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Almost 1 in 2 European households has a wooden floor

Ceramic floors are the most popular floors in European homes, followed by wooden floors and laminate. The economic climate does affect consumers' spending on flooring solutions but has not impacted the demand for parquet. 6 out of 10 people want to change floors in their home, especially in their living room, bedroom and kitchen. People associate a wooden floor with a natural and warm feeling; following the ecological and authenticity trend, and consider it a good investment on the long run. These are conclusions from the European Consumer Survey on Parquet, conducted by InSites Consulting in 7 European Countries commissioned by the FEP (the European Federation of the Parquet Industry).

Economic situation has not affected the demand for parquet

A ceramic floor is the most popular type of floor in Europe, installed in 90% of the houses or apartments. Runner up is the wooden floor (46%), followed by laminate (33%). Carpet (24%) and vinyl (16%) are the least popular and loose market share.

The popularity of wooden floors is different depending on the country. Top country is Sweden, where you can find wooden floors in 8 out of 10 homes. Also Poland (71%) and Austria (65%) like wooden floors. Spanish houses or apartments have the least wooden floors (17%). In all countries we see a small uplift of the market share of wooden floors over the last 2 years. The negative economic climate is esteemed to impact one's spending power on flooring solutions but shows no impact on the appeal of parquet. To the contrary.

Specialist dealers are winning over DIY stores

61% of European households considers changing or buying floors in the upcoming 3 years. Especially the floors of the living room, bedroom and kitchen are subject to change. 39% would take wooden floors, while only ceramic stone shows more potential with 46%.

A store visit has most impact on the actual decision process of consumers. Information on maintenance and cleaning of the floor is crucial, as well as actual floor samples. Also important when making their decision on which floor to buy is the opinion of others (38%) and their own previous experiences (41%). Over the last years we've observed that consumers paying more attention to expert opinions when making a decision on flooring solutions. This is reflected in the observation that consumers prefer buying parquet at a specialist dealer (45%) above a DIY store (39%). Still, currently installed floors were most often purchased in DIY stores after consultation of professional stores.

"People prefer to visit professional stores as they value the expert opinion. It is no surprise that consumers are most satisfied about the specialist dealers (81%) compared to DIY stores (71%)." explains Christophe Vergult, Managing partner at InSites Consulting.

Consumers value the warm and natural feeling of wooden floors

Looking at trends, we see that people care a lot about the decoration of the house or the apartment they live in. 87% agrees that a floor they like is important in their house. People who care for authenticity prefer real products over fake copies, even if they cost more; they more often choose wooden floors. This doesn't mean that budget is not an issue. Especially in Southern Europe the crisis is still around. This has resulted in a higher price sensitiveness of parquet.

A wooden floor is associated with providing a natural and warm feeling. This is less the case with laminate, ceramic or natural stone, vinyl, concrete or carpet. Consumers increasingly value certain

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functional characteristics of wooden floors, such as ease of installation and maintenance which contributes to the overall appeal of wooden floors.

These survey data result from a market survey conducted by InSites Consulting under the order of the FEP (the European Federation of the Parquet Industry) in April 2011. The European Consumer Survey on Parquet provides an overview of the market structure, potential, knowledge and perception of different floors, as well as the buying process, purchasing reasons and expectations. In total, 5.610 consumers took part in this online survey in 7 countries: France, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Poland, Austria and Italy. The figures are representative for each country and for Europe, according to age (25-70) and gender.

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FEP

The European Federation of the Parquet Industry (FEP) reunites European national parquet federations, parquet manufacturers and suppliers to the industry. It is the main body representing and defending the interests of the European parquet industries towards the European authorities.

The primary goal of FEP is to strengthen and improve the position of wood flooring against other floor covering products as well as to enhance the growth, prosperity and stature of the European parquet manufacturing industry – thereby protecting its interests and reinforcing its image.

InSites Consulting

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