

Skellefteå, June 16, 2022

### **Press release: EOS Summer General Assembly**

On June 16 in the iconic and inspiring Wood Hotel located in Skellefteå (Sweden), the European Organization of the Sawmill Industry (EOS) held its Summer General Assembly. For the first time in three years the event was also physical. The General Assembly was part of a number of events, (including interesting field visits to a state-of-the-art sawmill, glulam and CLT production site as well as the amazing Sara *Kulturhus* - Cultural Centre -, one of the tallest timber buildings in the world), organized by the EOS Member Skogsindustrierna to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CEI-Bois - The European Confederation of Woodworking Industries.

On this occasion, the EOS Annual Report was presented to the EOS Members. The document is freely downloadable on the EOS website – from the end of June. The publication is the standard reference point for statistics connected to the production, consumption and trade of sawnwood – in particular, but not only in Europe. The Annual Report contains also, as well as a number of special focuses, an exhaustive section of the advocacy activities of EOS.

Commenting on the softwood market, the EOS President Herbert Jöbstl declared: “The first few months of 2022 were very positive for the industry, thanks to strong demand. Production could keep pace with demand thanks to a stable supply of raw materials – albeit at very high prices. The by-products markets are also doing well. But there are signs of a slowdown and the next few months are going to be very difficult amid high unpredictability, slowing construction markets and rising inflation. While in this uncertain context nobody can say what Q4 will hold for the sector, it is quite a safe bet to state that Q3 will be tough”.

The EOS Vice-President for Hardwood, Maria Kiefer-Polz added on the hardwood market that “2021 and the first months of 2022 were positive for the sector in spite of high logs prices. The next few months are probably going to be more problematic due to a general slowdown in the market and a further increase in the raw material prices. Logistics is a problem in the Black Sea. The oak sector remains hampered by unsustainable exports of logs and prices for oak logs in particular have been skyrocketing. But we have to remain positive as we know that wood products have sound environmental credentials and are fundamental in the fight against climate change”.

The softwood and hardwood sectors alike continue to be hampered by high costs, in particular for energy prices. Regarding the development related to bioenergy, there is an overall consensus that solid biomass is an important source of domestic green fuel in many Countries with no other alternative in the short-term.

In the last two years, attention on forests and use of woods has increased in different domains of European and international policy, particularly in relation to achieving climate neutrality and sustainable development. With the European Green Deal, the EU is committed to eliminate - or offset - its greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and give to the European forests and the timber usage a central role in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.



European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry aisbl

While there is a strong chance that the impact of some pieces of the EU forests-related legislation will negatively affect the raw material supply, other recent European industrial related initiatives are expected to have a positive impact in recognizing and further enhancing the use of wood as sustainable material.

In sum, the EOS Members agree that while demand for wood products is solid and wood is gaining increasing recognition by consumers, challenges on the supply side are multiple. **Securing that the sawmill industry has enough raw materials even in the future is vital not only for sawmills – the first processors of logs – but for the whole woodworking industry and for the European economy in general.** The EOS Members are adamant that without the production of sustainable wood products there is no path to the decarbonization of the European economy.

The next EOS General Assembly will take place on October 14 in charming Copenhagen on occasion of the International Softwood Conference (ISC 2022 on 12-13 October).

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EOS, the European Organization of the Sawmill Industry, through its members federations and associated members represent around 77% of the total European sawn wood output in a sector that has a turnover of around 35 billion EUR and employs about 250,000 people in the EU.

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