



Brussels, 11 January 2021

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Upcoming approval end date of propiconazole: a safe transition period is needed to secure the relevancy of sustainable wood-based products in construction

Brussels, 11 January 2021 – Ahead of the upcoming approval expiry date (31st of March 2021) of propiconazole, a wood preservative used for timber doors and windows, CEI-Bois, EuroWindoor and Small Business Standards (SBS) published a position paper that defines its role as preservative for wood-based products, recognises the need to extend the transition period and expresses the wish to initiate partnerships to develop long term sustainable alternatives.

The availability of timber provided by the European forestry industry has turned wood into a popular primary material for many industrial sectors, among which the timber window and door industry plays a key role and follows strict processes to meet the properties demanded by construction standards. In its recent Renovation Wave Strategy, the European Commission also recognised the important role of nature-based construction materials such as wood due to its double benefit of “*stocking carbon emissions in buildings and avoiding emissions that would have been needed to produce conventional construction materials*”.

To increase the use of wood in construction products and more specifically in windows and doors, the humid European climate makes it necessary to treat the timber sash and frame against fungal attacks (see position paper annex, page 7) to ensure a long service life of the products. This is often a regulatory requirement as contained in several European standards such as EN 599-1 and EN 335, both setting treatment requirements to ensure the durability of wood and wood-based products.

Timber window and door manufacturers use the approved active substance propiconazole in combination with one or two other active substances (tebuconazole and/or Iodopropynyl Butyl Carbamate (IPBC) when impregnating timber. The combination is essential to keep the total amount of active substances at a minimum, limit the concentration of impregnation product and at the same time ensure a long service life for the windows and doors. Currently, there are no identified alternatives that can be used directly by manufacturers of wooden products, leaving the industry without any solution to secure the long lifespan of the products in case of a non-renewal. In this regard, several studies are being conducted at the moment with the aim of screening all suitable technologies (with and without propiconazole), and findings should be communicated in early 2021.

In the meantime, it must be avoided that users of wood materials are excluded from the market. Solutions need to be found to ensure that the properties of wood products will not deteriorate due to insufficient protective measures. Maintaining and expanding the use of the sustainable native material wood in the construction sector is an important contribution to achieve the goals defined by the EU within the framework of the EU Green Deal (2019) and Bio-economy Strategy (2018) which aim for climate neutrality, value creation and resource efficiency. For users of these wood preservatives, the priority is on the development of practical solutions that would ensure the use of wood as a sustainable material and not in defending a specific chemical substance.

Therefore, CEI-Bois, EuroWindoor and SBS support the following temporary decisions to maintain the relevancy of the timber window and door industry:

- Postpone the expiry date of approval of the propiconazole active substance for use in biocidal products in wood preservatives (Product Type 8) due to the delay of the impact assessment study.
- Renew the approval of propiconazole until an equivalent substitute is available, tested and assessed for use in timber windows and doors.

In the long term, CEI-Bois, EuroWindoor and SBS call for a public-private partnership on wood preservatives to be initiated by the European Commission without delay, where public authorities and the industry can agree on sustainable alternatives to biocidal products containing the active substances propiconazole, tebuconazole and IPBC.

Read the position paper « [The use of Propiconazole in wood preservatives for timber windows and doors](#) ».

*** END ***