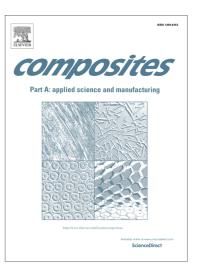
### Accepted Manuscript

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PII:	S1359-835X(16)30165-8
DOI:	http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compositesa.2016.05.029
Reference:	JCOMA 4319
To appear in:	Composites: Part A
Received Date:	4 January 2016
Revised Date:	18 April 2016
Accepted Date:	28 May 2016



Please cite this article as: Berges, M., Léger, R., Placet, V., Person, V., Corn, S., Gabrion, X., Rousseau, J., Ramasso, E., Ienny, P., Fontaine, S., Influence of moisture uptake on the static, cyclic and dynamic behaviour of unidirectional flax fibre-reinforced epoxy laminates, *Composites: Part A* (2016), doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compositesa. 2016.05.029

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## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

## Influence of moisture uptake on the static, cyclic and dynamic behaviour of unidirectional flax fibre-reinforced epoxy laminates

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#### ABSTRACT

This papers aims to characterize the influence of moisture uptake on the mechanical behaviour of unidirectional flax fibre-reinforced epoxy laminates. Monotonic and cyclic tensile tests and free vibration characterization are carried out. Results show that UD flax-epoxy composites, when exposed to hygrothermal conditioning at 70°C and 85% RH, exhibit a diffusion kinetic which follows a one dimensional Fickian behaviour. The mass uptake at equilibrium is approximately 3.3% and the diffusion coefficient 6.5  $10^{-6}$  m<sup>2</sup> s<sup>-1</sup>. Water vapour sorption is shown to induce a significant change in the shape of the tensile stress-strain curve, a decrease in the dynamic elastic modulus of about 20% and a 50% increase in the damping ratio. Contrary to all expectations, water saturation does not degrade the monotonic tensile strength of such a flax-epoxy composites and leads to an increase in the fatigue strength for a high number of cycles.

Keywords: A. Polymer-Matrix Composites, A. Natural fibres, B. Mechanical properties, C. Moisture

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