

PRESS

ITALO-AUSTRIAN JOINT COMMITTEE: FEDERLEGNOARREDO AT THE TABLE WITH THE AUSTRIAN WOOD INDUSTRY TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES' ASSOCIATIONS

Consolidating relations, supporting businesses through national representation, and looking at the future prospects of the Italian wood sector: these were the key themes of FederlegnoArredo's participation in the Italo-Austrian Joint Committee, which met on September in Klagenfurt, Austria, on the eve of International Wood Day, one of Middle Europe's leading trade events for the sector.

The meeting provided an important opportunity for dialogue between industry representatives from the two countries, with **FederlegnoArredo representing the Italian wood supply chain**, bringing the concerns and priorities of Italian trade businesses to the table and engaging with its Austrian counterparts on the main challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

The working group aims to establish a structured dialogue between Italy and Austria and support Italian businesses in the cross-border market, at a time marked by global uncertainty and a slowdown in markets. Austria is the **main source of sawn wood** imported by Italy. In 2025, Italy imported 2.7 million cubic metres of sawn softwood from Austria, accounting for **58% of total Italian imports of sawn softwood** (source: FederlegnoArredo Research Centre).

"The Joint Committee represents an important opportunity for dialogue and exchange between industry representatives from the two countries. In a complex international context, strengthening relations and working together on shared projects and challenges means creating better conditions to support the competitiveness of our businesses and accompany them through the transformations the sector is undergoing. The meeting in Klagenfurt allows us to build on this process and lay the foundations for a shared roadmap for future projects," said **Stefano Corà, Head of the FederlegnoArredo delegation to the Italo-Austrian Joint Committee**.

Michael Pfeifer representing the Austrian Sawmilling Industry, said: "International cooperation and a long-term vision lie at the heart of the process initiated in Klagenfurt, with the aim of strengthening cross-border relations in timber between Italy and Austria. We particularly appreciated the dynamism and pragmatic approach demonstrated by FederlegnoArredo in this first

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meeting with the new Italian delegation. It gives us confidence in our ability to jointly develop a roadmap of shared initiatives. The sector faces numerous challenges at both European and national level.

The next operational meeting will take place in Vienna, where technical experts will work together to define the details of the collaboration, followed by further institutional meetings in spring in Vicenza, Italy, to continue the joint work aimed at strengthening the wood sector.

Representing FederlegnoArredo, alongside Director General **Carlo Piemonte** and **Stefano Corà**, were **Stefano Ghinassi of Fedecomlegno and Vice President, Softwood, of ETTF**; **Daniele Servadio of Assolegno**; and **Nicola Lettera of Assoimballaggi**.

The participation of the three associations ensured a **broad representation of the Italian wood supply chain**, bringing together the different expertise and specific characteristics of the sectors represented: **Fedecomlegno**, with a focus on market prospects and the outlook for Italian companies importing and distributing Austrian products; **Assolegno**, with a focus on the needs of companies operating in the timber construction sector and on the competitiveness of wood as a strategic material for the green transition; and **Assoimballaggi**, with particular attention to the challenges, opportunities and future prospects of the wood packaging sector.

Representing the Austrian side, alongside **Rainer Handl**, Secretary of the Association of the Austrian Wood Industries, responsible for Sawmilling, Transport & Logistics, were **Georg Binder (General Secretary of proHolz Austria)**, **Christoph Kulterer** (Owner Hasslacher Group and EOS board member), **Michael Pfeifer** (Head of the Austrian – Italian Delegation and Owner of Pfeifer Group) and **Bruno Ruhdorfer** (Member of the Austrian Delegation and Vice Chairman of the Timber Trade Association in Austria).

The value of this bilateral dialogue was further underscored by the significant participation of **FederlegnoArredo member companies** in the networking evening, which provided an additional opportunity for businesses and industry representatives from the two countries to meet and exchange views.

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FederlegnoArredo Press Office

Alessia Quiriconi

Tel. 347 4831339

alessia.quiriconi@federlegnoarredo.it

Chiara Sirianni

Tel. 338 5305071

chiara.sirianni@federlegnoarredo.it

FederlegnoArredo

SEDE LEGALE

Foro Buonaparte, 65
20121 • Milano

Tel +39 02 8060 41
press@federlegnoarredo.it

C.F. 97228150153
federlegnoarredo.it

