

## ERA ECO LABEL



It is allocated to furniture which meets the eco-design criteria specified in paragraph 4. The owner of the ERA eco label is Era grupa d.o.o. from Vinkovci.

### 1. Meaning of the label

The eco-label is awarded by applying the LCA - Life Cycle Analysis – methodology, which includes defined assessment factors, taking into account all stages of the process - from design, procurement, production, packaging, transportation, use, future restoration, redevelopment, to the disposal. In addition to the abovementioned, it includes the in-between phases, the relationships between the individual phases, as well as the human and environmental factors.

The quality of products in terms of the environment is assessed based on categories of influence: damage to human health and the environment – aimed at simplifying the communication on the different forms of influence.

The ERA eco label is **given to a specific furniture element** for the duration of three years.

The ERA eco label means the following:

1. That natural, recycled or raw materials that can be recycled were used in the production of furniture
2. That evaporation of toxic substances into the environment was eliminated to the greatest extent possible, while at the same time protecting human health
3. That in creating the product and packaging eco design principles were applied

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4. That in the manufacturing process no one's rights were violated, either as authors or workers: in other words, that the product is an original work, not a copy of someone's work, and child labour was not used in its creation, and it implies that the participants in the whole process of creating the product were adequately compensated for their work, and worked in appropriate working conditions, in accordance with regulations.

### **2. The eco label application method**

It is applied to products, packaging and promotional materials according to the Label Standard Book.

It is awarded to products that meet the standard of ecological furniture owned and created by Era grupa d.o.o. from Vinkovci, all according to the criteria of the Standard. Experts from the fields of ecology, furniture production, wood industry, design and economics are involved in the process of assigning labels (evaluation).

### **3. Labelling method on products**

The eco label is applied to products in accordance with the Graphic Labelling Standards Book.

### **4. Criteria relating to the selection and use of raw materials or the manufacturing process, and which products must meet in order to bear the Era eco label sign:**

Only and solely those products that meet the regulations of Ecological Furniture Standards can carry the ERA eco label. The Standard prescribes the method of design that is guided by PRINCIPLES OF ECO DESIGN.

The **requirements** that include ecologically designed products and which are used as criteria for obtaining the ERA eco-label are as follows:

The requirements of an environmentally designed product are as follows:

<b>1. The product is made of environmentally friendly materials, primarily wood and wood materials with the FSC certificate</b>
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The Republic of Croatia has 47% of its land area covered by forests, and more than two and a half million hectares of the national territory is covered by forests that provide timber reserves of more than 350 million cubic meters.

The main suppliers of raw materials, Hrvatske šume (*Croatian Forests*), have the FSC certification, which guarantees that the product is produced from wood from healthy

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forests, which are managed according to strict environmental, economic and social standards.

The entire wood manufacturing complex in the Republic of Croatia is based on very valuable land covered by forests that are the source of high quality and biologically renewable raw materials.

It should be particularly noted that products which are in accordance with the principles of eco-design may not contain genetically modified wood. Recycled materials commonly used in manufacturing are also acceptable from an environmental point of view. These are materials that do not generate harmful and unnecessary waste in their production or at the end of their life cycle.

### **2. The use of dangerous substances was completely avoided in production**

Raw wood must not be processed with substances or preparations which contain substances which the World Health Organization classifies as class IA (exceptionally hazardous), class IB (very hazardous) according to the danger of pesticides. Wood processing must be in accordance with the provisions of the Chemicals Act and the products or preparations, binders, adhesive substances or glues and materials must not contain any free formaldehyde.

Furniture made according to the principles of eco-design is made entirely of natural materials, the surface is protected with natural oils or waxes and it does not contain harmful substances.

### **3. The waste in the manufacturing process is reduced to the greatest extent possible**

Wood as a raw material is environmentally viable because less than two percent of wood remnants cannot be processed into semi-finished products and can be considered waste.

### **4. Economical use of raw materials**

During product design the utilization of materials should be taken into account in order to avoid unnecessary waste, or so that the "excess" material could be used for some other part of the product or another product.

### **5. All raw materials used during production can be recycled**

In organising production which is in accordance with the principles of eco-design, all used materials and raw materials should be recyclable.

### **6. Products are multifunctional**

Furniture designed in accordance with the principles of eco-design frequently has several functions. Of course, not every product must necessarily have multiple functions, but during the definition of the product it is necessary to consider and ask what all can it be used for and re-used.

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Who all can be a user? In accordance with these answers the product must be designed to possibly have multiple functions. Nowadays, more and more designers and manufacturers are turning to designing products in accordance with the principles of inclusive design (1) - design for everyone or design without limitations. This is not a new genre of design or a separate activity, but presents a general approach to design in which designers ensure that their goods and/or services respond to the needs of the widest possible group of users, regardless of their age or ability. The growth of inclusive design is conditioned by an aging population and a growing movement for integrating persons with disability into society. This design concept is not only aimed at the handicapped and those with disability, but also at people with special needs in all population groups, such as children, the elderly, pregnant women etc. According to the WHO data(2), in 2020 almost 50% of the European adult population will be over 50 years old. Inclusive design means products which require no special adaptation or modification to be simple to use for all users.

### **7. Simple assembly**

The design should take into account the possibility and method of stacking furniture during transportation, assembly and handling during assembly and disassembly of furniture, whereby it is essential to avoid complicated solutions, as well as unnecessary actions.

### **8. Easy cleaning and maintenance**

The entire product should be accessible for cleaning and maintenance. Maintenance and cleaning of furniture must be possible without the use of organic solvents. Furniture made of solid wood, designed in accordance with the principles of eco-design, with a surface protected with natural oils and wax, is maintained with a damp, soft cloth, and occasionally, if necessary, livened up by oil or wax.

### **9. Use of product components which extend the product life-cycle**

The quality of products is a set of concepts that relate to the quality of materials, execution, composition, and functionality, construction, shape, colour, and more. Wood itself as a high quality material ensures durability.

### **10. Enclosing instructions along with the product, with pictures for the assembly, use and maintenance of the product**

In the furniture industry we generally come across secondary packaging and transport packaging, and less frequently primary packaging. Packaging must satisfy a certain number

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<sup>1</sup> *Inclusive design -the objects and the environment need to be designed in such a manner as to be usable, without modifications or additions, by the greatest number of persons possible, regardless of their age, gender, knowledge or difficulties*

<sup>2</sup> *WHO- World Health Organization*

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of objectives (3) of brand identification, convey detailed and convincing information, facilitate the transport of the product and its protection, aid storage in warehouses and stores (4) and contribute to the use of the object. The particularities of the market on which the product is marketed also clearly have an impact on labelling the product, as does the language, legislation and consumer information.

For the product designed according to eco-design principles to be acceptable and clear to everyone, instructions with pictures for the assembly, use and maintenance are enclosed with the product. Consumers should also be presented with detailed information describing the best way of dealing with disposal of the product when it becomes waste, listed in the order they affect the environment (for instance: reuse, recycling, encouraging return requests, energy production). Each disposal option should have listed precautions to be taken in order to limit the negative impact on the environment.

### **11. Decreasing the points that can weaken the product**

In product design, it is necessary to take into account and eliminate the points that could structurally weaken the product and thereby reduce the life of the product.

### **12. Effort made that the repairs and future restoration work on the product be viable**

For products made of solid wood and finished with oils and waxes, restoration and repairs are simple and cost effective.

### **13. Increased number of years of the given product warranty**

Through the warranty, the manufacturer undertakes to perform its obligations towards the customer regarding the sold product. Servicing the product is a service activity aimed at maintaining and repairing the product. According to a GfK survey, the average age of furniture in homes in the Republic of Croatia is 14 years, while some households have furniture up to 30 years old, mainly produced in local factories. (5)

A warranty reduces the customer's perception of risk and furniture designed according to eco-design principles has a 100 year warranty.

### **14. Post-sales service for product repairs and replacement**

In accordance with the principles of eco-design, products must be designed and manufactured so that the manufacturer can guarantee that it is able to, upon request,

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<sup>3</sup> Kotler, P.; Keller, K. L.: "Upravljanje marketingom", Mate, Zagreb, 2008, p. 393

<sup>4</sup> Kotler mentions "help in storage in the household", but in the process from handling to use, the furniture is not stored in households packed. Instead, the users who store the packaged product are retail store warehouses, own warehouses, stores and premises of a similar purpose

<sup>5</sup> .GfK Hrvatska, research conducted in September 2008, GfK Hrvatska internal materials

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obtain spare parts, which are identical to those installed or which have the same functional properties as those that are built in.

### **15. Minimized number of product parts**

For products designed in accordance with the principles of eco-design, it is important to minimize the number of product parts in order to both optimize production, as well as optimize the assembly and handling of the product.

### **16. Minimized difference of materials**

During design, diversity of materials has to be reduced in order to optimize procurement, production, maintenance, as well as the final disposal and recycling of the product.

### **17. Selection of materials which are easily recyclable**

In accordance with the requirement that the materials of which the product is made be environmentally friendly, they should at the same time be recyclable as easily as possible.

### **18. Avoiding materials based on melamine resins**

For furniture designed in accordance with the principles of eco-design, the application of materials based on melamine resins is not allowed.

### **19. Labelling of problematic parts in the phase of product destruction and enabling their easier separation**

Since modern design products, including furniture, cannot avoid symbiosis with modern technologies and the use of various other parts required by the product features, such as lights, batteries and similar parts that in the process of waste disposal are separately sorted and disposed of, they need to be specially labelled, and at the beginning of the process their easy separation and sorting be planned.

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