

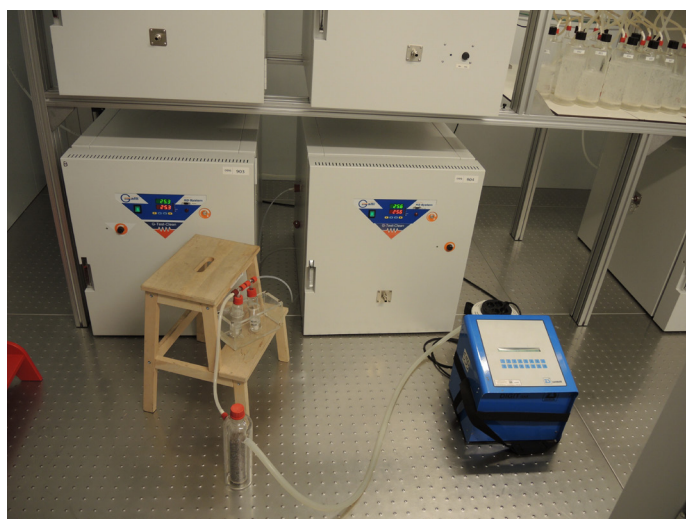
# VOC emissions, what happens in Germany?

Franco Bulian

It is well known that in 2012 Germany issued its own regulation concerning the reduction of volatile organic substance emissions from building materials and, in particular, from wood flooring.

This document was published with specific reference to the European Union construction products Regulation (No. 305), which states that any materials shall be safe for end-users also in terms of emissions. Similarly to France and Belgium, Germany had issued its own national regulation to respond to this general principle which, although established, did not find a real practical application by the European Union.

Germany had thus defined its national requirements, subjecting the import of wood flooring and other materials to a system of preventive approval and subsequent VOC emission controls called ABZ.



This regulation was subsequently challenged by the European Union which ruled that it cannot be applied to products subject to CE marking for which a harmonized EN standard exists.

At present, DiBt's preventive approval is then no longer necessary for the export of wood flooring in Germany. Although some companies that had already received it may continue to use this approval for marketing purposes, authorization cannot be requested for new products.

However, Germany has reacted to this European Union decision by recently presenting an appeal against the decision of the European Court of Justice on the grounds that the German population, and in particular the weakest citizens, could be exposed to risks to their health in consequence of the lack of preventative controls on materials.

It is therefore important to keep the focus on this current issue and that it is constantly and rapidly evolving.

We would like to remember that CATAS has more than 30 test chambers for the analysis of formaldehyde and VOC emissions from raw materials and finished products.

In any case it is always important to evaluate the purpose of the test in order to perform it with the required conditions and procedures.

CATAS technicians can always help companies in this field that sometimes is rather complex.