

## Delivering smart and circular packaging solutions

2  
Editorial  
Eleni Despotou  
Director General

2-9  
Technical Seminar  
25-27 October 2023  
Lyon, France

10  
EU Parliament dinner

11  
EU policy

12  
FEFCO activities



## Editorial



**Eleni Despotou**  
Director General

In the face of challenging market conditions, the European corrugated cardboard industry has stood resilient, exemplifying its commitment to innovation, sustainability and industry leadership. The recent Technical Seminar held in Lyon marked a significant milestone, bringing together approximately 1200 professionals from the corrugated and supplier community. The seminar served as a testament to the industry's collective strength and determination to overcome adversities. As markets fluctuated, and uncertainties loomed, FEFCO's commitment to fostering collaboration and sharing insights shone through, providing a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and joint work.

Amidst the positive momentum generated by the seminar, the corrugated cardboard industry faced another challenge during the past year, related to the ongoing legislative process of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR). Its outcome will undoubtedly shape the future landscape of the industry. FEFCO is actively engaged in navigating these complex waters to ensure that the regulatory framework remains favourable to the corrugated cardboard packaging sector, keeping it sustainable and competitive.

Despite the prevailing narrative favouring excessive reuse ideologies, corrugated packaging remains an evident choice that serves both people and the environment. FEFCO emphasises the need for a balanced approach that acknowledges the unique advantages of corrugated cardboard in terms of recyclability, efficiency, renewability and overall environmental impact.

As FEFCO works towards securing a balanced position in the legislative process, it stands as a beacon for the corrugated cardboard industry, showcasing the resilience and adaptability needed to thrive in an ever-changing landscape. The challenges faced in the market and legislative arena are met with determination and a commitment to sustainability, ensuring that corrugated packaging remains an indispensable choice for the future. FEFCO's unwavering dedication is a testament to its role as a leader in the corrugated cardboard industry, steering the sector towards a sustainable and prosperous future.



## FEFCO in Lyon showcases a smarter and greener future

FEFCO's latest Technical Seminar, on 25–27 October at Lyon's Centre de Congrès, brought together 1,150 representatives of Europe's corrugated board industry. This year's theme was **Shaping our future through innovation**, addressing the challenges of the industry as it recovers from the post-COVID disruptions to become smarter and greener.



**"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."**

Fady Gemayel - FEFCO President

Participants from the corrugated sector, suppliers, customers and industry visionaries talked about sustainability improvements, optimised energy consumption, production of lighter and stronger board systems and other smart technologies.

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

The programme included sessions on energy efficiency and energy reduction, light paper grammage, artificial intelligence (AI), digital printing, logistics flows, bio-based coatings, cybersecurity and



Left: High level panel: Markku Leskelä, Metsä Board; Saverio Mayer, SKG/ FEFCO Vice President & Lars Engel, BHS. Right: (from left to right): Richard Coward (moderator); panellists (see above) & Allan Dickner, IKEA (on screen).

EU legislation, and four high-level panel discussions for participants to consult and debate key issues with leaders and experts from the industry and the sector.

Being held just one day after the EU's draft Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) was finalised, the impact of the regulation on the industry was top of mind during the seminar. (The PPWR, which aims to reduce packaging waste across the entire economy, was approved by the European Parliament on 22 November 2023.)

FEFCO President **Fady Gemayel** said the corrugated industry was already aligned 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

continued. "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."



Eleni Despotou

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."

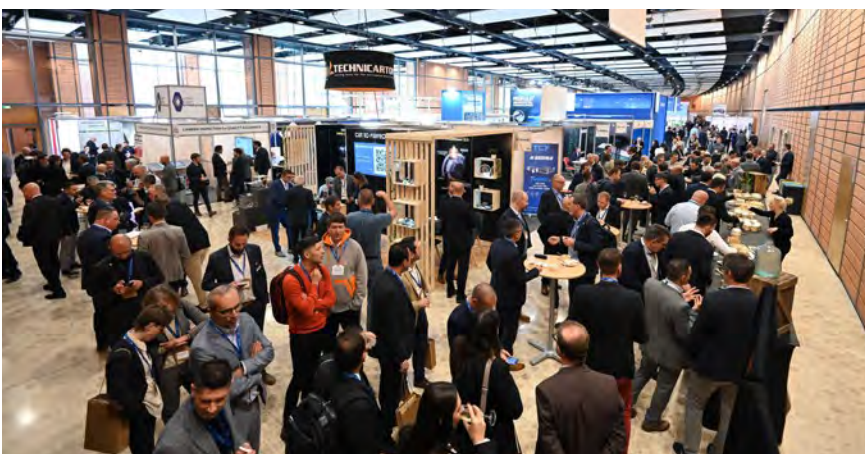
FEFCO Director General **Eleni Despotou** said the event showed how the corrugated cardboard sector is fit for the future. "Our world faces challenges as

In the first panel discussion, on innovation and reuse, Saverio Mayer, CEO Europe at Smurfit Kappa and FEFCO Vice President, said that the industry was facing a moment of truth as the world dealt with climate change and geopolitical threats to the economy such as the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine. "The challenge for the industry is to drastically change, or revolutionise," he said. "I'm not saying it is easy. But there is nothing that has substantially changed the industry in the past 15-20 years."

BHS Corrugated Managing Director Lars Engel also urged radical change. "We need to envision the corrugated industry in 5-10 years," he said. "Challenges lead to opportunities, which lead to innovation. If we want to reduce our carbon footprint, we must go further into lightweight. And that means preprint – digital rather than analogue."

Markku Leskelä, Senior Vice President Development at Metsä Board, called for evolution in the face of new regulations. "Almost every challenge we have is something we can work on. We can turn these challenges into opportunities," he said. "The word sustainability connects so many worlds. For example, the reduction of the carbon footprint is crucial and we need to find ways to use even more lightweight materials."

IKEA of Sweden Senior Packaging Manager Allan Dickner defended the corrugated sector as the EU moved to push for more





reusable packaging. "Reuse is important, but we should use it where it is appropriate." He underlined the sector's commitment to sustainability. "We are not the bad guys in this. People will eventually judge that this is good for us and good for the planet. Competitors will always try to pinpoint difficulties of board, but we are 100% renewable and reusable." Dickner also said corrugated is in the DNA of IKEA and its 50 packaging engineers. "People love the brown corrugated board. Our identity is the hotdog, meatballs and brown board."



Pascal Vermeulen

In the session on innovation in energy reduction, Climact Managing Partner **Pascal Vermeulen** explained the FEFCO Climate Neutrality Roadmap and CO<sub>2</sub> tool.

"FEFCO does not wait and has created a roadmap," he said. He added that the corrugated cardboard sector produced 11.5 million tonnes (mt) of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2020, and if its upward trend were to continue, it would rise by 6.1 mt by 2050. "But with a coordinated plan involving all parts of the value chain, we can reduce this number. The good news is that there is a roadmap. And if everyone plays its part, we can reach carbon neutrality."

The roadmap foresees, within the corrugated sector, cuts of 3.3 mt with material efficiency (less/thinner paper, recyclability, minimising material losses during production and improving product design), 1 mt in energy efficiency (improved efficiency and reduced energy input) and 1.8 mt in heat and grid decarbonisation.

However, Vermeulen said, two-thirds of the necessary cuts would come from outside, in the value chain, primarily in paper



Krassimira Kazashka, FEFCO  
Marc Van Damme, OIC Chair



Left to right: Michael Frey, Consultant; Silvia Trevisan, KTH Stockholm; Robert Tschullik, Klingele, Klaus Lüke, Klingele (moderator) & Pascal Vermeulen, Climact

manufacturing and by using energy-efficient transport modes to decarbonise transport. "We cannot move alone – we need to work with suppliers and other partners. In addition, as a prerequisite; we need stability from policymakers and robust energy grid infrastructure."



Robert Tschullik

**Robert Tschullik**, Klingele Technical Project Manager and member of the FEFCO Energy Efficiency Working Group, warned that energy efficiency is an issue

littered with buzzwords. It's more useful to look at the energy waste that can't be seen. His examples included: motion sensors in toilets that use more energy than they save; energy-wasting air pumps for wastewater; not using solar panels on the roof; keeping vacuum pressure pads working when they are not needed; and not insulating steam pumps.



Sennai Asmelash

Some 99% of the electric energy used by the corrugated sector comes from the grid. **Sennai Mesfun of the Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE)** and consultant

Michael Frey detailed how to decarbonise the value chain, noting that FEFCO has begun an energy survey, with figures being updated every two years. They warned that

larger plants are not always more efficient, and urged manufacturers to focus on implementable measures through equipment upgrades and mastering processes. They listed best practice measures covering thematic areas such as steam generation and distribution, corrugating, converting, and auxiliaries such as compressed air, and monitoring factory lighting and heating.



Silvia Trevisan

**Silvia Trevisan**, Postdoctoral Researcher at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, outlined the challenges behind electrification – inherently

fluctuating renewable sources, curtailment of renewable, increasingly variable electricity prices, non-flexible loads and strains on the electricity grid – and said renewable energy must rise fivefold by 2050 to meet the EU's targets.

She explained how to empower net-zero heat generation with thermal energy storage (TES). The paper, pulp and print sector uses 13% of all industrial heat demand, making it the fourth biggest industry sector, she said. To produce 200 kg of paper, some 560 kwh of energy is needed, equivalent to driving 3,500 km in an electric car or using an eco-lightbulb for 3.5 years. She explained TES, arguing that integrating TES is the most cost-competitive energy solution for industrial heat. "All this is not



Left to right: Klaus Lüke, Klingele (moderator); Bastian Deppisch, Koenig & Bauer; Léonard Badet, BOBST; Christian Lang, Göpfert; Steve Biller, BW Papersystems & Alexander Kollofrath, Thimm

just for the sake of the environment, but about reducing costs. Electrification is a key pathway towards decarbonisation. TES systems can alleviate the challenges.”

The panel discussion on energy efficiency gathered four experts to share ideas and experiences.

- BOBST Chief Technology Officer Léonard Badet said the company has optimised parameters with sensors that measure electrical power, air and drying. “We can only improve what we can measure,” he said, adding that some 75% of BOBST carbon footprint comes from the machine’s usage at the converter’s site. Looking ahead, optimised 3D printed parts could improve vacuum transport efficiency by 60%.

- Koenig & Bauer Product Manager Bastian Deppisch explained a production data analysis tool to improve efficiency. “Our goal is to be CO<sub>2</sub> neutral in all our plants by 2030 – but also to keep improving after that,” he said, adding that energy saving with standstill measures will be 110 W/h in a year. He said that die-cutters had to improve to handle lightweight paper.
- Christian Lang, Sales Manager at Göpfert Maschinen, explained his energy data handling tool that collects, measures and analyses data. “The machines use far too much energy, but we can’t find where the energy is used,” he said. Göpfert installed 28,600 m<sup>2</sup> of solar panels on its roof; Lang said this was not just about energy efficiency and carbon neutrality but about energy independence. “We

need to take small, efficient steps before revolutionising.”

- BW Papersystems Senior Product Manager Steve Biller urged companies to work closer with customers to find the balance between performance and sustainability. When it comes to power, he said dryers and vacuumers are similar in that operators think more is better – but that is not always the case.

The second session looked at innovations in corrugators.



Steen Jacobsen

Borregaard Technical Application Manager **Steen Jacobsen** explained his research into the viscosity and connectivity properties of cellulose, which helps

create a stable glue, resulting in fewer mechanical breakdowns. One case study found 19.8% glue savings, 8% energy savings, 40% less downtime and a 20% speed increase, while other studies showed even more impressive results.



Jan Andersson

**Jan Andersson**, Technical Sales & Product Development Manager at Holmen, which develops premium paperboard from sawn and refined wood products,

explained how the company made light and







Left to right: Klaus Lüke, Klingele; Thomas Wimmer, Palm Verpackung; Tomasz Garbowski, Poznan University; Marco Bertola, Fosber; Jan Andersson, Holmen; Martin McTigue, BW Papersystems; Steen Jacobsen, Borregaard; Lars Komogowski, BHS & Nęcki, Łukasz, VPK (moderator).

ultralight new fibre papers. He said Holmen's 73 gsm paper results in the production of 13,699 m/t (compared to the previous figure of 100 gsm making 10,000 m/t), which means saving 744 kg CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per tonne of paper.



Thomas Wimmer

**Thomas Wimmer**, Head of Technology, Corrugated Cardboard Production at Palm Group, spoke about the packaging performance of ultralight corrugated case media and the 'green pulping' concept. His target is ultralight corrugated case media (ulCCM), which is 60 gsm. "There is no



Tomasz Garbowski

difference in printing quality or stiffness between 80 gsm and 60 gsm," he said, adding that customers want reasonable and stable technical values at a reasonable cost.

**Tomasz Garbowski**, Associate Professor at Poznan University of Life Sciences, explained how AI is helping optimise the corrugated board production process by improving efficiency, increasing quality, reducing energy consumption and thereby cutting costs and CO<sub>2</sub>. "AI can indirectly contribute to cutting emissions, and it will come sooner rather than later."



Martin McTigue

**Martin McTigue**, Director of Product Management, BW Papersystems, said that he was aiming for a 40% reduction in thermal energy and a 33% reduction in

electrical energy use by 2050. He emphasised non-crush features that prevent waste and direct drive motors with fewer gearboxes, and noted that paper at the correct temperature requires less starch to bond.



Marco Bertola

Fosber Group CEO **Marco Bertola** talked about the journey towards sustainable consumption and Fosber's three principles: people, processes and

technology. He said predictive maintenance was a key part of the process, which included a sustainability and consumption analysis of all machine functions – leading to more efficiency and less consumption.

BHS Corrugated Thermal Engineer Lars Komogowski explained the differences between efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency (i.e., is it working / working well / working in the most ecological way?). For example, he said digitalisation is a way to become more efficient, but not the right way to reduce consumption. But heat consumption can be optimised by using machine learning to improve metering and monitoring.

The third session explored innovations in converting.



Cyrille Tueta

• **Cyrille Tueta**, Area Sales Manager (Lyon) at BOBST, explained the multi-out applications on casemakers, noting that BOBST machines with dual cutters and multifold can make 40,000 boxes/hour.



Esa Koski

• EMBA Sales Director **Esa Koski** talked of reversing the skip feed with the patented TwinFeed system to create a dual box process. "You have two



FEFCO Operations and Innovation Committee



Left to right: Astrid Glasenapp, RISE (moderator); John Nicholls, SKG/FEFCO H&S Committee; Olivier Waddington, Siegwerk; Krassimira Kazashka, FEFCO; Peter Rättö, RISE; Armin Kaltenbacher, BHS & Saskia Runte, VDW/ FEFCO OIC (moderator).

machines in one. You can't always invest in many lines, but here you can invest in one machine."



Giovanni Bettini

- Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) Head of Sales **Giovanni Bettini** explained how the latest machines can produce 42,000 boxes/hour, with the dual slotter machine able to do up to 700 boxes/minute. He noted that the newest technologies were more energy efficient, cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



Ulrich G. Wolz

- BGM (BAHMÜLLER-GÖPFERT Maschinenbau) COO **Ulrich G. Wolz** outlined the challenges with minimum box heights and how the Multibox system can address this. He also explained the patented FLOWBELT technology, which ensures no friction between the box and folding belt, and the TopSpeedStacker.



Javier Quesada

- Kento Digital Printing CEO **Javier Quesada** argued that digital printing on corrugated is a major failure: only 0.3% of total corrugated is digitally printed more than a decade since it came to market. That is mainly due to the high costs, but also glue,

converting and speed. "We need a new digital ink model, a new printing format and a new equipment concept."



Jürgen Freier

- Highcon Vice President and General Manager for Sales Europe **Jürgen Freier** said that digital finishing is opening new opportunities and promising amazing results. The equivalent box strength uses fewer dies and produces lower carbon emissions.

The final session looked at innovation driven by the changing environment, markets and supply chains.



Oliver Waddington

- Oliver Waddington**, Head of Business Development - WB Barrier Coatings at Siegwerk, described traditional and printed barrier coatings, which include laminates, wax coatings such as paraffin, hydrophobics such as silicone, and dispersion coatings such as mineral fillers and film formation. He said dispersion coating systems cost €10 million but are worth it. He also noted that while rigid plastic packs were long perceived as necessary for water and moisture barrier, a paper-based pack format does much of the same job and has the right functionality. "It's not yet like-for-like but it is fit for purpose."



Peter Rättö

**Peter Rättö**, Scientific Officer at Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE) explained why bio-based barrier coatings could become an alternative to plastic layers. He said there is currently intense research into the barrier performance of materials, and listed future product opportunities using, for example, nanocellulose, hemicellulose, lignin and carbon fibres.



Armin Kaltenbacher

BHS Corrugated Product Manager **Armin Kaltenbacher** outlined the threats from cybercrime, from hacking to ransomware. He said 83% of organisations have had more than one breach, at an average cost of \$4.82 million. Industry 4.0, by connecting previously isolated systems, creates a bigger attack surface and extended risk scenarios, with insurability depending on security measures. Most victims pay the ransom just to get back into business as soon as possible – "not always a good idea".



Krassimira Kazashka

**Krassimira Kazashka**, FEFCO Technical Director, detailed the impacts of the PPWR, whereby all packaging should be recyclable by 2030. "It's great news for us as we are recyclable: we are designed for recycling, separately collected, sorted and recycled to secondary raw materials to substitute primary materials, and it can be done at scale," she said, noting that corrugated cardboard packs and protects 75% of goods transported and delivered across Europe, and has a 90% recycling rate.

However, the EU list of targets for recyclability performance grades could be trickier, including the question of what to do with the plastic part in packaging, such as plastic straps. There are also targets for different sectors such as e-commerce, grouped packaging, transport packaging and large-scale consumer groups. "Are we future-ready? We don't know yet," Kazashka said, pointing out that reuse targets are a threat to the corrugated



sector. "We are saying reuse and recycling are complementary. All reusable packaging must be reused – meaning transporting empty crates back. Not to mention the costs for washing. Reuse targets should be used only if they are realistic and have proven benefits."



John Nicholls

**John Nicholls**, Vice President Health & Safety Europe at Smurfit Kappa and member of the FEFCO Health & Safety Committee, outlined the progress in making

the corrugated industry a safe workplace. He said lost time accident (LTA) frequency and injury rates have been brought down over the years, but there are still too many repeat or similar incidents, despite sharing best practices. Nicholls raised hopes for AI

applications to help, from multi-cameras to fork-lift mounted cameras. "The trends are positive, but we need to continue to engage to get better. And AI is just one ingredient in the long-term management of risk."

The final panel discussion explored digital printing and the challenges of developing fast, high-quality and adaptive systems.

FEPA Chief Innovation & Information Officer Daniele Plazzi said printed technology is a paradox, whereby production may conflict with customer demand. "Customers want flexibility but not every solution fits all needs," he said.

LIC Packaging President Bertoldo Piero said that of the 150 million m<sup>2</sup> of packaging produced by LIC, 20 million m<sup>2</sup> is printed. "Supporting sustainable business solutions is about meeting the needs of the market," he said. "In my view, digital printing is the future."

Thimm Group Managing Director Ekkehard Dürr said the company's 13 factories had focused on preprint, but after consulting customers found demand for digital printing, so went all in. "If you compare only prices, digital will always be more expensive than flexo – but you have to consider all the factors."

Thimm Group Director Prepress & Print Solutions Steffen Walter explained the factors for backing digital: sustainability, supply chains, digital workflow and technology. He also predicted that Thimm will soon have some plants without any analog print units.



Left to right: Daniele Plazzi, FEPA; Bertoldo Piero, LIC Packaging; Marc Van Damme, VPK/OIC Chairman (moderator); Ekkehard Dürr, Christiansen Print & Steffen Walter, Thimm Group

### FEFCO would like to thank all the Technical Seminar Sponsors



### Welcome Reception



Markku Leskelä, Metsä Board and Eleni Despotou, FEFCO



## Corrugated packaging industry innovation awards at FEFCO's Lyon Technical Seminar

Inspiring and environment-friendly innovations in the corrugated sector were celebrated with prestigious awards on 27 October, at the end of the three-day FEFCO Technical Seminar in Lyon.



**"The Fefco Technical Seminar has always been an ideal platform to make connections, gather knowledge and experience the level of innovation of our industry. This time the fact that we were able to see, speak and meet in person with our peers, colleagues and contacts was extremely refreshing and spiced up the event after many months of communicating in a virtual world."**

Marc Van Damme - FEFCO Operations & Innovation Committee Chairman.



Lars Martinussen

### Best Innovation Gold Award: Kyoto Group

Awarded for their proven method for the electrification of process heat from renewable sources such as wind and solar energy using a thermal energy storage (TES) solution.

Lars Martinussen explained how this technology could reduce the corrugated industry's dependence on energy with volatile costs and supply.

### Sustainability Award: Kyoto Group

Recognising their technology aimed at reducing carbon emissions and mitigating the corrugated industry's impact on the environment.

### Best Innovation Silver Award: JB Machinery

Awarded for Auto Dryer Control (ADC), a system reducing the energy consumption of infrared (IR) dryers by automatically

controlling dryer settings. Dave Burgess explained the closed-loop algorithm that optimises drying levels, cutting electricity costs on flexo printing units.



Dave Burgess

### Best Innovation Bronze Award: Graco Distribution BV



Gaetan David

Recognised for replacing hydraulic pumps with electric double diaphragm pumps, reducing the corrugated industry's energy costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Gaetan David highlighted the potential impact on energy costs and emissions.

### Best Presentation Award: Bart Verbruggen (OMP NV)

Awarded for an excellent presentation on planning for sustainability, or green planning, offering practical solutions to sustainability challenges in corrugated supply chains.



Bart Verbruggen

### Most Inspiring New Member Award: C-TECH



Patrick Borgions

Awarded to this Netherlands-based company for innovations in automation for multipoint folder gluers, including pre-feeding, bundling, and palletising of all types of boxes, described by Patrick Borgions.



Mauro Adami

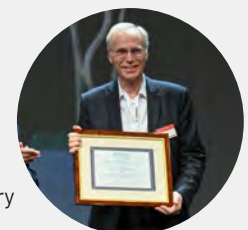
### Lifetime Achievement Award: Mauro Adami (Fosber)

Since 1989, Mauro has developed many applications on the Fosber corrugating lines, with focus on innovations and efficiency, easy maintenance and cost-avoiding solutions. His passion for corrugated

and commitment to excellence has brought the corrugated industry to a higher level.

### Lifetime Achievement Award: Yves Bletterie (Bobst)

With a 37-year career in the corrugated industry for Bobst, Yves is a knowledgeable and respected engineer who supported converters very effectively with advice that helped the sector become world class, innovative and more efficient.



Yves Bletterie

# EU Parliament dinner 13 September Strasbourg

A dinner debate organised by FEFCO in September at the European Parliament in Strasbourg was attended by stakeholders from the corrugated cardboard sector and MEPs.



Participants from CEPI Containerboard (CCB) and FEFCO

The debate focused on the benefits of corrugated packaging, how recycling and reuse are complementary solutions, and the fact that wiping out one in favour of the other will have substantial consequences for the environment, jobs in Europe and the fulfilment of the EU Green Deal.

MEP Massimiliano Salini outlined the key issue underlying the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste (PPWR) legislation: the gap between the PPWR and reality.

Central to that gap is its emphasis on reuse rather than recycling, reflecting how the objectives of the legislation shifted from waste management to waste prevention. "This shift represents a move from packaging being an environmental discussion to a lifestyle discussion," said MEP Salini.

Attendees highlighted a key fact: cardboard is already circular. Not only does the material have a recycling rate that exceeds 90%, but new material also contains on average 89% recycled content. MEP Sean Kelly noted in his remarks that circularity "is one of the ideals of Europe at the moment."

The discussion shone a light on some key side effects and unintended consequences

of the PPWR that were ignored by the initial impact assessments.

For MEP Kelly, impact assessments are needed but, currently, they are not comprehensive enough. "Impact assessments from the European Commission look at economic, environmental and social effects, but they don't take into account many side effects and unintended consequences, including the potential negatives around usage of water, increase of traffic, logistics and environmental impacts."

Another key issue widely discussed at the dinner was the rise of plastic production and waste. With the well-known issues surrounding plastic packaging, MEP Salini stated that "it makes no sense to change from cardboard back to plastic".

FEFCO members attending reinforced their pledge to reducing packaging waste and meeting the EU's 2050 climate targets.

Moreover, attendees called for continuing focus on seeing reuse and recycling as complementary solutions – an approach that benefits the environment, society and the economy.



MEP Massimiliano Salini



Fady Gemayel, FEFCO President



Saverio Mayer, FEFCO Vice President and CEO Europe SKG



MEP Sean Kelly





# PPWR refresher and update

## The proposal

The Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) was published by the European Commission in November 2022. The legislation is complementary to the objectives of the EU Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). It aims to reduce packaging waste, to harmonise measures at European level and eventually ensure packaging is recycled or reused.

The European Parliament's Environment Committee (ENVI) was assigned the file in December 2022, with Belgian MEP Frédérique Ries leading as the rapporteur. Additionally, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) was given joint competence on key articles for FEFCO. Both committees adopted positions on the legislation prior to the European Parliament's plenary vote held last 22 November.

FEFCO and its members have actively engaged on the file over the past year, taking part in the ongoing negotiations at both EU and national level.

## The Parliament vote

The European Parliament voted to approve their position on the PPWR on 22 November 2023, with 426 votes in favour, 125 against and 74 abstentions. Prior to the vote, many alternative amendments were proposed by different political groups, coalitions of MEPs and the ITRE Committee. Some highlights from the Parliament-approved proposal are as follows:

- overall packaging reduction targets: 5% by 2030, 10 % by 2035 and 15 % by 2040.
- maintain the exemptions for cardboard for transport packaging.
- restrictions on the use of certain single-use packaging formats.
- ban on the use of PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances) and Bisphenol A in food contact packaging.

Several political groups commented on the vote.

"By voting to ban 'eternal' pollutants in food packaging, the European Parliament has shown that it will not compromise with the health of European citizens." - Frédérique Ries, Renew Europe

"While aiming for reuse, we must be aware of packaging's life cycle. One cannot generalise; single-use can still be the best environmental solution in certain circumstances." - Massimiliano Salini, European People's Party.

"Our focus on promoting reusable packaging and expanding recycling options reflects our commitment to minimising the environmental impact of single-use items and fostering a circular economy." - Delara Burkhardt, Socialists & Democrats Group.

"Conservatives in Parliament unfortunately managed to remove important restrictions on superfluous single-use packaging, demonstrating the influence of the single-use lobby and fast-food corporations.

However, we secured support for stronger recycling rules as well as preserving entirely new reuse requirements." - Grace O'Sullivan, Greens/EFA.

## Next steps

The Council must now adopt its general approach on the PPWR, a political agreement at Council level, before trilogue negotiations can begin between the institutions.

The Spanish Presidency of the Council played a crucial role in the coordination of the Council position on the Commission's legislative proposal. On 18 December 2023, the Council is expected to reach an agreement on its general approach. Therefore, the trilogue negotiations will only begin in January 2024, under the Belgian Presidency of the Council. However, agreements will need to be reached quickly as the legislation should be finalised well before the EU elections take place on 6-9 June 2024. If negotiations are delayed, the file will pass to the second half of 2024, under the Hungarian Council Presidency.

For context, at the next European elections, 720 members of the Parliament will be elected. They will vote to elect the new head of the European Commission and approve Commissioners.

FEFCO will continue its active stakeholder engagement in the negotiations on the PPWR to ensure the final legislation is beneficial for both the environment and the internal market.

# FEFCO activities

## New Corresponding members

A big welcome to the new members who have joined FEFCO in 2023!

### Easternpak

[www.easternpak.com](http://www.easternpak.com)

Saudi Arabia

### Infinya Packaging

[www.infinya.co.i](http://www.infinya.co.i)

Israel

## New members of the National Directors Committee (NDC):

After years of representing the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI, UK), Andrew Barnetson is stepping down, to pursue his career development as Executive Director for competitiveness. We thank Andrew for his invaluable contribution to FEFCO activities over the years. A warm welcome to Dimitra Rappou, the new CPI Executive Director for Sustainable Products, who succeeds Andrew as the CPI representative at the National Associations Committee, and Phil Fenton, who will follow all corrugated matters.

After five years as Executive Director, Cosmin Alexandru Ionescu will leave the Romanian Pulp and Paper Association (ROMPAP) at the end of 2023 – our gratitude to Cosmin for his great support. Since 1 November 2023, Altafinii Tudose assumes this role. A warm welcome Altafinii, and best wishes in your new position.

## FEFCO team update

After nearly ten years, FEFCO Technical Director Krassimira Kazashka has parted

ways with FEFCO to pursue a new career opportunity. During her time, Krassimira was particularly appreciated for her outstanding dedication and enthusiasm, and her invaluable contribution to achieving important milestones in the work of FEFCO. The FEFCO team and members wish her all the best in her new role.

Additionally, the FEFCO secretariat bids farewell to Hana Gallego, FEFCO EU Public Affairs Officer, who will be embarking on a new journey. FEFCO is grateful to Hana for her contributions to the secretariat's work throughout the past three years, particularly her dedicated efforts on the challenging PPWR file. We extend our best wishes to Hana for continued success and fulfilment in all her future endeavours.

To fill the advocacy vacancy, Laura Mazzei has joined FEFCO as EU Public Affairs Manager. Laura previously worked as Account Manager in FIPRA's Green Transition, Energy & Industrials Practice. Other previous work includes advisor for a leading global consumer goods company and an internship in the European Commission in the unit dealing with consumer goods and the food industry. Furthermore, she has a good overview on all matters related to green transition, industrial matters and sustainable growth. Laura studied political sciences, and holds a Master's Degree in European and International Studies from the University of Parma and a Master's in Business Studies from CIS.

## FEFCO events

### FEFCO Summit 2024

#### Leading circularity

15-17 May 2024

Athens, Greece

Divani Appolon Hotel

[See FEFCO Home page](#)

## Other events

### Fruit Logistica

7-9 February 2024

Berlin, Germany

[www.fruitlogistica.com/en/](http://www.fruitlogistica.com/en/)

### Cosmopack

21-23 March 2024

Bologna, Italy

[www.cosmoprof.com/](http://www.cosmoprof.com/)

### MACFRUT

8-10 May 2024

Rimini Expo Center, Italy

[www.macfrut.com/en/](http://www.macfrut.com/en/)

### Drupa

28 May-7 June 2024

Düsseldorf, Germany

[www.drupa.com](http://www.drupa.com)

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