



Addressing the housing crisis in Europe

Position Paper on The European Affordable Housing Plan

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The EPLF welcomes the European Institutions' commitment to address the housing crisis in Europe, through the European Affordable Housing Plan (EAHP). **Ensuring that laminate plays a key role in affordable and sustainable European housing is one of our goals.** As such, the EPLF would like to provide inputs to European policymakers, to ensure that the EAHP addresses effectively the social, economic and environmental challenges raised by the current housing crisis.

Wood-based construction materials should be recognized as a key enabler for affordable and sustainable housing in Europe

Overall, the wood-based sector significantly contributes to the transition towards a carbon-neutral and circular bioeconomy, and a climate-positive society, offering sustainably produced, renewable and recyclable raw materials that can be used for high-value innovative products. In the specific case of laminate flooring:

- **The wood used is intrinsically sustainable** as it comes from sustainably managed forestry and crooked wood from road maintenance, offering a viable alternative to fossil based or non-renewable materials. As such, laminate flooring plays an important role in the cascading use of wood and has all the positive environmental impact of wood products.
- **Decarbonisation is also in our DNA**, as trees absorb carbon, and laminate flooring is made with wood, it is in essence a carbon capture mechanism, and on average, the sector captures over 200k tonnes of CO₂ each year, removing carbon from the atmosphere for min 25 years.¹

Laminate flooring is designed to be a durable and affordable choice for buildings, leading to long-term cost savings and improved efficiency. This makes it an integral part of Europe's affordable housing landscape, thanks to:

- Its **user-friendly installation processes**: the click system makes it easy and fast to install and uninstall, providing flexibility for users and reducing the need for extensive labour, resources, and waste at end-of-life;
- Its **minimum reference service life of 25 years** - and some companies in the sector offering **lifetime warranties**: such longevity reduces the need for frequent replacements, thereby minimising waste and maintenance costs, contributing to long-lasting housing in Europe.

Economic incentives for wood-based value chains should be unlocked through EU R&D&I funding and public procurement

Innovation and scale-up of existing technologies are key to ensure the competitiveness of European industry. However, to steer market demand, the construction industry needs economic incentives and further guidance on existing funds.

The **EU Operational Toolkit on the use of EU funds for investments in social housing is a very useful basis**. However, the following **improvements would be welcome**:

¹ See '[Technical Bulletin R-Strategies and Lifespan of Laminate Floor Coverings](#)', 11/2024

- Better alignment of funds: Clearer information and practical tools (e.g. a calculator) to combine different EU instruments (e.g. ERDF, ESF+, InvestEU, Recovery & Resilience Facility, EIB instruments) would help understanding the different options and creating better synergies between EU funds.
- Simplified access and procedures: EU funds application and reporting processes should be streamlined and include less burdensome administrative requirements.
- A “one-stop shop” approach and – potentially - increased pre-financing would make funding more accessible.
- Support for innovation in construction: EU funds could more prominently incentivise industrialised, modular, and circular building methods that reduce cost and build time, while ensuring high sustainability standards (e.g. under Cohesion funds as well as under programmes falling under direct management, such as Horizon Europe and LIFE).
- Capacity building and project development: wider use of preparatory grants could support local actors in developing viable housing projects.

Public procurement remain a key tool to support the construction sector. **Revising the criteria for public procurement** presents an excellent opportunity to boost investments into the production of all our homes’ foundation, in particular for wood-based construction materials. To this end, the EAHP should review and amend the Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement, including the mandatory use of materials that bring a high climate mitigation potential, such as wood-based carbon-storing products.

The future of housing should be “Made in Europe”, free from regulatory and standardisation barriers

Laminate flooring is an inherently local and European sector. Our industry is a true EU success story, with European-made construction products renowned worldwide for their quality and sustainability.

The laminate producing companies also play a vital role in **creating approximately 100,000 jobs and at least the double in indirect jobs in the EU**, particularly in rural European areas where employment opportunities can be limited. With over 20 production facilities and operations across Europe, we not only provide stable employment but also contribute to the economic vitality of local communities. We source 95% of our materials within the EU and often within a 250 km radius. This reinforces our commitment to strengthening the economic fabric of European communities while reducing our carbon through minimised transportation emissions.

However, such successful story is **threatened by regulatory and standardization barriers**. To safeguard the competitiveness of European laminate flooring manufacturers, it is essential to establish a level playing field and create a true EU single market for our products in the face of different national approaches (e.g., on the lifetime of our product).

Protection against unfair competition from other products and regions is also needed, particularly against flooring imports from Asia that may not meet the same environmental and ethical standards, creating negative impacts not only for our industry but for the whole EU economy.

The EPLF calls on European policy makers to recognize and promote wood as a key enabler for affordable and sustainable housing. This would also be in line with other EU initiatives such as the “EU Strategy Towards a Circular, Regenerative and Competitive Bioeconomy”, the “EU Circular Economy Act” and the “New European Bauhaus”.

By collaborating closely with policymakers, industry stakeholders, and consumers, the EPLF is strongly committed to build a sustainable future for the laminate flooring sector and the broader European economy, while also contributing to address the most urgent challenges such as the housing crisis in Europe.

The EPLF® is an non-profit association that serves as a platform for the exchange of ideas and experience between producers of laminate flooring and their supplier industries. The members of EPLF® account for approx. 50% of the global market and more than 80% of the European market. It represents 15 laminate producers from eight European countries, 25 suppliers to the laminate flooring industry and renowned testing institutes. The focus of the association's work revolves around research, development, the introduction of standards, representation at international trade fairs and representation of interests, evaluation of statistical data and active press office and public relations work. www.eplf.com