

# Riga Wood

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# Riga Wood Insight



## The VIOBOND consortium will replace fossil resources with renewable lignin in everyday consumer products

9 partners from 5 European Union Member States have joined forces in the VIOBOND project worth EUR 35 million to establish a new, unique bio-based resin plant in Latvia. The project was selected within the framework of the HORIZON Europe programme for research and innovation and aims to take significant commercialisation steps based on the natural wood component lignin, creating industrial technologies for a significant reduction of the share of fossil raw materials in phenol formaldehyde resin, which is currently widely used in various everyday products.

Replacing the refined petroleum products phenol and formaldehyde in resins, with industrially produced renewable lignin, will achieve the objective set by VIOBOND partners – the use of bio-based, more environmentally friendly and less

toxic materials in the production of furniture, floor coverings, thermal insulation, sandpaper and other everyday products.

The coordinator of the cross-sectoral project VIOBOND is Latvijas Finieris Group – a world leader in the research, development, and production of high-value-added birch plywood products. Together with 8 partners, the project combines knowledge and experience in lignin, wood processing, energy, engineering and other fields of scientific research and industrial production.

The programme’s support shall focus on tackling climate change and investing in the sustainable development goals, contributing to the EU’s competitiveness and growth.

The project will start on 1 September 2021 and will end on 31 August 2026.





In cooperation with  
RIGA WOOD Baltic

## Interior Architects Looking for Innovative Solutions for their Project

Latvijas Finieris is increasing its production volumes of lignin-based green glue Riga ECOlogical, and the new product is gaining popularity among architects and interior designers. The design bureau br.ook interior architecture, in one of their latest projects – library of Andrejs Upīts Secondary School Skrīveri, Latvia – chose to use Riga Ply and Riga ECOlogical for their interior solutions.

Interior architect Baiba Rūķe, br.ook interior architecture, comments: *“The initial idea was to create a multifunctional space, yet we wanted the environment to be clean and natural for creative activities. The birch plywood is good material due to its durability and vast application options. It is also our local product. As interior architects, we pay a great deal of attention to materials that we use in our projects and*

***we look for solutions that focus on air quality.***

*It was interesting to use this material, which is natural and has a focus on sustainability.”*

The library is special, not only because of the high-quality materials used in the renovation process, but also due to its functionality. The idea of the project was to transform the library into a meeting place where one can get familiar with the latest books, do homework in a pleasant and quiet environment, as well as organise other educational activities for children and the youth.



## Joining the European Federation of the Parquet Industry – a Step Closer to Our Customers and Partners

Starting from this year, Latvijas Finieris has become a member of the European Federation of the Parquet Industry (FEP), with a vision to be closer to other players of the industry and stay on top of the changes and tendencies within it.

Paolo Cavazzoni, Chairman of Riga Wood Italia, comments: *“Being a member of FEP gives us a great opportunity to introduce this specific audience to our versatile product portfolio and especially to Riga ECOlogical. Furthermore, membership provides an opportunity to be among the first to be aware of situations in the market as well as other innovations.”*

Even though last year was spent in the shadow of the pandemic, the figures of the Parquet Industry in 2020 have remained stable. In Europe’s biggest parquet market – in Germany – parquet consumption has even increased during

the pandemic. The main reason, according to FEP, was the rate of renovations.

By choosing sustainable solutions for building and renovation, everyone can do their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, therefore slowing down the negative effects of climate change.

*“The high demand for wood solutions in construction and repairing works, contrary to some stereotypical views,*

*has facilitated active afforestation, thus playing an important role in reducing the carbon footprint and “storing carbon” in various wood products,”* Mr Cavazzoni adds.

The European Federation of the Parquet Industry is present in 20 countries and unites 80 members, among whom are manufacturers, national federations and suppliers.

The official FEP website: <https://www.parquet.net/p/index.html>



## Sustainable Business Development Through Personnel Efficiency Programme

To facilitate high-level engagement and proactive behaviour among employees of all levels and professions, Latvijas Finieris Group has introduced its employees to various

## methods that help to increase work efficiency.

The current personnel efficiency programme consists of 4 different methods - 5s, Kaizen, TPM, SMED – which are designed to facilitate efficiency in the work space, the overall inclusion of employees and compliance with sustainable business development principles.

One of the most popular methods used in Latvijas Finieris Group is the Kaizen method, which was introduced in the concern in 2018, with the primary aim being to create long-

term improvements. Right now Kaizen is actively used in Lignums Mill with notable success. Employees of all professions and work experience have a chance to propose practical improvements for their work space. Afterwards, a special commission reviews proposals and makes a decision on whether to support the initiative or not. If the proposal receives approval, the initiator can start to work on implementing it in reality.

Edgars Šestakovskis, Director of Lignums Mill, comments: *“We are dedicated to improving our working environment to make it safer and more efficient. The Kaizen programme gives*

*our employees the opportunity to engage, come forward with initiatives and be a positive example to others.”*

Employee engagement and suggestions for improvement have a growing trend with each year. Now the number of new proposals submitted per month is equal to the proposals submitted in 2018 throughout the year. For each approved and implemented improvement, its author receives points that are afterwards transformed into financial bonuses as additional motivation. After seeing the notable changes that it has brought Lignums Mill, this method will gradually be applied in other mills, too.





## Caring for Mental and Physical Wellbeing of Employees

The pandemic has brought with it stress, uncertainty, need for adapting to new daily routines and loads of other challenges in everyday life. Being aware of the importance to stay healthy at any times, Human Resource Department of Latvijas Finieris, is looking after its team and has launched an online seminar cycle “Be in Balance”. This project allows employees to get advices from professionals on

## how to keep balance between work and home, and how to deal with everyday stressors.

Besides online seminars, the HR Department has initiated sports challenges promoting active lifestyle where everyone, including internationally based Riga Wood sales offices, can join the challenge.

Furthermore, online workout videos containing various exercises for everyday use, are also available for the employees.

Gunita Meiere, Director of Human Resource Department at Latvijas Finieris: *“We value our employees and we see as our duty to do everything what we can to help them to overcome the obstacles and go strong through these challenging times. Therefore we have designed activities that facilitates both – mental and physical health – and strengthens our team spirit.”*

During the online seminars, employees can listen to lectures given by well-known management specialists, organizational psychologists and cognitively behavioural psychotherapist, ask questions and share their own thoughts.

## Latvijas Finieris Continues its Social Campaign “Trust Science”

At the beginning of the year, Latvijas Finieris initiated a social campaign “Trust Science”, calling on everyone to act in a responsible manner during the pandemic. The campaign achieved its goal – it increased the awareness of the

necessity to trust reliable information sources and experts, and was recognised not only by employees, but also by governmental bodies and the wider part of society. The second part of the campaign was launched with the main goal being to educate employees about the importance of the vaccination, and how it can secure a safe working environment and protect everyone’s families.

*“Risks related to COVID-19 don’t decrease and vaccination right now is the only known way of how to get back to previous daily routines, as well as*

## ***protect ourselves and others from severe illness or even death”***

emphasises Jānis Ciems, CEO of Latvijas Finieris.

Active communication regarding vaccination is organised within the entire Latvijas Finieris Group, providing employees with practical information. An encouraging example was seen in “Likmere”, the Group’s mill in Lithuania, where in a short period of time approximately 80% of the employees received their first vaccine.

