

E F IC

European Furniture Industries Confederation

ANNUAL REPORT

ADVOCACY & ACTIVITIES

2023



WHO WE ARE

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 18 national associations, one individual company member and several clusters.



EU FURNITURE SECTOR AT A GLANCE



1 MILLION
EMPLOYEES



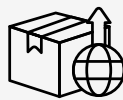
120 000
ENTERPRISES,

MAINLY SMEs &
MICROENTERPRISES



PRODUCTION
116 BILLION US\$

(23% OF WORLD
FURNITURE
PRODUCTION)



EXPORTS
71 BILLION \$

(36% OF WORLD
FURNITURE
EXPORTS)



IMPORTS
80 BILLION \$

(44% OF WORLD
FURNITURE
IMPORTS)



CONSUMPTION
124 BILLION US\$

(26% OF WORLD
FURNITURE
CONSUMPTION)

SOURCE FOR PRODUCTION, TRADE AND CONSUMPTION FIGURES: @CSIL WORLD FURNITURE OUTLOOK – DATA FOR 2022
REPRESENTING EU27+NO, CH, IS

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN



'I am delighted to have been reelected President of EFIC at the end of 2023 for a new term. During the past three years, I have been committed to making the confederation grow and help strengthen the role of EFIC in the Brussels arena. I will make every effort over the next three years to continue what we have achieved so far and support the European furniture industries in all aspects. EFIC must continue representing the furniture industries in Europe with one voice. We will work together not only to overcome the impact of the multiple crises, but also to prepare and guide the industry through the green and digital transition - which EFIC fully embraces - including the future requirements under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation.'

Edi Snaidero

EFIC President

FOREWORD FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

In 2023, our focus was on several EU circular economy initiatives, in particular the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), which is expected to prioritise furniture among other product groups. Our industry can already today demonstrate a range of best practices and is progressively developing circular business models. We look forward to contributing to making sustainable products the norm in the EU and to engaging with EU institutions in the next steps and in view of the development of product specific legislation affecting the furniture sector.



Gabriella Kemendi

EFIC Secretary General

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JUNE

Strengthening the Brussels team and EFIC advocacy efforts. Two new staff members joined EFIC:



Constance Rossi
Communication & Policy Officer



Nicole Gaglioti
Trainee Projects, Communication,
Policies

JULY



The Union of Spanish Wood and Furniture companies UNEmadera joined EFIC.

DECEMBER



Edi Snaidero, EFIC President since 2021, has been re-elected for a new term for the period running from 2024-2026.

EFIC PHYSICAL MEETINGS

In 2023, the EFIC Board and Circular Economy WG met regularly to discuss about the challenges and opportunities in the furniture sector, as well as the ongoing legislative files at EU level.



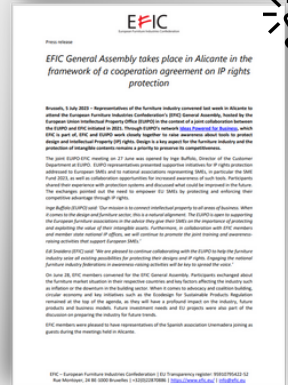
EFIC General Assembly & Board meeting



EUIPO, Alicante, Spain



Representatives of the furniture industry convened in Alicante 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.



EFIC Extraordinary General Assembly



PASYVEX, Protaras, Cyprus

Representatives of the European furniture industry convened in Protaras, Cyprus, to attend the EFIC Extraordinary General Assembly, hosted by the EFIC member PASYVEX, the Cyprus Furniture & Woodworking Industry Association. EFIC members exchanged, among others, about the priorities of the European furniture industry in view of the upcoming European Parliament elections and next EU legislative term running from 2024 to 2029. They also had the chance to meet with Mr. Kyriakos Hadjiyiannis, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Energy, Trade, Industry and Tourism at the Cyprus Parliament



EFIC Circular Economy Working Group



IKEA, Älmhult, Sweden

EFIC members gathered in Älmhult for the EFIC Circular Economy WG meeting. Members discussed about the ESPR and future delegated act on furniture, as well as how to prepare the industry for the potential upcoming ecodesign requirements. Members pointed once more at the need for a holistic approach on circular economy, where ecodesign is only part of the solution. Other tools and actions will be needed to fully close the loop and ensure that valuable materials do not become waste.



EFIC PRIORITIES

1
HARMONISED EU
RULES &
STANDARDISATION

2
EU GREEN DEAL &
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
ACTION PLAN

3
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE & MARKET
ACCESS

5
INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY RIGHTS &
DESIGN PROTECTION

4
SOCIAL
DIALOGUE

6
OTHERS

1.

Harmonised EU rules & Standardisation



EFIC advocates for harmonised legislation and definitions at EU level, including harmonised EU circular economy rules.

EFIC believes that one way of achieving full harmonisation in the Single Market is by converting existing Directives into Regulations. Another is by addressing national legislation that may pre-empt EU legislation or be contradictory to EU objectives and goals, preventing a patchwork of national requirements.

Moreover, harmonisation in line with trade agreements will help to reduce the costs of doing business for entities in Europe and leading to a more harmonised flow of goods across borders and investments.

It is also important to support and strengthen standardisation processes by removing existing bottlenecks and barriers to the system, as well as to ensure consultation with standardisation bodies.

An in-depth expertise and a flexible process are needed to take into account innovations on the market, in close dialogue with standardisation bodies and the industry concerned.

Standards are key for a functioning Single Market, for a competitive European industry and for enhanced innovation in Europe. As a member of the European Commission's High-Level Forum on European Standardisation, EFIC is proactive in identifying standardisation priorities in support of EU policies and legislation. The Furniture industry experts are also keen to be involved in the development of standards affecting the sector via CEN TC207 and other relevant standardization processes.

Throughout 2023, EFIC has been active in advocating for harmonised legislation across the EU, such as via the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation and many other files.

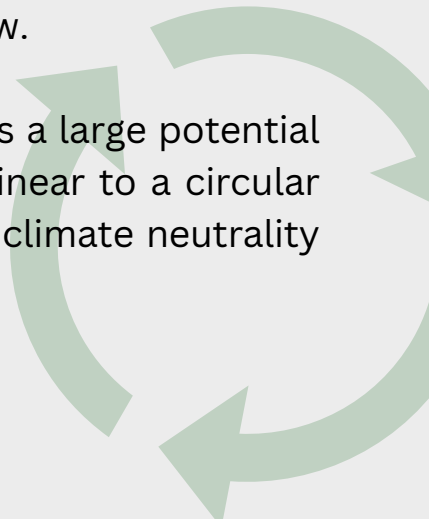


2.

EU Green Deal & Circular Economy Action Plan

EFIC followed closely several EU initiatives focusing on circular economy, such as the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), the Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), the Environmental Taxonomy Regulation, the Right to Repair Directive, the Green Claims Directive, to name a few.

Furniture is well suited for a circular economy and there is a large potential to drive it further in the industry. The transition from a linear to a circular economy will be the main contribution of the industry to climate neutrality objectives and it is seen as a business opportunity.



Ecodesign for Sustainable Product Regulation (ESPR)

The ESPR establishes a framework to set ecodesign requirements for specific product groups to significantly improve their circularity, energy performance and other environmental sustainability aspects.

The ESPR remained at the top of the European Furniture Industries' agenda in 2023. EFIC welcomes the ESPR, as it has the potential to bring harmonisation and stop the proliferation of unilateral measures by Member States. It would also increase circularity and material efficiency with common design criteria supported by standardisation.

In March 2023, [EFIC participated in a roundtable on the ESPR](#), hosted by MEP Alessandra Moretti, the rapporteur of the file.



Ms Moretti stressed the need for harmonised rules and legal certainty, considering that the industry is mainly composed by SMEs, for allowing innovation and facilitating discussions with stakeholders, including in the future Ecodesign Forum.

Pierre Henry of the European Commission gave insights on the potential prioritisation of products and the analysed effects by the JRC. EFIC agrees with these messages. The ESPR can indeed fill the regulatory gap and address unilateral Member State action. It will also enhance material efficiency with common design criteria - supported by standardisation - paving the way for a higher uptake of circular business models. However, several other pieces will need to come together, as also stressed by Valérie Boiten, as design is only one aspect of the circular economy.

Ecodesign for Sustainable Product Regulation (ESPR)

In May 2023, EFIC issued its [position](#) on the Commission consultation on new product priorities under the ESPR & Joint Research Centre Report. We shared our views on being identified as a product for potential first action, and the benefits this could bring, such as harmonisation, closing regulatory gaps, increased circularity and material efficiency. We also shared recommendations on the potential requirements for furniture identified by the JRC.

EFIC also follows and is involved in the work of the standardisation committee CEN TC 207 (Furniture) and its WG 10 (Requirements and tools for furniture circularity) which started developing standards for product aspects under article 5 of the ESPR, starting with a standard on dis/reassembly.

Further standards e.g. for repairability, durability and product life are expected, aimed at supporting a circular approach in the furniture industry, as well as evaluation methodologies.

EFIC provided recommendations to EU institutions throughout the legislative process. On December 5th, a provisional agreement was reached by legislators. Furniture, including mattresses, is mentioned as a product group to be prioritised under a first work plan.



EU Green Deal & Circular Economy Action Plan

Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

EFIC followed very closely the PPWR through the decision-making process in coordination with other stakeholders.

EFIC supports the internal market legal basis of the Commission proposal for the PPWR, a key opportunity to increase harmonisation across Member States, putting an end to divergent national measures to labelling and sorting instructions for packaging waste that are disrupting the EU single market and undermining the transition towards greater circularity.

In April 2023, EFIC co-signed a [joint statement](#) alongside more than 100 signatories asking to preserve the single market in the PPWR.

In November 2023 EFIC co-signed a [joint statement](#) with four other signatories on high-quality recycling and the issues raised by the proposed 'closed-product-loop' recycling approach for all packaging materials.

Such a mandate would disrupt the wood packaging and paper-based packaging recycling industry, which successfully transforms packaging waste into products that are made from a renewable material, are useful to society and safe for the consumers.

Throughout the legislative process, and in view of the interinstitutional negotiations, EFIC engaged with policymakers to advocate for harmonised labelling and sorting instructions for packaging waste across the EU.

EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

The EUDR entered into force in June 2023. Once applied, the new law will ensure that a set of key goods exported from or placed on the EU market must be deforestation free and thus will no longer contribute to deforestation and forest degradation in the EU and elsewhere in the world.

Under the list of commodities that are subject to the legislation, also wood and furniture are targeted.

EU Green Deal & Circular Economy Action Plan

EFIC followed closely this Regulation via the Forest-based industries Expert Group and the Multi-Stakeholders Platform on Deforestation of the European Commission.

Under the EUDR, the due diligence obligations will be expanded. A geolocation obligation has been introduced and operators must collect the geographical coordinates of the plots where the wood has been produced. Operators will have to file a "due diligence declaration" with customs as soon as they start selling on or exporting from the EU market. In addition, a country benchmarking system will be introduced, with countries designated as low, standard or high risk.

EFIC will follow this dossier very closely in view of its implementation and the guidance that the EU institutions are providing, including the development of the due diligence information system.

Right to Repair Directive

In March 2023, the European Commission adopted a proposal on common rules promoting the repair of

goods. The European Furniture Industries welcome this initiative as it would prolong products' lifetime via product design and the promotion of circular business models.

In November 2023, EFIC issued a position paper in view of the European Parliament Plenary and provided recommendations on the conditions of repair (cost, time for repair, spare parts availability, liability) and on the necessary linkage with the ESPR when it comes to products falling under the Right to Repair Directive, among other issues.

EFIC recommends focusing only on the relevant spare parts, as defined in the future relevant ecodesign delegated act (under the upcoming Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation) as not all will be equally relevant to the circular strategy operations or to the crucial aspect of extending the product's lifetime.

In December 2023, EFIC issued a position paper in view of the interinstitutional negotiations (trilogues).

EU Green Deal & Circular Economy Action Plan

Taxonomy Regulation

The Taxonomy Environmental Delegated Regulation was adopted in May 2023. It lays down technical screening criteria for determining the conditions under which an economic activity qualifies as contributing, among others, to the transition to a circular economy.

The furniture sector falls under Services (Repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing, sale of spare parts, preparation for re-use of end-of-life products and product components, sale of second-hand goods, product as a service, marketplace for sale of second hand goods for reuse). Further activities may be added in the future.

EFIC contributed to the Commission public consultation. We welcomed the goals of EU taxonomy and the approach of considering broader activities/movements applying to several sectors, compared to the previously seen approach by the Sustainable Finance Platform (SFP) which was detailing product requirements per sector. Last but not least, new furniture that is designed to

extend the lifetime of the product (following the principles of the ESPR and future delegated act for furniture) should be considered as substantially contributing to the circular economy.

Green Claims Directive

Adopted in March 2023, this proposal aims to ensure that environmental labels and claims are credible and trustworthy.

In July 2023, EFIC submitted a position paper to the European Commission public consultation.

The Furniture sector is in favour of protecting the market from greenwashing and advocates for harmonised rules at EU level. EFIC supports consistency with other relevant EU legislation, decreased administrative burden, especially for SMEs, as well as the need to ensure a level-playing field and legal certainty. Clarifications in Article 3 are also necessary as the current scope could lead to problems for both the companies and the national authorities exercising supervision and market control.

Towards 2023, EFIC followed developments in the European Parliament on the file.



EFIC COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES

Collaboration among the value chain players will be needed in the transition to a circular economy, as well as sharing best practices that can serve as inspiration to other furniture manufacturers or that can be the building blocks of future legislation.

The growing EFIC collection of best practices shows successful examples of applying circular economy principles. Best practices feature products that have created value from waste and which have been designed for disassembly, allowing reuse, refurbishing and recycling and thus prolonging product lifetime.

© Invitrum Kitchen Valcucine



© Tiramisu Evolutionary Chair Foppapedretti



© Threespine Vålinge



3.

International Trade & Market Access

EFIC emphasizes the significance of adhering to rules-based trade and collaboration. It underscores the importance of eliminating hindrances to trade not just within the EU internal market but also in interactions with third countries. Avoiding the establishment of new trade barriers is crucial for enhancing the participation of our innovative and adaptable SMEs in the global market.

Nevertheless, there needs to be predictability and harmonization of rules, not to disrupt operations and global trade flows. Therefore, we support the rules-based trading framework and all stakeholders collaborating to set a stable foundation for both competitiveness and sustainability for all players globally.

EFIC regularly participates in the Market Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) hosted by DG TRADE, where tariff and non-tariff barriers of third countries are tackled.

EFIC also follows closely ongoing trade negotiations with third countries that are an important export market for the EU furniture industries.



Read more about EFIC [International Trade](#) and [Market Access](#) activities

In 2023, EFIC closely monitored the draft Quality Indian Control Orders (QCOs) for furniture issued by the Indian DPIIT in 2022. The proposed orders seek to enforce strict standards, including ISI Mark certification, for specified wooden furniture items. If adopted, the QCO could create a market access barrier, impacting the industry. EFIC raised this concern during the December 14th, 2023 MAAC meeting and continues to track developments on the issue.



4.

Social Dialogue

EFIC participates in the Sectoral EU Social Dialogue together with the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois).

Social Partners follow EU initiatives on Industry Policy, Digitalisation, Health & Safety, Circular Economy and Education & Training, among others, and collaborate to address the challenges and opportunities that the green transition and digitalisation bring to the furniture sector and its workers.

EFIC already participated in two EU projects: the SAWYER project and the Digit-fur project, looking into the main legislative and voluntary instruments that can facilitate the circular economy transition and digitalisation and analysing how these are expected to impact the European furniture sector in 2030, including jobs, skills and the appearance of new business models.

In the framework of Social Dialogue, EFIC is also now participating in another

EU project, FurnCircle (2023-2025), which aims to promote and strengthen social dialogue at regional, national and EU level within the furniture sector, as well as providing tools and recommendations to facilitate the transition to a more circular economy.

European Year of Skills 2023

In the context of the European Year of Skills, the Woodworking and Furniture European Social Partners, CEI-Bois, EFBWW and EFIC organised in February 2023 a dedicated expert meeting on challenges and perspectives for skills and training in both sectors. The event was moderated by Mrs Dijan from the Croatian Wood Cluster and high-level speakers investigated cross border collaboration between training institutes, companies and trade unions and explored the question of the future of work, in a context where shortages of staff and boosting the attractiveness of both industries are a common challenge and where new skills needs are emerging due to the green and digital transitions.

5.

Intellectual Property Rights & Design Protection

Design is a key aspect for the furniture industry and the protection of intangible contents remains a priority to preserve its competitiveness. In this context, EFIC and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) signed a collaboration agreement in December 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.

EFIC's collaboration with EUIPO offers enhanced industry support to stakeholders in matters related to IP rights. Through this collaboration, EFIC members can benefit from tailored guidance, valuable resources, and training programs specifically designed for the furniture industry.

These initiatives will equip the industry with the necessary tools and knowledge to address IP challenges, mitigate counterfeiting risks, and

protect the intellectual property of furniture manufacturers and designers.

Read more about our collaboration with EUIPO in 2023:



June 2023

EFIC GA takes place in Alicante in the framework of a cooperation agreement on IP rights protection.



September 2023

EFIC implements a section on IP Rights protection on its website, in collaboration with EUIPO.

6.

Others

In addition, EFIC follows other EU policy files that can impact the furniture industry.

Machinery Regulation

On 18 April 2023, the political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on a new Machinery Regulation was formally adopted. It will replace the current Machinery Directive, adapting the rules to new market developments and risks originating from emerging technologies. The Regulation will enter into application in January 2027. EFIC will aim to contribute to the drafting of the guideline document on the implementation of the Regulation, planned for Summer 2024.

EFIC members are also involved in standardisation activities on electrically motorized furniture in connection to the Machinery Regulation.

Construction Products Regulation

On 30 March 2022, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products, repealing the current CPR.

In November 2023, EFIC issued a position paper in view of the interinstitutional negotiations that started in July 2023 and shared some concerns on the risk that the definitions under the CPR could - under certain circumstances - lead to furniture falling under the CPR in parallel with the Ecodesign for Sustainable Product Regulation (ESPR).



Restriction on formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasing substances in articles

This Regulation regulates intentionally added formaldehyde and formaldehyde releasing substances in wood-based articles and furniture, articles other than wood-based articles and furniture, as well as the interior of vehicles.

It entered into force in August 2023 with a transition period for articles ending on 6 August 2024. ECHA is expected to be mandated with the drafting of a guidance document on the implementation of the Regulation. EFIC will aim at providing recommendations concerning the furniture sector.

Administrative Burden

In November 2023, EFIC responded to the Commission's public consultation on Administrative burden and focusing on the rationalisation of reporting requirements. EFIC provided many recommendations on specific areas: mutual recognition, flammability regulations, packaging sorting and labelling, etc.

Flammability

In 2023, EFIC provided recommendations to the UK public consultation on a proposed new approach to the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture and furnishings.

There is currently no harmonisation of flammability standards at EU/European level, whereas a harmonised European regulatory framework is needed to reduce the use of unwanted toxic flame retardants in furniture and support the industry to comply with upcoming EU Regulations (such as the ESPR and product aspects like presence of substances of concern, design for recyclability, among others). A harmonised framework will help reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and boost a more circular economy.



EU FUNDED PROJECTS

Cluster of Clusters

EFIC members of the Cluster of Clusters discuss and monitor innovation opportunities in the furniture sector.

The Cluster of Clusters is co-ordinated together with associated EFIC member AMBIT. The group tracks relevant opportunities in EU funding programmes (Social Dialogue, Erasmus+, Horizon, Interreg...).

Funded EU Projects

FLIER (2023-2025), aims to properly train Sustainable Furniture Designers for making sustainable furniture the norm in the EU market.

FurnCIRCLE (2023-2025), aims to promote, strengthen, develop social dialogue at regional, national and EU level within the furniture sector, as it will provide key up-to-date information, tools and recommendations for social partners to address the debate and challenges of the furniture industry circular and climate-neutral transition, including the analysis of implications and changes for employment and work and the new skills needs for workers that this transition will entail.

Circler (2024-2027), aims to create an innovative training toolkit including several multimedia and interactive materials and tools, enabling EU VET providers and HEIS to train professionals to successfully lead this transition along the furniture sector whole value chain.

In all of these projects, EFIC focuses on the dissemination and communication of the project's results.

→ [Read more about EFIC participation to EU funded projects](#)



STAKEHOLDER & EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS

EFIC is part of several expert groups and advisory committees at the European level:

Expert Groups



EFIC is part of the **High-Level Forum on European Standardization**, designed to provide advice to the Commission in anticipating upcoming standardization priorities and contribute to the EU's role as a global standard-setter.



EFIC is also part of the **Forest-based industries expert group** of the European Commission, which meets once or twice a year to discuss topics close to these industries, such as the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).



EFIC participates in the **European Union Ecolabelling Board** meetings, held by the European Commission DG Environment (DG ENV). In this group, stakeholders can engage in development of product group criteria, as well as to discuss issues relating to the EU Ecolabel.



EFIC is part of the **Machinery Expert Group** of the European Commission's DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), which provide advice and expertise to the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives in the field of the internal market for machinery within the scope of the Regulation 2006/42/EC on Machinery.



EFIC attends once a month the **Market Access Advisory Committee** meeting of the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade (DG TRADE), which tracks and puts in place measures to tackle market access barriers.



EFIC is a Social Partner, as part of the **Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Woodworking and Furniture Industries** of the European Commission's DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL).

Stakeholders' meetings/coalitions



EFIC participates in joint initiatives, coordinated by [EUROPEN](#), the European Organisation for Packaging and the Environment, to raise awareness about the functions of packaging and the importance to advance its sustainability.



EFIC joined in March 2023 the **Circular Choices Coalition**, led by Cepi and composed of organisations in the EU forestry sector, the wood, fibre-based paper, and board products industry. The Coalition's goal is to support bioeconomy and provide recommendations to EU policymakers in view of the next EU legislative term (2024-2029).



EFIC is regularly in touch with **supplier's organisations**, such as the European Panel Federation (EPF). In June 2023, EFIC President Edi Snaidero participated in a panel discussion during the [EPF Annual General Meeting in Santiago de Compostela](#).

EFIC MEMBERSHIP IN 2023

FULL MEMBERS



ASSOCIATED MEMBERS

Companies



Associations



Cluster of Clusters



NOT A MEMBER OF EFIC YET?

JOIN OUR ORGANISATION TO MAKE THE VOICE OF THE EUROPEAN FURNITURE INDUSTRIES EVEN LOUDER AND BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES:



Monitoring of policy developments at EU (and national) level in areas affecting the furniture industry



Promotion of the industry via different communication channels



Writing of briefings and industry position papers in close collaboration with members



Tracking relevant opportunities in EU funding programmes



Advocacy towards policymakers via different channels



Support to members on other issues that are not strictly related to policy



E#IC

European Furniture Industries Confederation

EU Transparency register:

95910795422-52

Rue Montoyer 24, 1000 Brussels, PO Box 2

+32 2 287 08 86

info@efic.eu

Follow us on social media:

