



European Furniture Industries Confederation

Roadmap consultation

Action Plan on the Customs Union

EFIC feedback

21 April 2020

The European Furniture industries are strongly oriented towards international trade. In 2018, the EU (plus Norway, Switzerland and Iceland) accounted for imports of furniture worth \$64,059 million (data from CSIL World Furniture Outlook of July 2019). While the European Furniture Industries advocate for free international trade and the removal of trade barriers, trade must be rules-based. As such, imported goods from all over the world should be subject to the same rules as EU products, including those purchased online. Compliance of non-EU products needs to be enforceable and controllable by customs authorities.

European furniture products are produced taking into consideration the highest social, safety and environmental standards and they are appreciated and recognised worldwide because of their quality. European furniture manufacturers are also setting the trends for furniture design at global level. Furthermore, our companies are embracing high environmental and sustainability standards, are constantly looking into new business models that promote circular loops such as reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishment and recycling and are actively engaging in the transition to the circular economy, aiming at increasing the lifetime of products through a circular design, the use of more sustainable materials and the reduction of chemicals in the manufacturing cycle.

The European furniture industries are facing challenges due to the rising imports of non-compliant products from third countries. Recommendations to protect the competitiveness of European producers:

- Custom control effectiveness and risk analysis is key to fight illegitimate trade and to ensure that safe and compliant products enter the EU market. With an appropriate balance between trade facilitation and control, Member States must strengthen their control actions at the EU borders. For this purpose, a consistent and harmonised implementation of the Customs Union rules by all Member States is crucial. The same rules and controls must apply to products purchased via e-commerce.
- Protection of Intellectual Property Rights must be strongly enforced. Our competitiveness strongly depends on the protection of products with high intangible contents, such as brands, patents, design and copyright as the only effective tool against counterfeiting.
- Third country producers placing products on the EU market must provide proof of environmental responsibility, to avoid that EU measures promoting circularity and European producers efforts are counteracted by imports of unsustainably produced / non-circular products entering the EU market (especially relevant is compliance with REACH and CLP and



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the use and tracking of substances of concern). It is crucial that third country producers importing products in the EU abide by all upcoming EU rules related to circularity (including sustainable product design, information to consumers, etc.). These steps are crucial if the EU is indeed to become a trendsetter at global level when it comes to the transition to a circular economy.
