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# GAIN Report

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## Germany

### Solid Wood Products

## International Furniture Show in Germany 2004

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**Report Highlights:**

The 2004 International Furniture Show in Cologne, Germany, attracted again nearly 1,400 exhibitors. The vast majority of the approximately 1,350 companies that exhibited at the show were European companies. European beech was the predominant wood species utilized in the furniture exhibited in Cologne, followed by Scandinavian birch. White oak was not widely utilized by manufacturers. Hard maple, walnut and cherry are also species of limited interest.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
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Berlin [GM1]  
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## Summary

The International Furniture Fair held mid-January in Cologne (Koeln), Germany is one of the world's largest furniture fairs, attracting 1,368 exhibitors from 48 countries. 63 percent of the exhibitors are from outside Germany. Of these 862 international exhibitors, 459 companies came from EU-15 countries and 52 from EU accession countries. That leaves 351 exhibitors from non-EU countries. The U.S. was represented by seven companies. Interestingly, 168 companies represented the Asian furniture production region, which has been continuously increasing its presence in Europe.

The dominant wood species used for the presented furniture was again European beech. A novelty in the beech market is the more colorful beech heartwood. However, exhibitors were not yet convinced that this will be a success in the German market because German customers prefer relatively uniform colored light color wood species. Scandinavian birch was also exhibited by many companies and is reportedly in increasing demand by the end user. North American birch does not seem to be of interest by the contacted companies. Hard maple from the U.S. and Canada faces increasing competition from European maple. The same is true for red alder.

There was relatively little softwood furniture shown at the fair. Exhibitors said that low prices for softwood furniture coming from the Baltic countries and other CEE countries during recent years ruined this market. In general, exhibitors complained about low furniture prices.

The currently lower value of the dollar might help U.S. timber exporters to regain market shares. However, white oak, the standard U.S. wood export species, was not seen much in Koeln. Some exhibitors said that oak is currently not of great interest in Germany. White ash was not seen at all. Cherry and walnut are valuable species, which attract a stable number of furniture makers.

American Furniture companies exhibited colonial style furniture, which differs immensely from the European style furniture. U.S. exhibitors seemed to be satisfied with this year's show since they cover a niche market which does not face significant competition in Europe.