

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recycling & reuse recognised as complementary to the circular economy

Brussels, Wednesday, 30 November 2022

FEFCO welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation that will contribute to the EU's circular economy and climate neutrality ambitions.

FEFCO supports the Commission's decision to transition from a Directive to a Regulation as it will allow for improved harmonisation of packaging requirements and facilitate a level playing field in the European single market. Additionally, the waste reduction targets established by the proposal are a necessary step towards improving waste prevention and packaging sustainability across the EU.

The proposal provides a balanced approach to ensure that packaging "*be designed, manufactured and commercialised in such a way as to allow for its re-use or high-quality recycling*". This recognises the complementarity of both reuse and recycling systems in improving circularity.

Recycling is already at the heart of the circular economy, and we are pleased to see recycling targets upheld in the proposal. Corrugated cardboard contributes extensively to the circular system as it is the most recycled packaging material on the market. The industry has invested heavily in sustainability by improving recycling systems, with paper & board packaging achieving a recycling rate of 82%. Corrugated cardboard packaging also uses secondary raw materials, with 88% recycled content on average.

FEFCO believes that functional and well-established existing circular systems should be maintained and further supported. Packaging based on a renewable material which is fully recyclable and recycled in reality should be exempt from reuse targets in the legislation. Fibres from corrugated cardboard packaging can be recycled up to twenty-five times without any significant loss in quality. The recycling of corrugated cardboard packaging therefore ensures the reuse of the packaging material and contributes to the circular economy.

Eleni Despotou, Director General of FEFCO, said "*the corrugated industry is dedicated to supporting the EU climate ambition, as demonstrated through FEFCO's recently launched Climate Neutrality Roadmap. We believe that both circular economy and climate neutrality are indispensable for achieving the EU Green Deal ambitions.*"

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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 88% recycled material.