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EPAL -- a mark of quality. Protecting the EPAL brand

The organisation that regulates the EPAL (European Pallet Association) business within the UK and Ireland has expressed concern about the quality of the used pallets entering its pool and is taking action to improve the situation by acting to assert its trademark rights.

Recent surveys carried out by Brepal suggest that up to one third of used pallets in circulation are falling short of its quality specifications.

Martin Leibrandt, chief executive of EPAL said: "Businesses use EPAL pallets because they want to guarantee a pallet that conforms to our strict specifications governing the load bearing capacity, dimensions, design, materials used and construction. "Only a small proportion of movements take place on new pallets, with the vast majority involving second-hand or repaired EPAL pallets, and the same rigorous standards are applied here.

"The EPAL mark is there so users - and in turn their customers – know they are receiving their goods on a pallet which conforms to the specification and has been properly manufactured and maintained. Users who acquire a pallet bearing the EPAL trademark should be able to expect them to be the right size, to have an appropriate strength, load-bearing ability and durability, and to be in a good condition, so they know their goods will be transported effectively.

"Many used pallets will have been damaged and repaired at some time in their life. The EPAL system makes exchange straightforward and effective – and it provides quality assurance, fairness and added safety for users. The flow of unregulated repairs into the pool will reduce users' confidence that they will always receive a pallet that is fit for purpose.

"Pallets that do not conform to the standards are more likely to be faulty or to break; as a result they compromise the supply chain, and have the potential to damage a business's reputation, to be a hazard in the workplace, and to cause sizeable economic losses."

EPAL has successfully pursued cases of non-conformance to its standards of repair in Europe courts, added Leibrandt. "We will do this again where necessary

in the UK in order to protect the reputation of EPAL pallets and the businesses that rely on them," he said. "We will be writing to the used pallet trade to explain our position as well as explaining the situation directly to our users."

Notes to Editors

- EPAL is a not-for-profit organisation concerned with the promotion of cost-effective pallet pooling across the world, using standardised high quality pallets
- EPAL regulates the manufacture, repair and trading of EPAL pallets via binding licensing agreements with manufacturers, repairers and traders guaranteeing product quality
- The EPAL pallet exchange system permits businesses which use pallets for this purpose to exchange them with third parties. This means that a business receiving goods packed on EPAL pallets does not need to return those pallets to its supplier; it can supply the pallets to other users who can then use them for their goods or supply them to other users.

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