed to European SMEs and to national associations representing SMEs, in particular the SME Fund 2023, as well as collaboration opportunities for increased awareness of such tools. Participants shared their experience with protection systems and discussed what could be improved in the future. The exchanges pointed out the need to empower EU SMEs by protecting and enforcing their competitive advantage through IP rights.

Inge Buffolo (EUIPO) said: ‘Our mission is to connect intellectual property to all areas of business. When it comes to the design and furniture sector, this is a natural alignment. The EUIPO is open to supporting the European furniture associations in the advice they give their SMEs on the importance of protecting and exploiting the value of their intangible assets. Furthermore, in collaboration with EFIC members and member state national IP offices, we will continue to promote the joint training and awareness-raising activities that support European SMEs.’

Edi Snaidero (EFIC) said: ‘We are pleased to continue collaborating with the EUIPO to help the furniture industry seize all existing possibilities for protecting their designs and IP rights. Engaging the national furniture industry federations in awareness-raising activities will be key to spread the voice.’

On June 28, EFIC members convened for the EFIC General Assembly. Participants exchanged about the furniture market situation in their respective countries and key factors affecting the industry such as inflation or the downturn in the building sector. When it comes to advocacy and coalition building, circular economy and key initiatives such as the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation remained at the top of the agenda, as they will have a profound impact on the industry, future products and business models. Future investment needs and EU projects were also part of the discussion on preparing the industry for future trends.

EFIC members were pleased to have representatives of the Spanish association Unemadera joining as guests during the meetings held in Alicante.

EFIC is the European Furniture Industries Confederation, representing over 70% of the total turnover of the European Furniture Industries, a sector employing 1 million people in about 120.000 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/>

For further information, please contact:

Ms Constance Rossi, EFIC Communication & Policy Officer

0032 (0)2 287 08 86; info@efic.eu