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Corrugated cardboard remains the recycling champion in 2025

Brussels, Thursday, 26 November 2026

Corrugated cardboard continues to demonstrate outstanding recycling performance in Europe, with FEFCO's updated recycling rate model demonstrating a recycling rate of 90% for 2025. The latest result confirms the consistently high recycling performance recorded in previous years and reinforces corrugated cardboard's position as a recycling champion.

The 2025 update follows the methodology developed by FEFCO to specifically assess the recycling rate of corrugated cardboard in Europe. Applying the model to the latest available data results in a recycling rate of **90% for 2025**, following similarly high results for 2023 and 2024.

Corrugated cardboard benefits from well-established separate collection systems, a high-quality and widely collected material stream, strong demand for recovered fibres and recycling infrastructure operating at scale. Used corrugated cardboard is not simply waste: it is a valuable raw material for the production of new packaging, keeping fibres in circulation and supporting a functioning circular economy.

"Achieving a recycling rate of 90% once again demonstrates that circularity is already happening at scale for corrugated cardboard," said Juliette Guérin, Technical & Sustainability Director at FEFCO. "Maintaining this very high level of recycling year after year is what makes corrugated cardboard a benchmark for packaging circularity in Europe."

A robust methodology to track recycling performance

FEFCO developed a peer-reviewed corrugated-specific methodological framework to provide a more accurate picture of the recycling performance of the sector than figures covering paper and board as a whole. The approach provides FEFCO with a transparent and repeatable framework that can be updated annually as new data become available.

The methodology estimates the proportion of corrugated board waste sent for recycling compared with corrugated board packaging placed on the market. It covers the EU27 plus Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and draws on recognised European and international data sources.

The 2025 update therefore adds a third year to FEFCO's monitoring of corrugated cardboard recycling performance and confirms a clear picture: **corrugated cardboard recycling remains consistently above 90% in Europe.**

Supporting Europe's circular economy

Under the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), Europe has set ambitious objectives for packaging recycling. Against this background, reliable material-specific data are essential to understand how different packaging materials perform in practice.

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Corrugated cardboard demonstrates the contribution that efficient collection, sorting and recycling systems, combined with strong markets for secondary raw materials, can make towards a circular economy. **Corrugated cardboard remains recycled for real across Europe.**

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Note to the editors

FEFCO (European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers) represents the interests of the corrugated packaging industry in Europe. Headquartered in Brussels, FEFCO brings together European 16 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 produces around 46–50 billion square metres of board each year and comprises around 400 companies operating more than 600 plants, employing approximately 100,000 people.
Corrugated cardboard packaging is inherently circular: it is based on renewable raw materials and is widely recycled in practice. The average box weight has decreased by 9% between 1996 and 2022 and contains on average 88% recycled content.