

Furniture Go International unveiled to 70 companies

- Nearly 70 European companies participated in the first public meeting of the Furniture Go International (FGOI) project which will enable them to reach new markets such as the United States, Canada, Egypt and South Africa.
- Understanding the final client and market needs was identified as the main challenge for the success of this project and for export, in general.
- In the project's first year the goal will be to match the product portfolio of the participating SMEs with the needs from the target markets.

The meeting, held in hybrid format, was attended by the [8 European clusters](#) that are leading the project and between 5 and 7 SMEs associated with each of them. The companies participating in the meeting are the ones whose profile most closely matches [the objectives of Furniture Go International](#) (FGOI) project, and which are the most interested in the internationalisation proposal. The call for SMEs participants is and will remain open for others in the furniture, wood industry and decoration sector that are willing to get actively involved and target the markets of the United States, Canada, Egypt or South Africa.

The project will focus on implementing a common internationalisation strategy, gathering and processing all the information and experience necessary to approach the new markets with maximized chances of success. Over the course of 3 years, the project includes market analysis, trade missions, international matchmaking activities and the establishment of permanent contacts in each of the markets of interest to help overcome barriers on the spot.

The FGOI kick off meeting began with a brief introduction of the project and a presentation of the clusters involved from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden. During a live quiz the SMEs representatives could answer anonymously about their main concerns regarding the internationalization process and choose the country they are more interested in doing business with. The main challenge identified for exports outside the EU was the lack of reliable and current information about the targeted new markets (59% of respondents). Other important challenges are deficiency of representative office in foreign markets and logistics (53%) and ambiguity concerning foreign legislation, technical requirements, producer responsibility (38%), as well as transportation and intercultural differences.

Although the SMEs representatives voted in majority (40%) for opening the first new business in the USA and Egypt was the least preferred export destination (13%), things changed quickly in the Q&A session that concluded the event. Some of the participants that already had experience with Egyptian business partners outlined the fact that in recent years they are building a new capital in the outskirts of Cairo, [designed to hold 6.5 million residents](#). The New Administrative Capital of Egypt is [expected to cost about \\$40 bn](#). And as one SME representative put it: „they will need a lot of furniture for that”.

[Furniture Go International \(FGOI\)](#) is a project driven by eight clusters from six European countries and funded by the European Commission. Between 50 and 100 small and medium-sized enterprises in the furniture and related industries are expected to participate directly in this 100% results-oriented project. The participating clusters are: TFC-Transylvanian Furniture Cluster (Romania), HABIC-Association Cluster of Habitat, Wood, Office and Contract Sector (Spain), WIC-Wood Industry Cluster (Slovenia), KCN-Cluster of Czech Furniture Manufacturers (Czech Republic), ICS-Interior Cluster Sweden (Sweden), PWC- PRO WOOD Regional Cluster (Romania), BFC-Bulgarian Furniture Cluster (Bulgaria) y HCB-Habitat Cluster Barcelona (Spain). Combined, they add more than 500 companies.

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