

BETWEEN EDUCATION, DESIGN, AND INDUSTRY: TRANSILVANIA UNIVERSITY OF BRAȘOV AT BIFE-SIM 2026

Between September 17 and 20, 2026, the Faculty of Furniture Design and Wood Engineering (FDMIL) part of University Transilvania of Brașov participated in BIFE-SIM 2026, held at Romexpo Bucharest. Considered one of the premier events dedicated to Romania's furniture, design, and woodworking industries, the fair brought together manufacturers, suppliers, designers, architects, industry specialists, academic representatives, and a public keen on industry developments.

FDMIL's participation reflects the faculty's ongoing commitment to strengthening ties between education, research, design, and the professional sector, while also providing a framework to present its study fields and academic initiatives. The FDMIL booth served as a meeting point for students, alumni, faculty members, company representatives, and visitors interested in furniture design and the wood industry.



The presence at BIFE-SIM featured an important component dedicated to FDMIL students, who visited the exhibition and had the opportunity to discover products, materials, technologies, and solutions developed and showcased by participating companies. Direct contact with the professional environment allowed them to observe the practical application of knowledge acquired during their study programs and to track the evolution of key areas such as product design, the use of materials and hardware, processing and finishing technologies, as well as solutions focused on functionality, efficiency, and innovation.

For future designers and engineers, such experiences complement university training by providing a direct perspective on how the concepts and technologies studied are translated into real products and processes. Engaging in dialogue with professionals and company representatives also enables them to better understand current market demands and the ongoing transformations shaping the furniture and woodworking industries.



Another important dimension of FDMIL's participation at BIFE-SIM 2026 was promoting the field among high school students exploring future career options. The faculty's booth was visited by students and teachers from "Constantin Brâncuși" Technological High School in Bucharest, "Carol I" High School in Bicaz, and "Avram Iancu" Technological High School in Sibiu. These meetings provided an opportunity to present the field in a tangible way, bridging creativity and technology through design, prototyping, and furniture manufacturing. For the high school students, engaging with a specialized faculty within an industry-dedicated exhibition offered a clear perspective on the training and professional development pathways available in this domain.



FDMIL's participation at BIFE-SIM 2026 was highlighted by a significant achievement by faculty alumni in the National Furniture Design Competition – CNDM 2026. Alumni Mihnea MOLNAR-VARLAM and Ion Laurențiu SAFTA were awarded 2nd Prize for their project *Papyrus*, which was among the finalist

entries showcased at BIFE-SIM. Their presence at the exhibition enabled the project to engage directly with manufacturers, distributors, designers, and other professionals across the furniture, architecture, and design industries.

The *Papyrus* chair also serves as an example of the journey from concept and design to prototype and final product through collaboration between designers and manufacturers. The realization of the prototype was made possible in partnership with Bradul Măneciu and VLAdiLA, whose contribution enabled the translation of the concept into a tangible object, demonstrating the importance of synergy between design, production, and the creative industries.

This achievement is all the more relevant in the context of FDMIL's activity given that one of the project's authors, Mihnea MOLNAR-VARLAM, is currently a PhD student at Transilvania University of Braşov, pursuing his academic and professional path in furniture design. Thus, *Papyrus* illustrates the continuity between university education, professional growth, and the active involvement of alumni in projects and competitions dedicated to furniture design.



In the competition, two more projects by our students were selected for the second stage—juried during BIFE-SIM 2026: the *Aura Loop* unit by Ana-Maria MOȘOIU (second-year Master's student, Furniture Eco-design and Restoration - EDMR) and the *Aero* bench by Hajnalka GYÖRGY (fourth-year student, Design of Wood Products - IDPFL).



CNDM 2026 was organized by the Romanian Furniture Manufacturers Association (APMR), with the support of its partners, including the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning

Bucharest – Faculty of Interior Architecture, Transilvania University of Braşov – Faculty of Furniture Design and Wood Engineering, the Order of Architects of Romania – Bucharest Branch, ARDI – Romanian Association for Design and Innovation, and Romexpo, alongside APMR member companies involved in supporting the competition and manufacturing the prototypes.

Through all these components, BIFE-SIM 2026 provided FDMIL with a multifaceted platform for engaging with the industry and the public, bringing together educational promotion, hands-on student learning experiences, networking with professionals, and showcasing alumni achievements in a single venue. For the faculty, taking part in such an event serves as an effective way to maintain an active dialogue with the professional sector and create opportunities where academic training, research, and the creativity of students and alumni align directly with real industry developments.

BIFE-SIM thus remains an essential meeting ground for academia and industry, where ideas, materials, technologies, and people converge to shape the future development of furniture design and the wood industry.



Throughout the event, FDMIL was represented by students Márta MODI and Ana POTOPEA, alongside lecturer Antonela LUNGU, whose presence ensured the continuity of showcase activities and dialogue with visitors and industry representatives.

We would like to thank the Romanian Furniture Manufacturers Association for their support and for the invitation to be part of BIFE-SIM 2026. We look forward to our next meeting and will see you at the 35th edition of the event, taking place from September 16–19, 2027, at ROMEXPO Bucharest, in Pavilions B1 and B2.

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