

A new future for the furniture sector in Singapore

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REDISCOVERED CENTRALITY

Today, just less than ten years after the financial crisis in Asia, which reduced the weight of Indochinese furniture supply, especially that of the Chinese giant, Singapore finds itself once again in a central position for the furniture sector.

In the meantime local entrepreneurs have invested in plants abroad (from the group initiative in Kunshan, not far from Shanghai, to a myriad of initiatives in Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam) and in infrastructures in Singapore, not least of which the new fair complex that hosted 500 exhibitors on an area of 35,000 square metres in 2006 and which promises to increase by 50% in future editions.

WHAT'S GOING ON AT IFFS

Since there are no shows of any importance in their own countries, firms from Indonesia and Vietnam have adopted Singapore as their "national" trade fair. But also quite a number of firms from Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia, especially those active at the upper end, don't pass up the chance to be seen in Singapore.

Although not officially included in the trade fair, the Office sector entered through the back door with the massive presence of operators from the city of Anji, in the province of Zhejiang, which is home to 440 producers of seating (roughly 60% of whom manufacture office seating). In 2005 production increased by 40%. The gossip was the recent (November 2005) acquisition of Lamex, a Chinese office furniture giant, by the American Hon.