

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innovation, AI and sustainability take centre stage at FEFCO's 40th anniversary Technical Seminar in Rome

Rome, Italy, Monday, 13 October 2025

Some 1,171 representatives from the corrugated board industry and its suppliers gathered in Rome from October 8 to 10 for FEFCO's Technical Seminar, celebrating the event's 40th anniversary and 23rd edition, where they discussed the latest innovations, challenges and regulatory developments shaping the future of the corrugated packaging sector.

Under the headline **Elevate Tomorrow's Corrugated Board Industry**, the event showcased the industry's transition towards smarter, more circular and digitally driven manufacturing.

Delegates from across Europe and beyond exchanged views on how the sector can strengthen competitiveness while supporting the EU's climate and circularity goals. From energy costs and trade disruptions to new digital frontiers, speakers underlined how innovation and collaboration will drive the next generation of corrugated packaging.

FEFCO extends its sincere appreciation to the members of its Operations & Innovation Committee for their invaluable expertise and commitment, which greatly contributed to the success of the programme of the 23rd Technical Seminar. The three-day programme explored the sector's response to evolving market demands, regulation and sustainability pressures, with sessions covering EU legislation - including the recently adopted Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) and EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) - circularity, digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence, energy efficiency, cybersecurity, mergers and acquisitions.

The event also included its first-ever high-level CEO panel on mergers and acquisitions, featuring business leaders who discussed the industry's evolving global landscape.

Smurfit Westrock President & CEO Europe, MEA & APAC, Saverio Mayer urged merging companies to understand and respect the business and culture they are getting into. "You cannot expect an American business to do things like Europeans," he said.

Saica President & CEO Susana Alejandro agreed, saying that when integrating a new company, you need to respect diversity. "We have our values, but we have to remember that they are doing it their way," she said.

DS Smith, an International Paper Company, CEO Packaging Division Stefano Rossi said companies have a responsibility to promote a culture where people can express themselves. "One simple ingredient to integrate is to be present as leaders – to engage and to inspire," he said.

Klingele Paper & Packaging Group, Managing Partner & CEO Jan Klingele said companies need to recognise when acquisitions don't work. "There are times when the company does not want to be integrated, and we just have to let them go," he said.

Other highlights included:

- The successful achievement of the corrugated industry under the PPWR, recognising its sustainable nature and securing an exemption for cardboard in 2025.
- New findings from the FEFCO 2025 Life Cycle Assessment, confirming corrugated's role as an environmentally responsible, low-carbon solution.
- Presentations on AI, automation, robotics, and energy monitoring systems, highlighting how data-driven efficiency supports profitability and climate goals.

The exhibition floor featured a record 185 stands and 120 exhibitors from 35 countries, showcasing machinery, digital tools and sustainable solutions across the entire value chain.

FEFCO Director General Eleni Despotou said the 2025 Technical Seminar captured the spirit of renewal and collaboration that has defined the industry over four decades. "This milestone edition reflects how far our industry has come as we embrace innovation and sustainability," she said. "Corrugated packaging is circular by nature, built on renewable materials and innovation. As the world changes, our sector continues to deliver sustainable, competitive solutions for Europe's economy."

FEFCO President Nina Iversen added: "This Technical Seminar shows the sector's commitment to innovation and excellence. From regulation to recycling, energy to AI, our members are leading the way in making packaging smarter, stronger and more sustainable."

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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 16 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 46.6 billion square metres of board per year, enough to cover Denmark. It has 390 companies, 600 plants and accounts for around 100,000 jobs (statistics based on FEFCO member data). 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 2022 and contains on average 88% recycled content.