



PRESS RELEASE

Retreating into the home: The boom of home improvement and the focus on comfort

Brussels, 10 December 2020 – In 2020, the global economy was dominated by the impact of Covid-19. Particularly in the spring, the evolution of the pandemic led to volatility of the flooring market. Since then, the sales figures have started to recover and EPLF members are cautiously confident that there will be solid end-of-the-year results for 2020.

In the past year, homes have taken an even greater role in people's life. Lockdowns and curfews made it mandatory to stay inside and a substantial increase in remote working led to a blending between personal and office spaces. As people spend more time at home, they also put more effort into creating a living and working space that is not only comfortable but also functional. The members of EPLF noticed that people were more willing to invest in higher quality products in order to create their desired comfort spaces where they can take a break from the uncertainties of daily life. Against this background, the market for home improvement is booming while the project market is slowing down.

Bringing nature into the home: wood and mineral textures are king

The use of natural materials is a continuing trend. Oak is particularly popular and the usage of other types of wood such as chestnut, pine, walnut and the interplay between different materials has also gained in importance. Overall, customers want to have flooring that is as true to nature as possible, which is why many manufacturers are constantly working on improving the look and feel of their laminate flooring to make it indistinguishable from real wood. Manufacturers have set new standards in establishing an unperfected, handcrafted appearance of flooring panels by using natural oak material with knots and cracks. One manufacturer noted that the effect of nature on our well-being cannot be underestimated which may be the reason for the continuity of this trend. Next to dark, natural and earthy tones that come with the use of natural material, invisible and transparent colours are also popular as they put an emphasis on the raw wood. Other favoured colours such as rosé, sage, mint, blue, terracotta and cognac demonstrate the trend towards softer, soothing colours.

The use of natural wood is complemented by stone optics predominately in various grey tones. While metal and concrete optics set the scene for trendy, urban living areas, there is also a tendency towards warmer looks and timeless elegance. For instance, the usage of granite, sandstone and marble creates a valuable and ageless look. Additionally, **matte**, toned-down finishes help create a warm atmosphere in a room.

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Herringbone and chevron remain as popular as always in terms of flooring patterns. The interior trend to combine different floor looks and plank formats are also *en vogue*. For this reason, all sorts of sizes are in high demand: long and wide planks to showcase the natural aspect of the wood as well as small formats to create laying optics.

Combining key properties in one product: Durable, waterproof and hygienic

Flooring manufacturers continue to focus on **water resistance** and reduction of noise as key performance characteristics of their products. A waterproof flooring offers more flexibility to customers as it can also be used in rooms with special requirements, like in moist areas. In addition, the aspects of **sustainability and durability** remain valued characteristics as customers want to invest in a high-end product which will last for a long time, and minimise the impact on the environment.

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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.

Selection of pictures:



Image 1: Herringbone patterns provide rooms with a modern yet comfortable look. © Alsapan

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Image 2: Dark, natural and earthy tones are popular colour schemes. © ÇAMSAN ENTEGRE

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Image 3: Metal and concrete optics set the scene for trendy, urban living areas. © Egger

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Image 4: The use of natural materials is a continuing trend. © Hamberger Flooring

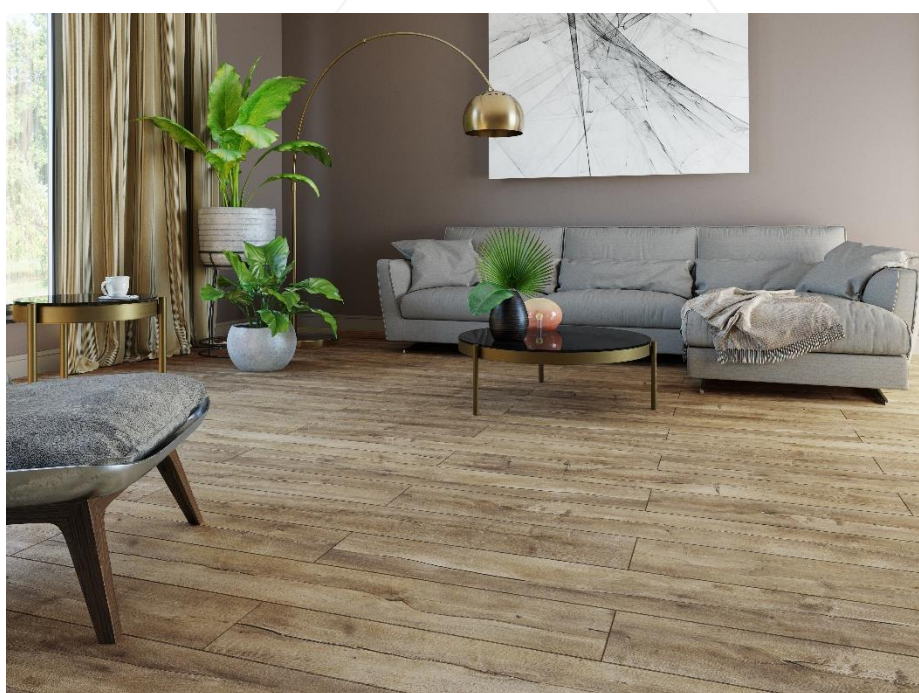


Image 5: Laminate flooring becomes indistinguishable from real wood. © Result

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