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## PRESS RELEASE: TRADE OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN INDIA AND THE EU IN INDUSTRIAL WOOD PRODUCTS WEBINAR

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8 April 2022, Brussels

The *Trade opportunities between India and the EU in Industrial Wood Products* webinar was jointly organised by the European Confederation of the Woodworking Industry (CEI-Bois), the Indian Embassy to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, in Brussels and the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) on the 7 of April 2022. The event was moderated by CEI-Bois' Trade Working Group Chairman Mr Fryer and gathered a great number of participants from across the EU and India.

This is the second time that the organizers host a joint webinar that aims to serve as a platform of discussion between various Indian and European Woodworking Industry players. The session was opened by Dr. Smita Sirohi, Adviser at the Embassy of India to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU who stressed the importance of bringing together partners from this increasingly growing in prominence sector.

A keynote speaker from DG Trade, Mr Maxim, presented the state of play of EU-India trade and investment relations and gave a glimpse of what is to be expected as next steps of the recently re-opened trade negotiations between the EU and India. India is amongst the world's fastest-growing large economies and an important player in global economic governance. India is the tenth largest partner for EU exports of goods (1.9 %) and also the tenth largest partner for EU imports of goods (2.2 %). There is still work ahead in concluding an agreement, but India is an important trade and investment partner for the EU and both India and the EU will gain from a balanced, ambitious, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial trade agreement.

The webinar explored current trends and opportunities for industrial wood products both from an Indian perspective - with a presentation of the India Timber Supply and Demand 2010–2030 report by co-author Dr Kant, which shows that although India's forest cover has increased steadily for nearly two decades, timber production is still substantially less than consumption, and an increasingly large proportion of demand is being met by imports; and an European perspective - with a presentation by Mr Paul Brannen on recent EU initiatives that favour the use of more wood in construction and renovation due to its environmental benefits and its potential to help reach climate neutrality goals in Europe.

In its ending session the webinar focused on showcasing the potential of Timber construction with examples from India and Slovenia. Dr Šušteršič from InnoRenew CoE presented the recently completed construction of the largest wooden building in Slovenia. It is a hybrid combination of timber, concrete, and steel. The upper three floors of the main building are entirely wooden, making it the largest wooden building in Slovenia to date. The building houses offices, meeting rooms and research laboratories. On the other hand, Dr. Shankar gave a presentation from an Indian architect perspective on the huge opportunity wood offers in construction not only in aesthetics but also as a renewable, reusable, climate resilient and low embodied energy natural material.

Overall, the webinar highlighted the importance of fostering exchange and open dialogue in order to encourage new potential areas for cooperation between the European and Indian Woodworking Industry, be it from a technological, RDI, services or best practices perspective.

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CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries represents 20 European and National organisations from 14 countries and is the body backing the interests of the whole industrial European wood sector: more than 180.000 companies generating an annual turnover of 152 billion euros and employing 1 million workers in the EU

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