

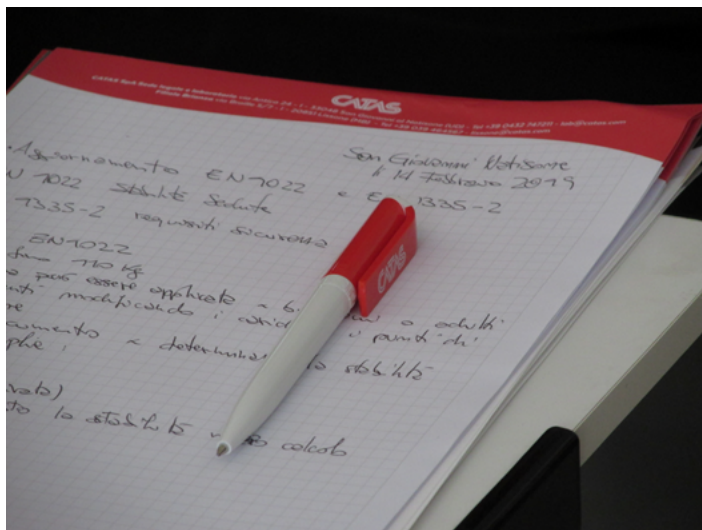
# Training in the wood and furniture sector, some good news...

Franco Bulian

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Technical training represents a need that today is strongly required by the companies of our sector. The manufacturing world perceives, in fact, the lack of young people specifically educated in disciplines concerning wood and furniture, young people who can be easily hired and immediately involved in the various company roles (technical, commercial, quality control, etc.).

If until a few years ago this gap represented a really serious problem especially for Italy, today some positive signs are visible and initiatives in this sense not only grow, but also seem to meet the enthusiasm of young people, the essential ingredient for any future of our sector that we want or can think of.



A recent survey conducted by Catas regarding training dedicated to wood on the Italian territory, identified eighteen professional courses, forty-two courses within technical institutes, seven high-technical-education training courses (ITS and IFTS) and twenty-three university courses.

Although among these there are some virtuous examples with complete courses concerning this sector, such as the **TEMA-wood** professional degree established at the University of Florence and to which Catas also collaborates, not all those identified by the research mentioned above are actually specific to the world of wood and its derivatives. But it does not matter, in any case it is interesting that the world of training has understood the economic relevance of our sector and that a process of introducing wood, its derivatives and the specific production processes of this sector has started in many training areas.

In the training panorama recorded by the survey carried out by Catas, the **ITS** (high technical education) and **IFTS** (high technical education and training) courses certainly deserve a clarification considering that, presumably, they are not well-known as the other education courses. We therefore remind that the ITS and IFTS are parallel to the university courses, from which they differ in consequence to their strong link with the productive world, being also much more dynamic and practical in the organization of the study programs. At the end of the training period, normally characterized by many hours of internship in the companies of our sector, the students obtain a certificate (IFTS) or a diploma (ITS) of high technical specialization recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education. The ITS and IFTS courses organized by the **Messina Foundation** in Lentate (Monza Brianza) and in Puglia by the **Cuccovillo Institute** of Bari, both carried out in collaboration with Catas, are clear examples of how companies and trade associations are engaged in this effort to create a training base suitable for the needs of the wood and furniture sector.

As part of the training in the wood-furniture sector, CATAS also plays a very active role and more and more hours are dedicated by its technicians to this activity.

It is surely true that CATAS was born as a test laboratory dedicated to responding to specific needs of companies, but over time it has turned into a more complex organism, in a sort of archive of knowledge deriving from the various activities in which we are involved, such as the daily tests on materials and products, the participation in standardization committees, the numerous national and international researches and the organization of seminars on various

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topics also in collaboration with other Italian and foreign realities. All this precious heritage of theoretical and practical “knowledge” is constantly shared in various areas and in different forms.

The numbers clearly testify this “new” identity of the institute: over 200 hours of training per year in ITS and IFTS courses, 50 hours in the universities, more than 40 courses provided to companies.

The constant growth in training has led CATAS to create the Catas Academy, an organization within the institute that allows us to offer courses that are highly targeted also to the specific needs of the market.

Companies increasingly ask Catas technicians for what we might call “refresh courses” or for short updates for their commercial and/or technical staff: this is a new trend that is rapidly growing and that probably derives from the needs of dealing with an ever wider and more complex market, which requires solid foundations, preparation, knowledge and constant updating.

*The following list highlights some of the most requested courses, but we take this opportunity to remind you that Catas is extremely flexible with a wide range of skills, able to deal with different subjects as well.*

- Wood and wood-based panels, composition, classification and defects.
- Furniture upholstery materials: characteristics, classification and performance.
- Adhesives: types, performances, defects
- Paints, types, performances, defects.
- Furniture in various sectors of use (domestic, contract and office): safety and performance.
- Children’s furniture: safety and performance.
- The reaction to fire.
- Safety and emissions of raw materials and finished products.
- How to draw up and how to respect a specification.

*The courses, of variable duration according to the needs of the companies, can be carried out either at the Catas offices (San Giovanni al Natisone - Udine and Lissone - Monza Brianza) or at the companies themselves.*



The logo for CATAS Academy features the word 'CATAS' in a red, outlined, sans-serif font, positioned above the word 'ACADEMY' in a larger, blue, solid sans-serif font. A stylized blue 'A' is positioned to the left of 'ACADEMY', partially overlapping the 'C'.

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