

EU-India FTA: European Furniture Industry Calls on the Council to Ensure Fair Competition and Reciprocity

Press release – Brussels — October 1, 2026 — The European Furniture Industries Confederation (EFIC) issues its position ahead of the Council's conclusion of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA). While welcoming the FTA as a valuable opportunity to boost trade and unlock access to a growing market, EFIC urges the Council to eliminate trade barriers and guarantee a level playing field for European manufacturers.

The European furniture sector— an industry composed by 130,000 enterprises, 1 million workers, and generating over €100 billion turnover in the EU—supports open, rules-based international trade. However, EFIC warns against structural and regulatory imbalances in the current deal terms.

Key Recommendations to the Council of the EU:

- **Eliminate Non-Tariff Barriers:** EFIC calls for concrete commitments and timelines from India to remove burdensome Quality Control Orders (QCOs) before entry into force. Mandatory certifications from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) currently impose 18-to-24-month delay timelines on foreign factories compared to 1–2 months domestically.
- **Balance Tariff Liberalisation:** While Indian furniture exports to the EU will enjoy full, immediate tariff liberalisation, key EU exports to India (such as wooden seats, kitchen furniture, and metal frames) face phased tariff reductions over 5 to 10 years. Continuous monitoring is necessary to prevent market distortions.
- **Level the Playing Field:** Regulatory and environmental differences, alongside lower labor costs in third countries, create unfair competition unless imported goods strictly adhere to EU standards.
- **Strengthen Market Surveillance:** Increased resources must be allocated, ensuring imports comply with upcoming legislation like the delegated act for furniture under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, to avoid a competitive disadvantage for EU manufacturers.
- **Mitigate Circumvention Risks:** Effective origin rules, monitoring of trade flows and production impacts, and adequate enforcement mechanisms are needed to address potential circumvention and changing global sourcing patterns.
- **Maintain Usable Safeguard Mechanisms:** The Chapter 7 safeguard mechanism must allow the EU furniture industry to act rapidly if Indian import volumes increase sharply and cause or threaten to cause significant market disruption.

The objective of the FTA must be to realise trade benefits without undermining the competitiveness and resilience of the European furniture sector. Removing trade obstacles while maintaining strict import compliance is critical for our smart and agile SMEs.

The full paper is available on the EFIC website on [this link](#).



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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/>

