

*Wood Products***1. Introduction**

Chapters 44 - 49 of the EC's Common Customs Tariff (CCT) Code details products of wood, cork, straw, wicker, paper and paper board. Unprocessed woods from certain species enter free of customs tariffs. Builders' woodwork (doors, windows) enter at a 6% rate of duty. Paper products (particularly stationery products) attract higher rates of 9 - 12%. Although there are no EC Directives related to these chapters of the CCT, legislation applies to broad product categories, for example construction products or packaging materials which include wood or paper products. The most prominent issue in this product range concerns the EC's environmental policy to protect the tropical rain forests. After 1995, only products made of wood originating from sustainable forest areas approved by the EC will be allowed to be imported.

2. Building Products

Building products constitute the largest product category under wood products. They cover a variety of wood and wood-based products for the construction industry. Products include sawn wood and ply wood, panels, boards, beams, joinery, windows and doors.

The most important factors affecting trade are as follows:

- ◆ restrictions on international tropical wood trade brought about by environmental concerns
- ◆ desire of most producer countries to add value to the wood at source which will disrupt present chain of production and distribution
- ◆ European standards for building/construction products.

Europe has traditionally been an importer of raw lumber or timber with most processing done within established mills and factories in the EC. Exports of logs and sawn wood are discouraged by supplying countries including Commonwealth countries in favour of value added products such as doors and windows. Value added products, however, have been slower to take off in Europe compared to other high growth areas such as Japan. Traditional European importers have been reluctant to shorten the marketing chain and have instead looked for other sources of wood. Under the present circumstances this is unsustainable and the industry foresees new distribution chains: the promotion brokerage and wholesale enterprise set up by producer countries in major trading centres of Europe, possibly helped by European joint venture capital. Commonwealth exporters should look towards setting up joint ventures with companies from the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Germany, which are the largest importers of wood products.

There is a great concern for conserving tropical rain forests. Consumers are moving away from tropical hardwood and manufacturers are seeking suppliers that use wood from sustainable forests. Popularity of paler woods reflect this trend as end users have begun to use colour to gauge origin of timber, staying away from red colour woods which are associated with hardwood. Wood has become a popular construction material due to its being seen as environmentally friendly and more energy efficient. Timber frame houses are said to cost 25% less to heat compared to similarly constructed masonry houses.

The EC has issued legislation setting down the following essential requirements for construction/building products:

- ◆ chemical resistance and stability
- ◆ safety in case of fire
- ◆ hygiene, health and environment
- ◆ safety in use
- ◆ protection against noise
- ◆ energy economy and heat retention.

Depending on the intended use of the product and subsequent technical requirements to be issued all, some, one or none may be relevant. The European standards bodies, CEN and CENELEC, have been given the mandate to produce suitable European standards for groups of construction products in line with this legislation.

At present 32 draft provisional mandates for product standards are under review. Products such as strawboards, panels, doors and windows will be affected. The detailed requirements are in the process of discussion.

A new European design code for timber products (Euro code 5) is being drafted. The code requires the use of the metric system, sets minimum stress tolerance, marketing sizes, etc. Implementation of this code is yet unknown as there is an on-going debate within the industry due to differences in EC national requirements.

For more information contact CEN and CENELEC as detailed in Section 6.

3. Packaging Products

The protection of the environment has become a major concern of the EC. Legislation on packaging including paper and paper board packaging is expected in the very near future. All packaging must comply with the following essential requirements:

- ◆ minimise weight and volume compatible with safety and consumer requirements
- ◆ designed, produced and marketed so as to permit its re-use, re-cycling or recovery for energy etc., according to stated criteria, and so as to minimise environmental impact on final disposal
- ◆ minimise content of hazardous substances.

Packages will have to be marked with EC symbols to indicate whether it is re-usable or re-cyclable under rules to be implemented in each Member State within 5 years of the EC legislation.

The EC will also establish a system of identification and classification of packaging materials. Plastics shall use a number from 1 - 19, paper and cardboard from 20 - 39, metal from 40 - 49, wood from 50 - 59, textiles from 60 - 69, glass from 70 - 79.

The EC is also expected to issue European standards in packaging relating in particular to:

- ◆ dimensions and shapes of packaging for agreed products in order to facilitate their re-use
- ◆ product specification for the use of re-cycled materials in the manufacture of packaging and other products
- ◆ modular distribution packaging for transport.

Paper and paper-board packaging is expected to benefit from this forthcoming EC legislation. These products lend themselves easily to re-cycling, or recovery for energy, and have very little environmental impact on final disposal.

For more information on EC policy on packaging refer to Part I Chapter 2 of this book.

4. Stationery Products

Paper stationery products have been greatly influenced by green issues. Re-cycled paper or board products (containing percentages of re-cycled paper to 100%, unbleached paper and paper bleached without use of chlorine) have become popular in certain EC countries, particularly well developed countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom. Germany has instituted the "Blue Angel" and "Green Spot" labels for products which have environmental advantages. The trend is expected to grow although the cost factor is an important issue and most European consumers buy on the basis of price rather than on environmental consideration. At the present time European suppliers already dominate the market and it is advisable for Commonwealth exporters to concentrate on niche markets of specialised paper products such as hand-made paper products, paper ornaments, etc.

5. Decorative and Gift Items

The decorative and gift items market is very fashion sensitive. The "back to nature" and "back to naturalness and reality" trend is dominant throughout Europe. For wood items there is an interest in sculpted frames, fitting in with the nostalgic trend, and for original carvings in classical African designs. There is a promising market for woven baskets which have become a standard accessory with dried flowers and pot pourri. The import of decorative and gift items is done either on a commercial basis by specialised home decoration importers or by department stores.

6. Further Information and Contact Points

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	TRADE FAIRS & EXHIBITION
1. European Confederation of Wood Working Industries covers: 109-111 rue Royale B-1000 Brussels Belgium Tel: +32 2 217 6365 Fax: +32 2 217 5904 2. European Federation of Wooden Pallets and Packaging Health Street Tamworth Staffs. B79 7JH United Kingdom Tel: +44 827 52337 Fax: +44 827 310827 3. European Confederation of Pulp, Paper and Board Industries 54 rue Delfacqz B-1050 Brussels Belgium Tel: +32 2 534 1010 Fax: +32 2 534 1424 4. World Crafts Council P.O. Box 2045 DK-1012 Kobenhavn K Denmark Tel: +45 42 86 1887 Fax: +45 42 86 0347 5. European Paper Institute 42 rue Galilé F-75116 Paris France Tel: +33 1 47 20 43 83 Fax: +33 1 47 20 37 20	1. CONSTRUCTA Location: Hanover, Germany Contact: Deutsche Messe AG Messegelände D-3000 Hanover 82 Germany Tel: +49 511 890 Fax: +49 511 893 2626 Frequency: Every year in February 2. SIPPA International Stationery and Office Suppliers Show Location: Paris-Nord/Villepinte France Contact: OIP 62 rue de Miromesnil 75008 Paris France Tel: +33 1 49 53 27 00 Fax: +33 1 49 53 27 86 Frequency: Every year in February 3. PRIMERE/AMBIENTE/AUTUMN FAIR Consumer Goods Fair Location: Frankfurt, Germany Contact: Messe Frankfurt GmbH Postfach 970126 6000 Frankfurt 1 Germany Tel: +49 697 5750 Fax: +49 697 5756433 Frequency: Primere: Every year in January Ambiente: Every year in February Autumn: Every year in August

1. *European Commission*

200 Rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 299 1111

2. *European Standardisation Committee (CEN)*

Rue de Stassart 36
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 519 6811
Fax: +32 2 519 6819

**3. *European Committee for
Electrotechnical Standardisation
(CENELEC)***

Rue de Stassart 35
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 519 6871
Fax: +32 2 519 6919

Wooden Doors and Windows

Product Coverage

CCT NUMBER	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
441810	Windows, french windows and their frames
441820	Doors and their frames

Customs Duties

CCT NUMBER	FULL	ACP	GSP*	LDDC
441810	6%	0%	0%	0%
441820	6%	0%	0%	0%
* Imports of wooden doors and windows are allowed entry into the EC free of customs duties within the limits of a ceiling. Imports beyond the ceiling may be subject to the full rate of duty.				

Products and Standards

The EC has issued legislation for construction products. Essential requirements cover:

- ◆ mechanical resistance and stability
- ◆ safety in case of fire
- ◆ hygiene, health and environment
- ◆ safety in use
- ◆ protection against noise
- ◆ energy economy and heat retention.

At present 32 construction products are under review by the European Standards Bodies (CEN and CENELEC) to produce European standards to meet the above criteria. As doors and windows are not included in this present list it is unlikely that a harmonized standard will be implemented within the next 5 years as other products are taking priority.

Each EC Member State determines required standards for its products. Member States have different specifications on size and moisture content requirement for doors and windows. Most states have national standards bodies that give specifications. Manufacturers normally comply with these standards even if they are not legal requirements. Windows are more difficult to standardise in terms of size as there are a number of sizes including made-to-measure window requirements.

Quality control in most countries is controlled by manufacturers and importers and Commonwealth exporters are advised to work closely with them or obtain product standards of specific target markets.

Packaging is an important consideration to maintain the quality of the product. Adequate protection normally by plastic packaging is required to protect against dirt and scratches. Protection against damage due to changes in moisture level must also be considered.

Marketing and Distribution

Timber products sold in the EC normally go through importers to builders' merchants/ manufacturers (for further processing)/D-I-Y (do-it-yourself) outlets. In Germany and the United Kingdom, agents play a greater role and contact with their country suppliers is normally initiated through the agents who are also responsible for quality control.

Doors and windows made from hardwood are losing popularity in the EC. Marketing efforts have been directed towards emphasising that wood products come from sustainable forests.

Documentation

Aside from normal shipping and import documents, Certificate of Origin - Form A for GSP and LDDC countries, EUR 1 for ACP countries - must accompany consignments if exporter is to benefit from reduced tariff or tariff free entry into the EC.

Other Information

Trade Association: European Confederation of Wood Working Industries
109-111 rue Royale
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 217 6365
Fax: +32 2 217 5904

Trade Fairs: CONSTRUCTA HANOVER
International Building Trade Exhibition
Location: Hanover, Germany
Contact: Deutsche Messe AG
Messegelände
D-3000 Hanover 82
Germany
Tel: +49 511 890
Fax: +49 511 8932626
Frequency: Every year in February

ACP Commonwealth Countries

ACP Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

Tariff free and quota free entry to the EC.

Rules of Origin:

General rules of origin apply. Special rules apply to the following products:

- ◆ roughly layered
- ◆ veneer and plywood sheets
- ◆ beading and moulding
- ◆ packing cases, boxes, crates, drums of wood
- ◆ builders' joinery and carpentry of wood
- ◆ articles of cork
- ◆ match splints
- ◆ carbon paper
- ◆ envelopes, cards, postcards, greeting cards
- ◆ toilet paper
- ◆ letter pads
- ◆ calendars

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (EUR 1) must accompany consignment of goods in order to obtain tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporting country's national Customs and Excise office or Ministry of Trade.

GSP Commonwealth Countries

GSP Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

The following products are allowed into the EC free of customs duties within the limit of a ceiling:

- ◆ plywood
- ◆ veneered panels
- ◆ laminated wood
- ◆ ornaments and statuettes of wood
- ◆ wood marquetry and inlaid wood of non tropical woods
- ◆ windows
- ◆ doors
- ◆ parquet panels
- ◆ shuttering for constructional work

Imports of the above products beyond the ceiling may be subject to the full rate of tariff.

Rules of Origin:

General rules of origin apply. Special rules apply to the following products:

- ◆ wood roughly layered
- ◆ veneer and plywood sheets
- ◆ beading and moulding
- ◆ packing cases, boxes, crates, drums of wood
- ◆ builders' joinery and carpentry of wood
- ◆ articles of cork
- ◆ match splints
- ◆ carbon paper
- ◆ envelopes, cards, postcards, greeting cards
- ◆ toilet paper
- ◆ letter pads
- ◆ calendars

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (Form A) must accompany consignment of goods in order to obtain tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporting country's national Customs and Excise office or Ministry of Trade.

LDDC Commonwealth Countries

LDDC Commonwealth Countries

Entry Conditions:

Tariff free and quota free entry into the EC.

Rules of Origin:

General rules of origin apply. Special rules apply to the following products:

- ◆ wood roughly layered
- ◆ veneer and plywood sheets
- ◆ beading and moulding
- ◆ packing cases, boxes, crates, drums of wood
- ◆ builders' joinery and carpentry of wood
- ◆ articles of cork
- ◆ match splints
- ◆ carbon paper
- ◆ envelopes, cards, postcards, greeting cards
- ◆ toilet paper
- ◆ letter pads
- ◆ calendars

Documentation:

Certificate of Origin (Form A) must accompany consignment of goods in order to obtain tariff free entry into the EC. These forms can be obtained from the exporting country's national Customs and Excise office or Ministry of Trade.