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Smart and sustainable solutions showcased at FEFCO Technical Seminar

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Some 816 representatives from the corrugated board industry and machinery manufacturers gathered at the Bella Centre in Copenhagen for the FEFCO Technical Seminar on October 20-22 to debate the latest ideas and innovations in the industry. The event also highlighted the sector's moves to comply with the EU's Green Deal goals including digital transformation, sustainability and climate neutrality.

The latest digital printing systems and other smart technologies were showcased at the event which was dedicated to the theme 'Towards intelligent manufacturing - the digitalisation of the corrugated industry'.

The programme generated exceptional interest, with 22 speakers, 62 separate spotlight sessions and a panel discussion with high-level Industry representatives.

On the exhibition floor, there were 117 stands and 80 exhibitors from 30 countries showing off their products and services.

FEFCO brought together buyers and suppliers from Europe and beyond to debate innovations, industry trends and how the corrugated sector can adapt to the EU's ongoing overhaul of sustainability regulations. They presented ideas and solutions aimed at producing boxes more efficiently, more sustainably and with a reduced CO₂ footprint.

In his welcome address, FEFCO President Fady Gemayel noted that corrugated, first developed in the 19th century, is still proving itself as an indispensable packaging option. "We are socially responsible. We are part of a circular economy: we recycle, and we reuse the fibre," he said. "And we have proven during this pandemic how essential corrugated is. We are a real value to society. The corrugated board industry doesn't sit back but is preparing proactively. As industry 4.0 unfolds, we want to lead the way."

The participants discussed how factories can adopt integrative planning, build an automated storage system, control temperature and moisture, as well as how to use predictive maintenance to resolve problems before they happen. Other essential topics were related to whether and when to switch to digital printing and understand digital data to improve workflows.

FEFCO's new Director General Eleni Despotou said the event showed how the corrugated sector continued to innovate and adapt to challenges. Despite the pandemic, the strong presence in Copenhagen showed the resilience of the corrugated community. "Our world is changing faster than ever, but we are committed to ensuring that our smart and sustainable board packaging solutions are adapting" she said. "Europe's packaging companies today operate in a very complex industry, with new environmental regulations, global competition, intelligent packages and high-tech factors. But the sector is still thinking big, thinking green, thinking smart and thinking sustainable."

For more information, please contact:

Nathalie Schneegans, Communications Director: nathalie.schneegans@fefco.org, +32 2 6500832.

Note to the editors

FEFCO (European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers) represents the interests of the European Corrugated Board Manufacturers. Headquartered in Brussels, FEFCO has 17 Association members, all European national corrugated packaging organisations. The role of the Federation is to investigate economic, financial, technical and policy issues of interest to the corrugated packaging Industry, to analyse all factors which may influence the industry, and to promote and develop its reputation.

Europe's corrugated industry in Europe makes about 50 billion square metres of board per year, enough to cover Denmark. It has 373 companies, 646 plants and accounts for around 100,000 jobs. Corrugated cardboard packaging is circular by nature: it is based on a renewable resource; it is recyclable and recycled in reality. The average box weight decreased by 9% between 1996 and 2018 and contains on average 89% recycled material.