**THE BIGGEST ITALIAN AND EUROPEAN**

**RESEARCH AND TESTING CENTRE**

**FOR THE WOOD AND FURNITURE INDUSTRY**

HISTORY

CATAS, with offices in San Giovanni al Natisone in the province of Udine and Lissone (Monza-Brianza), **was born in 1969** in the district known throughout the world as the home of the chair and furniture components, the area among Manzano, San Giovanni al Natisone and Corno di Rosazzo in the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region.

The institute was founded by the Chamber of Commerce of Udine to primarily respond to the **needs of local companies** to develop on new foreign markets, to adapt their products to domestic and foreign standards and to be updated on the use of innovative materials. Such companies, that still characterize this important sector, were aware about the need for a technology centre, closely linked to the industry, offering scientific expertise and solutions applicable in a field, that of wood, extremely competitive.

The development of CATAS was initially supported only by the Udine Chamber of Commerce, the local industry associations (small industries and craftsmen), the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, the Professional School of San Giovanni al Natisone and the University of Udine.

In **1994**, after twenty years of growth in Italy and abroad, CATAS became a limited liability company with the declared mission to encourage and support the technological development of the wood and furniture companies. Nowadays, CATAS is a private limited company, which major partners are: the Udine Chamber of Commerce, Federlegno-Arredo Eventi, the Industrial Association of Udine, the Bank of Cividale, the Italian Wood Craftsmen’s Association-Aial, the Como Craftsmen’s Guild, the Industrial Association of Monza and Brianza and the Association of Small Businesses in Udine.

CATAS TODAY

CATAS spa is presently considered **the largest Italian and European institute in the field of wood and furniture**. It is a research centre supported by a highly qualified team of experts, more than 50 employees, including graduates in chemistry, physics, engineering and mathematics.

The five departments **(materials, surfaces, finished products, chemical-biological, and fire)** carry out a wide range of tests and research both on raw materials and finished products. For each single material or product, CATAS can assess the conformity to **the requirements of standards or to those defined by the customer itself, by carrying out different tests on safety, performance and durability**.

For some years there is also a technical office able to perform virtual simulation of mechanical tests. With these instruments, the safety and performance of a new product can be evaluated even before its realization, through modelling and simulations carried out thanks to the computer aid and the use of special dedicated software programmes.

These systems also allow to simulate possible modification of the product to improve it, thus having a well-founded confidence that the finished product – at the end of the ideation, design and implementation process – will succeed the tests required by the market

Tests are carried out according to national standards (UNI, DIN, BS, NF, ASTM, ANSI, etc.), European standards (EN) and international standards (ISO). On top of these, tests can be designed according to the specific requirements of the client.

In addition to the accreditation granted by **Accredia**, CATAS has also several recognitions from government agencies (for example the **Italian Home Office** for fire reaction tests or the American **CARB** and **EPA** for the formaldehyde emission), associations (the Bifma, which brings together the US manufacturers of office furniture) and large private groups, including **Ikea** and **Intertek**. CATAS is also included in the list **Cpsc** (Consumer Products Safety Commission) for the analysis of lead in finishes for the American market.

THE ACTIVITIES

**The laboratory tests**

The activities that CATAS carries mostly relate to tests on materials and products of wood and furniture industry; in particular:

• tests of resistance, durability and safety of furniture and

 components;

• resistance and durability tests on interior doors;

• tests of resistance, durability and safety of external blinds;

• packaging;

• conformity assessment of playgrounds equipment;

• ergonomic assessment of office chairs;

• physical and mechanical tests on raw materials (wood, panels,

 plastics etc.);

• chemical analysis of materials (adhesives, paints, plastics);

• analysis of the emissions of formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds from raw materials and finished products;

• fire reaction tests;

• effectiveness of wood preservative treatments;

• identification of wood species.

**The product certification**

CATAS grants a **product certification** – with its own brand **CATAS Quality Award (CQA)** – verifying the conformity of an entire production to the standards and technical specifications internationally recognized. This label is applied to raw materials (wood base panels with a limited emission of formaldehyde, adhesives, wood coating systems for exterior and interior), semi-finished products (glue lam window profiles, faced panels) and finished products (chairs, tables, beds, mattresses, etc.). In order to be certified, a product must be verified and must respond positively to the continuous internal controls (tests directly carried out by the manufacturer) and the inspections and tests periodically conducted by CATAS.

CATAS has also initiated partnerships with German institutes **Eph-Ihd** (Dresden) and **Wki** (Braunschweig) and with English **Fira**, also for common product certification schemes.

Within the certification process, CATAS, was the first Italian institution to obtain the accreditation by Accredia as a product certification body, specifically for the scheme on **formaldehyde** emission from wood based panels. Such accreditation is one of the essential prerequisites for the certification activities of wood based panels according to EPA regulations (the US Environmental Protection Agency).

**CATAS and CE marking**

From 2014 CATAS has been officially authorized (notified) by the European Union to carry out activities of assessment and verification of conformity of construction products to the EU European Regulation No 305/2011 laying down the "harmonized" standards for marketing them in the European Union for the following products:

• wood flooring and parquet,

• ceilings,

• wood-based panels for use in construction;

• resilient, textile and laminate floor coverings

• surfaces for sports areas;

• interior and exterior walls with solid wood elements.

**Training**

CATAS – through the activities implemented by the specific **CATAS-Academy** section – offers a complete training program, able to competently respond to the needs of companies operating in the wood and furniture or "neighbouring" sectors (manufacturers of panels, adhesives, paints, etc.). The goal is to spread more knowledge to the institute's customers, as well as to enrich their staff of technical and standard expertise.

These training courses are part of a **specific catalogue**, but CATAS is also available to organize "ad hoc" training programs on individual topics of specific interest, identified in collaboration with the company.

Beyond that CATAS constantly organizes meetings (seminars, workshops) on new standards or on the presentation of the results of internal studies and researches.

CATAS has also established **significant partnerships** with **schools and Universities** that form the technicians for the wood and furniture industry. Moreover the use of CATAS laboratories represents an important opportunity for the realization of thesis of technological-scientific nature.

**Standardisation**

CATAS takes part in the most important international work groups involved in drawing up standards in the wood and furniture sector and plays an important role in the interpretation and application of the legal guidelines.

In Italy, as part of **UNI**, the Italian Organization for Standardization, CATAS representatives hold the positions of Coordinators of the *Furniture Testing and for Wood Coatings* working groups.

In **Europe**, CATAS sits on all the *CEN TC 207 Furniture* working groups, on the *formaldehyde working group* for *TC 112 Wooden Panels*, on the *Coating Systems for Exteriors working group* for *TC 139 Paints and Varnishes)* and on TC 193 which deals with *adhesives for wood*; CATAS is convenor of the European technical committee on wood preservatives.

**Internationally**, CATAS sits on the ISO TC 136 (Furniture) commission and is active on all its working groups.

**Engineering**

In addition to tests on materials and products, CATAS offers companies the opportunity to set up their own laboratories for the internal control of production. Thanks to the presence in international tables, around which the test methodologies are defined, CATAS is able **to provide directly all of the equipment to test the safety, durability and the resistance of furniture**.

Beside the supply of the machines, CATAS also offers all the necessary support for the set up of the tests according to international standards.

**Research**

CATAS supports companies in **developing new products and new materials**. These true "applied research paths" can also be defined by specific projects planned in close collaboration with universities or research centres.

In some cases these programmes can be additional supported by special public funding provided by periodic calls.

Furthermore, CATAS has always collaborated in **qualifying international research programs**, especially in the context of the definition or improvement of test methods regarding the areas in which it operates.

**Communication**

CATAS keeps constantly informed its clients about technical innovations and new technical standards through newsletters, by issuing specific publications and with the organisation of dedicated events.

THE CATAS NUMBERS

Over **48 thousand tests** performed each year.

Over 1,300 subscriber customers.

About 2,000 clients who come annually to CATAS 40% of whom are foreign companies.

More than 100 productions certified by the CATAS Quality Award.

40 and more training events organized each year.

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*Testing, research, certification*

BIOGRAPHIES

**Bernardino Ceccarelli**

President of CATAS since May 2014. Founder of Ceccarelli Group, leader of the famous team Polisportiva Libertas Martignacco and president of the regional Libertas, he is vicepresident of Confapi Fvg, association for which is also president of the Logistics category.

**Andrea Giavon, General Director**

Andrea Giavon was born in Udine and trained as a chemist. In addition to his more than 30 years’ experience in the laboratory, he is a member of Italian standardization groups (UNI) on domestic, office, outdoor and contract furniture; he is also a member of the Biomedical and Diagnostic Technologies committee. He is Co-ordinator of the Furniture Testing working group of the furniture Commission. In Europe he is a member of the TC 207 Furniture committee and is the Italian delegate for the working groups concerned with domestic, kitchen, office, outdoor and contract furniture. Internationally, he is a member of ISO Technical Committee 136 (Furniture) and Italian delegate on its various working groups. He is professor at the Engineering Faculty of the Trieste University. *(giavon@CATAS.com)*

**Franco Bulian, Deputy Director**

Franco Bulian has a degree in chemistry, being the Deputy Director and the Head of the Marketing Department of CATAS. Since 2007 he is the professor of the course entitled “Furniture Materials and Technologies” for the Double Degree managed by the Universities of Trieste and Ostwestfalen-Lippe (Germany).
Franco Bulian is the coordinator of the UNI Working Group on wood finishes being also member of the European standardization committee on wood coatings (CEN TC 139 WG2) and on formaldehyde emission from wood based panels (CEN TC112 WG5). He has published many technical articles and some books, also in English language, on subjects related with his activities at CATAS. *(bulian@CATAS.com)*