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European Commission launches anti-dumping investigation into Russian birch plywood

Seven manufacturers chiefly based in Eastern Europe behind petition

The European Commission launched an anti-dumping investigation into imports of birch plywood from Russia on 14 October 2020 (case number: 2020 C 342/02). This step comes after the Woodstock Consortium, a group of several companies founded for this purpose, lodged a complaint with the institution on 31 August. The consortium is backed by two unnamed European birch plywood manufacturers that accounted for more than 25% of total EU production in 2019. Five other producers supported the complaint.

The seven manufacturers, which include the Latvian group Latvijas Finieris AS (Riga), the Polish manufacturers Paged Group (Warsaw), Bydgoskie Zaklady Sklejek S.A. (Sklejka Multi, Bydgoszcz), Piotrkowskie Zakłady Przemysłu Sklejek Sp.zo.o. (Piotrków Trybunalski), Sklejka Orzechowo S.A. (Orzechowo), Zaklady Przemysly Sklejek S.A. (Biaform, Bialystok) and another unnamed firm, claim to represent 59% of EU birch plywood production. In the documents submitted to the European Commission, the consortium accuses Russian suppliers of carrying out price dumping ranging from 23% to 84%. According to a list contained in the complaint, a total of 55 Russian plywood mills are involved in this dumping, including six mills run by the market leader Sveza Group (St. Petersburg), six mills operated by Starwood Group (Nizhny Novgorod), two mills run by Segheza Group (Moscow), two mills belonging to United Panel Group (UPG, Moscow) and Syktyvkar Plywood Mill Ltd. (Syktyvkar). One site run by an EU manufacturer, a facility in Chudovo run by UPM-Kymmene Corp., based in Helsinki, is also on the list.

According to companies involved in the Woodstock Consortium, Russian birch plywood exports to the EU have increased more and more in recent years and reached record highs in 2019. However, export prices decreased more and more in the same period. The supply and price pressure caused by these deliveries have led EU manufacturers to book significant decreases in earnings. According to the Woodstock Consortium, subsequent restructuring measures have led to around 1,400 job losses since 2017. The anti-dumping duties sought by the petitioners should offset the price variations

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Anti-dumping investigation into Russian birch plywood

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that have emerged in recent years and create a level playing field.

The investigation covers imports of raw and laminated birch plywood under subheading 4412 33 from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. Long-term trends dating back to 1 January 2017 will be taken into account. Interested parties can submit comments on the investigation within 37 days of its publication in the EU Official Journal, which took place on 14 October. The publication also included questionnaires for Russian exporters, European importers and converters. The European Commission is also planning to conduct on-site investigations between 4 January and 12 February 2021, with a preliminary assessment of possible dumping to be presented by 14 April. Preliminary measures should be imposed by 14 May. The Commission has until 12 November to determine final measures once it has reviewed subsequent comments and statements. □

Background

EU anti-dumping investigation into birch plywood

https://download.euwid-holz.de/204301.html

Structural panels production still lower than last year

(EUWID-Boston) North American structural panel manufacturing rebounded slightly in the third quarter of 2020. The first quarter came close to the level recorded in the same stretch in 2019, while the second quarter faced a marked decline in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The sharp uptick in demand over the past few months meant that all regions experienced a double-digit growth in output between the second and third quarters. Softwood plywood production increased sharply in Canada and on the west coast of the US but was only marginally higher than last year in the south and south-east of the US. Nonetheless, higher third-quarter output could not fully erase a weaker performance in the first half of the year. Consequently, the first nine months combined encountered a slight reduction in both OSB and softwood plywood output.

According to the APA-The Engineered Wood Association, based in Tacoma, Washington, OSB production improved 3% in a year-on-year comparison to stand at 5.408 (Q3 2019: 5.233) million m^3 in the third quarter. This figure was 13% higher than the second quarter's sum of 4.789 million m^3. In both cases, the north of the US performed much better than the other two regions. Manufacturing was up 23% compared with the second quarter and 9% compared with the same stretch last year to land at 646,000 m^3 from July to September. OSB manufacturing rose by 3% in the south/south-east of the US (3.031 million m^3) and Canada (1.731 million m^3), climbing by 12% and 11% when compared with the second quarter. Total OSB production had dipped 1% to 5.100 (5.167) million m^3 in the first quarter. A small downturn in the north of the US (-2% to 631,000 m^3) and a strong fall in Canada (-10% to 1.629 million m^3) were not entirely wiped out by a 5% growth to 2.840 million m^3 in the south and south-east. The south and south-east of the US also held up the best in the second quarter (-3% to 2.712 million m^3), with double-digit decreases recorded in the north of the US (-15% to 524,000 m^3) and Canada (-14% to 1.553 million m^3).

Consequently, North American OSB production slipped by 2% to 15.302 (15.625) million m^3 in the first nine months combined. The south and south-east of the US saw production rebound by 1% to 8.583 (8.480) million m^3. The north of the US faced a moderate 3% decline to 1.801 million m^3, while Canadian output fell by 7% to 4.918 million m^3.

The APA statistics show that North American softwood plywood production was 4% lower at 6.787 (7.081) million m^3 in the nine-month period. After stagnating at 2.294 (2.296) million m^3 in the first quarter, the second quarter produced a larger 12% fall to 2.123 (2.412) million m^3 because of Covid-related shutdowns. The third quarter closed with a small 1% reduction to 2.359 (2.378) million m^3. The south and south-east of the US – which fared much better than the two other regions in the first two quarters – suffered the biggest blow in this period. □

North America: Structural Panel Production

July - September 2020

in m m^3	July - Sep 2020	April - June 2020	Q3/Q2 % Change	July - Sep 2019	20/19 % Change	Jan - Sep 2020	Jan - Sep 2019	20/19 % Change
OSB								
US South	3.031	2.712	+ 12	2.955	+ 3	8.583	8.480	+ 1
US North	0.646	0.524	+ 23	0.595	+ 9	1.801	1.859	- 3
Total US	3.677	3.236	+ 14	3.550	+ 4	10.384	10.339	± 0
Canada	1.731	1.553	+ 11	1.683	+ 3	4.918	5.286	- 7
Total North America	**5.408**	**4.789**	**+ 13**	**5.233**	**+ 3**	**15.302**	**15.625**	**- 2**
Softwood Plywood								
US South	1.173	1.153	+ 2	1.239	- 5	3.521	3.621	- 3
US West/Inland	0.716	0.616	+ 16	0.722	- 1	2.039	2.184	- 7
Total US	1.889	1.769	+ 7	1.961	- 4	5.560	5.805	- 4
Canada	0.470	0.354	+ 33	0.417	+ 13	1.227	1.276	- 4
Total North America	**2.359**	**2.123**	**+ 11**	**2.378**	**- 1**	**6.787**	**7.081**	**- 4**
Total Structual Panels								
US	5.566	5.005	+ 11	5.511	+ 1	15.944	16.144	- 1
Canada	2.201	1.907	+ 15	2.100	+ 5	6.145	6.562	- 6
Total North America	**7.767**	**6.912**	**+ 12**	**7.611**	**+ 2**	**22.089**	**22.706**	**- 3**

Source: EUWID, according to APA - The Engineered Wood Association

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