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**Press File Furniture Fair 2016**

**The Brussels Furniture Fair: a real challenge every year**

***Over the years, the Brussels Furniture Fair has become a strong, well-populated event with the dynamism of a truly international trade fair, featuring powerful, commercial products and a raft of innovations. It is a solid business platform and an interesting place to meet. Achieving this every year afresh is a real challenge. The key is to present a high-quality, professional concept with the right degree of innovation and creativity. There needs to be a clear, homogenous concept, a well-defined target audience and above all, the right offering. A combination of inspiration, creativity and pragmatism is the central thread of the Furniture Fair, and this guarantees a high degree of credibility for exhibitors and visitors alike.***

A new edition of the Furniture Fair also means a new campaign visual. This year we’ve opted for four, one for each of the Furniture Fair’s working languages. Whilst visitors to the fair will only have seen the visual in their own language beforehand, at the Furniture Fair itself the four different visuals will all come together to symbolise the truly international nature of the visitors. This is a moment where the European furniture sector can meet up in the international melting pot that is Brussels.

**International Appeal**

Our target audience is Europe, in the first instance our neighbouring countries. These are strong markets that offer a huge buying potential.

In the past few years, the Furniture Fair has been attracting around 20,000 visitors per year. As well as from Belgium, these chiefly come from the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, Germany and Great Britain. However the Furniture Fair also attracts visitors from other European countries. For example, a large number of visitors come from Switzerland and Scandinavia. For the current edition, we are expecting approximately the same number of visitors as in previous years, but with an increasingly international slant. This shift can partly be explained by the concentration on the Belgian market, but is undoubtedly also due to the increasing interest being shown from abroad.

This interest from abroad is primarily due to the wide-ranging, high-quality offering that is on display at the Furniture Fair. Belgium lies at the point of convergence between Northern and Southern Europe, meaning that the collections presented at the Furniture Fair are attractive to a broad audience of buyers. We already see this with the Belgian manufacturers, who traditionally have a strong export focus. With 95 Belgian exhibitors – the same number as in 2015 – this is still the largest group. The Netherlands comes a close second with 80 stands. Italy and Germany occupy a roughly similar number of stands: 22 and 19 respectively. There are 13 participants from France, the same number as in the last edition. The remaining countries supply a total of 39 names on the exhibitors’ list. The total comes to 268 exhibitors, or 7 fewer than in 2015.

When we look at the size of stands, things look a bit different. In this light, the Belgian presence – at 47.27% – is even more dominant. This represents a 1.52% increase on last year. Of course, the Belgian’s large stands can be explained by the trade fair’s long history. This is their home trade fair; the place where they showcase their products for the first time. For Belgian manufacturers, this is the key launch moment of the year. When surface area is taken into account, the Dutch once again come in second place, occupying almost a quarter of the surface area (22.52%). Italy and Germany switch positions: the German stands take up 8.45% of the space, whilst those of the Italians take up 6.41%. France occupies 2.56% of the space, with the other countries representing a total of 12.79%. Amongst the exhibitors from elsewhere, the key countries, in size order, are: Poland (6 exhibitors), Spain (6), Portugal (6), Lithuania (4), Denmark (4) and Turkey (4). All these countries are occupying roughly the same amount of space as in 2015.

This means that although there are slightly fewer participants, the total surface area of the stands has increased slightly this year by 1.11%. This illustrates a trend towards larger stands. This, plus the fact that exhibitors are investing significantly in beautifully presented stands, is a convincing proof of the Furniture Fair’s commercial importance.

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|  | **Number** | **% Amount** | **% Surface Area** |
| **Belgium** | 95 | 35.45% | 47.27% |
| **The Netherlands** | 80 | 29.85% | 22.52% |
| **Italy** | 22 | 8.21% | 6.41% |
| **Germany** | 19 | 7.09% | 8.45% |
| **France** | 13 | 4.85% | 2.56% |
| **Other** | 39 | 14.55% | 12.79% |
| **TOTAL** | **268** | **100%** | **100%** |

**New exhibitors and familiar faces**

The offering is markedly international and in line with the market, and always has a fashionable touch. We continue to focus strongly on reliability and quality. The design is contemporary, in all genres and at all price levels. In any case, a strong offering remains the most important argument for the furniture trade. It is therefore of paramount importance to stage a rational fair that can be visited efficiently.

The Brussels Furniture Fair can rely on a loyal group of exhibitors. A massive 80% of them return year after year, and this year is no different. Of course, this also means that almost 20% of the stand holders are new to the fair, or are manufacturers who have found their way back to Brussels after a year of more’s absence. As always, this list includes some interesting names. Key returners include Willi Schillig, Ada, Calligaris and Conforluxe. Avek, M-Line and Van Dyck will be returning to Brussels by Night.

There are also some beautiful things to be discovered amongst the new exhibitors. These serve to create an element of surprise at the fair. All too many visitors make a beeline for their regular suppliers, but it is more than worthwhile to take a further look around! The compact scale of the Brussels Furniture Fair compared to the large fairs in Germany or Italy, and the ease of circulation are key advantages here. In Hall 3, we welcome exhibitors including Debrah’s Collection from Belgium, Trendteam and Mokumuku by Bullfrog from Germany and Acomodel from Spain. Also present are familiar faces from Italy such as Calia, Egoitaliano, Bardi, Verysofa and Max Divani with Franco Ferri. The unique ambiance created by Easysofa is a stand-out feature. A series of new names can be found in Hall 4: Himolla is bringing along its sister company K+W; Mark Mobilier and Alsapan from France are coming to Brussels for the first time; and Italy is getting reinforcements in the form of children’s bedrooms from Nardi Interni, and furniture from Orme and Status. Aleal, ARC, Suffa Design and AC Moura are new, prominent Portuguese exhibitors. Skovby presents dining rooms from Denmark, and the Turkish manufacturer Cilek is a key player in the children’s bedroom market. Hall 5, home to the big Belgian players, often sees little change in terms of exhibitors, but this certainly doesn’t mean that there’s nothing new on offer! This year, Recor is integrating its bedding department into the Recor Group stand, Unic Design and Moome are in new locations, and Soho is a new Belgian exhibitor in outdoor furniture. Perfecta is continuing its upgrade with contemporary chairs and tables. And Mintjens will be launching a sleeker, modern and elegant range with slender steel tops and oak veneer fronts.

In Brussels by Night, Belgian regulars such as Veldeman Bedding, LS Bedding/Magnitude, Revor Groep, Van Landschoot, Kreamat, Boone, Nill Spring and Van Houdt will once again have a strong presence. Loyal exhibitors from the Netherlands include Perzona, Napco, Norma and Bijnen. Serta and Yatsan are also back. The absence of Hilding Anders and Epeda is nicely compensated by the return of Avek, M-Line and Van Dyck from the Netherlands, Elsach and Mathy by Bols from Belgium and new exhibitors such as Viking Beds of Sweden, Brinkhaus from Germany, Dico Bed, Jan des Bouvries and Royal Dreams from the Netherlands, the most important Turkish player Isbir and duvets and pillows by the French company Pyrenex.

Fusion in Hall 8 will once again be buzzing, and will be augmented by a number of exciting names. Lee&Lewis are back after a year away, bigger than ever before. Arista was also absent in 2015. Foda is a new Belgian exhibitor. These are highly complementary to the rock solid, warm collections of Belgian market leaders such as Vandecasteele and Micheldenolf. Belgium and the Netherlands lead the way in the lifestyle segment, so alongside the numerous Belgians, we also see a strong Dutch presence in Hall 8, which includes Nijwie, Bodilson and Maxfurn. Two new names – Sevn and Bella Comfort – are joining the Dutch group stand, alongside Nix Design, Eleonora, By Boo, Richmond, DTP and Vermeer. Other new Dutch exhibitors are Hoogendam, European Furniture, XO Interiors, Quality Oak Furniture, Peridesign and Ruby Fires. Henk Schram and PTMD are real surprises. Basant and Woodjam are representing France in Fusion, and the arrival of Tetrad means that we have one of the most important British seating manufacturers at the fair. Numerous smaller stands lend an international dimension to the hall and guarantee that there will be some razor-sharp and original innovations in their genre on display.

In Hall 9, the Mozaïek segment will remain much the same. We are also seeing an upward trend in this entry level segment of the market, with ever more attractive presentations and collections. In addition to the aforementioned Confortluxe, Flora Carpets will also be staging a return. The Spanish firm Gorbe is back too. Chairz Classo is a Belgian newcomer, Kolorado is a new Bulgarian exhibitor and Monte is a fresh face from Turkey.

**Building on a strong foundation**

With its rich past and solid reputation, the Brussels Furniture Fair is a stable factor in the market, and this year is no different. Its key characteristics are the numerous loyal exhibitors who come year after year, the products with real market value, and the presence of leading international brands. From reliable, solid collections to innovative new products; there are simply too many to list. The new collections from Recor, Rom, Passe Partout, the Mecam Group, Mintjens, Meubar, Up2date, Bauwens, Hima etc… fly the flag for the solid reputation of Belgian Furniture both at home and abroad. The big German and Italian players arouse the curiosity of numerous buyers. These will be present once again with prestigious stands, and will play their part in determining which way the wind will blow for the coming season in the furniture trade.

**The latest trends at the Furniture Fair**

It is probably a little too early to offer a general overview, but just before the start of the fair a number of trends were already clear. For example, there is an upgrading of the collections going on, with a focus on luxury materials. Marble could already be seen in tabletops, for example at Vips&Friends, but it is now also being incorporated into cupboards: at Micheldenolf it is used for the tops, whilst at Basant by Inditime it is in the fronts. At the latter, we also find marquetry in brass, whilst Jess presents table legs in copper. D&D is making the luxurious look accessible to all, and for its Tabu collection is working with imitation marble, concrete and gold leaf. Finally, Devina Nais is experimenting with special printing techniques on wood, to enchanting effect.

A second trend is the further expansion of the Scandinavian style. This is chiefly apparent in Fusion and in Brussels by Night. While exhibitors such as Leda and Lee&Lewis previously exhibited predominately romantic models, we now see them also presenting sleeker ranges. But ambiance and cosiness are still important. In the sleeping comfort segment it is no longer only the box springs that are stealing the show. Beds are becoming more elegant and are raised higher up above the floor on slim feet in lacquered metal or natural wood. Upholstery is colourful, with a particular emphasis on pastel shades. Examples of this can be found at Veldeman Bedding, Kreamat and Nill Spring, amongst others. Children’s bedrooms too have not escaped the influences from the High North. Vipack presents a bedroom with fronts fashioned from pieces of birch, whilst Païdi is using natural wood and colours.

Innovative solutions provide answers to contemporary questions about the way in which we live. These are sometimes designed to be space-saving or to limit material use, such as the Frames shelving by Moome or the Easyway cupboard by Lifetime Kidsrooms, which can be magically converted into a table with benches. With its Multidressing, Mintjens introduces a semi-bespoke, wall-to-wall wardrobe. Sometimes these are simple solutions for the ever-recurring problem of the ideal sleeping position, for example the iBed by Recor Bedding, the Noflik Ergo by Avek, or Anatomic by Revor. Smartsleeve presents a super ventilating mattress topper, whilst Magnitude introduces a playful touch with Hans Christian.

**Concepts create emphasis and offer that little something extra**

Holland à la Carte is taking a fresh, highly contemporary approach. Overall it is slightly sleeker, but thanks to the alternating heights of the cubes, it is also playful. A number of loyal exhibitors such as Cartel Living, Chita, Kluskens, Spinder, Jamé, Teugra, Nouvion and Jess are returning. Gealux, Helderr and Bree’s New World are a perfect fit, and Leclercq&Bouwman and Expo Trading offer some interesting lighting.

In the upper market segment. Square is once again presenting clear, pure collections. Over the years, Joli, Neococoon, Coesel, Nicoletti and Dienne have become familiar faces. Moreover, firms such as Bert Plantagie, Domitalia, Jan Kurtz, Mokumuku, the Belgian Debrah’s Collection, Devina Nais, Slide Art and others offer guaranteed quality, but also with an original, often playful touch.

Brussels by Night has established itself as a fair within a fair, and is an essential port of call of all sleep specialists. The leading Belgian offering will of course be on display, with stunning presentations, stylish products and stand-out technical features. As a true Benelux trade fair, Brussels by Night is notable for the presence of numerous Dutch exhibitors. The sleeping sector is particularly innovative, so a stage dedicated to highlighting the stand-out technical and design developments is essential.

**An inspiring and businesslike platform**

The Furniture Fair is all about meeting, taking a look, and doing business. Distribution demands a true B2B trade fair where you can conduct business in an efficient but relaxed manner. We also work hard to create an attractive ambiance at the fair – in the trend passages and at the catering points, for example. What’s more, a trade fair is to some extent a time of celebration for the sector, and this is a role that as a welcoming, optimistic fair, the Brussels Furniture Fair is delighted to play. Furthermore, a trade fair serves as a barometer for the sector, and it is true to say that the Brussels Furniture Fair reflects the dynamism of the Belgian furniture industry.

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Brussels Furniture Fair

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**Next Furniture Fair: 5 to 8 November 2017**