

German engineering aids progress

Modern hardwood products from Germany continue to be in high demand in the UK for construction, interior finishing and furniture production. Dr Thorsten Mrosek, CEO of the international marketing platform Wood Germany, reports

In the UK, great demands are placed on modern building structures and materials, for example in the context of sustainable or 'green' building. High standards also apply to products for interior finishing, furniture production and exterior applications. Architects, building planners, decision-makers in the real estate sector and project development, as well as furniture designers, are particularly appreciative of the fact that contemporary wood construction and high-quality timber products are able to meet the highest demands for technical performance, profitability, energy efficiency, aesthetics and sustainability.

Germany is a global leader in wood construction and wood furniture technology and innovation and its wood products and design solutions continue to be in high demand in the UK. These include sophisticated and energy-efficient residential buildings and contemporary industrial and commercial buildings. In addition to kiln-dried sawn timber and planed products – with beech and oak being the most widely imported – sought after solid timber products include engineered building materials such as beech glulam and hybrid glulam (spruce/beech).

Wood-based panels from Germany are also still in high demand in the UK and, thanks to recent German industry investments, laminated veneer lumber (LVL) based on beech will play a larger role in the future.

While solid hardwood and wood-based panel products for interior finishing and for

Thorsten Mrosek promotes modern wood products from sustainable forestry in Germany



furniture production are continuously optimised by the German wood industry in terms of technical performance and design, major product innovation has taken place in the area of wood construction based on hardwood and hybrid products. The beech and hybrid glulam have been developed and successfully applied in construction projects. The German wood engineering companies Hess Timber GmbH & Co KG and Schaffitzel & Miebach Faszination Brücken GmbH are both offering high-end and innovative wood construction solutions based on hardwood and hybrid glulam, for example.

Other innovative hardwood products include LVL for construction, thermally modified beech for exterior applications such as cladding, decking and garden furniture, laminated plywood shapes for furniture production, as well

SUMMARY

- Wood-based panels from Germany are in demand in the UK.
- Glulam and LVL products based on beech have been developed.
- Germany's wood resource is 3.4 billion m³.
- The UK imported 7,000m³ of sawn oak and beech in the first half of this year.

as laminated compressed wood for special applications such as components for car and aeroplane interiors.

Germany is home to Europe's largest wood resource (3.4 billion m³) and its largest production of sawn timber (2011: 22.6 million m³, softwood and hardwood timber, including planed products).

Between January and June this year, among the most important German export markets for sawn beech – the most significant German hardwood product – were China (55,000m³), Poland (22,000m³) and the US (19,800m³). During this period the UK imported about 5,200m³ of sawn beech and 1,800m³ of sawn oak. The UK is among the top export markets for German softwood products (January and June 2012: 84,000m³ sawn softwood and 86,000m³ planed softwood 76,000m³ of wood-based panels).

In terms of marketing and other support of the German wood industry, it appears that the organisation Wood Future (Zukunft Holz GmbH) will not be able to fill the gap left behind after the German Timber Promotion Fund was forced to discontinue its activities in 2009 for technical reasons. While the German wood industry is represented and supported by the various industry associations and their umbrella organisations, domestic technical support is also provided by the Wood Information Service (Informationsdienst Holz) and international marketing support is offered by the marketing platform Wood Germany.

Wood Germany intends to continue making a contribution towards promoting a dialogue between experts and decision-makers in the UK and representatives of the German timber industry. Many German timber and wood machinery companies participated in Timber Expo this week. ■

● For more information visit www.woodgermany.com.



Hybrid glulam based on spruce and oak being used in the UK PHOTO: HESS TIMBER GMBH & CO KG



Beech glulam is another recent innovation PHOTO: SCHAFFITZEL + MIEBACH FASZINATION BRÜCKEN GMBH