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**BRUSSELS FURNITURE FAIR 2023 – PRESS CONFERENCE**

1. **Introduction by Glenn De Maeseneer, general manager Meubelbeurs Brussel**
2. **Sectoral report for 2023, presentation by Filip De Jaeger, COO Fedustria**

**The Belgian furniture industry in 2023:**

**Challenging market conditions**

**The Belgian furniture industry**

**Key figures (2022)**

* **722 companies**
* **9,763 employees**
* **Turnover: 2.3 billion euros**
* **Change in activity by volume: -14%**
* **Export share: 57%**
* **Share in total turnover of the Belgian woodworking and furniture industry: 33%**

**Summary of developments in the first half of 2023**

* Turnover: EUR 1.106 billion, -5.6% compared with the first half of 2022. Real decrease in volume by 11.8% due to 6.2% increase in output prices
* Investments: EUR 48.2 million (+30.6%)
* Production capacity utilisation rate: 74.2%
* Exports: -12.2% compared with the same period in 2022. France, the Netherlands and Germany have seen a sharp downturn but remain the major sales markets
* Imports: -17.4% compared with the same period in 2022

**General context**

Since the second half of 2022, the Belgian furniture industry has seen falling demand both on the domestic and international markets. The sharp rise in inflation, higher costs for energy and raw materials, and an uncertain future as a result of geopolitical developments have damaged consumer confidence. The perfect storm that we predicted last year has since developed into a veritable hurricane in 2023.

What is more, following the coronavirus pandemic, many consumers chose to spend their available family budget (again) on leisure (travel, hospitality) rather than on decorating their homes, which had been given the necessary attention during the pandemic and this had boosted the sector considerably.

Notwithstanding the government's measures to support consumers via the energy allowance, coupled with Belgium's familiar principle of automatic wage indexation (which ensured a good 16% wage increase in 2021/2022) to maintain buying power, there has been no turning the tide in 2023. On the contrary: demand has remained low, including in construction, and a similar situation can be seen in neighbouring countries or on export markets. The furniture sector is therefore in turbulent times and the initial negative impact has already manifested itself, with insolvencies on the production side and store closures on the retail side. The sector has now set its sights on 2024, which will hopefully see a revival in fortunes.

**First six months of 2023: Turnover fell both in value and volume**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Turnover Development in the Belgian Furniture Industry** | | | | | | | **Sales prices** | **Turnover in volume** |
| **In EUR millions** | **2021** | **2022** | **'22/'21** | **6 m 2022** | **6 m 2023\*** | **6 m '23/'22** | **6 m '23/'22** | **6 m '/'22** |
| Chairs and seating, dining room, living room, bedroom, bathroom, garden and patio furniture | 933.8 | 929.5 | -0.5% | 489.3 | 466.1 | -4.7% | +9.0% | **-13.7%** |
| Office and shop furniture | 489.6 | 572.8 | 17.0% | 287.6 | 275.9 | -4.1% | +4.3% | **-8.4%** |
| Kitchen furniture | 482.9 | 513.5 | 6.3% | 262.8 | 262.2 | -0.2% | +13.5% | **-13.7%** |
| Mattresses and bases | 365.8 | 247.7 | -32.3% | 131.7 | 101.8 | -22.7% | +3.0% | **-25.7%** |
| Furniture industry | 2,272,1 | 2,263,5 | **-0.4%** | **1,171,4** | **1,106** | **-5.6%** | +6.2% | **-11.8%** |

Source: FPS Economy, VAT returns

\* Provisional data

In the first half of 2023, turnover in the Belgian furniture industry amounted to 1,106 million euros, a drop of 5.6% compared with the first half of 2022. During the same period, however, output prices increased by 6.2%, so in real terms (volume), we recorded a de-facto fall in turnover of 11.8%. In 2022, the fall in turnover over the year amounted to 0.4%.

These price increases can be attributed to increased raw material, material, energy and wage costs.

Following a marked increase in turnover in 2022, office and shop furniture saw a fall of 4.1% in the first half of 2023, while turnover for home furniture fell by 4.7%. The first half of 2022 still saw a modest increase of 1.9%. Kitchen furniture is stabilising partly because fewer and fewer permits are being issued for new homes. The higher interest rate for home loans is certainly related to this. Turnover in mattress and bed base products fell significantly and the insolvency of one major Belgian producer earlier this year will have certainly been a factor in this.

Source: FPS Economy, VAT returns

**Investments and production capacity utilisation rate**

During the first half of 2023, the Belgian furniture industry invested EUR 48.2 million, an increase of 30.6% compared with the same period in 2022; a total of EUR 86.1 million was invested in 2022, an increase of 15.4% compared with 2021. The significant investment volume seems to reflect the regained confidence of producers in the future.

Producers of office and shop furniture, as well as of kitchens, invested considerably during the first 6 months of 2023, while the home furniture product group also saw a considerable increase in investment. The mattresses and bed bases product group saw a sharp fall in investment, however.

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| **Development of investments in the furniture industry** | | | | | | |
| **In EUR millions** | **2021** | **2022** | **22/21** | **6 m 22** | **6 m 23\*** | **6 m 23/22\*** |
| Chairs and seating, dining room, bedroom, garden and patio furniture | 40.0 | 43.9 | **+9.8%** | 19.0 | 24.0 | **+26.3%** |
| Office and shop furniture | 10.2 | 12.0 | **+17.6%** | 5.4 | 10.1 | **+87.0%** |
| Kitchen furniture | 17.5 | 23.3 | **+33.1%** | 7.8 | 13.2 | **+69.2%** |
| Mattresses and bases | 6.8 | 6.9 | **+1.5%** | 4.8 | 1.0 | **-79.2%** |
| **Total for furniture industry** | **74.6** | **86.1** | **+15.4** | **36.9** | **48.2** | **+30.6%** |

Source: FPS Economy, VAT returns

\* Provisional data

The production capacity utilisation rate in the Belgian furniture industry has held steady at over 80% over the last few years, but has seen a decline since the third quarter of 2022. The second quarter of 2023 saw a ten-year low at 72.5%

**The Belgian furniture industry's production capacity utilisation rate.**

Source: National Bank of Belgium

**Employment remains steady in the Belgian furniture sector**

722 companies employed 9,763 people in 2022, down 61 units from 2021. Employment thus remained fairly steady.

Despite the falling level of economic activity, companies remain on the lookout for technically skilled workers to compensate for the outflow of older workers. Fedustria has launched campaigns to encourage young people to start education and find jobs in the furniture sector.

**Consumer confidence reaches a historic low**

Following a historic low in mid-2022, confidence among consumers in Belgium and across Europe recovered slightly before falling again in the summer of 2023.

Key factors with an impact on confidence have remained largely unchanged: inflation has remained relatively high, prices fell only to some extent, and the war in Ukraine is at a stalemate without any prospect of a solution. We recently saw the Hamas attack on Israel and the response resulting from it, which has also had an impact on the European and Belgian economies.

**Development of consumer confidence in Belgium and the EU**

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Source: European Commission

**Increasing order rate in the furniture trade**

According to the monthly survey by the National Bank of Belgium, the orders received in the Belgian furniture trade in the first eight months of 2023 rose cumulatively by 11.3%. Following an increase of 13.0% in the first quarter of 2023, the increase in orders during the second quarter remained limited to 5.7%, only to accelerate again to 15.7% in July–August.

This contrasts somewhat with the signals we are seeing in the market and in retail. On the other hand, the increases can also be explained by the fall in sales in 2022 and higher prices.

Source: National Bank of Belgium

**Foreign trade: both import and export of furniture fall**

In the first half of 2023, **Belgian furniture exports** (including transits) declined in value by 12.2% compared with the first half of 2022. However, taking into account the associated cost increase, this does mean a greater decrease in volume. Furniture exports amounted to just short of 802 million euros. While France remains the largest foreign market, it saw a decline of 23.5%. The country now accounts for a good third of furniture exports. The Netherlands (-7.8%) and Germany (-9.3%) also lost relative importance. Total exports to EU countries fell by 13.5%. An increase in exports to certain countries or regions could be seen, but all in all, sales remained limited.

**Imports of furniture** fell sharply by 17.4%, primarily due to a fall in imports from the Far East, with China (-30.6%), Indonesia (-49.8%) and Vietnam (-54.8%) showing the most notable decreases. China remained the most important origin country, however, with a share of 24.8%. Lower volumes of furniture arrived from Eastern Europe, mainly due to a not-unexpected decrease from Belarus (-76.1%), even though furniture is not subject to the sanctions imposed by the EU. We saw a 3.7% decrease in furniture imports from other EU countries. After China, the Netherlands and Germany remain the most important furniture suppliers on the Belgian market.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Foreign trade in the furniture industry (incl. furniture made of metal and plastic)** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Belgian imports** | | | | **Belgian exports** | | | | Percentage |
|  | Share |  |  |  | Share |  |  |  | share |
|  | 6m2023 | 6m2022 | 6m2023 | 6m | 6m2023 | 6m2022 | 6m2023 | 6m | 6m2023 |
| **Countries** | in % | 1,000 EUR | 1,000 EUR | 22/21 | in % | 1,000 EUR | 1,000 EUR | 22/21 | (Exp/imp) |
| France | 6.1 | 82,346.5 | 74,058.1 | -10.1 | 34.3 | 359,564.3 | 274,911.1 | -23.5 | 371.2 |
| Netherlands | 16.5 | 201,719.8 | 200,668.2 | -0.5 | 24.9 | 216,704.5 | 199,773.2 | -7.8 | 99.6 |
| Germany | 13.5 | 169,514.6 | 164,180.7 | -3.1 | 16.1 | 142,238.2 | 129,016.2 | -9.3 | 78.6 |
| Spain | 0.8 | 10,122.6 | 11,100.6 | 9.7 | 2.4 | 14,194.5 | 20,505.8 | 44.5 | 184.7 |
| Italy | 6.4 | 83,746.9 | 77,597.3 | -7.3 | 2.9 | 19,171.1 | 23,540.8 | 22.8 | 30.3 |
| Luxembourg | 0.1 | 1,132.5 | 830.1 | -26.7 | 1.6 | 14,759.9 | 12,941.7 | -12.3 | 1,559.0 |
| Poland | 8.5 | 107,829.5 | 103,704.8 | -3.8 | 1.1 | 8,951.5 | 8,878.5 | -0.8 | 8.6 |
| Ireland | 0.1 | 490.5 | 1,534.6 | 212.8 | 1.3 | 8,515.9 | 10,103.9 | 18.6 | 658.4 |
| Austria | 0.3 | 2,912.6 | 3,345.5 | 14.9 | 0.8 | 6,787.9 | 6,743.7 | -0.7 | 201.6 |
| Portugal | 0.4 | 4,303.5 | 4,485.9 | 4.2 | 0.7 | 4,795.7 | 5,509.0 | 14.9 | 122.8 |
| Sweden | 1.3 | 17,250.6 | 15,431.4 | -10.5 | 0.5 | 4,622.3 | 3,843.9 | -16.8 | 24.9 |
| Czech Republic | 0.7 | 11,791.5 | 8,023.5 | -32.0 | 0.8 | 4,497.1 | 6,506.1 | 44.7 | 81.1 |
| Denmark | 2.3 | 27,507.9 | 27,580.6 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 3,902.2 | 2,965.9 | -24.0 | 10.8 |
| Lithuania | 1.2 | 13,943.1 | 14,025.9 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 1,998.0 | 2,671.0 | 33.7 | 19.0 |
| Romania | 2.2 | 29,642.6 | 27,334.2 | -7.8 | 0.2 | 1,984.2 | 1,260.2 | -36.5 | 4.6 |
| Greece | 0.0 | 150.4 | 123.5 | -17.9 | 0.3 | 2,078.7 | 2,185.9 | 5.2 | 1,770.6 |
| Hungary | 0.7 | 9,348.0 | 8,687.0 | -7.1 | 0.1 | 1,910.1 | 726.0 | -62.0 | 8.4 |
| Estonia | 0.2 | 842.1 | 2,064.6 | 145.2 | 0.1 | 875.6 | 548.7 | -37.3 | 26.6 |
| Cyprus | 0.0 | 3.6 | 0.1 | -98.4 | 0.3 | 876.7 | 2,193.5 | 150.2 | 3,916.912.5 |
| Slovakia | 0.1 | 3,088.4 | 951.5 | -69.2 | 0.1 | 857.7 | 841.7 | -1.9 | 88.5 |
| Finland | 0.4 | 5,002.2 | 5,076.2 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 853.3 | 773.8 | -9.3 | 15.2 |
| Malta | 0.0 | 5.5 | 2.1 | -62.0 | 0.0 | 566.5 | 361.5 | -36.2 | 17,363.1 |
| Slovenia | 0.1 | 498.3 | 640.8 | 28.6 | 0.0 | 502.3 | 351.8 | -30.0 | 54.9 |
| Croatia | 0.1 | 728.2 | 950.3 | 30.5 | 0.1 | 429.1 | 469.0 | 9.3 | 49.4 |
| Bulgaria | 0.2 | 2,493.4 | 2,981.2 | 19.6 | 0.3 | 399.2 | 2,054.6 | 414.7 | 68.9 |
| Latvia | 0.0 | 189.2 | 387.6 | 104.9 | 0.0 | 205.1 | 136.3 | -33.5 | 35.2 |
| **European Union** | **62,2** | **787,912.2** | **758,470.3** | **-3.7** | **89.4** | **829,210.7** | **716,981.9** | **-13.5** | **94.5** |
| United Kingdom | 0.7 | 10,579.8 | 8,451.6 | -20.1 | 2.4 | 22,932.9 | 19,142.6 | -16.5 | 226.5 |
| Switzerland | 0.1 | 1,299.5 | 1,062.9 | -18.2 | 1.4 | 10,497.5 | 11,084.4 | 5.6 | 1,042.8 |
| Norway | 0.0 | 25.7 | 30.4 | 18.1 | 0.1 | 867.5 | 896.1 | 3.3 | 2,950.1 |
| Ukraine | 0.8 | 11,236.2 | 9,947.2 | -11.5 | 0.0 | 49.0 | 150.6 | 207.5 | 1.5 |
| Serbia | 0.7 | 8,173.5 | 8,768.2 | 7.3 | 0.0 | 102.2 | 152.1 | 48.8 | 1.7 |
| USA | 0.3 | 2,993.7 | 4,101.7 | 37.0 | 2.4 | 17,526.4 | 19,439.8 | 10.9 | 473.9 |
| Canada | 0.0 | 259.0 | 78.7 | -69.6 | 0.2 | 2,596.5 | 1,298.7 | -50.0 | 1,649.6 |
| Australia | 0.0 | 17.4 | 148.3 | 750.4 | 0.2 | 3,599.2 | 1,451.8 | -59.7 | 979.2 |
| Israel | 0.3 | 3,693.0 | 3,355.9 | -9.1 | 0.5 | 2,375.9 | 4,389.7 | 84.8 | 130.8 |
| Singapore | 0.0 | 0.8 | 87.6 | 10,934.0 | 0.1 | 2,002.4 | 471.2 | -76.5 | 537.9 |
| China | 24.8 | 435,104.5 | 302,056.0 | -30.6 | 0.2 | 1,646.3 | 1,736.7 | 5.5 | 0.6 |
| Hong Kong | 0.1 | 602.4 | 692.5 | 15.0 | 0.1 | 583.8 | 822.7 | 40.9 | 118.8 |
| Turkey | 3.8 | 53,455.8 | 46,790.9 | -12.5 | 0.0 | 256.7 | 230.1 | -10.4 | 0.5 |
| Indonesia | 2.7 | 64,636.0 | 32,436.7 | -49.8 | 0.0 | 291.8 | 237.5 | -18.6 | 0.7 |
| Thailand | 0.2 | 5,352.1 | 2,187.8 | -59.1 | 0.1 | 542.4 | 532.5 | -1.8 | 24.3 |
| Taiwan | 0.0 | 1,792.5 | 608.4 | -66.1 | 0.1 | 245.2 | 416.4 | 69.8 | 68.5 |
| India | 0.7 | 22,334.7 | 8,907.6 | -60.1 | 0.1 | 538.5 | 496.9 | -7.7 | 5.6 |
| Malaysia | 0.3 | 10,094.9 | 3,989.4 | -60.5 | 0.0 | 79.9 | 112.7 | 41.0 | 2.8 |
| Vietnam | 1.4 | 38,189.4 | 17,264.7 | -54.8 | 0.0 | 42.4 | 188.4 | 344.8 | 1.1 |
| Japan | 0.1 | 918.7 | 883.8 | -3.8 | 0.1 | 1,124.9 | 1,062.1 | -5.6 | 120.2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total for other countries | 0.6 | 17,795.58 | 11,315.82 | -36.4 | 0.1 | 23,062.53 | 17,751.53 | -23.0% | 156.9 |
| **Total** | **100** | **1,475,159.18** | **1,218,932.42** | **-17.4** | **100** | **913,205.53** | **801,878.33** | **-12.2** | **65.8** |
| Source: INR |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**No light at the end of the tunnel yet**

In the wake of the energy crisis and high inflation, the central banks raised their key interest rates following a long period of zero or negative interest rates, with the intention of tempering runaway inflation. This has only been partially successful and has resulted in high interest rates for businesses and consumers. Construction has therefore become that bit more expensive and this has also had an impact on the furniture sector, since fewer new buildings means fewer new fitting projects and interiors/exteriors that do not come about until the end of the building process.

The recent flare-up of violence in the Middle East has since caused fresh tensions in the energy markets and resulted in further uncertainty among both consumers and producers. The latter are not anticipating an upturn in the furniture market right now and are setting their sights on 2024 and 2025.

Even so, they are not giving up and are working hard on their own future, with a focus on product development, design and innovation, not forgetting the challenges set by the European Green Deal geared towards circularity and sustainability.

Fedustria is supporting its member businesses in this process and has also launched a project this year that aims to encourage young people to seek training and jobs in the woodworking and furniture sectors.

## The federation is also assisting its members in their promotion and export activities by organising group stands and prospecting trips abroad. The latter initiatives are being carried out in collaboration with FIT, Flanders Investment & Trade (with which it has a strategic partnership), and AWEX, the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency.

Source: Fedustria

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*Fedustria is the Belgian federation of the textile, woodworking and furniture industries. In Belgium, we represent some 1,660 companies (more than 90% of which are SMEs), which together create 36,200 direct jobs and generate a turnover of EUR 12 billion, 70% of which comes from exports.*

*Taken separately, the Belgian furniture industry accounts for a turnover of EUR 2.3 billion and employs around 9,800 people.*

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1. **BRUSSELS FURNITURE FAIR**

**CAMPAIGN 2023 - The Future is Furnature**

For over 20 years, the Brussels Furniture Fair has come up with a new campaign image every year. Here we recognise some recurring elements : furniture, aesthetics, cosiness & hospitality and business. Elements that were also largely incorporated in the current campaign, albeit with a strong focus on nature. However, one important element was missing in previous campaigns, and yet it is part of the core of our business, the future! Future-oriented action and thinking are indeed central to the formula that makes the Brussels Furniture Fair a success. After all, that is what it is all about for our visitors and exhibitors: using the fair as a tool to build a successful business.

**ECO-initiatives**

Anyone looking to the future today cannot possibly look past the ever-increasing focus on ecologically responsible action. But what exactly does this concept mean? It is striking that many initiatives are being undertaken, but there is not yet a clear line on which the furniture manufacturer or retailer can build its policy vision. As a platform for the furniture sector, the Furniture Fair therefore aims to disseminate this information. To this end, we created the 'ECO-Stories' mark, which can be found on the hall plan. The name ECO-Stories was carefully chosen as by no means is it a label, but rather a medium that encourages the sharing of information and experiences. Here, we distinguish between stories from furniture manufacturers, our exhibitors, and non-manufacturers.

The Brussels Furniture AFfairs newsletter and blog already shared some ECO-Stories from our exhibitors. Below, we list all exhibitors with an ECO-Stories mark, and pick out the most striking stories.

Exhibitors with ECO Stories: Arbres de Vie, Arctic Living, Aya of Sweden, Benoa, De Eekhoorn, Ecolife Beds, Fantasia, Forte, Glam-more, Herleven, Het Anker, Isbir Bedding, Nicoletti Home, Perfecta, Rauch, Revor, Saunaco, Staud, Theuns, Toon de Somer, Wima, Wimex, Wöstmann.

* Herleven: High-quality furniture made from recycled waste, with a focus on sustainability.
* Ecolife Beds: A vegan bed manufacturer. Does not use plastic, chemical or synthetic additives.
* Arctic Living: Minimising CO2 emissions and using renewable forms of energy are central to the production process at Arctic Living.
* Revor: Fully circular mattress. In other words, all the materials incorporated in these mattresses can be reused endlessly, without loss of quality.

That companies pay attention to ecology and communicate about it is not a new trend, what is increasingly noticeable however is an evolution where there is more detailed communication about the weight of actions taken. When looking for trends based on our own ECO-Stories mark, we can state, admittedly without any scientific relevance, that especially manufacturers from Germany and manufacturers in the bedding sector are willing to share their experiences. In Germany, the use of various labels stands out. These eco-labels are considered respectable, objective labels, with which the furniture industry in Germany is clearly leading the way. We also noticed through the communication channels of the exhibitors themselves that many of them pay attention to ecology, but do not consider their initiatives sufficient to tell an ECO story around it.

On the posterboards in Hall 3 (Zone Square), we also draw attention to the ECO stories of other actors in our sector through posters. These stories can inspire retailers and exhibitors to write their own ECO story, but they also contain specific information anyone can use to work with straight away.

Some of these ECO stories and actors:

* Circular Business Awards: With the Circular Business Awards, the FEB aims to reward companies that have successfully embraced a circular business model.
* Circular Hotel Interior: The certification mark aims to guide you through the offer of circular interior solutions for the hotel industry through an objective certification of interior, furniture and textile products aimed at the hotel sector.
* Valumat: Providing guidelines for manufacturing circular mattresses and more.
* PEFC: PEFC developed an online CO2 calculator to calculate carbon storage in wooden furniture.
* Wood.be: Supporting companies in the transition to circularity.
* WATF, Stand 4-110: Short presentation Trendwolves.

In addition, the Furniture Fair itself is trying to do its bit by means of, for example, reusable stand building elements and signage, reducing and making more efficient use of paper shipments, reducing on-site printing and, of course, also providing a medium for the aforementioned players from the furniture sector.

**The future of fairs**

On top of following trends and evolutions within the furniture and interior design world, the fair as an event organiser must also look at how the event sector itself is evolving. What does that future look like? In recent years, it has become clear that experiences and perception play an increasingly central role at events, whether B2C or B2B.

That is why the Furniture Fair has focused even more than usual on dressing up the halls beautifully and creating discoveries. But not at the expense of the core business of good business. To safeguard this, resources were sought in new places. For example, through collaborations with exhibitors from the shop of tomorrow or by creating new advertising opportunities. Within this framework, the 'press reading corner' was also decorated in collaboration with the exhibitor Rom, and the champagne bar just next door in collaboration with Drappier.

When looking at the future of the Furniture Fair as an event, the focus is also on how information is shared on site. Here, it is important to find a good mix between digital and physical. The right means, for the right content, depending on the moment of distribution. That the BE magazine, for example, was exchanged for a blog with newsletter, while a physical newspaper is distributed on the trade fair floor, is therefore no coincidence, but a well-considered choice.

**Brussels Furniture Fair 2023 in figures**

The 2023 Furniture Fair is marked, among other things, by some shifts of loyal exhibitors. Calia Italia found a new location in hall 4, as did Passe Partout and Recor Group. This opened up opportunities in halls 5 and 3, where several new names appeared. With Yac, Saunaco, WR Inspired, Poleposition, Aquinos, Beka and Girardeau, Hall 5 has the largest number of changes in more than 20 years. We hope this will also create a new dynamic among visitors. Hall 3 also moved a lot, with a number of new exhibitors.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Exhibitors 2023 - Nationality | | | | | |
|  |
| **Country of Origin** | **Quantity** |  |  | **Country of Origin** | **Quantity** |  |
| Belgium | 79 |  |  | Belgium | 79 |  |
| China | 2 |  |  | Netherlands | 75 |  |
| Craotia | 1 |  |  | Germany | 17 |  |
| Denmark | 5 |  |  | Italy | 12 |  |
| France | 6 |  |  | Poland | 8 |  |
| Germany | 17 |  |  | France | 6 |  |
| Italy | 12 |  |  | Lituania | 6 |  |
| Latvia | 1 |  |  | Denmark | 5 |  |
| Lituania | 6 |  |  | Turkey | 5 |  |
| Mauritius | 1 |  |  | Sweden | 4 |  |
| Netherlands | 75 |  |  | China | 2 |  |
| Norway | 1 |  |  | Singapore | 2 |  |
| Poland | 8 |  |  | Croatia | 1 |  |
| Portugal | 1 |  |  | Latvia | 1 |  |
| Singapore | 2 |  |  | Mauritius | 1 |  |
| Spain | 1 |  |  | Norway | 1 |  |
| Sweden | 4 |  |  | Portugal | 1 |  |
| Switzerland | 1 |  |  | Spain | 1 |  |
| Turkey | 5 |  |  | Switzerland | 1 |  |
| United Kingdom | 1 |  |  | United Kingdom | 1 |  |
|  | 229 |  |  |  | 229 |  |

In 2023, the Furniture Fair will have a total of 229 exhibitors, an increase of 14 exhibitors compared to 2022. What stands out is a strong increase in exhibitors from Belgium (+10) and the Netherlands (+7). In surface, this means an increase of almost 5000 m².

Most notable are the full occupancy of Hall 4, increased occupancy of 'traditional' stands in Hall 3 and clear growth in Hall 6. As a result, we may say that, with the exception of Hall 6, the halls were fully occupied for the first time in a long time.

As loyal exhibitors Passe Partout and Recor Group moved from Hall 5 to Hall 4 to expand their stand area, the top three stand surfaces look very different this year.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOP 3 Surfaces 2023** | |
| MECAM | 1523m² |
| RECOR | 1328m² |
| PASSE PARTOUT | 1040m² |

**Brussels By Night**

The Brussels By Night bedroom segment remains a segment with great potential. Knowing the Furniture Fair took a big step forward in 2023, it is in this segment that the growth is most striking, with an increase of 350 m² compared to the previous edition. Here too, we make the link to the future: in fact, we believe that Brussels is the right place to hold a 'sleep fair'. When registering, a significant proportion of our visitors also indicated that they work in a bed shop, or are interested in products from the sleep segment (+20%). The commercial success of exhibitors in 2022 was also a signal for us to continue working on the future of Brussels By Night. We heard this only last year during the fair from the exhibitors themselves. The most important thing for this edition was a larger exhibition area, while maintaining quality. With exhibitors such as Hilding Anders, Nill Spring, Haarhuis & Jansen, Hukla, Aya of Sweden, Dauny, Elsach and Arctic Living exhibiting in Brussels for the first time, or returning after an absence, we can even speak of an injection of quality.

Of course, there are still steps to be taken. For instance, the absence of exhibitors from neighbouring France in Brussels By Night, a country with great potential in the field of bedroom comfort, is striking.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2023 - Brussels By Night | | | | | |
|  |
| **Country of Origin** | **Quantity** |  |  | **Country of Origin** | **Quantity** |  |
| Belgium | 10 |  |  | Netherlands | 16 |  |
| Germany | 2 |  |  | Belgium | 10 |  |
| Lithuania | 2 |  |  | Germany | 2 |  |
| Netherlands | 16 |  |  | Lithuania | 2 |  |
| Poland | 1 |  |  | Sweden | 2 |  |
| Spain | 1 |  |  | Poland | 1 |  |
| Sweden | 2 |  |  | Spain | 1 |  |
|  | 34 |  |  |  | 34 |  |

Of course, throughout the other halls of the Furniture Fair, there are even more manufacturers active in the sleep sector. On 'The Woods' stand in hall 6 you will find a foretaste of their products, with reference to their stand.

**Contract**

An important evolution, well known by now, is the increasing focus of manufacturers on the project market. A trend that is also noticeable at the Furniture Fair itself. More and more exhibitors focus on contract specialists and therefore ask that we provide their stand with the Contract label on the hall plan. We counted 65 exhibitors who requested the label this year, a 30% increase compared to the previous edition. We notice a similar trend when we look at visitor profiles. The Furniture Fair receives a larger number of interior designers every year, although their attendance is not yet directly proportional to the increase in contract exhibitors. A signal for us that further work is needed on this opportunity!

**How do we see the Future?**

Closing we do again by looking forward to the future. What to expect for the 2024 Furniture Fair? The next edition of the Furniture Fair will take place from 3 to 6 November 2024. The basics remain unchanged. The Furniture Fair stands for security, efficiency and good business in an atmospheric environment. We also want to further develop the aforementioned opportunities. This is not about growing for growth's sake, but primarily about being an event for all players in our sector, so that the Furniture Fair is experienced by everyone as the day of celebration for furniture professionals.

Thank you !