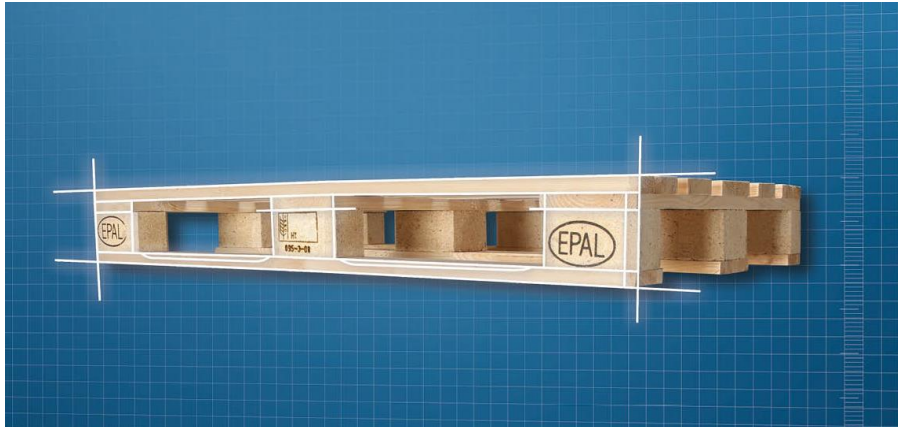


## European Pallet Association e. V. (EPAL)

### PRESS RELEASE



## EPAL assumes responsibility for the pallet pool's safety and quality

### Criticism of quality assurance at UIC/EUR pallets is growing – exchangeability is increasingly questioned

Düsseldorf, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 – In response to repeated requests from EPAL, the issue of quality assurance of UIC/EUR pallets and their exchangeability in the open exchange pool was again on the agenda for the UIC Working Group “Questions of palletisation” on 09/11/2016 in Vienna. Of the 195 members of the International Union of Railways (UIC), along with the RCA (Austria) and the chairman of UIC AG, Thomas Metlich, only representatives from ZSSK (Slovakia) and CD (Czech Republic) as well as the inspection companies ZVV, SGS and MÁV-REC attended. Some railways, including Green Cargo (Sweden) and RCH (Hungary), were only represented by their inspection companies.

EPAL was represented by its President, Robert Holliger and CEO, Martin Leibrandt as well as by the EPAL National Committees of Germany, Poland and Italy. The meeting had previously been postponed by the UIC, despite EPAL having requested this meeting several times.

**Indeed, the umbrella association of licensed producers and repairers, the European Pallet Association e.V. (EPAL), has for years been engaged in an intensive and successful fight against EPAL pallet counterfeiters. The trademark protection of “EPAL in oval” is being enforced in all countries in which EPAL pallets are produced and repaired. Infringements of the trademark rights of “EPAL in oval” are prosecuted and furthermore customs officers at EU external borders are trained by the EPAL Academy to recognise genuine and counterfeit EPAL Euro pallets.**

EPAL has been criticising the fact that of the UIC and their member railways and inspection companies are not undertaking effective action, because ever more users are being confronted with either counterfeit or inferior quality UIC Euro pallets. There is also clear criticism of the UIC's quality assurance measures: There have been serious complaints to EPAL from users that when exchanging EPAL Euro pallets they receive non-conforming UIC/EUR pallets.

The Working Group's meeting ended without any actual solution, as to how the UIC quality defects could be redressed. An EPAL meeting with the UIC and the ARGE pallet pool at the Austrian Chamber of Commerce did not achieve the desired result for EPAL either.

### **What could be the solution for the largest open exchange pool in the world?**

Italy could take a leading role for the other countries in terms of exchangeability: In April 2015, the EPAL National Committee in Italy prepared a study on the quality of UIC pallets in conjunction with ECR Italy. The focus of the study was the safety and quality aspect of the Euro pallets in circulation.

As a result of the study, exchangeability with the UIC was ceased. The market adopted and implemented the recommendation: In Italy, EPAL Euro pallets are not exchanged with UIC pallets and the number of EPAL pallets produced in the first quarter of 2016 had increased by 27.9% compared to the same period the previous year. The EPAL quality standard has prevailed.

Martin Leibrandt, CEO of EPAL, "The high quality and the safety of independent quality assurance is the upmost priority for pallet users of our EPAL products. That's why EPAL is acting decisively in all countries against pallet counterfeiters and trademark violations."

### **About EPAL:**

The European Pallet Association e.V. (EPAL) was founded in 1991 as the umbrella association of licensed producers and repairers of EPAL/EUR-pallets and box pallets. EPAL is globally responsible for the consistent quality of the EPAL load carriers and therefore uses an independent external quality inspection service. EPAL has been granting exclusive licenses for the production and repair of Euro pallets with the "EPAL in oval" branded marking on four corner blocks since 1st August 2013. EPAL is currently represented in more than thirty countries by fifteen National Committees which have committed themselves to implementing the EPAL objectives on a national basis. As a registered association, EPAL does not pursue any commercial interests and makes all its decisions in the interests of its industry, trade and logistics partners.

### **For further press information:**

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