EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION
WOOD-BASED PANELS

PRESS RELEASE

Sharing experiences and developing best practices in the realm of fire and explosion safety in the wood-based panels industry

Insights from the EPF Fire & Explosion Safety Task Force meeting and factory visit on 9-10 October 2023 at Pfleiderer, Leutkirch, Germany

Brussels, 16 October 2023

On 10 October, 25 experts from EPF member companies met in Leutkirch (Germany) to discuss and develop strategies regarding the latest advancements and best practices in terms of fire and explosion safety. Networking and sharing best practices took centre stage, fostering knowledge and learning exchanges among attendees.

“Safety is of highest priority”, Dr Frank Hermann, CEO of Pfleiderer underlined in his opening address, stressing on the wealth of expertise to help preventing and managing incidents, keeping them as harmless as possible. The day started with insightful presentations by Mr Gonzalo de las Alas-Pumariño and by Mr Timo Gauck from Pfleiderer, a leading player in the engineered WBP industry. The spotlight was on a case study involving an explosion with no injury in a silo and sifter in the factory in Leutkirch which occurred in November 2022. Participants delved into the measures and conclusions drawn from this specific incident, sparking discussions on how this experience could be used to enhance safety protocols in other plants as part of the sector wanting to become a Role Model Industry.

Participants furthermore evaluated contributions gathered from member companies on protection and preventive guidelines, specifically related to screens and air sifters. These will now be further enhanced with the goal to establish an EPF state of the art reference for both processes. In a next step, best practices will also be developed for dry mills, potentially other processes.



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Following the meeting, participants visited the areas at Pfleiderer Leutkirch's facilities where the incident took place. Thanks to this visit, participants had the privilege of witnessing a wide variety of cutting-edge technologies, versatile production and gaining insights into the manufacturing processes, control measures, and most importantly the safety features that underpin the plant's operations.



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The next Task Force meeting will take place online on 7 December. It will be followed by a physical Task Force meeting on 17 and on 18 April 2024, on the kind invitation of EGGER, in Unterradlberg, Austria. This continued collaboration of the Task Force members within the European Panel Federation reaffirms the industry's commitment to advancing worker safety and constant progress.

About EPF - the European Panel Federation has members in more than 30 European countries and represents the manufacturers of particleboard, MDF, OSB, hardboard, softboard and plywood. The EU wood-based panels industry has an annual turnover of about 25 billion euro and creates over 100,000 jobs directly. Contact us at info@europanels.org.

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