

Preparatory study for ecodesign requirements for furniture

Specific Contract: 300154396

Meeting Details

Date & time: 6 October 2026, 09:30–16:00 CEST

Location: *Hybrid meeting*
Albert Borschette Conference Centre, Rue Froissart 36, Brussels
Online participation via Microsoft Teams

Participants:

Study team:

Trinomics	-	Afroditi Adsal, Corina Haita-Falah
Oeko-institut	-	Daniel Hinchliffe
Ecoinnovazione	-	Alessandra Zamagni
Fraunhofer IZM	-	Eduard Wagner
VITO	-	Nele Kelchtermans

European	-	Kathrin Kutlescha
Commission –	-	Jana Hrkova
DG ENV	-	Sylvie Ludain

Number of attendees: 171 online; 44 in-person

Agenda:

Time	Item	Topic	Presenter (Institution)
09.30-09.35	1	Welcome	EC - DG Env
09.35-09.40	2	Introduction	VITO
09.40-09.45	3	Introduction to the study team	Trinomics
09.45-09.55	4	Introduction to the study	Trinomics
09.55-10.35	5	Task 1 – Scope	Oeko-institut
10.50-11.30	6	Task 2 – Market	Trinomics
11.30-12.10	7	Task 3 – Users	Oeko-institut
13.25-13.40	8	LCA findings	Ecoinnovazione
13.40-14.20	9	Task 4 – Technologies	Oeko-institut
14.35-15.20	10	Base Cases	Ecoinnovazione and Oeko-institut
15.20-15.50	11	DPP Aspects	Fraunhofer IZM
15.50-16:00	12	Closing words and next steps	Trinomics and Oeko-institut

Summary of the meeting discussion:

Presentation slides are available in on the project website: <https://espr-euecolabel-furniture.eu/preparatory-study>

Disclaimer: These meeting minutes were prepared with the assistance of an AI tool (Microsoft Copilot), based on the meeting transcript, online meeting chat and personal notes taken during the meeting. The content has been reviewed and consolidated to reflect the main discussions, questions and comments. The minutes are not intended to serve as a verbatim record of the meeting.

1. Welcome and introduction

The European Commission welcomed participants and emphasised the environmental significance and complexity of the furniture product group, and the importance of stakeholder evidence. The project team presented preliminary findings under Tasks 1–4, LCA findings, the base-case approach and DPP considerations. Both in-person and online participants contributed.

2. Task 1 – Scope and definitions

Daniel Hinchliffe from Oeko-Institut presented a summary of the findings for task 1 of the MEErP on scope and definitions. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation of task 1.

Stakeholders sought clarification on built-in and bespoke furniture, furniture parts and fittings, upholstered and removable components, electric fittings, wall-mounted units, vehicle interiors and mixed-material furniture. The team confirmed that B2B and B2C furniture are considered and mattresses are covered by a separate ESPR process. Certain boundary cases remain to be examined.

EFIC, EuroCommerce and craft associations stressed the predominantly SME-based structure of the sector, high import competition, and the need for proportionate requirements, adequate transition periods, available test methods and effective market surveillance. German cabinetmakers and craft representatives sought exclusions or simplified treatment for bespoke products because of low production volumes, long service lives and disproportionate DPP burdens. ECOS cautioned that exclusions and material thresholds could create loopholes, citing marble and stone furniture.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for further discussion and a common understanding of built-in and bespoke furniture, noting that these products may exhibit different lifetime characteristics from standard furniture.

Participants asked for alignment with CEN/TC 207 and correct use of the ESPR definitions of durability and reliability. Appropriate EN-based reliability tests for components and the difficulty of translating test cycles into service life were raised.

3. Task 2 – Market

Corina Haita-Falah from Trinomics presented a summary of the findings for task 2 of the MEErP on the market. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation of task 2.

EFIC and other participants confirmed declining European furniture sales/production, pointing to weaker demand and increasing imports. Enky suggested that the growth of second-hand and refurbished furniture may also influence new-product sales. Stakeholders called for better treatment of import quantities, weights and density differences, EU production outside the EU, product parts and mixed-material categories, and limitations of residual statistical categories.

FEAD noted that furniture is often captured under bulky or municipal waste codes together with mattresses, or classified by material after dismantling, complicating waste and treatment data. Member State authorities and EPR systems were suggested as additional sources, including French Ecomaison, Valdelia and ADEME datasets. EFIC offered further information on trends and classifications.

4. Task 3 – Users

Daniel Hinchliffe from Oeko-Institut presented a summary of the findings for task 3 of the MEErP on users. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation of task 3.

Participants emphasised that actual furniture lifetimes reflect purchasing preferences, intensive B2B versus B2C use, leasing, office moves and depreciation cycles, not solely physical failure. Enky discussed furniture-as-a-service and electrically powered desks and acoustic booths; Tikamoon described repair, returns, buy-back and resale initiatives.

RREUSE stressed self-repair, preparation for reuse and social-economy jobs and offered updated 2025 information; its indicative figures of approximately 180,000 tonnes collected and 100,000 tonnes locally reused require verification before publication. Participants asked the team to identify parts that fail first, barriers to repair and spare-parts availability. They cautioned that disassembly should not undermine strength or reliable reassembly. The potential trade-off between material minimisation and durability was raised, and the team invited evidence.

5. Preliminary LCA findings

Alessandra Zamagni from Ecoinnovazione presented a summary of the LCA findings. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation.

The team clarified that initial environmental hotspot findings were based on literature rather than full PEF calculations. The EF database will provide core data on energy,

transport, materials and end-of-life treatment, supplemented by other databases as needed. Manufacturing losses, including wood scrap and its management, will be considered.

Stakeholders raised questions on biogenic carbon, differences between material-based product groups, and coatings that extend life but may impair recycling. The team explained that cradle-to-grave improvement-option scenarios will assess such trade-offs after base cases are quantified. Enky suggested treating acoustic furniture as a distinct category.

6. Task 4 – Technologies and substances of concern

Daniel Hinchliffe from Oeko-Institut presented a summary of the findings for task 4 of the MEErP on technologies and substances of concern. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation of task 4.

Participants discussed reliability and upholstery testing, repairability, modular sofas, disassembly, material separation and the potential conflict with strength or functionality. Relevant upholstery standards and CEN/TC 207 expertise were offered. Views differed on recycled-content thresholds: some saw them as incentives for recycling markets, while others questioned additional benefits for already well-recycled materials such as steel and aluminium.

The team explained that the preliminary Category D substances-of-concern list was drawn from desk research and requires stakeholder validation. Participants urged engagement with recyclers and differentiation between intentional and unintentional substances, and between material-specific recycling obstacles. The team clarified that SoCs are being identified for final furniture products with attention to materials rather than individual parts.

FEAD stressed the importance of distinguishing between intentionally added and unintentionally present substances of concern in recycled materials.

7. Base cases

The project team described seven functional groups divided into 44 subgroups. EFIC welcomed the function-based direction but requested time to review the detail; stakeholders cautioned that theoretical average material compositions may poorly represent heterogeneous real products. They called for functional-unit and load-based distinctions for heavy-duty, commercial, kitchen, bathroom and educational furniture, as well as improved textile granularity.

Participants requested transparency on source data and calculations, and stressed that representative modelling averages should not automatically become assumptions for product-specific regulatory requirements.

8. Digital Product Passport

Eduard Wagner from Fraunhofer IZM presented a summary of the findings for Digital Product Passport. The following paragraphs represent the main discussion points following the presentation.

Stakeholders raised the availability and traceability of chemicals and materials information, especially for SMEs and bespoke furniture producers; the correct DPP level for modules, configurations, models, batches or items; and responsibility for updating third-party repair and collection information. Enky reported batch-level tracking and cautioned against item-level burdens.

The team indicated that access rights would be assessed. EFIC advocated a stepwise, need-to-know approach, examining who needs each data field, who holds it, costs and environmental value. Participants urged interoperability with ERP/CAD systems and existing identifiers, industrial-scale usability for recyclers, and lessons from EUDR traceability. The team clarified that EUDR is not part of the DPP scope. Participants also discussed how machine-readable DPP data could complement AI-enabled information retrieval.

9. Cross-cutting messages and follow-up

Recurring themes were proportionality for SMEs and bespoke manufacturers; alignment with ESPR definitions and standards; better evidence on market flows, waste and actual use; transparent and functionally appropriate base cases; cradle-to-grave evaluation of trade-offs; and pragmatic, interoperable DPP design.

Stakeholders were invited to provide written evidence and comments, including data on product classifications, lifetime and failure modes, reuse and waste flows, LCA inventories, SoCs and base cases. Several associations requested an extension of the comment deadline. The notes do not confirm a revised deadline or any formal decisions on exemptions or future regulatory requirements. The second stakeholder meeting is planned for March 2027 (subject to confirmation).

Follow-up items (proposed, not formal decisions)

- Review scope boundary cases and potential treatment of bespoke furniture and components.
- Check terminology and available reliability, upholstery and circularity standards.
- Seek supplementary import, market, EPR, reuse and waste datasets.
- Request evidence on failure modes, repair barriers, lifetimes and material trade-offs.
- Validate LCA datasets, base-case assumptions and preliminary Category D SoC list.
- Assess DPP granularity, information ownership, access rights and interoperability.
- Confirm written-comment deadline and communicate any extension.