

MM Kwidzyn to modernise pulp line with new Andritz digester

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Mayr-Melnhof has selected German engineering group Andritz as supplier for the replacement of the pulp digester at its integrated pulp and paper mill in Kwidzyn, Poland. With the new digester system, Mayr-Melnhof will be able to switch between softwood and hardwood in pulp production, Andritz explains. The scope of supply includes a digester with a vessel that enables homogeneous cooking results and high process flexibility, as well as a TurboFeed chip feeding system. Commissioning is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026.

At its Kwidzyn site, MM produces NBSK pulp as well as primary fibre-based board (GC) with a production capacity of 260,000 tpy. In addition, the group operates two paper machines at the site, each with an annual capacity of 200,000 tpy for fine papers and packaging kraft paper.

Afry wins contract for Kemira activated carbon plant

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Engineering and consulting company Afry has been awarded a contract for the detailed engineering of Kemira's new activated carbon plant in Helsingborg, Sweden. Commissioning is scheduled for the second half of 2027.

The project aims to meet increasing demand for sustainable water treatment solutions. According to Afry, the new plant will regenerate activated carbon already used by Kemira for reuse. Activated carbon is a by-product of industrial processes such as water treatment and is essential to remove micropollutants, including harmful per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS), from drinking water and wastewater. The growing need for sustainable water treatment solutions is being driven by stricter European regulations.

Kimberly-Clark pushes ahead with hydrogen project in Kent

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Kimberly-Clark (KC) is making progress with its project to use green hydrogen in its paper production at its site in Gravesend, Kent. To this end, British energy group ITM Power is set to install a hydrogen production facility at the site.

Initially, the hydrogen will be used to supply a dual-fuel boiler capable of operating on both hydrogen and natural gas. According to ITM Power, the long-term objective is to progressively replace the use of natural gas with hydrogen. Commissioning of the hydrogen system is scheduled for the end of 2027.

KC already announced in August 2025 that it would invest £125m to integrate green hydrogen into its UK production sites in Cumbria and Kent, with the aim of halving natural gas consumption. The projects are supported by the UK government through the Hydrogen Production Business Model (HPBM) and the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund (NZHF) as part of Hydrogen Allocation Round One (HAR1).

Stora announces new board members

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Stora Enso Oyj announces the proposed members for the Board of Directors of the new forest asset company planned to be demerged from Stora Enso. The demerger is expected to be completed in the first half of 2027. **Johan Trolle-Löwen** has been proposed to be Chair of the Board of Directors and **Jannica Fagerholm** to become Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. Other proposed members of the board are **Helen Fasth Gillstedt, Magnus Fernström, Timo Mäkinen** and **Catharina Stackelberg-Hammarén**. The proposed Board members will be nominated in the Demerger Plan as the inaugural Board of Directors for the New Company, subject to the approval of Stora Enso Oyj's Extraordinary General Meeting resolving on the Demerger Plan.

Jennifer Riddell at helm of McLaren Corrugate

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Jennifer Riddell has been appointed Managing Director of **McLaren Corrugate**, part of Glasgow-based McLaren Packaging Group. Ms Riddell has previously been the Managing Director of The Box-shop Ltd and Boxes and Packaging.

SPG starts up new tissue machine

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Tissue paper manufacturer **Saudi Paper Group (SPG)** hat started up a new tissue machine at its mill in Dammam. The TM 5, delivered by **Toscotec**, has a width of 5,600 mm and a working speed of up to 2,200 m/min and can produce up to 60,000 tpy of tissue paper.

Schades Group with new sales office in Turkey

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Schades Group, a European market leader for paper reels and label materials, has expanded its international footprint with the opening of Schades Türkiye. With this new location, including offices and warehouse operations, the company is making its first foray into a non-EU market, a company spokeswoman told EUWID. The company expects With this move, the group wants to strengthen its position in the Turkish market, which it believes offers significant economic potential.

Valmet takes over Severn Group

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Finnish engineering group **Valmet** plans to take over British valve producer **Severn Group**. Valmet has entered into an agreement to purchase all three Severn divisions (Severn Glocon, ValvTechnologies and LB Bentley) from the UK-based private equity firm Bluewater. The acquisition of the globally active business further strengthens Valmet's Process Performance Solutions segment and expands its flow control business, according to the buyer. The transaction is valued at \$480m on a cash and debt-free basis (around €410m) and is expected to close in the second quarter of 2026. Severn employs around 950 people worldwide with production sites in the UK, USA and India. Its net sales in the 2025 business year are estimated to be around €215m with an Ebitda margin of around 16 per cent, according to Valmet.

EUWID revises reporting for coloured office paper

German recovered paper market

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EUWID will revise its reporting on the German recovered paper market as of January 2026. From that date, grade 2.06 will be supplemented by grade 2.05. Price movements for both grades will be combined and reported jointly under the category “coloured office paper”.

This change mirrors the reporting approach already applied to grades 3.14 and 3.15, with monthly price movements for grades 2.05 and 2.06 published together. By making this adjustment, EUWID aims to broaden the range of grades covered and to provide a more accurate reflection of actual market developments for coloured office paper.

Recovered paper prices stable in Germany, market starts the year relatively quietly

High volatility and wide disparities shape the market in 2025

 21 January 2026 |  ~ 5 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

The German recovered paper market has entered the new year without any major movement. Prices for the mass grades mixed paper and board (1.02) and supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04) have remained largely unchanged in January. Only isolated reports from the paper industry point to further slight price reductions. Market participants attribute the unusual January stability to relatively low collection volumes, better-than-expected offtake from the paper industry, and increasing export activity.

Recovered Paper Germany				
December 2025				
Monthly changes in €/t	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	Oct 2025	Dec 2024
Mixed paper and board (1.02)	-4.00	-8.00	-2.00	-16.50
Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)	-6.00	-8.00	-1.00	-15.50
Used corrugated kraft II (4.03)	-5.00	-8.50	-3.00	-14.50
Sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11)	-7.00	-6.50	-3.00	-7.50
Coloured letters (2.06)	-10.00	-9.50	-6.50	-6.00
Multi printing (3.10)	-16.00	-13.00	-2.50	-11.00
White newsprint/magazine paper (3.14/3.15)	-6.00	-3.50	3.00	-11.00
White woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01)	-5.50	-9.50	-6.50	-8.50
Changes based on free delivered prices within Germany.				
© 2026 EUWID Europäischer Wirtschaftsdienst GmbH		EUWID assumes no liability for the accuracy of pricing information.		

Supply and demand for sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) remain in balance at a low level, meaning that prices are mostly stable. There has likewise been little movement in prices for the medium and higher recovered paper and board grades.

That said, individual market players report price reductions of up to €10 for coloured letters and multi printing. By contrast, others expect occasional, slight price increases.

Year-end declines in a year of highs and lows

At the end of the year, prices for all grades declined noticeably once again. An evaluation of reports from recovered paper suppliers and consumers shows that in December, prices for mixed paper and board (1.02) fell by €4.00/t compared to November. Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04) became €6.00/t cheaper, while used corrugated kraft II (4.03) prices declined by €5.00/t compared to the previous month.

Prices for sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) dropped by €7.00/t. For coloured letters (2.06), a decrease of €10.00/t was reported. Prices for multi printing (3.10) fell even more sharply, dropping by €16.00/t. White newsprint and magazine paper (3.14/3.15), by contrast, became only €6.00/t cheaper. For white woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01), a price decline of €5.50/t was reported.

Over the course of the past year as a whole, the recovered paper market proved highly volatile. While prices rose sharply in the spring of 2025, particularly for the mass grades, they weakened again to varying degrees over the remainder of the year.

Developments differed markedly by grade. For mixed paper and board, price increases and declines fully offset each other, leaving the grade at the end of 2025 at exactly the same level as a year earlier. By contrast, cumulative price changes for supermarket corrugated paper and board amounted to an increase of €11.00/t over the year.

Prices for sorted graphic paper for deinking fell by €22.00/t over the year. Even steeper declines were seen for coloured letters, multi printing and white woodfree uncoated shavings. A very different trend was seen for white newsprint and magazine paper, with grades 3.14/3.15 posting a cumulative increase of €29.00/t.

Supply and demand for mass grades matched in January

Most market participants describe the start of the new year as relatively uneventful. At paper mills that operated through the year-end period, anticipated logistical bottlenecks failed to materialise. Although there were isolated challenges, it had generally been possible to secure enough recovered paper.

With fewer paper machines shut down than expected, current demand and offtake from the paper industry are widely regarded as decent. Mills that continued production without interruption are also seeking to replenish stocks, possibly in anticipation of another sharp increase in recovered paper prices in the spring, sources told EUWID.

While waste management and recycling companies report higher stock levels, year-end arisings had been much lower than anticipated, so that pressure remains manageable. In isolated cases, temporary stoppages reportedly made it more difficult to move material. On balance, though, the outflow of volumes remains good, allowing collectors to gradually reduce their recovered paper inventories.

Improved export opportunities for supermarket corrugated paper and board have also helped to ease the pressure on waste management companies. In some cases, sources report slightly higher prices, making conditions for exports to the Far East competitive with domestic sales. Exports to Asia therefore represent an alternative, at least for suppliers based close to ports.

Overall, these factors have brought supply and demand for the mass recovered paper grades largely into balance. As a result, the €5/t price reductions originally targeted by the paper industry were only achieved in a small number of cases. Some sources also note that lower recovered paper prices do little to support mills' efforts to raise finished paper prices.

Sorted graphic paper for deinking price stable – mixed picture for other grades

Stable prices are also being reported for sorted graphic paper for deinking in January. However, the amount of material that changed hands is said to have declined further, mainly due to reduced availability following the closure of several sorting plants. According to market rumours, another sorting facility in southern Germany may be shut down.

Against the backdrop of subdued demand from the graphic paper industry, the weaker supply is expected to result in largely sideways price movement for grade 1.11 in January, following the recent price declines.

Assessments of the market situation of woodfree and pulp substitution grades covered by EUWID are mixed. While some sources report stable prices or renewed declines of up to €10/t, citing good availability, others point to stronger demand. Demand for woodfree and white grades is said to have picked up again following a very quiet fourth quarter. Pulp substitution grades are once more attracting buyers, a trend that is being linked to developments in the pulp market. In some cases, this has reportedly resulted in modest price increases of up to €5/t.

Will February bring tightening supply and rising prices?

Recycling and waste management companies as well as buyers are watching developments in the recovered paper market closely. According to most sources, the situation at paper mills and the outlook for the new year continue to offer little hope of a recovery. However, some market participants believe that supply shortages could emerge as a result of a marked decline in arisings expected to emerge in February at the latest. A tightening supply could then, as in the previous year, trigger a significant increase in recovered paper prices. Intensifying export activity could further exacerbate shortages and reinforce upward price pressure.

Some voices within the paper industry, by contrast, are expecting recovered paper demand to decline in the coming weeks. High inventories of finished paper could lead to a slowdown in mill output, they predict. Against this backdrop, price reductions for recovered paper in February cannot be ruled out, they say.

EUWID price changes for German recovered paper in 2025		
Price change €/t		December 2025 vs December 2024
Mixed paper and board	(1.02)	± 0.00
Supermarket corrugated paper and board	(1.04)	+ 11.00
Used corrugated kraft II	(4.03)	+ 3.00
Sorted graphic paper for deinking	(1.11)	- 22.00
Coloured letters	(2.06)	- 40.00
Multi printing	(3.10)	- 32.00
White newsprint	(3.14/3.15)	+ 29.00
White woodfree uncoated shavings	(3.18.01)	- 36.00
The table presents the cumulative price changes for the named grades in the past 12 months. Prices: free delivered to paper mills in Germany EUWID assumes no liability for the accuracy of pricing information.		
Source: EUWID		

Valmet modernises five Lee & Man tissue machines

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Valmet has received an order to renew the felt shoe presses of five tissue machines of Chinese papermaker **Lee & Man Paper Manufacturing**. The measure will affect tissue machines TM 3, 9, 10, 1 and 12 in the Chongqing, Jiangxi and Guangdong paper mills. The companies expect the shoe presses to be commissioned in the course of 2026.

Warak in Algeria order tissue machine from Valmet

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Algerian tissue paper manufacturer **Warak**, a subsidiary of the **Faderco** Group based in Algiers, has placed an order with **Valmet** for a new tissue machine. The new TM is to be installed at Warak's paper mill in Mostaganem, Algeria, the company said. With additional capacity for 65,000 tpy, Warak is doubling its tissue output. The machine has a web width of 5.6 m and a design speed of 2,200 m/min. Commissioning is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026.

Dairi-Pak installs die-cutter at Shropshire site

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As part of a £1m investment programme, UK packaging manufacturer **Dairi-Pak** has installed a flexo die-cutter at its site in Shropshire, the company said. The investment also includes a new waste extraction system and a waste compactor. According to Dairi-Pak, the upgrades increase capacity and improve product quality. The new equipment enables the company to produce short- to medium-run printed die-cuts.

Mayr-Melnhof renames Ipack brand to MM Polar

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Mayr-Melnhof (MM) has renamed its MF (machine-finished) kraft paper brand Ipack to MM Polar at the turn of the year. MM's Ipack Strong Pro papers will now be sold under the MM Polar Strong brand name, the company adds. The move is part of a broader strategy to streamline brand architecture within the MM group. The MM Polar Strong paper is suitable for a wide range of applications, including paper bags, food packaging, dry goods packaging, retail packaging and flow pack solutions, according to MM. It is also suitable for food contact.

New name for Palm's packaging plants in France

 **EUWID +** 21 January 2026 |  ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

Germany's **Palm** group has renamed its corrugated packaging operations in France. When Palm acquired German packaging company Seyfert in 2014, the French sites retained the Seyfert name. Since 1 January 2026, they have now been operating under the name Palm Packaging. This change affects the plants Palm Packaging Champagne in Reims, Palm Packaging Forez near Lyon, Palm Packaging Décines also near Lyon, Palm Packaging Provence in Sorgues, and Palm Packaging Libercourt near Lille.

IBS Group commissions starch preparation plant at Mondi Štětí

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Mondi has taken a further step to strengthen its offering of sustainable kraft papers. The company has commissioned a new starch preparation plant at its Štětí site in Czechia. The plant was supplied by PGA Anlagenbau, a member of the IBS Paper Performance Group, and will supply the site's new kraft paper machine with high-quality starch while keeping energy consumption to a minimum.

The new paper machine, in which Mondi invested €400m, was started up in December 2024 and officially inaugurated in December 2025. It has a capacity of up to 210,000 tpy of kraft and sack kraft paper and is intended to meet growing demand for sustainable e-commerce packaging.

August Faller adds Imker Group as its new partner

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With the entry of the Imker Group, Germany's folding carton manufacturer August Faller has won a new partner. Imker, represented in this transaction by its Luxembourg subsidiary Rucio Investment, plans to acquire a stake of more than 25 per cent in Faller Packaging. The folding carton producer told EUWID that Imker Group was a European family office that shares Faller Packaging's strategic orientation and long-term vision of the future. The completion of the transaction is still subject to the required regulatory approvals.

Reports indicate that with Imker Group's entry, Faller Packaging has gained a long-term partner committed to supporting the sustainable development of the group and accompanying the consistent implementation of its organic and inorganic growth strategy. Founded in 1882, August Faller is regarded as an expert in the area of pharmaceutical packaging including labels and packaging inserts.

The company also reports that its new packaging plant in Horsens, Denmark, started up on 16 September 2025. This means that Faller is now running production facilities in Germany, Poland, Denmark and Hungary, with a staff of approximately 1,500 in total.

European paper industry looks to new markets through Mercosur Trade Agreement

 **EUWID** + 21 January 2026 | 🕒 ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

The European paper industry welcomes the new free trade agreement between the EU and the Mercosur countries and expects it to open up new markets. Until now, tariffs and administrative barriers have constrained export activities of European producers of pulp, paper and board to Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. At a time when the European domestic market is losing volume each year and sales opportunities in other regions of the world are restricted by duties and trade barriers, the agreement could provide manufacturers with access to new customers once it enters into force.

On 9 January 2026, the Council of the European Union signed the partnership and trade agreement with the Mercosur countries, followed by the formal signing on 17 January 2026. However, the agreement has not yet entered into force, as it still requires approval by the European Parliament and ratification by all EU member states and Mercosur countries. A date for its implementation has not yet been set.

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (Cepi) is therefore urging the European Parliament to ratify the agreement swiftly. In a recent statement, the industry association highlighted the agreement's potential to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers and to foster growth for European pulp and paper companies, which are some of the strongest exporters amongst EU manufacturing sectors.

The proposed agreement aims to remove tariffs on over 90 per cent of goods exchanged between the EU and Mercosur countries. For the pulp and paper sector, this would be particularly significant: 85 per cent of EU pulp exports and 90 per cent of paper and board exports to Mercosur would become duty-free. "This move opens new markets for European producers which have been in an imbalanced trade relationship with their South American counterparts," Cepi stated. Since 2004, the EU has not imposed import tariffs on pulp, paper, board, and related products, including those from Mercosur nations. In contrast, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay have imposed high tariffs on European exports, creating an uneven competitive landscape, the association adds.

While trade relations between the EU and the United States have become tensed, Cepi notes that trade in pulp and paper between the EU and Mercosur remains particularly interdependent. Europe is a net exporter of high-quality paper and board products globally, but it is also a significant importer of market pulp, especially from Brazil and Uruguay.

However, as the EU has already removed its tariffs more than twenty years ago, Cepi does not expect the agreement to lead to a significant surge in pulp and paper imports from Mercosur countries.

The agreement includes a strengthened Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter with a legally binding annex. This annex sets clear commitments to halt deforestation and enhances cooperation on sustainable supply chain development, Cepi writes. According to the association, it marks the first instance where countries involved in such an agreement have made individual legal commitments on deforestation, subject to dispute settlement. Cepi underscores the importance of strict implementation to ensure that environmental and labour standards are upheld.

In the past, both the European pulp and paper industry and the Brazilian forestry sector have already committed to preventing illegal logging and deforestation.

Trump announces new tariffs for some European countries from February

 **EUWID** + 21 January 2026 | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

The geopolitical conflict between the USA and Denmark over Greenland is causing new trade tensions: US President Donald Trump announced new tariffs on 17 January, applicable explicitly to goods from Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Finland, the Netherlands and the UK. If enacted, a new 10 per cent tariff would be due on all goods exported to the US from these countries. The US president's plan also provides for an increase in the tariff rate to 25 per cent effective 1 June 2026. According to Trump's post on Truth Social, the tariffs will remain in force until an agreement is reached on the "complete and total purchase of Greenland".

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a joint statement with EU Council President António Costa: "Tariffs would undermine transatlantic relations and could set in motion a dangerous downward spiral."

The European Union is apparently considering imposing counter-tariffs of up to €93bn on US imports. Bernd Lange, chairman of the trade committee in the European Parliament, said in an interview with German TV channel Phoenix that this would be examined very carefully. A list of countermeasures was already available and could therefore be used quickly, he said. The Members of the European Parliament will discuss the next steps in the course of this week.

Paper industry also affected

The new US tariffs would also affect exports of paper and board to the United States. As early as 2025, the European umbrella association of the pulp and paper industry declared that the US is the second largest importer of paper and board products from the EU. The original customs agreement of 27 July 2025, which provided for a uniform 15 per cent import duty, had already cemented an increased cost level for the industry's exports to the USA, the association said.

Printing industry advocates packaging to be exempt from the EUDR

Paper industry speaks out in favour of including printed products once again

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The implementation of the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) has been postponed by another year to the end of 2026, and supply chain simplifications have been introduced – including the exemption of finished printed products such as books, magazines or brochures. Paper and board-based packaging, which largely uses the same fibre source, viz. pulp, however, is not covered by this exemption.

But why should finished printed products be exempt from the scope of the Deforestation Regulation, when fibre-based packaging is not? This question emerged within the packaging industry while the debate on postponing the EUDR was still ongoing. The decisive factor in providing the answers could be the EU Commission's review of the EUDR simplification scheduled for late April.

At the end of December and beginning of January, discussions between EUWID and the associations representing the paper, printing and packaging industries on this issue revealed a dynamic and unexpectedly contradictory picture across different parts of the supply chain. While the paper industry rejects the exemption for printed products, the packaging sector has so far refrained from making public statements. At the same time, the German and European printing industries stress that they no longer wish to limit their efforts to printed products alone, but now also intend to campaign for equivalent exemptions for paper and board-based packaging.

For example, as late as December 2025, the German printing and media industries federation Bvdm still explained that during the review process, the association would advocate further simplifications, clarification and SME-friendly rules during the review process, in particular for printing companies which continue to manufacture products covered by the EUDR, such as packaging or labels.

European Parliament vote brings issue into official debate

The issue came to the fore in the lead-up to the European Parliament's vote on Amendment 65 on 26 November 2025. This amendment provided for entirely deleting the products listed in Annex I of the EUDR. The exemption would therefore apply to all printed products classified under HS code 49, such as books, newspapers, commercial printed matter and advertising materials. In contrast, printed products under other HS codes, however, would remain fully subject to the regulation. This applies, for example,

to printed packaging, labels, wallpaper and stationery classified under HS code 48.

Amendment 65 was tabled by a total of 50 Members of Parliament, including 35 from the European People's Party (EPP), the largest parliamentary group, as well as members of the Socialists & Democrats (S&D) and Renew Europe groups.

A Bvdm spokeswoman explained towards EUWID that the amendment had primarily been put forth on the initiative of European publishers' associations. Relevant umbrella associations of the publishing sector made a statement ahead of the vote at the end of November explaining that the amendment offered a necessary and proportionate solution by restoring the scope of EUDR to what had originally been proposed by the Commission in 2021, and excluding finished printed products – which by their nature do not fall under the EU regulation – from Annex I. The signatories thus referred to a 2021 Commission proposal that envisaged limiting the scope of the EUDR to pulp and paper, without including finished products such as printed matter.

The trilogue agreement reached between the European Parliament, Council, and Commission finally confirmed the exemption of finished printed products from the scope of the EUDR.

Printing and paper industries at odds over exemption provision

Following the vote, the European printing association Intergraf stated that the printing industry had not demanded the exemption in question. This view is supported by the European paper industry, which is now campaigning to overturn the regulation.

In a position paper available to EUWID, the Confederation of European Paper Industries (Cepi) called on the EU to reconsider the exclusion of printed products from the scope of the EUDR. While Cepi generally welcomed the postponement and simplification of the regulation, it said to regret the European Parliament's vote on removing printed products from the scope of the EU Regulation. As an industry, the association did not call for this exemption and is convinced that it creates an environmental loophole in the Regulation and undermines a level playing field between EU and non-EU companies, thereby increasing the risk of market distortions in the future, Cepi said.

Cepi argues that excluding finished printed products would mean that paper mills based in the EU would continue to be bound by EUDR requirements, while imported printed products would be exempt from due diligence and traceability obligations. This would weaken the competitiveness of European companies on global markets and create incentives to relocate production outside the EU in order to avoid additional administrative burdens. For this reason, the industry intends to urge the EU, as part of the planned review of the simplification measures, to bring printed products back within the scope of the EUDR.

A request for comment made by EUWID remained unanswered by Cepi by the editorial deadline.

The German association Die Papierindustrie, confirmed its rejection of such exemptions when contacted by EUWID. The association also argues that the paper recycling loop could be put at risk by such an exemption as it would, for example, allow printed products made from tropical wood to enter the German paper recycling cycle. Even after recycling, traces of tropical timber remained detectable, although the point of entry could no longer be identified, a spokeswoman for the German pulp and paper

industry association explained. According to Papierindustrie, the European Timber Regulation (EUTR) has good reasons to include printed products, which makes it even more difficult to understand why an exemption should apply in case of the EUDR.

Likewise, the association of Swiss paper, board and film manufacturers SPKF highlights the fibre source as the focal point of its criticism of exemptions for printed products. SPKF identifies pulp as the common fibre source for both printed products and fibre-based packaging. Exempting only one segment of the broad range of possible end products is only partially comprehensible from a technical perspective because it places more weight on the end product rather than the origin of the raw material, the SPKF told EUWID. Whether and in what form the industry would propose further adjustments or exemptions ahead of the review announced by the European Commission for April 2026 would depend on the experience gained during practical implementation, the association added.

In agreement therewith, a spokesperson of the Austrian paper industry association Austropapier stated in response to an inquiry that its objective was not to obtain equivalent exemption rules for the raw material chain of printed products such as paper and pulp.

What is the position of the packaging sector?

While the paper industry representative bodies have not been sparing with comprehensive comments on the subject in question, associations representing fibre-based packaging industries have been more reserved in their responses to EUWID. Nonetheless, it became obvious that stakeholders in such segments as paper packaging, folding cartons and corrugated board and packaging do not seem to have the intention to bring about similar exemptions.

For example, the German folding carton industry association FFI declared towards EUWID that it would not advocate further exemptions either.

This view was also confirmed by Karsten Hunger, general manager of the German association representing producers of packaging made from paper and plastic films IPV. He explained that as a rule, the association considered such case-by-case exemptions to be counterproductive for the industry. The IPV did not advocate individual exemptions, but rather a general simplification and reduction of administrative burden in the application of the rules for all stakeholders. According to IPV, this is the only way to safeguard a level playing field across the entire supply chain of packaging made from paper and board, and to avoid a situation where European suppliers are placed at a disadvantage.

The German corrugated board industry association VDW is also campaigning for a lower level of bureaucratic burden. In a statement, the association welcomes the compromise reached between the EU Council and the European Parliament, describing it as a simplification. However, the VDW declined to comment to EUWID on potential exemption provisions for packaging.

Review by the EU Commission scheduled to take place by April 2026

Under the compromise reached in the trilogue negotiations, the European Commission is to present a review of the simplification

measures by the end of April 2026. When asked about the current state of play, the European Commission had not responded to EUWID by the editorial deadline.

Feldmuehle closure reshuffles Germany's label paper market

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Just one topic dominates discussions on Germany's label paper market: the closure of the Feldmuehle mill after more than 120 years of operation. Industry insiders told EUWID that „the cards are now being reshuffled“, as customers who had still recently been sourcing paper from the Uetersen plant were now looking for alternative suppliers. The redistribution of orders to the remaining suppliers of wet-strength and alkali-resistant papers was only slowly getting underway.

Label paper manufacturers are thus reporting a rise in demand in the first quarter. For some, the effect is only just beginning to make itself felt. Sources said that others were already seeing a marked uptick in orders for wet-strength label papers as EUWID was researching this report in the third week of January. “Compared with the weak fourth quarter, we currently have a solid order book and our machines are running at adequate capacity utilisation,” one insider remarked. Temporary machine stoppages, which were still an issue only a few months ago, were no longer on the agenda.

“The closure of the world's number two supplier is inevitably throwing the entire market into turmoil. A battle for volumes is bound to ensue,” one converter of wet-strength and alkali-resistant papers warned.

Back in early October, when EUWID last conducted its research, lead times of as little as ten days were still being quoted; these have now stretched to four to six weeks. This applied not only to wet-strength and alkali-resistant grades, but also to non-wet-strength label papers. For the latter, demand is mostly described as stable, although some sources reported lower sales volumes in the fourth quarter.

Price talks between the paper industry and label printing companies for the first quarter of 2026 were still not entirely wrapped up in the third week of January. However, many signs suggested another rollover, after prices for both grades had already been left unchanged from the third to the fourth quarters. Multiple industry sources noted that pricing would only become “really interesting” from April onwards. Besides the new supplier landscape in the wet-strength segment, developments in pulp costs were once again expected to play a key role.

Recycled label paper prices also remained stable from the third to the fourth quarter of 2025. Market players were likewise anticipating no change for the first quarter of 2026.

When asked about demand trends, some EUWID contacts reported a marked decline in interest, especially from the brewing industry, where buyers are said to be scrutinising every cent spent on labels. At the same time, other companies are still reportedly switching from primary-fibre paper to recycled grades.

EUWID Price Watch Germany Label Paper 2025				
Prices in € per tonne free delivered	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2025	Third quarter 2025	Fourth quarter 2025
Wet-strength and alkali-resistant 70-80 g (reels)	2,250 - 2,330	2,250 - 2,380	2,250 - 2,380	2,250 - 2,380
Non wet-strength 70-100 g (reels)	2,010 - 2,120	2,030 - 2,150	2,030 - 2,150	2,030 - 2,150
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Woodfree envelope paper prices down in Q4, prices for shipping bag paper grades under pressure

 21 January 2026 | ~ 3 min | Published in issue 4/2026

EUWID Price Watch Germany Envelope and Shipping Bag Paper 2025				
Prices in € per tonne free delivered	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2025	Third quarter 2025	Fourth quarter 2025
White woodfree envelope paper, 80 g	1,780 - 2,020	1,780 - 1,990	1,750 - 1,990	1,710 - 1,970
Recycled envelope paper, 80 g	1,320 - 1,470	1,320 - 1,470	1,320 - 1,470	1,320 - 1,470
Shipping bag paper VKP 3	1,350 - 1,500	1,350 - 1,500	1,350 - 1,500	1,320 - 1,500
Shipping bag paper VP 4	1,300 - 1,450	1,300 - 1,450	1,300 - 1,450	1,270 - 1,450
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Germany's envelope paper market remained stuck in a phase of lacklustre demand and surplus capacity on both sides of the market in the fourth quarter of 2025. Although the year-end is traditionally a stronger period for envelope grades, insiders report that this did not hold true to the same extent in the final quarter of last year. EUWID sources from both the envelope and paper industry alike described the close of the year as disappointing.

In fact, observers considered overall demand in the fourth quarter as being in line with the third quarter, which experts had already described as weak and “rather modest”. Similar comments were heard from the paper industry. Paper mills producing white woodfree envelope paper are adjusting their output to prevailing market conditions. Only isolated reports pointed to a slight pickup in activity, which, however, was attributed more to winning orders away from competitors than to a growth in demand.

Sources told EUWID that, over the course of the past year, producers of woodfree uncoated paper that did not normally make traditional higher-quality envelope paper grades have increasingly tried to push volumes into this market, where possible, to keep their paper machines busy. Buyers confirm this trend, but emphasise that they only resort to woodfree offset paper grades in specific exceptional cases, for instance, to put on stock or as a backup solution. Market sources also reported a noticeable rise in spot offers for imported paper, particularly in the fourth quarter, which reportedly added more pressure on prices for white woodfree envelope paper.

Price gap between fresh and recycled fibre-based envelope papers is growing

Overall, the previously reported fall in white woodfree envelope paper prices was confirmed in the fourth quarter. EUWID learned that prices slipped again in the final three months of the year, typically by around €20-40/t. Market players also mentioned steeper reductions in some cases, although not all insiders were willing to confirm such reports.

By contrast, prices for recycled envelope paper grades were steady in the fourth quarter, insiders agreed, with experts describing this segment as comparatively more stable and less overloaded as it is served by a smaller number of suppliers. Paper machines making recycled fibre-based envelope papers were reportedly operating at decent capacity by and large in the fourth quarter. What's more, quite a few insiders claimed to have seen a slight increase in enquiries for recycled paper as 2025 drew to a close.

Against the background of the many uncertainties surrounding the requirements of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and its implementation as of the end of 2025, some converters and end customers were hoping to gain an advantage by switching from primary fibre-based, white woodfree paper to recycled envelope paper last year, according to market sources. That being said, experts stressed that the price gap between the two envelope paper grades was widening, which made such a switch look unattractive purely from a cost perspective, especially now that the implementation of the EUDR has been postponed by at least another year to the end of 2026.

Kraft paper grades also under pressure in the fourth quarter

Kraft (VKP 3) and recycled fibre-based (VP 4) shipping bag paper saw renewed movement in prices in the fourth quarter, although this did not happen uniformly across the board. Contacts quoted price cuts of €30/t for shipping bag paper (VP 4), while others continued to mention stable prices.

Prices for e-commerce shipping bag paper (VKP 3) also appeared not to have held steady, with packaging manufacturers reporting concessions mostly in the €10-30/t range.

The new kraft paper machine in Štětí is said to be a factor here, as a significant share of the new paper capacity produced in the Czech Republic is envisaged for the e-commerce sector. Offering new volumes in a well-supplied market was inevitably translating into overcapacity and downward pressure on prices, experts noted, talking about price reductions for kraft paper grades in Q4.

Quiet start to the new year for France’s recovered paper market, with prices mostly stable

 21 January 2026 | ⌚ ~ 5 min | Published in issue 4/2026

It is more of the same on France’s recovered paper market, with the new year getting underway much as the old one ended. Demand within France was not especially strong but decent, supply was adequate, and prices for most grades held steady. Insiders reported only a few minor price cuts for some of the high grades. The holiday period, with just a few production stoppages, made little impact on the market overall, though there were some logistical problems.

EUWID Price Watch Recovered Paper France					
January 2026					
Prices in € per tonne	Jan 2026		Dec 2025		Nov 2025
Mixed paper and board (1.02)	25	35	25	35	30 - 45
Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)	60	70	60	70	60 - 75
Old corrugated containers (1.05)	80	90	80	90	80 - 95
Sorted graphic paper for drinking (1.11)	85	95	85	95	90 - 100
Intra-Europe exports from France (1.11)	85	95	85	95	90 - 100
Coloured letters (2.06)	140	155	140	155	145 - 165
Multi-printing (3.10)	170	180	170	185	175 - 195
White woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01)	340	355	345	355	350 - 405
Prices in € per tonne ex works, material sorted and in bales.					
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As usual, there had been a shortage of lorry drivers and transport capacity around Christmas, market players reported again this year. Buyers and suppliers had anticipated the difficulties and generally scheduled their shipments well in advance. However, the number of transport days was particularly low in 2025. Complicating matters, snow had reportedly disrupted road transport in many parts of France on a few days in January. In some regions, especially in the south, there were also reports of road closures due to strike action. EUWID sources on both sides of the market noted that this had led to delays. However, no major disruption or significant impact on overall market activity was observed.

Nevertheless, a few corrugated case material mills are reported to have had somewhat less recovered paper on hand than expected in January due to logistical constraints. Other paper manufacturers, by contrast, had somewhat more recovered paper in stock, especially those that had taken downtime over Christmas and New Year. All things considered, buyers told EUWID that ordinary recovered paper grades had been readily available. Waste management companies also generally reported fairly stable supply for ordinary grades, often describing collection volumes as neither high nor low.

Demand for ordinary recovered paper grades was characterised as relatively stable in mid-January. A couple of production stoppages took place in the corrugated case material industry over the holiday period. As a result, demand for recovered paper was cooler here and there. However, downtimes were said to have remained limited in France. Some major manufacturers did not halt production at all or did so only for a few days. On the whole, waste management companies reported no shortage of interest in recovered paper, particularly as some volumes were again flowing to the Far East.

In this largely unchanged market climate, French prices for mixed paper and board (1.02), supermarket paper and board (1.04), and old corrugated containers (OCC; 1.05) held steady in January. Downward pressure was reported to be limited, with one buyer remarking that the opportunity to push through reductions in December had been missed. It was now too late to do so, he added.

Far East exports slightly more expensive

In this vein, some market players pointed to exports to the Far East, where prices for January shipments increased slightly. Sources active on the export market reported minimal hikes of around €2–5/t, which might have had a signalling effect and helped prevent prices from slipping on the French domestic market. Insiders said that OCC had been shipped from France to Asia at prices of up to €100/t ex works.

Waste management company sources painted a picture of good demand from the Far East, with Asian paper mills buying more or less the usual amounts. One industry insider expected this situation to continue into February, with demand from the Far East potentially even becoming a little stronger.

In the French domestic market, EUWID contacts do not expect any major changes to the market for ordinary recovered paper grades for the time being, stating that a recovery in demand is not on the horizon. In mid-January, many felt that it was still too early to identify a price trend for February. However, many consider stable prices for ordinary grades to be likely. That being said, they did not rule out price increases in the coming months, either. One buyer pointed out that prices typically rose in March/April. It also remains to be seen what will happen to the corrugated case material market, where some producers have now announced hikes for new paper.

January was another quiet month for sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11). Everything was said to be running its usual course, with demand for this grade described as normal and stable in France. Prices were likewise reported to be unchanged.

In neighbouring countries, volumes are still difficult to place. A few buyers on these markets having become very cautious in their purchasing over recent months.

That being said, European export prices for sorted graphic paper for deinking from France had already been steadily declining in recent months. In January, most prices then held steady, with only isolated reductions in certain countries and/or where the previous price had been on the high side.

Conditions on the market for coloured letters (2.06) have eased recently. Prices had now stabilised after a couple of consecutive months of decline. One supplier reported that demand from the tissue industry had returned to normal, another commented that the market was broadly balanced.

Prices for multi printing (3.10) stayed the same in many cases in January, although in some instances, further discounts of €5/t were granted due to slower demand. Overall, waste management companies said they were still able to place volumes on the market without major difficulty.

Sources told EUWID that it remains challenging to find buyers for white woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01), although collection volumes are also very low. After repeated price cuts in recent months, January prices were often stable or, in isolated cases, fell by another €5-10/t.

Price debates shape paper markets in Germany at the turn of the year

Price increases are on the table for recycled corrugated case material

 **EUWID** + 21 January 2026 | 🕒 ~ 7 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

German prices for brown kraftliner are showing a downward trend in January 2026. Discussions in the middle of the month revealed that some concessions still dated from the end of 2025 and before Christmas, while others were only finalised during the annual negotiations. There have also been price debates regarding publication paper. Paper mills are aiming at keeping prices for coated and uncoated magazine paper stable at fourth-quarter levels. However, at least the SC paper business is under considerable pressure. Commercial printers are demanding discounts for large print jobs.

Special deals are also flourishing in the market for woodfree uncoated paper. Uncoated fine paper is said to be under considerable price pressure. In view of the competition, paper mills are finding it difficult to achieve price stability across the entire graphic paper market.

Fine paper prices still feeling the pinch as the new year begins

The German woodfree paper market remains under heavy pressure at the beginning of 2026. Manufacturers, merchants and buyers all reported tough negotiations, leading to a very mixed picture on pricing.

Prices for C-grade copy paper fall within a wide range of around €800 to €930/t, with some reports of lower prices, too. Insiders put January prices for 80 g woodfree uncoated reels at €870-920/t. For 80 g uncoated folio sheets, buyers often quoted prices of about €900-930/t, with lower prices occasionally mentioned, too. Coated reels are currently traded at roughly €830-850/t, while 100 g coated sheets are frequently listed at about €880-900/t or lower.

At the start of the year, manufacturers once again tabled price hikes, seeking mark-ups of around €10-20/t – and in some cases of as much as €30/t – for woodfree grades from January. Buyers also reported that they had received demands for price hikes of five to nine per cent. So far, though, these increases are only being implemented to a limited extent, something that market players attributed to a few paper mills operating at low levels and aggressively chasing orders. Some had reportedly even conceded price cuts over the Christmas and New Year period. One insider told EUWID that price reductions were “less the result of negotiating skill and more a reflection of the mills’ predicament”. A number of players were said to be quite open to discussion, particularly when it came to larger orders.

Market players agree that prices have now essentially stabilised at a low level. Sources repeatedly noted that there was little interest for any further price erosion, noting that falling paper prices would also devalue downstream paper products and drag down the overall value creation along the supply chain. However, there are still special deals and spot lots well below the price levels indicated in the EUWID price watch.

The current price situation is shaped by a generally tense state of the market, with weak economic activity in other industrial sectors also dampening demand for graphic paper. "If fewer electronic devices are produced, fewer printed manuals are needed, and this ultimately weighs on the print industry as well," one insider pointed out.

With oversupply leaving its mark, market players expect capacity reductions to take place later on this year. "Consolidation might just be exactly what the market needs right now to get back on its feet," one respondent told EUWID.

The joint venture between Sappi and UPM is seen as sending a strong signal to the industry. Experts anticipate a noticeable impact above all in the market for coated woodfree paper. Customers are largely holding back any reaction until the two companies announce the next firm steps.

Oversupply characterises price talks round for publication paper

In a difficult market environment, consumption of LWC and SC papers shrank drastically in Germany and throughout Europe in 2025 with reports suggesting an almost double-digit decline. This decline is expected to continue at the start of 2026: Insiders expect order volumes to decline again by over 5 per cent in the first quarter.

In particular, the advertising market is postponing spending amid weak consumer sentiment and the subdued economic outlook, weighing on print volumes. At the same time, paper and print continue to face strong competition from digital media, market observers emphasise.

As a result, the market for coated and uncoated magazine paper remains characterised by oversupply despite production curtailments implemented by mills. Given the persistently low capacity utilisation across the paper industry, market players see further consolidation as increasingly urgent. High cost levels combined with inadequate prices are adding to uncertainty and weighing on market sentiment.

Despite the unfavourable market environment, paper mills announced price increases for LWC in the latest round of negotiations. However, these targets could not be realised under current conditions. In many cases, LWC prices were rolled over at fourth-quarter 2025 levels, a development that paper industry representatives view with clear dissatisfaction.

Paper prices in the publishing sector are much more stable than in the commercial printing market. Offset LWC therefore often sells between €770 and €800/t ahead of discounts. Spot deals and so-called special or contract transactions are concluded at significantly lower levels, which market participants describe as "disruptive".

Similar to coated grades, prices for uncoated magazine papers are spread across a wide range, with occasional sharp downward

outliers. Prices for SC papers are often rolled over from the fourth quarter, but in practice they are usually subject to discounts, even where the rolled-over prices are not as high.

Reports of price cuts of €10-20/t on contested volumes are stoking concerns that price stabilisation efforts have faltered and that competition, especially for spot business, is intensifying. According to market observers, a clear price split has been in place for some time, with differences between contract business and special deals becoming increasingly entrenched. Experts stress that the situation is existential for paper mills, as the lack of margins is increasingly forcing many players to focus on short-term cash flow.

In the current market environment, competitive pressure is intensifying as the Sappi-UPM joint venture draws closer. Experts expect many companies to have to adjust their strategies.

Industry insiders describe the Sappi-UPM joint venture as a radical but necessary step in the consolidation of the graphic paper industry. Experts told EUWID that similar developments could also emerge in other segments, including uncoated fine paper and the printing industry, potentially leading to a higher degree of concentration.

By contrast, the paper and printing industry currently takes a more relaxed view of the European Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Preparing for and dealing with its implementation has absorbed significant resources and capacity, placing companies under considerable strain. Opinions remain divided, however, on the exclusion of graphic print products from the scope of the EUDR, with some industry associations questioning whether this amendment to the regulation is expedient.

December and January price cuts for corrugated case material adding up

German prices for brown kraftliner are trending lower in January. EUWID interviews conducted in mid-January revealed that a few concessions dated to late 2025 and pre-Christmas deals, but others were only fixed during annual contract talks. This meant that a few companies secured cuts in November and December, others not until December and for the start of 2026, and still others only with the dawning of 2026. Altogether, prices are currently said to have dropped by around €20-30/t.

Similar price reductions have occurred for recycled corrugated case material in January, although at the same time, the first calls for increases from 1 February have been announced. These price hikes announcements have not yet reached buyers of kraftliner, but EUWID contacts expect that kraftliner prices will soon follow if recycled corrugated case material prices edge higher. A few sources already see signs in their customers' ordering patterns that buyers are anticipating higher brown kraftliner prices and are bringing forward purchases at current prices. However, stronger ordering was not driven by demand. Initial reports suggest that corrugated board had made a solid, but not spectacular, start to the new year.

Sources also reported price reductions for semi-chemical fluting and white-top kraftliner, with EUWID research in mid-January identifying price cuts of around €20/t for both grades. As a result, white-top kraftliner prices would fall less sharply than those for white-top testliner over the same period.

Oversupply keeping up the pressure on prices in many market segments in France

Publication paper, CCM and cartonboard prices decline in January

 21 January 2026 | ⌚ ~ 11 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

A structural glut of printing and writing paper, coupled with a cyclical oversupply of packaging paper and cartonboard, has kept prices under sustained pressure in many parts of the French market. New first-quarter contracts for publication paper often featured price cuts, with producers only able to keep prices stable for LWC at most. Hardly any significant price movement between December and January was reported on the fine paper markets. Yet, the average trend in prices for woodfree uncoated paper, which, like LWC, was the subject of price increase notices, is tending to point downwards rather than upwards.

EUWID Price Watch France				
January 2026				
Prices in € per tonne (tax delivered unless otherwise stated)	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	
Fine paper				
Woodfree uncoated				
Copy paper 80 g/m² 40 grade	800 - 900	870 - 900	890 - 1,000	
Copy paper 80 g/m² 42 grade	800 - 900	870 - 900	890 - 1,000	
Other news 80 g	800 - 900	870 - 900	890 - 1,070	
Other news 80 g	800 - 900	870 - 900	890 - 1,000	
Woodfree coated				
Short, double coated, 100 g	820 - 900	820 - 900	890 - 1,000	
Book, double coated, 100 g	870 - 900	870 - 900	890 - 1,000	
Publication paper				
Standard uncoated 42 g	580 - 620	600 - 620	600 - 620	
Standard uncoated 42 g	580 - 620	610 - 640	610 - 640	
Uncoated uncoated 42 g, 52 g	620 - 650	620 - 650	620 - 640	
LWC, offset 60 g	760 - 790	760 - 800	770 - 830	
LWC, uncoated 60 g	770 - 800	770 - 810	780 - 840	
LC, offset 60 g (A)	650 - 680	660 - 700	670 - 720	
LC, uncoated 60 g (A)	650 - 680	660 - 700	670 - 720	
Corrugated case material				
Primary fibre corrugated case material				
Uncoated/offset 150 g	750 - 800	770 - 870	720 - 810	
Semi-chemical fluting	680 - 670	620 - 690	640 - 700	
White top fluting 140 g	800 - 870	800 - 890	840 - 890	
Recycled corrugated case material				
Recycled fluting 140 g	570 - 600	580 - 620	580 - 600	
Recycled fluting 140 g	580 - 620	600 - 640	590 - 620	
Topflute B	580 - 620	610 - 620	600 - 620	
Topflute B	580 - 610	600 - 610	590 - 610	
White top fluting grade B, 140 g	680 - 740	700 - 770	680 - 720	
Cartonboard				
CC 1	800 - 920	820 - 900	810 - 940	
CC 2	1,100 - 1,240	1,120 - 1,200	1,140 - 1,210	

As had looked to be on the cards in December, prices for all types of corrugated case material headed lower in January. At the same time, however, a few recycled containerboard manufacturers were already announcing increases for February, though it was still unclear in mid-January how these plans would play out. Falling prices are also being recorded in the French cartonboard market in January. As with corrugated case material, the root causes are a certain degree of oversupply and a lack of market growth.

Fine paper market continues to shrink as prices feel the pinch

The woodfree coated and uncoated paper market showed little change at the start of 2026. Market players reported a similar pattern to the end of 2025. One paper manufacturer noted that it was still too early to draw any conclusions about order intake but that the market constellation remained the same. Likewise, printers and paper merchants expressed little optimism about what the market might have in store.

Uncoated woodfree paper deliveries decreased by around 4 per cent in France last year, only slightly below the European average. Cut-size deliveries were roughly 6 per cent lower in a year-on-year comparison. Coated woodfree paper deliveries were harder hit, with a 9 per cent drop, which was somewhat stronger than in Europe as a whole.

Paper manufacturers still mostly view demand as inadequate. Some sources reported an improvement in order inflow since last November, although everyone agreed that paper machines are still operating well below full capacity. This was fuelling pressure on prices. As one buyer put it, there were always producers who needed orders to keep their machines running. Cheap offers are circulating, with a price war underway, primarily for uncoated woodfree paper, according to comments made by EUWID sources.

Higher prices had been announced for uncoated woodfree paper deliveries from January onwards. However, the latest market survey revealed virtually no price increases, at least in January. A few experts said that prices had increased, but this tended to be for February deliveries. The majority of EUWID contacts reported no universal rise in prices.

Opinions differ as to whether the announced hikes have halted or merely slowed the downward spiral in prices that has been in progress for many months now. Surplus capacity remains the core issue on the supply side of the market. Manufacturers, merchants and printers are all confronted with a chronic contraction of their markets, with capacity cutbacks the only real remedy. Market participants expect the planned merger of Sappi's and UPM's printing and writing paper businesses to trigger some movement on this front. That being said, hardly any concrete capacity management actions are expected from the two companies before the beginning of next year, when the creation of the joint venture might be completed.

Q1 ushers in a few price cuts for publication paper grades

The die is cast on France's publication paper market. In most cases, paper manufacturers and buyers had agreed on new first-quarter prices even before the Christmas break. Despite mills' efforts to hold prices, many contracts ultimately saw mark-downs.

Falling prices – and, in some cases, roll-overs – were reported for newsprint. The lower end of the range for standard newsprint 42 g now stands at around €600/t or €590/t, with the upper end hovering around €620/t.

To all appearances, SC paper has faced and continue to face the heaviest pressure on prices, with price cuts of €10-20/t quoted across the board. Insiders quoted prices around €650/t at the bottom end for the reference grade of 56 g SC-A.

Strictly speaking, LWC prices are also under pressure, although the capacity closures that have been fixed for some time and two producers' announcement of price hikes have reportedly brought a degree of stabilisation. Sources told EUWID that raising LWC prices was out of the question in the current environment. In any case, just one producer had really tried to secure higher prices. By and large, leaving aside a few isolated exceptions, there can be no talk of a general upward trend. However, there was no evidence of universal price reductions, either, with only minor reductions reported in a small number of cases. In many instances, prices remained unchanged.

In mid-January, market players said that it was still too early to draw firm conclusions about demand, although there had been no surprises so far. Most expect 2026 to follow a similar pattern to last year, with declines across all grades. Insiders said that demand for every grade continues to slow for structural reasons, with sources on both sides of the market noting that France was no exception within Europe. EUWID contacts described the publishing business as being in a downward spiral as circulation continues

to shrink for most newspapers and magazines. Demand for paper used in retail advertising also suffered losses last year. Printed advertising is being deployed in a more targeted way, and the distribution of non-addressed advertising to household letterboxes is becoming ever more complex and costly.

News of Sappi's and UPM's joint venture for printing and writing paper is raising questions, given the market trend and the fact that capacity closures are still deemed necessary. Insiders hardly expect either company to take concrete shutdown decisions before the merger has been completed, which is considered a possibility towards the end of this year. Contacts remarked that the market was effectively "frozen" for the time being, with little likely to happen on this front before then.

CCM prices still on a downward trajectory

What had already been hinted at in December has now become a reality: Corrugated case material became cheaper again on the French market in January. Generally speaking, these price cuts affected all grades and were typically €20/t, though in some instances they were limited to €10/t or extended to €30/t.

In the recycled corrugated case material segment, insiders mostly mentioned price cuts of €20/t, a level broadly confirmed across the market, although some contacts mention reductions of only €10/t in some instances.

Market players reported similar price cuts for white-top testliner, although there are also accounts of reductions going up to €30/t. In some cases, lower prices had already been agreed in December, and at the latest in January.

The brown and white-top kraftliner market also saw prices head lower in January, with indications of similar mark-downs. EUWID contacts frequently mentioned cuts of around €20/t for both grades, while in some instances discounts of only €10-20/t were granted.

Semichemical fluting prices fell by similar sums in January, too. Experts often quoted figures of €20/t, with others sometimes mentioning reductions of just €10-20/t.

Along with these price reductions, the market has been shaken up by announcements from three to four producers so far that they intend to push through steep hikes for February deliveries. Hamburger has gone public with a demand for a €100/t increase for brown recycled containerboard grades. At least two other manufacturers have followed suit with similar demands, and others indicated that they were considering or preparing comparable moves. Even though the proposed effective date of 1 February was rapidly approaching, contacts said in the second week of January that it was still too early to report any outcomes.

The paper industry appears to have come through the year-end period, when surplus production is traditionally a risk, relatively unscathed. According to market players, the latest survey shows inventories running several tens of thousands of tonnes below last January. Insiders said that this was still high, but did indicate that production was kept in check over the holidays.

There is still overcapacity, especially for recycled grades, despite numerous machine shutdowns over the past two years. Supply-side pressure persisted, driven above all by new production capacity entering the market. New non-integrated machines were having a particularly visible impact on supply, even though new machines such as Norske Skog's in Golbey have so far been running well below full capacity.

There is currently little sign of demand that could absorb the excess capacity, including in corrugated board production. Market insiders report that demand has started the new year without any particular surprises and is broadly acceptable. Some orders had already been placed in response to the impending price increase. However, they added, it would likely be mid-February before they knew where the market really stood.

Cartonboard prices decline in the new year

Cartonboard prices on the French market have declined at the beginning of the new year, as players had anticipated. Pressure on prices of both fresh fibre-based board (folding boxboard – FBB) and recycled cartonboard (white-lined chipboard – WLC) had recently intensified and manufacturers were unable to fend off demands from their customers.

In particular, the GC board market was exposed to strong competitive pressure, according to market players surveyed by EUWID. With more board remaining in Europe due to import duties in the USA, strong presence of Asian suppliers in Europe and the launch of Stora Enso's new cartonboard machine in Oulu last year, overcapacity in the folding boxboard market increased even more. Suppliers tried to solve this problem through pricing. One manufacturer in particular had resorted to very aggressive pricing on the market, several sources reported. This had triggered an avalanche and had also led other manufacturers to grant discounts.

According to EUWID respondents, GC II prices for deliveries from January in France fell by €20-40/t, depending on the starting price. Many customers received first price reductions as early as the fourth quarter. The remaining customers have now followed suit or a second round of price cuts has been implemented. In total, GC II prices in France have fallen by around €40-60/t since summer.

Quarterly contracts were often concluded by mid-january, but there were also still several open contracts or sporadic negotiations on half-year contracts going on.

The market environment was similar on the market for white-lined chipboard. Here, too, supply exceeds demand and manufacturers have had to fight for volumes. As a result, prices for GD II declined. For many buyers, it was the second price step, after prices had already fallen in several cases in September or October. For January, the cut often amounted to around €20/t, which takes the cumulative decline including the first reduction in autumn to around €40/t since the summer for GD II in France.

Prices were often fixed for the first quarter of 2026. In general, there is a tendency towards more quarterly contracts, but prices without a specific duration have also been negotiated in several cases.

Despite the weakness in consumption and the difficult market situation for some time, several market participants were not dissatisfied with the demand situation at the beginning of the year. The new year began “not so badly”, said one manufacturer in mid-January. Others also spoke of a good or at least satisfactory start. However, it is also not unusual for the month to be stronger than December, one customer pointed out. Over Christmas and New Year, cartonboard manufacturers in Europe as well as their customers in France took some downtime. Many insiders therefore consider the momentum at the beginning of the year to be a short-term upturn. The situation was basically unchanged and there were currently no signs of a real recovery in demand, commented one respondent.

Market players surveyed by EUWID do not expect the current situation to change anytime soon. For now, prices of FBB and WLC are expected to remain stable. After the price cuts in January, calm had returned for the time being and pressure from customers had eased, said most providers. “Now everyone is concentrating on business,” remarked one respondent. Many players also concluded quarterly contracts with customers at the beginning of the year, fixing prices until the end of March. But even where prices were agreed for shorter periods, they are not expected to move in February.

However, the current position could change if commodity prices rise. GC producers referred to potential price increases for wood pulp. A price increase for GC in the second quarter would then be urgently necessary, otherwise there would be closures in the industry, said one producer. Further shrinking margins could not be sustained, added another, while a third manufacturer complained that board prices were already too low and not profitable in the long term. Manufacturers on the GD board market had a similar view.

Cartonboard converters are aware of the delicate situation of their suppliers. But there was overcapacity in the market and a price increase was not enforceable in this market environment, commented one packaging manufacturer.

Norske Skog converts magazine paper production in Bruck to primary fibre

19 January 2026 | [Karolina Utracki](#) | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

Norske Skog is converting magazine paper production at its Austrian paper mill in Bruck to run exclusively on primary fibre.

Previously, Norske Skog used a mix of primary and deinked fibres for magazine paper production at the Bruck site.

Norske Skog operates two machines at the Bruck site. PM 4 has a capacity to produce up to 200,000 tpy of LWC and MWC paper, while PM 3 with a capacity of 210,000 tpy was converted to recycled containerboard production in 2023.

The mill also operates a deinking plant, which has supplied PM 4 with recycled fibres.



Norske Skog Bruck increases the use of primary fibre in magazine paper production.

Kelheim Fibres plans to phase out production in March

 **EUWID+** 16 January 2026 |  ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)



Germany's viscose fibre producer Kelheim Fibres is currently undergoing insolvency proceedings and is preparing for a production phase-out by the end of March. A takeover by a new investor is still uncertain.

The local court in Regensburg opened insolvency proceedings against Kelheim Fibres on 1 January 2025. The company then announced a restructuring plan in September 2025 and said in November that it would be taken over by financial investor Leo III Fonds. Later that month, however, the group reported that the transaction had failed because essential conditions for completion had not been met.

In December, another potential investor expressed interest in acquiring the company. Kelheim Fibres said the investor is currently reviewing the requirements for a takeover, adding that the assessment is still at an early stage. "The management supports any realistic option to continue operations," the company said.

Kelheim Fibres is a speciality fibre manufacturer specialising in viscose fibres. The company employs around 350 people and produces 35,000 t of fibres annually.

MM Packaging sells Leeuwarden plant to Grenadier Packaging

15 January 2026 | [Konstantin Stoll](#) | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

Mayr-Melnhof Packaging has sold its folding carton plant in Leeuwarden to UK-based Grenadier Packaging.

Grenadier, a producer of cartonboard and corrugated packaging and part of the Grenadier Holding, will continue to operate the established site in the Netherlands. The plant employs around 50 people and maintains long-standing customer relationships both in its domestic market and across Europe.



MM has divested its carton plant in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands

According to the information available, the site will be run as an independent operation under its new owners. High-quality folding cartons will remain the core business.

Grenadier did not disclose the financial terms of the transaction.

Grenadier Packaging has already expanded through acquisitions and is continuing to explore further strategic opportunities. Most recently, in April 2025, the company acquired the UK folding carton producer Kentmere Packaging.

Hamburger Containerboard wants to hike prices

14 January 2026 | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 4/2026](#)

Hamburger Containerboard has announced plans to raise prices for brown recycled containerboard with effect from 1 February 2026.



The company is seeking an increase of €100/t.

Recycled containerboard manufacturers have been under pressure due to persistently high costs, overcapacities and weak capacity utilisation.

