

BUSINESS PLAN

CEN/TC 207 FURNITURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Environment

Europe is one of the major players in the global furniture market.

Parties involved:

- Manufacturers;
- Consumers organizations;
- Test laboratories and certification bodies.

Sectors covered:

- Domestic furniture;
- Childrens furniture;
- Office furniture;
- Outdoor furniture;
- Non domestic (contract) furniture;
- School furniture
- Hardware for furniture

Benefits

To make a set of standards available which enable the interested parties to assess mainly the safety characteristics of products, so that they can be used for the purposes of the General Products Safety Directive and the future regulation which will supersede it.

Priorities

- 1) To complete the process of defining standards on test methods which are as much as possible horizontal and a set of separate standards on requirements with different levels of conformance according to the intended use of the product.
- 2) To complete the standards on childrens furniture under mandate.

1 BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE CEN/TC

1.1 Description of the Business Environment

The following political, economic, technical, regulatory, legal, societal and/or international dynamics describe the business environment of the industry sector, products, materials, disciplines or practices related to the scope of this CEN/TC, and they may significantly influence how the relevant standards development processes are conducted and the content of the resulting standards:

Political, economical, social, technical, legal and international factors that either directly require some or all of the standardisation activities proposed by the CEN/TC, or significantly influence the way these activities are carried out are the following:

Economical:

Europe is a leader in the furniture market. European standards are believed to be of use in order to further develop this leadership. The European standards are, however, not to be considered as serving “protectionistic” aims. On the contrary, they are proposed to ISO/TC 136 “Furniture” as the basis of their work on international furniture standards.

Social:

CEN/TC 207 decided to concentrate its work on “safety”, linked to (the use of) furniture. The work is thus believed to be important, especially to guarantee the consumers’ safety. The CEN/TC 207 standards, however, have no intention to restrict “design” opportunities, so that furniture can continue to play its cultural role.

Technical:

In the actual CEN/TC 207 activities, there were not so many national standards because the aim is to establish a coherent set of European test methods and safety requirements. In so doing, the internal market of furniture could be preserved.

Legal:

As already stated above, the CEN/TC 207 work partly covers political, social and technical elements. Therefore, it has also some relevance on the legal level (e.g. “state of the art”), although there is no direct legal reference to CEN/TC 207 work.

International:

The importance of European furniture exports on the international markets as well as the importance of the European market for furniture imports has already been highlighted above. Work within CEN/TC 207 as well as with ISO/TC 136 is believed to be also relevant within the context of the globalisation of the markets.

1.2 Quantitative Indicators of the Business Environment

The following list of quantitative indicators describes the business environment in order to provide adequate information to support actions of the CEN/TC:

The EU furniture industry accounts for about a quarter of the world's furniture production with a production value of € 87 billion. As a labour-intensive industry, it provides employment for around 1.2 million people. Material and service costs make up more than 60% of the production value. The value added represents around 40% of the production, with labour costs accounting for about 78%. The furniture sector is a basic industry in most of the industrialised countries, representing in general between 2 and 4% of the production value of the manufacturing sector.

The EU furniture industry is an assembling industry, which employs various raw materials to manufacture its products. They range from wooden boards to metal through, leather and glass.

The furniture industry in the EU accounts for 8,800 enterprises with over 20 employees, employing 600,000 people, and more than 80,000 enterprises with under 20 employees (employing almost 300,000 persons).

Germany is the largest furniture producing country, representing over 27% of total EU production, followed by Italy (21.6%), France (13.5%) and the UK (10.4%).

Upholstered furniture and kitchen furniture are the largest industry sectors representing 14.5% (valued at more than 10 billion euro worth of production: +4.5% compared with 1997) and 13% (+2.7%) respectively. Three other significant sub-sectors are office furniture (11.7% of total production), dining room furniture (11.5%) and bedroom furniture (10.3%).

2 BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE CEN/TC

- Removal of technical barriers to trade and open markets throughout Europe;
- Harmonization of national standards;
- Support European legislation, in particular New Approach Directives.

3 PARTICIPATION IN THE CEN/TC

All the CEN national members are entitled to nominate delegates to CEN Technical Committees and experts to Working Groups, ensuring a balance of all interested parties. Participation as observers of recognized European or international organizations is also possible under certain conditions. To participate in the activities of this CEN/TC, please contact the national standards organization in your country.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE CEN/TC AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

4.1 Defined objectives of the CEN/TC

4.1.1 General objectives

The objective of CEN/TC 207 is to prepare European standards in the field of furniture, concentrating more particularly on terminology, safety, test methods and dimensional co-ordination.

The major aim is to have this set of standards put in place at the European level, so as to guarantee the "Internal market" for furniture. At a later stage, these standards could then be the basis for international work on the subject.

4.1.1 Work programme

a) to finalise the publication of the following standards

WI	Reference	Subject
00207175	prEN 1335-1rev	Office furniture - Office work chair - Part 1: Dimensions - Determination of dimensions
00207223	prEN 17191	Children's furniture - Seating for children - Safety requirements and test methods
00207231	FprEN 1022rev	Domestic furniture – Seating – Determination of stability
00207241	prEN 13150rev	Workbenches for laboratories - Dimensions, safety requirements and test methods

00207247	prEN 1130	Children's Furniture - Cribs and cradles - Safety requirements and test methods
00207258	FprEN 15939rev	Hardware for furniture — Strength and loading capacity of wall attachment devices
00207262	FprEN 1335-2rev	Office furniture - Office work chair - Part 2: Safety requirements
00207267	prEN 17214	Visual assessment of furniture surface
00207273	FprCEN/TR 17292	Technical report regarding precision data for standards EN 12720, EN 12721, EN 12722, EN 15185 and EN 15186

b) to develop the following work items

WI	Reference	Subject
00207260		Outdoor furniture - Seating for camping, domestic and contract use - Specific requirement concerning behaviour at high temperature
00207261	prEN 1725rev	Domestic furniture - Beds and mattresses - Safety requirements and test methods
00207271		Street Furniture - Seating - Safety requirements
00207272	EN 15338+A1:2010rev	Hardware for furniture - Strength and durability of extension elements and their components
00207275	EN 527-2:2016/prA1	Office furniture - Work tables - Part 2: Safety, strength and durability requirements
PWI under approval	EN 14749:2016/prA1	Furniture - Domestic and kitchen storage units and kitchen-worktops - Safety requirements and test methods
PWI under approval	EN 747-1:2012+A1:2015 REV	Furniture - Bunk beds and high beds - Part 1: Safety, strength and durability requirements
WI under approval	EN 1729-2:2012+A1:2015 REV	Furniture - Chairs and tables for educational institutions - Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods
PWI under approval	EN 14434:2010 REV	Writing boards for educational institutions - Ergonomic, technical and safety requirements and their test methods

4.2 Identified strategies to achieve the CEN/TC.s defined objectives.

Based on the considerations above, the CEN/TC proposes the following objectives and strategic directions for its future work:

The current strategy by CEN/TC 207 has led to the publication of several standards. The TC will continue its current method of work in order to focus its work programme. There is an agreement within CEN/TC 207 to be very restrictive with the introduction of new work items.

Moreover, the work of CEN/TC 207 is to be conducted by using one language only (English) and using Internet in the management of both the CEN/TC and the Working Groups, in order to reduce costs for all CEN members involved in the activity of this Technical Committee.

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, CEN/TC 207 “Furniture” decided to create Working groups to deal with different aspects of standardization activity.

4.2.1 Working structure

- WG 1 Requirements for domestic furniture
- WG 2 Requirements for children's and nursery furniture
- WG 3 Office furniture
- WG 4 Requirements for outdoor furniture

- WG 5 Requirements for non domestic furniture
- WG 6 Requirements for educational furniture
- WG 7 Requirements and test methods for furniture surfaces
- WG 8 Requirements and test methods for hardware for furniture
- WG 9 Test methods

4.2.1 Cooperation with other ISO/CEN/TCs

Liaisons have already been established with the following TCs:

TC 52	Safety of toys
TC 112	Wood-based panels
TC 129	Glass in building
TC 136	Sports, playground and other recreational facilities and equipment
TC 139	Paints and varnishes
TC 156	Ventilation for buildings
TC 175	Round and sawn timber
TC 248	Textiles and textile products
TC 252	Child use and care articles
TC 289	Leather
TC 293	Assistive products for persons with disability
TC 315	Spectator facilities
TC 324	Castors and wheels
TC 364	High Chairs
ISO/TC 136	Furniture

4.2.2 Cooperation with European and International professional organisations

CEN/TC 207 is open to establish liaisons with any other European and International organisation dedicated to furniture that may provide a positive contribution to the standardization activity. These Organisations should submit a cooperation proposal to CEN who will evaluate and negotiate, or reject, the proposal.

Liaisons have already been established with the following organisations:

ANEC	European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation AISBL
EC	
SBS	Small Business Standards

Affiliate participation:

BELST	State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Belarus
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4.3 Environmental aspects

The furniture industry is definitely not among those with the greatest impact on the environment. Most of the environmental aspects associated with furniture are covered by regulations at European or national level and cannot be tackled in voluntary technical standards. However, EN standards can play an important role in providing tools to assess the durability of furniture products. The longer the service life of a product, the less the amount of waste produced, the less the impact on the environment. At present most of the published ENs under the responsibility of CEN/TC 207 contain some requirements and test method for assessing the durability of safety characteristics. In future developments, durability requirements will be improved and extended.

5 FACTORS AFFECTING COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEN/TC WORK PROGRAMME

The expert resources available at present are sufficient. They represent the major interests at stake and no specific expertise is lacking. Nevertheless, a continued active commitment on the part of stakeholders is essential for the completion and implementation of the work programme.