



PRESS RELEASE

Three decades of EPLF: shaping the future of laminate flooring

Brussels, 23 May 2024 – This year marks the 30th anniversary of the European Producers of Laminate Flooring Association (EPLF), a significant milestone in the history of laminate flooring excellence. Established in 1994 by eight pioneering European manufacturing companies, EPLF has grown significantly over the years, and is now recognised as the voice of the laminate flooring industry in Europe, carrying the sector's commitment to sustainability, innovation and quality.

No. 1 in the world

EPLF is the largest laminate flooring association worldwide with members supplying approximately 55% of the global laminate flooring market and over 80% of the European market. Currently, a total of 15 laminate producers from eight European countries, 25 suppliers to the laminate flooring industry, and renowned testing institutes are members of EPLF. Over the past three decades, EPLF has not only supported the laminate flooring industry in its standardisation, research and sustainability developments but has also become an international hub for exchanging ideas and experiences among producers and suppliers.

The evolution of EPLF

The journey of EPLF began in Bonn, Germany, where the association's founding members - Alsapan (France), Hamberger (Germany), Kaindl (Austria), Meister Leisten (now MeisterWerke Schulte GmbH), Dekaply (Belgium), Unilin (Belgium), Vesterby (Denmark), and Witex (now Windmüller GmbH) - laid the groundwork for EPLF's enduring success. Over the past three decades, EPLF has achieved numerous milestones, contributing to the industry's growth and global recognition.

"In celebrating our 30th anniversary, we reflect on the remarkable progress EPLF has made over the years," said Max von Tippelskirch (Swiss Krono Group), President of EPLF. "We owe our success to the dedication of our founding members and the ongoing commitment of all our members, manufacturers and partners in the whole value chain alike."

A key milestone in the history of EPLF was the introduction of EN 13329 in 2000, the first European standard for laminate flooring. This landmark achievement established clear quality benchmarks and load classes, giving consumers confidence in the durability and performance of laminate products. Additionally, the association's commitment to international collaboration and market accessibility was bolstered by EPLF's first participation at the Floor Coverings trade show in Beijing in 2001, opening doors to many opportunities to follow.

2005 marked a pivotal moment in the journey of EPLF when the association decided to expand its membership by opening it to suppliers. This strategic move reflected a holistic approach to advancing technology and design in laminate flooring. Shortly after this expansion, the sales of

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AN ASSOCIATION MANAGED BY SEC NEWGATE EU

EPLF peaked at 507 million m² of laminate flooring worldwide in 2007, marking the highest sales year in the history of EPLF.

Commitment to sustainability

EPLF's dedication to sustainability, a core pillar of the association today, is not a recent development, it can be traced back through its initiatives over the years. The journey began in 2009 with the publication of EPLF's first Technical Bulletins and EPD, placing transparency at the heart of its agenda. A decade later, in 2019, the management of EPLF relocated to Brussels, in a strategic move to bring it closer to the European institutions and organisations with which it collaborates. Since then, EPLF has strengthened its advocacy efforts and outreach capabilities. It went through a transformation which supported its EU ambitions and enabled it to amplify its voice and influence within the industry and among policymakers. In 2020, EPLF set a new course with a vision, reaffirming its commitment to position laminate as sustainable flooring. A new mission followed as well as the "Made with Wood" tagline, highlighting the link between laminate products, wood and its recyclability.

In recent years, EPLF has intensified its efforts to promote sustainability by focusing on reducing material loss during production. This involves using high-quality raw materials to minimise waste, particularly by developing technologies that optimise the geometric profile and cutting process to produce thinner products, such as 7-10mm instead of 9-14mm thick products. Thanks to a patented cutting method, it is possible to achieve around 3% more product width than standard methods, with significant material savings of around 3-4 per cent depending on product size.

Looking ahead

With a product that is sustainable by design, that is a by-product of other industries and therefore contributes to the cascading use of wood and that contributes to storing and capturing carbon, President Max von Tippelskirch expressed his optimistic view for the future:

"Despite the challenges of inflation, rising material costs, and slowing demand, the sector maintains confidence in the market and remains optimistic about future sales. While the laminate sector is not immune to these challenges, there is a growing interest in laminate flooring driven by an increasingly positive acknowledgement of our products' sustainability, design, and durability. Laminate has been proven to be a well-suited solution, offering an environmentally friendly, realistic, and cost-effective choice."

As the construction market gears up for growth, driven in part by the need to address housing shortages and the imperative for renovations under the European Green Deal, EPLF continues to represent and promote the laminate flooring sector. The association's focus on sustainability and innovation for the sector will remain at the forefront of its strategic priorities as it embarks on the next chapter of the journey.

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About EPLF: Established in 1994 in Germany, the Association of European Producers of Laminate Flooring represents the leading producers of laminate flooring in Europe and their suppliers. The focus of its work revolves around research, development, standardisation and representation at international trade fairs. Its management has moved to Brussels since November 2019

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