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Corrugated packaging gets smarter and greener at FEFCO's Lyon Technical Seminar

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Some 1,150 representatives from the corrugated board industry and its suppliers heard about the latest innovations and process optimisation at the FEFCO Technical Seminar in Lyon on October 25-27, where ideas, policies and new technologies in the sector were debated.

Sustainability improvements, optimised energy consumption, production of lighter and stronger board systems and other smart technologies were showcased at Lyon's Centre de Congrès which this year had the headline, "Shaping our future through innovations."

This event brought together dynamic representatives of the corrugated sector, suppliers, customers, and industry visionaries to debate how intelligence and digitalisation can transform manufacturing processes, enhance supply chain management, and drive overall efficiency. The conference included specific sessions on energy efficiency and energy reduction, light paper grammages, artificial intelligence (AI), digital printing, logistics flows, bio-based coatings, cybersecurity, and EU legislation. For more interactivity, the programme was built around four panel discussions with leaders and experts from the industry and the sector.

On the exhibition floor, 165 stands and 110 exhibitors from 41 countries showed off their products and services. The 2023 event set an attendance record and all numbers are up from the previous FEFCO events in Copenhagen (2021) and Geneva (2019).

The FEFCO Technical Seminar kicked off after a key European Parliament Environment Committee vote on the EU's proposed Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), which aims to reduce packaging waste across the entire economy.

FEFCO President, Fady Gemayel said the corrugated industry was already in line with the EU's Green Deal objectives. "Our product has proven to be essential to the well-being of the economy and for society. It has demonstrated its unique role in the distribution value chain. Corrugated cardboard is recyclable and recycled" he said. "Let us not forget that our boxes, once used, are recovered, repulped, and made into paper and then into a new box. This is real circularity. Corrugated boxes are using the same fibre repeatedly, as 89% of paper packaging is made from recovered paper."

FEFCO's Director General Eleni Despotou said the event showed how the corrugated cardboard sector is fit for the future. "Our world faces challenges as we move to become more sustainable while continuing to improve customer service and excellence. We are creating smart and sustainable packaging solutions that can adapt to these changing demands and help the planet become greener."

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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 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.