

Neuroscientific evidence revealed for the first time:

Our brain loves wood

Wood in interior design reduces stress and activates positive emotions

Brussels, 24 September 2025 – Today, Fedustria announces the results of a scientific study on the impact on our well-being of using wood in interior spaces. The research was led by **Prof. Dr. Steven Laureys**, in collaboration with Dr. Steven Scholte from the neuroscience research institute Neurensics. “These results scientifically confirm what many have intuitively felt for a long time: an environment rich in wood makes us feel good,” says Prof. Dr. Laureys.

Wood activates positive emotions: invoking greater engagement and a sense of home

Wood in interior design leads to significantly higher engagement and evokes positive emotions. At the same time, it suppresses negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and aversion. While concrete or plastic elements are often perceived as unpleasant, wood feels warm and comforting.

Effects on our living and working environments

An abundance of wood in our living and working spaces encourages problem-solving behaviour, especially in emotional and interpersonal situations. Wood creates an atmosphere where problems are more easily discussed, compromises are more readily reached, and individuals feel safer and more supported. In offices, wood also stimulates creativity.

Wood in unexpected environments: classrooms and hospitals

In classrooms, wood may evoke a sense of home and familiarity. In hospitals, it can help reduce stress and foster a sense of togetherness.

**Conclusion**

The results show that the use of wood in interior spaces has positive effects on our brain and our overall well-being.

**Karla Basselier, CEO Fedustria**, says: “This neuroscientific research confirms it: the use of wood in interiors is highly appreciated, whether at home or at work. Moreover, it has a healing effect on our well-being. Wood helps reduce stress and negative emotions, while increasing the sense of being ‘at home.’ This means there is still enormous potential for using wood in a variety of settings — even in less obvious ones, such as schools or hospitals.”

**Prof. Dr. Steven Laureys** adds: “Our brain loves wood. Wood is a natural material, historically and evolutionarily connected to humans. From a neuroscientific perspective, wood offers great potential for biophilic\* living — where the integration of natural elements in architecture contributes to greater well-being. Personally, I see huge potential in neuro-architecture, where psychologists, neuroscientists, architects and interior designers collaborate to create environments that positively influence people.”

*(\*) Biophilic: involving the integration of natural materials into the home environment.*



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*Fedustria is the Belgian Federation of Textile, Furniture & Woodworking Industries. We represent around 1,500 companies in Belgium (more than 90% of which are SMEs), which together create more than 32,500 direct jobs and generate a turnover of €11 billion, approximately 70% of which comes from exports. Our companies are a prime example of the manufacturing industry in Belgium.*

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