

# High sanctions against Korean fine paper manufacturers for price fixing

 **EUWID** + 29 April 2026 | [Karolina Utracki](#) | 🕒 ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

**Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) has imposed punitive measures on six of the largest manufacturers of graphic papers in Korea for price fixing. The affected companies are Hansol Paper, Moorim group (Moorim Paper, Moorim P&P, Moorim SP), Hankuk Paper and Hongwon Paper. Hansol and Moorim are considered the largest and second largest paper manufacturers in South Korea. The investigation focused on woodfree uncoated and coated papers.**



According to KFTC, the companies in question engaged in and implemented price agreements in the Korean paper market between February 2021 and December 2024, i. e. over a period of three years and ten months. In total, KFTC issued injunctions, mandated the companies to set prices independently and imposed fines totalling KRW338.3bn (around €235m), being the highest fine ever imposed in the Korean paper sector and one of the country's five largest antitrust fines overall.

Hankuk Paper and Hongwon Paper were also criminally charged, according to a statement from the Korean competition authority.

According to the KFTC, the six companies met more than 60 times to coordinate price hikes. A total of seven price adjustments were agreed and implemented. These were achieved through two increases in list prices and five reductions in discounts.

According to the agency, the employees involved took deliberate actions to conceal the agreements, by resorting to public telephones or third-party devices, using initials or pseudonyms amongst others, as well as undertaking coordinated procedures for informing customers about price increases.

During the cartel phase, the parties held around 95 per cent of the market share (about 81 per cent including imports), KFTC adds. Sales prices increased by an average of 71 per cent during the period.

The fines imposed are distributed as follows: Hansol Paper must bear the largest share of KRW 142.58bn (€98m), Moorim Group KRW138.15bn (€95m) in total, with KRW91.96bn (€63m) for Moorim P&P, KRW45.85bn (€32m) for Moorim Paper and KRW350m (€300,000) for Moorim SP. Hankuk Paper was fined KRW49.06bn (€34m), Hongwon Paper KRW8.54bn (€6m).

In addition, KFTC ordered the companies to set competitive prices in future and report on price changes every six months over a period of three years.

### **Companies regret incidents and announce preventive measures**

Hansol Paper and the Moorim Group made public statements after the sanctions were announced. Korean media reports indicate that Hansol stated that they take the incident very seriously and will strengthen internal control systems to prevent recurrence.

Moorim said: "We deeply regret the concern that has arisen and will immediately implement improvements in three areas: strengthening of compliance systems, establishment of a dedicated compliance team and application of the strictest disciplinary measures for violations of fair competition to prevent recurrence."

# Heinzel Group makes losses in 2025, but continues transformation amidst challenging market conditions

 **EUWID** + 29 April 2026 | ⌚ ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

Austria's family-owned pulp, paper and trading company Heinzel Group continued to pursue its strategic transformation in a challenging economic environment. Throughout 2025, the pressure on prices and volumes seen in the previous year persisted across several product areas.

While the pulp and kraft paper businesses proved comparatively stable at the beginning of the year, conditions in the containerboard segment remained strained. As the year went on, pricing pressure intensified and volumes declined, with the lower price level and reduced deliveries having an increasing impact on earnings, particularly in the second half. One highlight in 2025 was the successful start-up of the containerboard machine PM 11 at the Laakirchen mill in Austria in April 2025, which was converted from graphic paper to recycled corrugated case material, the group explained.

In summary, Heinzel Group said that the economic climate in 2025 had demanded adaptability and resilience, with operational cost-cutting, capacity adjustments, and clear prioritisation setting the course, starting in the second half of the year. Despite volatile demand and price pressure, the group states that disciplined cost and cash-flow management ensured a stable financial footing over the course of the year.

The group's net sales dipped by one per cent to just under €2bn as a result. Ebitda dropped by 33 per cent to €68m, while the Ebitda margin fell from 4.7 per cent in 2024 to 3.4 per cent in 2025. Net loss stood at -€21m compared to -€10m in 2024.

The group recorded an 11 per cent drop in total paper production, however, output of corrugated case material was 16 per cent higher than in 2024 at 525,000 t. Market pulp production decreased by three per cent to approximately 415,000 t. At the same time, Heinzel reported record output at its subsidiary Heinzel Pöls, which made slightly more than 491,000 t of bleached and unbleached softwood kraft pulp in 2025.

## Containerboard under pressure as the firm focuses on developing its portfolio

In its latest annual report, Heinzel stated that the European recycled containerboard market continued to be shaped by surplus supply in 2025. Despite a short-lived recovery in the spring, demand remained subdued on the whole, with supply surpassing demand for much of the year. Higher exports did not bring lasting relief to the market, either, with capacity utilisation below planned levels in parts of the industry. After stabilising in the spring, the market environment became weaker in the second half of

the year.

Slower demand affected production in the second half of 2025, Heinzel noted. The Austrian paper mill in Laakirchen also concentrated on expanding its portfolio by adding additional linerboard grades. PM 10, which was converted to produce the main grades of recycled fluting and Testliner 3, was fine-tuned to make the new grades and the new products now run regularly on PM 10.

Heinzel is also ramping up its paper carrier bag activities with the introduction of the Shopper Pro grade. The first trial runs had already taken place, and further development would be one of the main focal points for the company in 2026. At the same time, Heinzel noted that an increasing number of new suppliers are continuously trying to gain a foothold in the segment. Along with sack kraft paper producers targeting paper for carrier bags, new competitors that previously concentrated on copy paper and similar grades were now entering the market.

The group is also working to expand its kraft paper portfolio, announcing projects to make baking paper, tapes, paper sticks and release paper at PM 6 in Steyrermühl, Austria.

#### CEO Sebastian Heinzel sees 2026 as another year of business stabilisation

Heinzel Group expects the economic climate to remain challenging in 2026. Nevertheless, the group is confident about its future due to its targeted efficiency programs and a clear strategic focus on long term, sustainable growth. “Even in a difficult environment, we continued to move forward together and delivered important steps in our transformation”, said CEO Sebastian Heinzel.

| Heinzel Group results       |              |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| million €                   | 2025         | 2024         |
| <b>Overview</b>             |              |              |
| Sales                       | 1,989        | 2,164        |
| EBITDA                      | 68           | 102          |
| EBIT                        | -14          | 29           |
| Net result                  | -21          | -10          |
| <b>Production (1,000 t)</b> | <b>1,194</b> | <b>1,306</b> |
| Market pulp                 | 414          | 425          |
| Paper                       | 780          | 881          |
| <b>Deliveries (1,000 t)</b> | <b>3,013</b> | <b>3,166</b> |
| Heinzel products            | 1,196        | 1,281        |
| Trades goods                | 1,816        | 1,885        |
| Source: Heinzel             |              |              |

# Paper industry association calls for action to tackle drive shortage

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Several German industry associations once again drew attention to the shortage of lorry drivers. Germany's paper industry association **Die Papierindustrie** and ten other trade associations are calling on the federal government to significantly improve the framework conditions for the drivers' labour market. Among other things, they are calling for the profession of driver to be made more attractive and for better working conditions, a consistent reduction in red tape, and the facilitation of immigration from third countries into the driver labour market.



# Wepa finalises MPH1865 acquisition

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**Wepa** has completed the acquisition of a majority stake in **MPH1865**, a French manufacturer of tissue paper and soap. Wepa says it aims to strengthen its presence in the French away-from-home market. The newly acquired business will operate under the name Wepa Professional France going forward. Following the transaction, Wepa will operate four production sites in France and employ around 1,000 people in the country.



# Saica finalises investment at Saica Flex Deeside

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Spanish paper and packaging group **Saica** has invested £2.2m (€2.5m) in a fully automatic coating machine at its Saica Flex Deeside plant, quadrupling coating capacity. The new coater enables wider web widths, higher operating speeds and also supports Saica's entry into the growing linerless label segment. The machine is now fully operational.



# Antalis to increase prices

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**Antalis** says it will adjust prices in various product groups. Price increases of up to 10 per cent for products in the print segment and 3-5 per cent in the office segment are to be launched on the market as of 1 May, 2026. Surcharges of 3-15 per cent are planned for the visual communication segment and 18-70 per cent for the packaging & hygiene products segment.



# Igepa announces price increase

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Germany's **Igepa group** announces price increases for various product groups in the paper and board segment as of 4 May 2026. Depending on the segment and product group, the adjustments range from 5-10 per cent. Igepa says it is currently facing a large number of short-term and in some cases significant price adjustments on the part of suppliers. The company says it is therefore forced to pass these costs to its customers to ensure long-term profitability.



# Fibre Excellence is in receivership and halts production

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The commercial court of Toulouse has placed French pulp producer Fibre Excellence in receivership on 27 April. The company had filed for insolvency and requested to open receivership proceedings earlier in the month. Fibre Excellence said it now entered a six-month observation period.

Production stoppages are now taking place at the company's two pulp mills due to insufficient wood supplies. A spokesperson for the CGT trade union said that wood suppliers were hesitant in light of the insolvency, as they fear payment defaults. Fibre Excellence confirmed that its Saint-Gaudens mill had been taken offline on 23 April, while the Provence mill in Tarascon was scheduled to be temporarily idled on 28 April.

As part of the insolvency proceedings, solutions for continuing operations and preserving jobs are to be explored. The management has been in talks with the French government for some time, which is set to support the company's continued existence. So far, no agreement has been reached on the form of support. The state had offered financial aid, while the company, which also produces energy in-house, was primarily pushing for an adjustment of the regulated feed-in tariff for electricity generated from biomass, as wood prices have risen significantly in recent years. The government recently put forward some proposals in this regard.

According to the union spokesperson, the government has already offered several forms of assistance, but this has so far not led to a solution. He added that options including a sale or the entry of an investor are now being considered.

Fibre Excellence employs more than 500 people at its two pulp mills. In Saint-Gaudens, the company can produce up to 280,000 tpy of softwood and hardwood pulp, while the Provence mill has a capacity of 220,000 tpy of softwood pulp.



# Södra remains under pressure in pulp business, but benefits from one-off effects in the first quarter

 **EUWID** + 29 April 2026 | 🕒 ~ 3 min | Published in issue 18/2026

Swedish forestry group Södra posts positive result for the first quarter of 2026 despite a challenging market environment. However, the result was significantly influenced by the sale of forest land in the Baltic States. The company's operating result excluding the sale was significantly lower year-on-year and reflects the still difficult situation on softwood pulp markets.

Sales revenue decreased by 19 per cent to SEK6.6bn (Q1 25: SEK8.2bn) in the first quarter. Operating profit amounted to SEK895m (SEK439m) including a capital gain of almost SEK1.5bn from the sale of forests in Latvia and Estonia. Adjusted for this one-off effect, Södra's operating result for the reporting quarter shows a loss of SEK578m, contrasting a profit of SEK 439m for the same period of the previous year. Ebitda and net income are also significantly distorted by the windfall.

Continued weak demand, unfavourable currency effects and increased raw material costs had a negative impact, the company announced in its quarterly report. In particular, the appreciation of the Swedish currency against the US dollar reduced export revenues. At the same time, the ratio between raw material costs and achievable product prices remained stretched.

## Pulp business clearly in the red

Södra Cell's pulp business showed a much weaker performance in the first quarter than in the previous year. The division recorded an operating loss of SEK158m after a profit of SEK538m in the same period of the previous year. The main reasons for decline were negative currency effects and higher raw material costs.

According to the company, demand for pulp remained weak, especially in Europe. At the same time, the global market remained fraught with oversupply. There was an imbalance between supply and demand for both hardwood and softwood pulp, which maintained price pressure. Prices for softwood pulp rose slightly in Europe and the USA, while they remained largely stable in Asia. Overall, however, this was not enough to compensate for the cost increases, the company writes.

In addition, large quantities of pulp continued to be delivered to Asia, which had a dampening effect on the average price level. Sales volumes were slightly below the previous year's level. On the production side, Södra's softwood pulp output declined, while hardwood pulp output increased, partly also due to a scheduled maintenance stop.

In addition to market weakness, geopolitical developments made a negative impact. According to the company, these led to rising

costs, especially for logistics and input materials. Trade barriers and regulatory framework conditions made business even more difficult.

At the same time, pressure on the raw material markets remained high. The cost of wood and other input materials remained elevated, while the revenue side did not follow suit to the same extent. This structural imbalance had a direct negative impact on profitability.

### Efficiency measures are showing initial effects

Södra focused more on efficiency improvements in the first quarter. As part of the “World-class Efficiency” program, improvements were implemented with an earnings contribution of SEK233m. The aim is to reduce costs and strengthen the revenue base.

In addition, the company is pushing ahead with further development towards higher-quality products. Among other things, Södra will launch tannin on the market in the short term, while lignin will play a greater role in the company’s product portfolio in the long term.

With the sale of the forest areas in the Baltic States and the planned divestment of the stake in Sunpine, Södra is strategically realigning its portfolio. Both steps are intended to strengthen the financial position and improve the basis for the further development of the group.

| Södra results                            |                 |       |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| million SEK                              | January - March |       |
|                                          | 2026            | 2025  |
| <b>Key figures</b>                       |                 |       |
| Sales                                    | 6,604           | 8,154 |
| EBITDA                                   | 1,307           | 836   |
| Operating result                         | 895             | 439   |
| Net result                               | 1,120           | 359   |
| <b>Selected results by business area</b> |                 |       |
| <b>Södra Cell</b>                        |                 |       |
| Sales                                    | 3,401           | 4,512 |
| EBITDA                                   | 134             | 827   |
| Operating result                         | -158            | 538   |
| Production in 1,000 t                    | 463             | 492   |
| Deliveries in 1,000 t                    | 492             | 514   |
| Source: Södra                            |                 |       |

# Germany: Paper mills taking a somewhat mixed approach to kraftliner pricing

## Second round of price rises for woodfree papers set for May

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**The EUWID market survey conducted with respondents in the paper and corrugated industry in late April in Germany did not reveal a uniform pattern for kraftliner price hikes. There are reports about increases implemented in either April or May. Increases implemented in April basically followed the price hikes for recycled grades, players in the supply chain report. In the German woodfree paper market, suppliers are sending clear signals that further price increases are in the pipeline. Even though agreements were not signed and sealed yet, more than a few buyers expect a second wave of price hikes.**

Looking back over the past months, the corrugated board market in Germany has been weaker than players originally expected. For now, the war in the Middle East is not having any impact on demand. Following the Covid-19 pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine, it appears the market has developed better crisis resilience.

### **Second wave of price hikes for fine paper to commence in May**

Against the backdrop of the current round of price increases, fine paper buyers in Germany are once again raising the issue of overcapacity and the shrinking market. The imbalance between supply and demand persists, even though lead times remain long in some instances. Insiders said that in March, virtually all manufacturers registered an improvement in capacity utilisation at their mills and in their delivery volumes. However, they added that this was connected to inventory build-up, and they unanimously agreed that many buyers had large amounts on stock at the moment. Market players felt that ordering had levelled off again in April.

At the same time, some printers are also reporting good capacity utilisation, although comments are pointing to a fragile order situation. Many print jobs are said to be only smaller print runs.

Not all EUWID sources share the frequently voiced concern that the last and current round of price increases might have a negative impact on demand. Higher paper costs might accelerate the structural decline in demand for paper a little. That being said, the real opponent for the paper and printing sector was the opportunities opened up by AI that call many paper applications fundamentally into question.

For more than just this reason, the mood in the German paper and printing sector is gloomier than it has been in a long time. Experts also noted a marked increase in uncertainty at a company level. Business had become hard to plan, not least because of cost uncertainty. There were too many risks for companies, and the general business climate was also suffering. In the current environment, both investments and advertising budgets were being cut, sources said.

Nonetheless, paper mills have launched an increase in paper prices in April on the back of their balance sheets and earnings performance. Paper mills had last underscored the need for reasonable prices since the summer of 2025. The fact that paper machines had recently operated at good capacity utilisation had lent support to the paper industry in the latest price talks. Observers said that the latest increase in manufacturing cost was hitting the bottom line directly and warned that further risks were looming large in the weeks ahead. Additional price increases for woodfree paper were needed as a result, sources said, talking about hikes announced for May.

Paper industry insiders stressed that April's general price increase was not enough for them to operate at adequate profitability. Most prices climbed by up to €50/t with effect from 1 April or later in the month. In several instances, the hikes stood at roughly €30/t. Market players are quoting prices of more than €900/t and typically of around €950/t for offset sheets and reels. A similar picture has been painted for woodfree coated sheets and reels, with €950/t seen as the target. That being said, information for all grades varied from the starting point, with special deals at the start of the year often still running at around €850/t.

Paper mills and suppliers are sending clear signals that further price increases are in the pipeline, with virtually all sources interviewed by EUWID gaining this impression. Even though agreements were not signed and sealed yet, more than a few buyers expect a second wave of price hikes with effect from 1 May. For customers with monthly agreements, the April increases are seen largely as an interim step. Experts believe that the mark-ups for woodfree sheets and reels might add up to at least €50-60/t including in May and reach up to €100/t, depending on the previous level.

Special deals have been and remain very much in the spotlight for many suppliers. In recent quarters, price levels in this business had sometimes drifted well away from usual contract prices. Observers agreed that offers of this kind, made especially by paper mills but also by paper merchants, have no longer been seen in recent weeks.

Insiders noted that the copy paper business was one exception. This market remained fiercely competitive, not least among European players. Even though higher prices have been announced, pricing for C-grade copy paper is adjusting a little more slowly than for sheets and reels. Experts said that a change in prices has been initiated but got off to a late start. Even though the rock-bottom prices seen in the first couple of months of 2026 would not be repeated, many paper mills still seem to be some distance from their goals for copy paper, with hikes of mostly €20 and up to €50/t on list prices, and there is clearly ground to make up.

### **Mixed picture regarding price hike for kraftliner**

On the German market for kraftliner, producers took various approaches to pursuing the announced price hikes in April. Suppliers had already presented their demands in March, which could be as high as €100/t, and were usually slated to take effect from April, according to EUWID information. At the same time, however, there were also price announcements targeting €80/t and only as of

May. Against this backdrop, as of late April, it appears negotiations between paper mills and the corrugated board industry have resulted in two different outcomes: In some cases, increases already took effect in April, while others said the price mark-ups would apply as of 1 May.

In those instances where buyers confirm they already agreed to higher prices for April, increases were mostly said to be €60/t for brown kraftliner and €40/t for white-top kraftliner. The step for semi-chemical fluting was in line with that for brown kraftliner, according to market insiders. This was also confirmed by paper producers surveyed by EUWID. This means the mark-ups implemented so far are smaller than the full amount that paper mills were originally targeting.

Looking towards May, EUWID respondents from both sides of the market say they are not yet negotiating a second step, such as the one introduced for brown corrugated case material in April. In light of the increased production costs, a further price step is “not off the table” but it is still too early for specific announcements as of May, explained one kraftliner producer surveyed in calendar week 17.

Players in the corrugated industry, who were able to fend off increases for all kraftliner grades, citing the planned increase in May, told EUWID they were concerned they might have to accept an even larger step. One reason for this is the current availability, say market experts. There is no acute scarcity right now, yet both corrugated board producers and kraftliner producers say their paper machines are running well and order backlogs are decent, which is also apparent in slightly extended delivery times. Overall, industry insiders describe demand for kraftliner as largely good. Positive impetus is coming from temporary inventory build-ups in anticipation of rising paper prices as well as the seasonal business and maintenance downtimes on paper machines, say market participants.

### **Iran war having no effect on demand for corrugated packaging so far**

While the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine had led to panic-buying, so far the market for corrugated packaging has been largely unaffected by the ripple effects of the war in Iran. Apparently, a few major groups had contacted their packaging suppliers to ask about supply security, but insiders said the situation was not comparable to previous crises since 2020. The industry has developed a degree of crisis resilience, explained one company representative. Therefore, companies say the Iran war has resulted in neither an upturn nor downturn since March.

However, looking back to the turn of the year and the following weeks, it appears the development of the German corrugated board market was significantly weaker than EUWID respondents had predicted at that time. In retrospect, players say they may have been misled by inventory stocking effects, which suggested a different market picture. Only now, after reviewing their financial results, are companies noticing unexpectedly large declines on a square-meter basis in the first months of the year as compared with the fourth quarter. This, in turn, had a similarly negative effect on sales in the industry. This development was also reflective of the economic situation in key customer markets, with the exception of the food industry, EUWID was told. Nevertheless, there are certain companies that have better capacity utilisation than their competitors. However, there are no signs that better or worse activity levels are correlated to the focus of a firm's product portfolio.

On the price side, companies are all feeling mounting pressure due to the latest price increases, which add up to as much as €100/t depending on the paper grade. In many cases, respondents said they would need to pass along these hikes, but it was a bad time to ask their customers to pay more, since competition was so fierce.

On the bright side, companies say they are not feeling the expected pressure from certain aspects of the PPWR. The envisaged empty space ratio for grouped, transport and eCommerce packaging is barely an issue, as the packaging is tailor-made for customers and this aspect of the legislation is already taken into account, they say. However, corrugated board companies are feeling pressure as one major online platform has substituted its demand for corrugated packaging with paper sacks, which are also being produced by the trading company itself.

It remains unclear how producers of corrugated packaging will be affected by the upcoming duty applied to packages coming from non-EU countries. The European Union is eliminating the de minimis exemption for shipments containing goods with a value of less than €150, which will be subject to a flat-rate duty of €3 as of 1 July 2026. According to a recent press release from the German association of e-commerce retailers (BEVH), sales in Germany for the three largest Chinese-owned platforms were up by 12.9 per cent in the first quarter of this year compared with one year earlier. Temu, Shein and Ali Express are growing four times faster than the overall online retail market in Germany, according to BEVH. EUWID respondents say the introduction of the EU duty could help to refocus demand back to Europe and support the local market.

In its latest press release, BEVH also addressed another topic that is relevant to the corrugated board market: The mail-order shipping of medication, where the packaging must meet higher standards and be delivered more quickly than in other markets. Demand here is still modest but potentially attractive, the association said.

# NOA: European corrugated packaging market resilient despite crises, modest recovery expected

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Growth in the corrugated packaging market in western and central Europe has so far defied expectations in the 2020s, but UK-based consultancy NOA expects some market growth for the rest of the decade.

Developments have been shaped by a series of global crises: The Covid-19 pandemic triggered a surge in demand from mobile/online/distance retail in 2020 and 2021, while Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 led to a sharp escalation in energy costs that continues to weigh on both consumer spending and production costs across Europe. At the same time, regulatory initiatives aimed at improving sustainability such as the EUDR, PPWR and EPR schemes are creating additional challenges for the fibre-based packaging industry. As a result, growth in the corrugated industry was very volatile and lagged behind the GDP development in 2024 and 2025.

Early 2026 suggested a return to accelerated growth in the industry, according to NOA, however the Iran War seems to have scuppered that optimism. The conflict and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have once again driven up oil and gas prices, which could trigger a prolonged global recession, or normalise again in the near term.

Forecasts for 2026 have had to be revised downwards by the NOA team due to this latest global shockwave.

## Long-term outlook supported by sustainability trends

Under more optimistic scenarios, growth prospects for the packaging industry remain positive over the next five years. UK-based consultancy NOA expects average annual growth of over one or even two per cent for the period through to 2030. After underperforming overall GDP growth since 2021, packaging demand is expected to broadly track economic growth again from 2026 onwards. Brand owners are increasingly responding to consumer demand for sustainable packaging and regulatory requirements – provided it remains affordable. As a result, “greener” solutions are expected to drive most of the growth in paper packaging between 2025 and 2030.

NOA expects sustainable packaging to gradually becoming the industry standard. Major brands are leading this shift: Cadbury is trialling cardboard tubes, Lego has replaced plastic bags with paper pouches, Ikea aims to eliminate plastics from its operations by 2030, and Procter & Gamble has introduced fibre-based packaging for razors and other products. The key challenge for the coming years will be to make sustainable packaging the default option, combining environmental benefits with cost competitiveness.

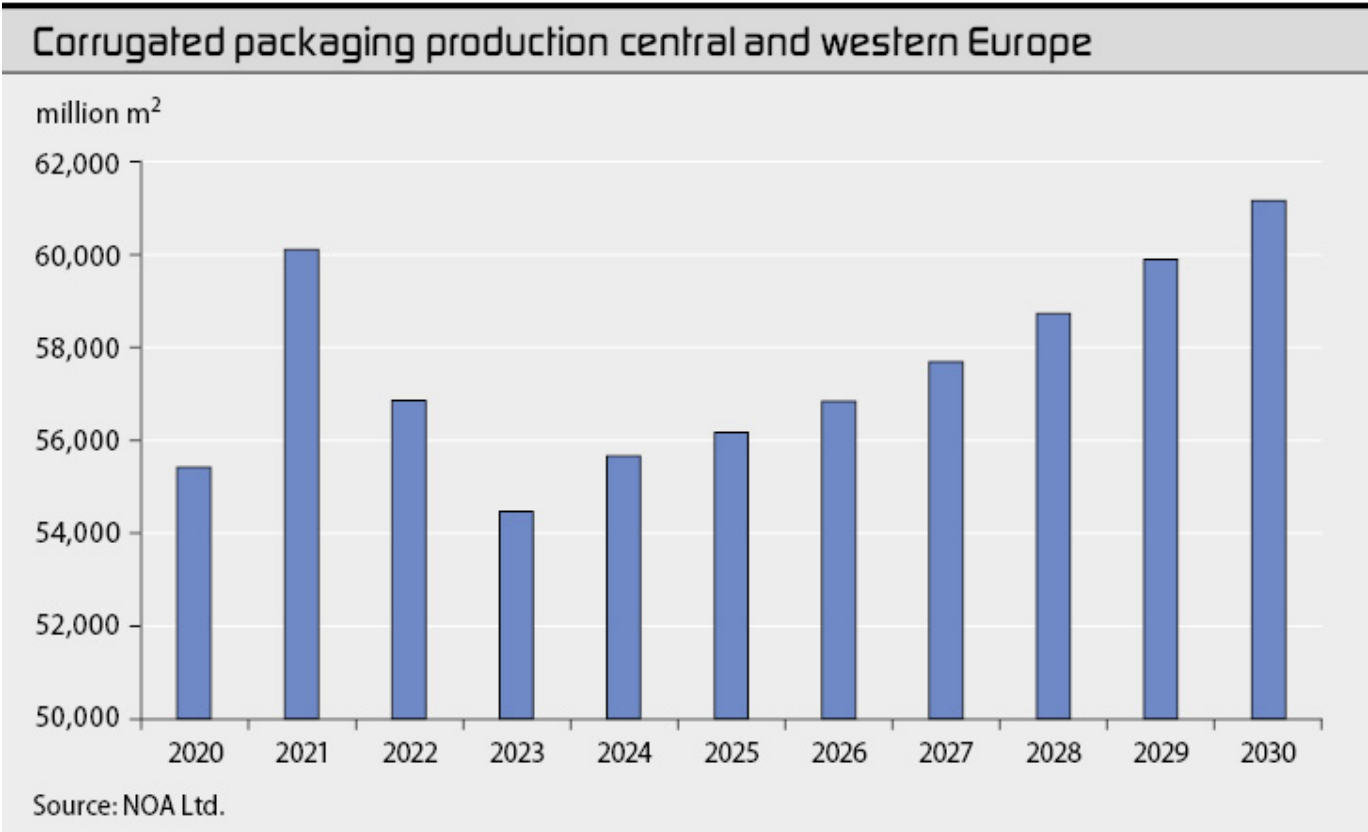
Regional growth trends remain uneven, food sector remains dominant

While many European countries recorded declines between 2020 and 2025, NOA expects all markets to return to growth of around 1.5 to 1.9 per cent annually between 2025 and 2030.

Poland stands out, having already grown by 1.7 per cent in the first half of the decade. Growth is expected to accelerate to 1.9 per cent, reaching a size of 7.6 billion m² and increasing its share of the European corrugated market by nearly one percentage point to 12.4 per cent. Italy and Iberia also expanded in both periods, with growth gaining momentum. Italy (8.5 billion m²) remains the second-largest market after Germany (11.6 billion m²).

The food segment, including both FMCG and fresh produce, remains the largest end-use market for corrugated packaging, accounting for nearly 50 per cent of total demand. It grew by almost one per cent between 2020 and 2025 and is expected to expand by around 2.3 per cent in the following five years.

By contrast, most other segments declined in the first half of the decade and are expected to either continue shrinking or post only below-average growth through to 2030. This also applies to the largest non-FMCG segment, industrial and machinery, which saw a decline of 0.8 per cent between 2020 and 2025 and is forecast to grow by just 0.2 per cent between 2025 and 2030.



# With hikes, suppliers in Italy tread a fine line between cost coverage and machine load

Prices rise in many market segments of the paper and board market

 29 April 2026 | ⌚ ~ 16 min | Published in issue 18/2026

Producers of paper and board are faced with a dilemma: They need to raise their prices in order to compensate for higher costs and avoid spilling red ink. At the same time, however, they also have to offer attractive prices so they do not to throttle demand and lose customers to their competitors. Due to the uncertain geopolitical situation in the Gulf region and the resulting volatility for businesses and the economy, decision-making is not getting any easier. After all, the paper industry’s customers as well as players further along the value chain are all struggling with cost inflation and adjusting their consumption behaviour.

Between mid-February and the end of March, customers of the paper and board industries have stepped up their orders. In anticipation of rising prices, they moved forward their orders and sometimes purchased additional volumes. The good demand temporarily caused order books to swell at paper and board mills. Suppliers are taking advantage of this moment to bolster their calls for higher prices. However, numerous customers already stocked up on material prior to the price increases and now have comfortable stockpiles. Consequently, there has been a slowdown in incoming orders with the higher prices effective in April or May, so paper mills are seeing their order books shrink again.

## Fine paper suppliers push for further price increases

In April, customers in Italy had to pay more for woodfree coated and uncoated paper. However, the size of the mark-up and exact timing was often determined in individual negotiations, say EUWID respondents.

| EUWID Price Watch Italy                                                                                                                   |             |           |             |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| April 2026                                                                                                                                |             |           |             |  |
| Prices in € per tonne free delivered unless otherwise stated                                                                              |             |           |             |  |
| First quarter 2026                                                                                                                        |             |           |             |  |
| Fine paper                                                                                                                                |             |           |             |  |
| Woodfree uncoated                                                                                                                         |             |           |             |  |
| Copy paper 80 g A4 B grade                                                                                                                | 910 - 960   | 880 - 960 | 960 - 1,050 |  |
| Copy paper 80 g A4 C grade                                                                                                                | 790 - 880   | 760 - 860 | 820 - 970   |  |
| Other news 80 g                                                                                                                           | 900 - 970   | 870 - 940 | 960 - 1,050 |  |
| Other news 80 g                                                                                                                           | 900 - 960   | 770 - 860 | 870 - 970   |  |
| Woodfree coated                                                                                                                           |             |           |             |  |
| News, double coated, 100 g                                                                                                                | 900 - 1,040 | 910 - 960 | 960 - 1,160 |  |
| Feed, double coated, 100 g                                                                                                                | 860 - 950   | 820 - 900 | 890 - 990   |  |
| Publication paper                                                                                                                         |             |           |             |  |
| Standard newspaper 40 g                                                                                                                   | 560 - 615   | 560 - 590 | 590 - 620   |  |
| Standard newspaper 40 g                                                                                                                   | 570 - 625   | 570 - 600 | 600 - 630   |  |
| Improved newspaper 50-60, 12 g                                                                                                            | 590 - 615   | 590 - 610 | 620 - 645   |  |
| IMC, offset 60 g                                                                                                                          | 720 - 760   | 720 - 760 | 740 - 760   |  |
| SC, offset 60 g (A)                                                                                                                       | 620 - 660   | 620 - 640 | 640 - 670   |  |
| SC, offset 60 g (B)                                                                                                                       | 600 - 670   | 600 - 630 | 630 - 660   |  |
| Corrugated case material                                                                                                                  |             |           |             |  |
| Primary fibre corrugated case material                                                                                                    |             |           |             |  |
| Unbleached kraftliner 170 g, European quality                                                                                             | 620 - 650   | 620 - 650 | 630 - 660   |  |
| White top kraftliner 180 g, European quality                                                                                              | 570 - 620   | 570 - 620 | 590 - 630   |  |
| Recycled corrugated case material                                                                                                         |             |           |             |  |
| Recycled Faling, European quality                                                                                                         | 480 - 490   | 340 - 350 | 400 - 410   |  |
| Tecthine 8, European quality                                                                                                              | 440 - 450   | 360 - 380 | 400 - 410   |  |
| Tecthine 10, European quality                                                                                                             | 450 - 460   | 360 - 380 | 420 - 440   |  |
| White top kraftliner, grade C, 160 g, European quality                                                                                    | 530 - 550   | 480 - 510 | 530 - 560   |  |
| Maklon, Italian quality                                                                                                                   | 300 - 360   | 290 - 300 | 360 - 370   |  |
| Tecthine 8, Italian quality                                                                                                               | 360 - 370   | 360 - 370 | 370 - 380   |  |
| Cartonboard                                                                                                                               |             |           |             |  |
| GD 1                                                                                                                                      | 560 - 630   | 560 - 630 | 620 - 690   |  |
| GD 2                                                                                                                                      | 510 - 590   | 510 - 570 | 580 - 630   |  |
| GC 1                                                                                                                                      | 510 - 590   | 510 - 570 | 580 - 630   |  |
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| EUWID Price Review Italy                                                                                                                  |           |             |             |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|--|
| First quarter 2026                                                                                                                        |           |             |             |  |
| Prices in € per tonne free delivered unless otherwise stated                                                                              |           |             |             |  |
| First quarter 2024                                                                                                                        |           |             |             |  |
| Fourth quarter 2025                                                                                                                       |           |             |             |  |
| First quarter 2023                                                                                                                        |           |             |             |  |
| Recovered paper (prices in weight)                                                                                                        |           |             |             |  |
| News paper and board 1,100                                                                                                                | 70 - 85   | 65 - 95     | 80 - 110    |  |
| Supermarket corrugated paper and board 1,140                                                                                              | 70 - 85   | 70 - 100    | 85 - 140    |  |
| Old corrugated container 1,050                                                                                                            | 60 - 85   | 60 - 100    | 85 - 120    |  |
| New slapping of corrugated board (A/B)                                                                                                    | 100 - 110 | 100 - 120   | 110 - 160   |  |
| Magazine 1,080                                                                                                                            | 100 - 110 | 110 - 140   | 130 - 160   |  |
| Newspaper 1,210                                                                                                                           | 100 - 165 | 110 - 160   | 165 - 180   |  |
| White woodfree board 1,010                                                                                                                | 240 - 305 | 240 - 320   | 300 - 320   |  |
| White newspaper 1,110                                                                                                                     | 290 - 305 | 290 - 330   | 305 - 330   |  |
| White woodfree board 1,180                                                                                                                | 340 - 420 | 400 - 450   | 420 - 450   |  |
| Fine paper                                                                                                                                |           |             |             |  |
| Woodfree uncoated                                                                                                                         |           |             |             |  |
| Copy paper 80 g A4 B grade                                                                                                                | 880 - 960 | 880 - 970   | 970 - 1,050 |  |
| Copy paper 80 g A4 C grade                                                                                                                | 760 - 860 | 760 - 870   | 870 - 970   |  |
| Other news 80 g                                                                                                                           | 870 - 940 | 870 - 950   | 960 - 1,050 |  |
| Other news 80 g                                                                                                                           | 770 - 860 | 770 - 870   | 870 - 970   |  |
| Woodfree coated                                                                                                                           |           |             |             |  |
| News, double coated, 100 g                                                                                                                | 910 - 960 | 910 - 1,000 | 960 - 1,160 |  |
| Feed, double coated, 100 g                                                                                                                | 820 - 960 | 820 - 910   | 890 - 990   |  |
| Publication paper                                                                                                                         |           |             |             |  |
| Standard newspaper 40 g                                                                                                                   | 560 - 590 | 570 - 600   | 590 - 620   |  |
| Standard newspaper 40 g                                                                                                                   | 570 - 600 | 580 - 610   | 600 - 630   |  |
| Improved newspaper 50-60, 12 g                                                                                                            | 590 - 615 | 600 - 620   | 620 - 645   |  |
| IMC, offset 60 g                                                                                                                          | 720 - 760 | 720 - 760   | 740 - 760   |  |
| SC, offset 60 g (A)                                                                                                                       | 620 - 640 | 620 - 650   | 640 - 670   |  |
| SC, offset 60 g (B)                                                                                                                       | 600 - 670 | 600 - 630   | 630 - 660   |  |
| Corrugated case material                                                                                                                  |           |             |             |  |
| Primary fibre corrugated case material                                                                                                    |           |             |             |  |
| Unbleached kraftliner 170 g, European quality                                                                                             | 620 - 650 | 630 - 660   | 630 - 660   |  |
| White top kraftliner 180 g, European quality                                                                                              | 570 - 620 | 580 - 630   | 590 - 630   |  |
| Recycled corrugated case material                                                                                                         |           |             |             |  |
| Recycled Faling, European quality                                                                                                         | 340 - 350 | 340 - 370   | 350 - 410   |  |
| Tecthine 8, European quality                                                                                                              | 360 - 380 | 360 - 410   | 400 - 410   |  |
| Tecthine 10, European quality                                                                                                             | 350 - 360 | 350 - 380   | 420 - 430   |  |
| White top kraftliner, grade C, 160 g, European quality                                                                                    | 480 - 510 | 500 - 530   | 530 - 560   |  |
| Maklon, Italian quality                                                                                                                   | 290 - 300 | 300 - 320   | 300 - 360   |  |
| Tecthine 8, Italian quality                                                                                                               | 360 - 370 | 370 - 380   | 370 - 370   |  |
| Cartonboard                                                                                                                               |           |             |             |  |
| GD 1                                                                                                                                      | 560 - 630 | 560 - 630   | 630 - 670   |  |
| GD 2                                                                                                                                      | 510 - 570 | 510 - 590   | 580 - 630   |  |
| GC 1                                                                                                                                      | 510 - 590 | 510 - 570   | 580 - 630   |  |
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After the failure of a timid attempt to lift prices in the first

quarter – which reportedly actually resulted in prices being reduced by €20-40/t in numerous cases – paper producers launched a new price round for deliveries as of the beginning of the second quarter. The argumentation in the announcements focused on the low sales prices and higher costs, primarily for energy and logistics as well as for raw and auxiliary materials. Since the outbreak of the Iran war, energy prices have risen and industrial companies are increasingly worried about sufficient and affordable energy supplies, so raising prices has become an even more pressing issue for the paper industry. To underline the urgency, several suppliers shortly thereafter announced a further price increase. In rare cases, paper producers want to use an energy surcharge to adjust their prices to the current cost situation.

Even though much uncertainty remains, it appears the initial market upset in reaction to the knock-on effects of the Iran war has faded somewhat during the second half of April, thereby easing some of the pressure that was expected to bring rapid price hikes for fine paper. In mid-February – following the announcement of the price hike but before the outbreak of the Middle East conflict – customers had already begun to accumulate additional paper inventories and they stepped up these efforts even more in March. Consequently, new order intake for April and especially for May has proven to be weaker and the mills' order backlogs are shrinking.

The producers' side made a major effort to implement higher prices for deliveries in April – and this attempt apparently succeeded for the most part: Although the implemented hikes never reached the originally targeted amounts – and were sometimes significantly lower – the price increase has taken effect widely throughout the market. For woodfree coated papers, market participants in Italy say deliveries in April will cost €40-50/t more. Reports about the price increase for uncoated papers vary between €20-40/t. In general, paper industry representatives welcome this price increase and are happy to have achieved an important first step. A few producers, however, do not plan to let up and are already pushing for further mark-ups of €40 or €50/t for orders or deliveries as of the beginning or middle of May.

Normally, paper merchants would welcome a price increase like the one implemented in April: As a rule, merchants benefit from higher paper prices, not least because this raises the value of their inventories. However, some paper merchants in Italy believe their current position is not particularly advantageous. The merchant business is often the first one that has to accept the price increases and then must try to pass them along in the market, one player told EUWID. But customers have shown little willingness to accept higher prices: They had stocked up with sufficient paper in advance and were now trying to wait out the situation for as long as possible, EUWID was told. The April mark-ups are therefore primarily applicable in the indent business, merchants say. In the stock business, higher prices are due to take effect as of May.

A few merchants say they are concerned that not all players have to pay the same increases, which could put certain companies at a competitive disadvantage. There are already price differences in the market that cannot be explained solely by the size of orders, noted one EUWID respondent. These worries are even more prominent in Italy, as the largest merchant firms there are owned by paper producers.

Merchants' fears have been confirmed and fuelled by scattered reports from printing companies and converters that producers are taking differing approaches to implementing price hikes, depending on the importance of the customer and the order volume. Costs in the paper industry have risen overall but not all paper producers appear to be feeling the same pressure. Filling capacity and boosting deliveries seems to be more important here to some paper mills, so they are willing to put up with lower prices. A few large contracts for offset paper were reportedly extended beyond April with unchanged prices; a price hike of up to €50/t will take effect here only as of June or July. For smaller customers, however, the same producer introduced price adjustments of €30/t as of April, according to one merchant involved.

Customers in Italy still have the option to source paper from Far East, provided they are not in a hurry and can live with the delivery-related uncertainties.

Suppliers from Asia were the first to demand and implement price hikes of €20-50/t in the immediate wake of the outbreak of the Iran war. However, woodfree uncoated papers from Asia remain inexpensive and, depending on the paper grade, still cost €100-150/t less than paper from European producers.

### **Hesitant implementation of price hikes for publication paper in April**

Prices for newsprint and magazine paper in Italy did rise at the start of the second quarter, but not as quickly or substantially as producers had envisaged. Market participants report that, under various pricing models, the cost of paper is increasing either immediately as of April or only as of May. For newsprint and SC paper, the mark-ups are typically smaller, ranging between €20-25/t. When it comes to LWC, reports from EUWID respondents can vary more markedly. Several paper producers and customers say price hikes of between €20-40/t were introduced for deliveries as of April or May. A few suppliers, however, claim they have achieved significantly larger price increases for coated magazine paper, reportedly as much as €70/t, either in a single step in April or in two steps in April and May.

It is surprising that newsprint producers were willing to take this initiative and yet were unable to reach agreements with heftier price increases. Demand for standard newsprint in Italy – and throughout Europe – is described as decent and solid right now. Especially in the weeks between mid-February and the end of March, order intake was reported to be brisk. Moreover, average capacity utilisation in the European industry is robust at over 80 per cent heading into the second quarter.

The closures of the past years are finally starting to have a noticeable effect, suppliers say. Another key factor here is the fading presence of Canadian producers, who have been shipping considerably less newsprint to Italy since at least the beginning of the fourth quarter. With a lack of alternative suppliers, customers were turning more to the European industry again, explained one producer.

And this is apparently also having an effect on the availability of newsprint. Even though paper is not scarce, it is not always possible to meet certain customer needs and wishes, producers say. In this environment, the industry was reportedly also able to prevent buyers from accumulating excessive inventories before the start of the latest price round.

Suppliers of coated magazine paper say they were also able to benefit from a reduced supply in order to push through their price demands. Here, the upcoming merger between UPM and Sappi apparently played a role as well: The joint-venture will create a new industry heavyweight in this segment. At the same time, customers will have a smaller number of potential suppliers. In future, customers who need to carry out a project on LWC will have fewer options to choose from, notes one supplier. Paper mills want to take advantage of this opportunity to keep their prices high beyond April, and possibly even introduce further price steps.

By contrast, suppliers of SC paper are not in such a strong position because their product must compete with standard and improved newsprint. Despite order activity rebounding from the middle of the second quarter, capacity utilisation in the paper mills is still at a modest level of just above 70 per cent. The reasons why a small price hike succeeded was because of the price movement for newsprint and because the paper mills were desperate to find quick cost relief, producers and customers say.

According to customers, the situation on the publication paper market at the start of the second quarter played less of a role. Overall, the price increase was modest and therefore manageable for buyers. However, publishers and printing companies vehemently reject calls for further hikes, pointing to their own challenging business situation and cost position. Without the rising energy prices, the paper industry would not have had any good arguments for price hikes, they claim.

### **First price hikes for recycled CCM in Italy implemented in April**

In April, a first price increase for recycled corrugated case material went through in Italy. Market participants say prices were lifted by €60/t for brown grades and €40/t for uncoated white-top testliner.

But producers all agree that this mark-up is not sufficient. The increase in natural gas prices alone since the end of February effectively means additional costs of €30-40/t in paper production, some producers calculate. Moreover, recovered paper prices and costs for transport and logistics have also ticked higher. Expensive logistics are noticeable in two ways: On the one hand, in sourcing raw materials and auxiliary materials, and on the other hand, when delivering paper, explained one paper producer. A few Italian paper mills also complained to EUWID they had to spend more for the disposal of production waste and residual materials.

Against this backdrop and with a view to the price trends in other major European markets, producers on the Italian market want to pursue a further price adjustment of as much as €40/t for deliveries in May.

To support their pricing plans, a few producers point to the good bookings situation and longer delivery times. Others cite logistics difficulties and/or technical problems, which can lead to deliveries being reduced or delayed. Although paper is theoretically still available in more-than-sufficient quantities, it is not always possible to fulfil customers' wishes when it comes to the timing of deliveries or the desired volumes, explained one producer.

Prices for fresh-fibre corrugated case material were unchanged once again in Italy in April. A few producers of brown kraftliner had reportedly agreed with some customers on a price increase for deliveries in April, but rescinded from implementing this throughout the market, so as not to lose any volumes to their competitors. EUWID respondents from both sides of the market say, however, that they have already agreed to raise prices for the entire range of primary fibre-based corrugated case material grades in May. These increases reportedly range between €30-60/t.

Unbleached kraftliner from the US is also becoming more expensive: Suppliers implemented a price adjustment of €20-30/t for production in April. A further price step of a similar size is slated to follow for production in May.

In line with the typical trend at this time of year, demand for kraftliner is improving. Customers have positive expectations for the fruit and vegetable season now underway, bolstering the industry's hopes for a decent year for primary fibre-based corrugated case material. European producers want to take advantage of this to further firm up their position in the Italian market. Last year, amid declining availability of brown kraftliner volumes from the USA, new opportunities had opened up, say some producers, who now want to continue pursuing these.

However, European producers are not the only ones interested. EUWID respondents report a growing presence of Brazilian suppliers in the market and anticipate volumes from this country will grow again this year – not least because these are made easier by the Mercosur trade agreement. One indication of this is that a Brazilian company is establishing structures to ensure better customer service and more reliable deliveries, commented one buyer.

Surprisingly, players in the Italian corrugated board sector have only few complaints when asked about demand development in the first three or four months of this year. However, their concerns centre around the future development of corrugated case material prices. Some of the price increases have apparently been passed along by producers of corrugated sheets, but transferring these higher costs to consumers via corrugated box prices is proving more difficult.

### **Limited implementation of price increases for cartonboard in April**

There were diverging trends on the Italian markets for white-lined chipboard and folding boxboard during the first quarter. While suppliers of recycled fibre-based board experienced decent demand and higher delivery volumes, this was contrasted by a significant decrease in deliveries of GC board in the first quarter in Italy. This also explains the positioning of the board producers at the beginning of the second quarter and is reflected in how they approached the current price round for deliveries as of April.

Various producers of GD board announced price hikes of up to 10 per cent, effective for deliveries from the beginning of April. The implementation of these price demands and the consolidation of the new prices is expected to take a bit longer, but manufacturers have little doubt that this price round will prove at least partially successful. In Italy, market participants report hikes for GD 2 and GD 3 amounting to €20-30/t in most cases, applicable for deliveries as of late April or early May. The increases vary depending on the starting price and customer, so they may be larger in a few instances.

As is usual, customers placed higher orders for cartonboard in advance of the price increases. These additional orders swelled the order books at board mills, resulting in longer delivery times. The first price increases for GD board are therefore generally taking effect in the second half of April, or often only as of the last week of the month.

One board producer said he regretted having waited too long to introduce the price increases. Others believe there was no alternative to the late implementation because the initiative would not have had any chance of success without a flurry of announcements, and ultimately, the support of the major market players.

Producers are also not necessarily satisfied with the outcome of the price round for GD on the Italian market because the smallish mark-ups are just barely sufficient to cover the increased costs for transport and recovered paper. As one producer stated: At least another €30/t would have been necessary to make up for the increased natural gas costs so far.

But as customers of the cartonboard industry like to point out, the higher transport and energy prices also apply for downstream companies. A heftier price hike would have been met with more resistance and could have resulted in further decreases in demand.

However, the first effects of the new price round are already noticeable. Customers scaled back their ordering in April and the board mills' order books are shrinking as new order intake slows. In late April, one producer reported that his plant had an order backlog of just 16 days, while a different company said that orders on hand had fallen from four to three weeks.

Cartonboard producers believe this represents a typical behaviour pattern after a new price round, so they are not too worried about this development. Yet, producers also stress that customers will not be able to hold out for too long before they put in new orders. Although customers have increased inventory levels, these are nowhere near as high as they were during previous crisis situations. For one thing, nobody has the money to build up large inventories. Moreover, based on previous experience, customers are scared of the risk of heading into uncertain times with a lot of – presumably expensive – cartonboard on stock.

On the market for GC board, customers have been showing similar behaviour patterns: From a certain point in February, they started ordering more board and then (sometimes abruptly) stopped this ordering by mid-April, EUWID was told. The good demand for GC in Italy is partially already evident in the available statistics for the month of March, commented one producer. Buyers have learned from the past, so they did not let the uncertainty following the outbreak of war in Iran lead to panic and panic-buying, EUWID respondents stressed.

The development of demand heading into the second quarter raises questions about the possibility of higher prices being implemented for GC 2. Several suppliers had declared in March and April that they wanted to implement a cost-driven price hike of up to €80/t for deliveries as of mid-March, April, or May. But even by the second-last week of April, not all producers had revealed their pricing plans. This creates growing uncertainty in the market and gives customers more leverage in their price negotiations with other suppliers.

EUWID respondents say this is the big dilemma that producers in many segments are facing right now: They are confronted with high costs and need to increase their prices to manage cost pressure, and if possible, secure margins. At the same time, they fear that raising sales prices could negatively impact demand and they might lose volumes to their competitors. And so there are oft-heard anecdotes from the market about special conditions and exceptions.

And in any case, it is difficult to implement mark-ups. The market is still oversupplied and low-priced offerings from Asia are intensifying competition despite long delivery times, complains one producer. Customers did not believe that European producers were spilling red ink and urgently needed higher sales prices, a different producer explained. They demanded explanations for cost surcharges, especially because parts of the industry are not that dependent on natural gas and instead use biomass fuels in their production, he said.

Nevertheless, cartonboard suppliers do not want to retreat from their plans. Industry representatives say the price initiative for deliveries as of May should put them in a better position to deal with the possibility of further rising costs and could be a starting point for further price talks. The next opportunity to implement higher prices throughout the market will come by the beginning of the second half-year at the latest, producers believe.

# Prices for ordinary recovered paper grades in Italy move higher in April

Exports to Asia ease amid growing uncertainty

 29 April 2026 | ~ 4 min | Published in issue 18/2026

The events in the Middle East and the resulting price increases for oil and natural gas have – directly or indirectly – spurred movement on the Italian market for recovered paper. An upward price step was recorded for ordinary grades in April. However, the market appeared less nervous overall than it was one year ago, when recovered paper prices suddenly spiked, only to fall shortly thereafter. Quotes for deinking grades either remained flat or ticked higher this month. Despite rising pulp prices, the price trend for higher grades of recovered paper was stable.

| EUWID Price Watch Recovered Paper Italy          |            |            |                                                                     |            |     |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----|
| April 2026                                       |            |            |                                                                     |            |     |
| Prices in € per tonne                            | April 2026 | March 2026 | Feb 2026                                                            | April 2025 |     |
| Mixed paper and board (1.02)                     | 80 - 90    | 70 - 80    | 70 - 80                                                             | 145 -      | 160 |
| Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)    | 85 - 95    | 75 - 85    | 75 - 85                                                             | 155 -      | 170 |
| Old corrugated containers (1.05)                 | 90 - 105   | 80 - 95    | 80 - 95                                                             | 165 -      | 180 |
| New shavings of corrugated board (4.01)          | 110 - 120  | 100 - 110  | 100 - 110                                                           | 180 -      | 190 |
| Magazines (1.06)                                 | 105 - 120  | 105 - 115  | 105 - 115                                                           | 150 -      | 165 |
| Newspapers (2.01)                                | 150 - 165  | 150 - 165  | 150 - 165                                                           | 180 -      | 200 |
| White woodfree letters (3.05)                    | 285 - 305  | 285 - 305  | 285 - 305                                                           | 320 -      | 330 |
| White newspaper (3.14)                           | 290 - 305  | 290 - 305  | 290 - 305                                                           | 310 -      | 335 |
| White woodfree shavings (3.18)                   | 395 - 420  | 395 - 420  | 395 - 420                                                           | 430 -      | 455 |
| Prices ex works, material sorted and in bales    |            |            |                                                                     |            |     |
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In April, prices of mixed paper and board (1.02), supermarket paper and board (1.04) and old corrugated containers (OCC, 1.05) were often raised by €10/t in Italy. Depending on the starting price level, the mark-ups were sometimes also just €5, or occasionally as much as €15/t.

Waste management firms and traders in Italy defended this price step, noting that demand was quite good on the domestic market while collection volumes remained low and energy prices climbed. While energy-intensive paper mills were particularly sensitive to these cost increases, waste management companies said they were also seeing their operating costs rise: Electricity to run their machines was more expensive and transport costs associated with collections were also rising, explained one company representative.

A few paper producers, on the other hand, opined that supply and demand were relatively balanced and there was actually no need for price increases. The export business had softened somewhat and there had been no problems with sourcing recovered paper, several off-takers reported. They suspect that the market uncertainty due to unpredictable global events had prompted some buyers to purchase additional volumes as a precaution.

In the end, several factors contributed to the mark-up for ordinary recovered paper grades. Demand from Italian mills was quite good in April, the players surveyed by EUWID agreed. Some paper mills had idled production for a few days over Easter, but their machines then resumed normal production. Several paper producers reported slightly better ordering in April. Some corrugated board producers had upped their new paper purchasing, driven by concerns over shortages tied to the geopolitical situation, some of them explained. Others said the improvement was a seasonal effect. Several players also pointed to the fact that there was some uncertainty in the export business and export prices were barely higher than those in Italy. Against this backdrop, many suppliers prioritised deliveries to the Italian market in April.

Respondents add that producers of corrugated case material were able to raise their sales prices in Italy. Even though the mills see this increase as insufficient, they would not have been able to pay more for recovered paper without the hike for new paper.

### **Transport costs rise**

Finally, a few respondents also cited higher oil prices and thus increased transport costs as reasons for the rising recovered paper prices. The increases varied markedly from one logistics company to another. According to market players, road haulage fees were often hiked by as much as 6 per cent, and sometimes even 12 per cent. If the supplier is responsible for transport and has to bear the additional costs, which reportedly equate to around €2-3/t in many cases, the increase would generally be tacked on to the ex-works sales price.

Similarly, logistics was a tense topic in the export business to Asia. Market participants reported there had been no major problems with container availability so far. However, one exporter described the situation on the export market as generally unstable. Freight rates had risen and were volatile, he said, adding there were risks that sailings would be cancelled and vessels sometimes had to be rerouted. Overall, there was uncertainty and doing business with Asia had become riskier, a different player said.

### **Exports to Asia down slightly**

Against this backdrop, some waste management firms and traders active in the Italian market reduced their exports to Asia in April – even though, as they stress, there was ongoing interest from Asian buyers. One contributing factor here was that export prices were only marginally higher than those on the domestic market, if at all, and volumes could also be sold within Italy. Prices for OCC on the Far East export market nevertheless moved slightly higher, though there were also transactions with unchanged prices. Several suppliers mentioned smaller mark-ups of €5/t or sometimes also €10/t. OCC was therefore being shipped to Asia for €95-110/t in April.

The market for deinking grades remained relatively balanced in April, but there were early signs that conditions could begin to shift. Some prices for magazines (1.06) were stable, but there were also small increases of up to €5/t recorded. Some suppliers said demand had livened up somewhat in recent weeks, partly because one buyer had become more active again. Others said they were not seeing any improvement (yet). Prices for newspapers (2.01) were mostly stable, but saw some small hikes of €5/t in isolated cases, too.

There were no changes for the higher grades of recovered paper in April. Prices for white woodfree letters (3.05), white newsprint (3.14) and white woodfree shavings (3.18) were once again steady. A few suppliers were surprised that the uptick in pulp prices did not have any effect here, as this normally encourages tissue producers to replace pulp with recovered paper. On the other hand, sellers say it is still difficult to find buyers for these grades.

# Brisk demand in France drives price increases for ordinary recovered paper grades

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Paper mills in France have been pretty active in April, sources told EUWID. Waste management companies in the country reported solid demand for recovered paper from both domestic paper manufacturers and mills in neighbouring Germany, which was partly attributed to stock building efforts. Against this backdrop, prices for ordinary recovered paper grades have moved slightly higher. Sorted graphic paper for deinking prices, by contrast, were stable, with high grades also showing barely any changes in April. Otherwise, the market continued to be affected by rising transport costs in the wake of the war in Iran.

| EUWID Price Watch Recovered Paper France                      |            |            |                                                                     |            |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--|
| April 2026                                                    |            |            |                                                                     |            |  |
| Prices in € per tonne                                         | April 2026 | March 2026 | Feb 2026                                                            | April 2025 |  |
| Mixed paper and board (1.02)                                  | 35 - 45    | 25 - 35    | 25 - 35                                                             | 70 - 85    |  |
| Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)                 | 70 - 80    | 60 - 70    | 60 - 70                                                             | 115 - 130  |  |
| Old corrugated containers (1.05)                              | 90 - 100   | 80 - 90    | 80 - 90                                                             | 115 - 150  |  |
| Sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11)                      | 85 - 95    | 85 - 95    | 85 - 95                                                             | 105 - 115  |  |
| Intra-Europe exports from France (1.11)                       | 85 - 95    | 85 - 95    | 85 - 95                                                             | 125 - 140  |  |
| Coloured letters (2.06)                                       | 135 - 145  | 135 - 145  | 140 - 150                                                           | 165 - 185  |  |
| Multi-printing (3.10)                                         | 170 - 180  | 170 - 180  | 170 - 180                                                           | 195 - 205  |  |
| White woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01)                    | 335 - 350  | 335 - 350  | 340 - 350                                                           | 390 - 405  |  |
| Prices in € per tonne ex works, material sorted and in bales. |            |            |                                                                     |            |  |
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In April, mixed paper and board (1.02), supermarket paper and board (1.04) and old corrugated containers (OCC; 1.05) typically cost €10/t more in France than they had in March.

Waste management companies reported pretty decent demand. Corrugated case material manufacturers told EUWID that their order books were well filled, without any significant downtime reported at mills. Lively interest even generated a couple of higher spot prices, especially but not exclusively for transactions with German buyers, suppliers and customers alike confirmed.

Several market players attributed the good demand in part to buyers seeking to secure enough raw material and fill their warehouses. They noted that several public holidays fall in May, leading to constraints on collections and leaving just 17 days available for sourcing recovered paper in the month. A few public holidays are just around the corner in Germany, too.

There was no shortage of recovered paper, and supply was decent as long as mills agreed to pay higher prices, one paper mill source said. Other buyers said that they were also pleased with the amount of recovered paper that they had in stock at the moment. At the same time, however, they acknowledged a degree of concern and stressed that, as every year, the market would need to monitor supply closely.

French corrugated case material manufacturers managed to push through additional price increases for finished paper in April. Several insiders told EUWID that this was among the reasons why paper producers agreed to pay more for recovered paper.

Higher transport costs were also cited now and again as a reason for recovered paper price increases, at least where waste management companies were responsible for logistics and had to absorb the additional cost. In some cases, where free delivery prices had been agreed, buyers were left to shoulder higher transport costs. Insiders told EUWID that the increase in logistics prices amounted to roughly €1-3/t.

Recovered paper suppliers were pleased with how things were going in April. As is the case every year at this time, there were a few logistics troubles here and there, but material was moving well, with collection volumes still described as low, and waste management companies reporting lean stocks.

### **Exporting to the Far East becomes less attractive in April**

By contrast, export business with Asia was somewhat constrained in April. Several suppliers said that they had scaled back export volume due to rising transport costs as a result of the Iran war and unattractive sales prices for OCC. Following the latest price increases on the domestic market, OCC prices in the export market are now at the same level as, or only marginally above, those achievable in France. Market players also pointed to good alternative outlets within Europe.

OCC exports from France to Asia cost the same in April as they had in March or increased only a little in cases where sellers had to absorb higher transport costs. Waste management companies and merchants in France often quoted export prices of up to €105 /t or sometimes up to €110/t ex works for this grade.

The market for sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) experienced no changes in April. Demand in France was described as normal and good, with stable purchasing volumes and prices. Exports of this grade to neighbouring countries also fetched the same prices as in March. There was no talk of an improvement in demand here. It remained hard to find buyers, one supplier said, while another contact noted that supply and demand were broadly balanced on the whole.

### **Coloured letters market remains weak but prices hold steady**

Waste management companies surveyed by EUWID reported barely any improvement in market conditions for coloured letters (2.06). Demand was still ailing, one of them noted. A couple of contacts pointed to isolated machine stoppages in the tissue industry. One supplier did see the first signs of a slight recovery in demand but said that “it is still complicated”. Some volumes could be shipped to Asia.

Multi printing (3.10) and white woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01) cost the same in April as they did in March. Market players told EUWID that the increase in pulp prices had not had an impact on demand for substitution grades to date. It was still hard to find buyers, but all in all, the market for both grades was balanced, they said.

# British recovered paper market steady in April, but outlook remains uncertain

 29 April 2026 |  ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

In April, the British recovered paper market proved to be more stable than many market players had anticipated in March. Experts told EUWID that the market was largely balanced, with little sign of turbulence, especially for brown bulk grades.

| EUWID Price Watch Recovered Paper UK                  |            |                |            |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| April 2026                                            |            |                |            |            |
| Prices in £ per tonne                                 | April 2026 | April 2026     | March 2026 | April 2025 |
|                                                       | £          | € <sup>1</sup> | £          | £          |
| Mixed paper and board (1.02)                          | 45 - 65    | 52 - 75        | 45 - 65    | 55 - 90    |
| Mixed paper and board (1.02), export                  | 55 - 68    | 63 - 78        | 55 - 68    | 55 - 95    |
| Old corrugated containers (1.05)                      | 80 - 90    | 92 - 104       | 75 - 87    | 120 - 128  |
| Old corrugated containers (1.05), export              | 82 - 98    | 94 - 113       | 82 - 92    | 115 - 132  |
| Magazines (1.06) <sup>1</sup>                         | 90 - 115   | 104 - 132      | 90 - 115   | 95 - 140   |
| Sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) <sup>1</sup> | 80 - 90    | 92 - 104       | 80 - 90    | 85 - 110   |
| Newspapers (2.01) <sup>1</sup>                        | 95 - 105   | 109 - 121      | 95 - 105   | 95 - 130   |
| Sorted office paper (2.05)                            | 115 - 130  | 132 - 150      | 115 - 125  | 160 - 175  |
| White woodfree letters (3.05) <sup>2</sup>            | 250 - 270  | 288 - 311      | 250 - 270  | -          |
| Multigrade                                            | 130 - 150  | 150 - 173      | 130 - 150  | 165 - 180  |
| White newsprint (3.14)                                | 170 - 200  | 196 - 230      | 170 - 200  | 200 - 230  |
| White woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01)            | 280 - 345  | 322 - 397      | 280 - 345  | 380 - 420  |

<sup>1</sup> Exchange rate as of 24 April 2026, (£1 = €1.15)

<sup>2</sup> Includes exports and non-paper applications

<sup>3</sup> From January 2026 onwards, the grade White woodfree letters (3.05) will be additionally covered by EUWID.

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One key factor is container shipping rates on sea routes to Asia, which have either held steady or even decreased in some cases. Capacity utilisation was said to be weak on these routes, leading shippers to scale back or cancel planned surcharges. Exports to Asia were generally moving smoothly, with only minor isolated problems, in any event experiencing fewer issues than many insiders had been concerned about in March.

Since recovered paper exports from the Gulf region to Asia remain at a standstill as the USA and Iran continue their blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, Asian paper manufacturers remain reliant on shipments from Europe and the USA. Buying has thus continued, even though US recovered paper has become more attractive because of the weaker dollar.

At the same time, market insiders reported generally subdued production activity in Asia, where the effects of the crisis in the Middle East were being felt more acutely than in Europe. In India, especially, many paper mills run on natural gas, so they are having to reduce production or even temporarily idle machines. Sources also reported more machines taking downtime in China, which is having a knock-on effect on surrounding markets.

By contrast, European paper manufacturers supplied by lorry have scaled back their purchasing in the UK somewhat, due in part to sharply higher road haulage costs. This is especially evident when it comes to supermarket paper and board (1.04), for which in some cases continental buyers are only prepared to pay prices in line with those for mixed paper and board (1.02). That being said, conditions vary by customer and logistics provider, meaning that significant volumes are still heading from the UK to Continental Europe.

Demand for brown mass grades from British paper manufacturers remained broadly solid. Insiders told EUWID that one supplier had sourced additional material at slightly higher prices during the month. Kraft-containing grades also became slightly more expensive, tracking the trend in corrugated packaging.

On the other hand, market players reported no change in prices for recovered paper for deinking, something that they attributed to paper producers being in negotiations with their customers about higher prices for finished paper. Looking ahead, though, supply might tighten and prices rise, depending on mills' further buying behaviour.

### **Downtime and muted demand shaping the market for tissue grades in April**

Production activity remains subdued for woodfree grades used to make tissue. The Unifibres complex at Essity's Prudhoe facility is only ramping up slowly, while another British producer has scheduled or already carried out extended stoppages at several plants. As a result, recovered fibre purchasing has dropped off noticeably in recent weeks. Technical issues at another mill are further reducing raw material consumption. Demand on the European mainland is also currently subdued, as existing stocks are being run down.

Market players expect a trend reversal by June at the latest, once the affected machines are back up and running again and Essity Prudhoe is likely to be operating at full capacity. Accordingly, prices did not fall any further in April, and small mark-ups even surfaced in a few cases.

Demand for high-white recovered paper grades remains weak despite higher pulp prices. This market is balanced, with prices unchanged.

When it comes to packaging grades, markets insiders warn that the latest hikes might be short-lived. Higher energy and transport costs and general uncertainty are likely to further curb demand for finished paper and place an additional burden on the market as a whole.

## UK recovered paper exports

| tonnes                     | January        |                | %<br>Change   |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
|                            | 2026           | 2025           |               |
| <b>Total EU 27</b>         | <b>55,000</b>  | <b>56,207</b>  | <b>- 2.1</b>  |
| France                     | 7,997          | 10,208         | - 21.7        |
| Germany                    | 16,567         | 12,048         | + 37.5        |
| Netherlands                | 16,126         | 20,664         | - 22.0        |
| <b>Total other Europe</b>  | <b>36,019</b>  | <b>973</b>     | <b>-</b>      |
| Turkey                     | 36,018         | 839            | -             |
| <b>Total Asia</b>          | <b>290,220</b> | <b>277,012</b> | <b>+ 4.8</b>  |
| China                      | 233            | 121            | + 93.0        |
| India                      | 150,455        | 106,837        | + 40.8        |
| Indonesia                  | 21,188         | 29,665         | - 28.6        |
| Malaysia                   | 66,390         | 56,291         | + 17.9        |
| Thailand                   | 22,272         | 30,248         | - 26.4        |
| Vietnam                    | 26,281         | 50,704         | - 48.2        |
| <b>Total South America</b> | <b>-</b>       | <b>120</b>     | <b>-</b>      |
| <b>Total Exports</b>       | <b>381,240</b> | <b>334,313</b> | <b>+ 14.0</b> |

Source: CPI

# UK paper prices rise across most market segments in April

Cartonboard price hikes planned for May / Producers call for further increases

 29 April 2026 | ⌚ ~ 11 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

Rising production and transport costs have prompted manufacturers across all paper and board markets in the UK to push hard for price increases, and the majority of these were implemented in April. The outbreak of the Iran war, with its implications for energy prices, increased the pressure on publication paper manufacturers to push through price rises in the second-quarter pricing round. A similar scenario is unfolding in the fine paper market, where new higher prices often have only short durations or are valid until further notice. Producers are aiming for further increases here in May.

In the market for corrugated case material, prices for brown recycled grades rose sharply in April, with the remaining grades set to follow in May with more moderate price increases. Price increases for cartonboard are also set to take effect for May delivery, despite only moderate demand.

## Fine paper prices on the rise

The price increases sought by woodfree coated and uncoated paper manufacturers have taken hold in the UK in April. Insiders told EUWID that uncoated grades had become roughly £30/t more expensive but sometimes increase by less and rarely more. That being said, arrangements could vary considerably. Most sources said that higher prices took hold at the start of April but applied for only a short time. Some prices were set in stone until the end of May. Others only applied “until further notice,” something likely connected to manufacturers wanting to leave the door open to additional hikes. Additional price hikes have already been unveiled, too, in some instances.

Woodfree coated prices have risen a little more, with insiders often putting the hikes at £40/t with effect from the start of April or sometime later in the month. These increases applied for a short time or until further notice. There are already calls for further increases for woodfree coated paper, as well. One leading producer announced that from mid-April it intended to apply an additional surcharge of €50/t, or the equivalent in pounds sterling, to all of its woodfree coated grades. Other suppliers have likewise considered demanding further price rises.

| EUWID Price Watch UK                                         |             |               |             |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| April 2026                                                   |             |               |             |             |
| Prices in £ per tonne free delivered unless otherwise stated | April 2026  | April 2026    | March 2026  | April 2025  |
|                                                              | £           | 4*            | £           | £           |
| Fine paper                                                   |             |               |             |             |
| Woodfree uncoated                                            |             |               |             |             |
| Copy paper 80 g/m² grade                                     | 790 - 800   | 900 - 910     | 760 - 820   | 830 - 890   |
| Copy paper 90 g/m² grade                                     | 790 - 820   | 880 - 940     | 750 - 790   | 790 - 840   |
| Other news 80 g                                              | 840 - 860   | 960 - 1,020   | 810 - 860   | 880 - 930   |
| Other news 90 g                                              | 790 - 820   | 870 - 920     | 770 - 800   | 800 - 840   |
| Woodfree coated                                              |             |               |             |             |
| Sheet, double coated, 105 g                                  | 880 - 900   | 980 - 1,010   | 820 - 860   | 880 - 940   |
| Book, double coated, 105 g                                   | 880 - 900   | 950 - 980     | 770 - 820   | 800 - 860   |
| Publication paper                                            |             |               |             |             |
| Standard uncoated 40 g                                       | 590 - 590   | 570 - 600     | 480 - 530   | 480 - 530   |
| Standard uncoated 42 g                                       | 590 - 540   | 587 - 621     | 480 - 520   | 480 - 520   |
| Standard uncoated 48 g                                       | 520 - 530   | 580 - 631     | 500 - 530   | 500 - 530   |
| Improved uncoated 52 g, ISO 68                               | 590 - 580   | 633 - 647     | 530 - 560   | 530 - 560   |
| UV, offset 80 g                                              | 680 - 720   | 790 - 820     | 640 - 680   | 640 - 700   |
| UV, offset 90 g                                              | 590 - 600   | 670 - 702     | 570 - 590   | 580 - 630   |
| Corrugated case material                                     |             |               |             |             |
| Process free corrugated case material                        |             |               |             |             |
| Unbleached sulphite 120 g, European quality                  | 680 - 720   | 790 - 820     | 680 - 720   | 720 - 750   |
| White top sulphite 180 g, European quality                   | 880 - 920   | 930 - 1,000   | 880 - 920   | 780 - 840   |
| Recycled corrugated case material                            |             |               |             |             |
| Recycled Pulping 180 g                                       | 580 - 600   | 670 - 700     | 530 - 570   | 530 - 600   |
| Recycled Pulping 90 g                                        | 580 - 600   | 670 - 700     | 530 - 580   | 530 - 600   |
| Recycled Pulping 80 g                                        | 540 - 620   | 640 - 710     | 510 - 580   | 540 - 620   |
| Tylose II                                                    | 680 - 670   | 690 - 700     | 620 - 660   | 570 - 620   |
| Tylose III                                                   | 540 - 600   | 670 - 700     | 540 - 570   | 530 - 600   |
| White top sulphite, grade B, 180 g                           | 640 - 680   | 730 - 760     | 640 - 680   | 640 - 680   |
| Cartonboard                                                  |             |               |             |             |
| CEI                                                          | 580 - 600   | 640 - 700     | 560 - 600   | 620 - 710   |
| CEI                                                          | 880 - 1,000 | 1,010 - 1,100 | 880 - 1,000 | 930 - 1,030 |

To all appearances, the news of higher prices has stimulated business for manufacturers a little. Producers say that order intake in March, and in some cases April, also included stock-building by some customers. This has helped certain European mills to view themselves as relatively busy, even though, overall, capacity utilisation remains weak. One market insider reported that demand had already eased somewhat in April, while another contact argued that this was simply the market's usual seasonal pattern.

The role played by the war on Iran and its impact on energy prices and other parts of the economy are judged differently in the market. What does seem clear is that costs for transport, chemicals, and in some cases energy supply have recently moved higher.

When it comes to higher energy costs, the situation facing European mills is viewed as very mixed and, on average, not yet dramatic. Market insiders do agree, though, that the longer the war on Iran drags on, the more difficult the cost environment will become. The key issue for market players remains the unpredictability of how the conflict will unfold.

### **Manufacturers succeed in raising publication paper prices**

The die had already been cast on the publication paper market by the end of March when buyers and producers agreed on increases in second-quarter prices. Backed by mounting pressure, especially from energy and transportation costs, the paper industry had pushed for higher prices.

Price talks in the newsprint segment often yielded hikes of £20/t, and only rarely less. European manufacturers had set this increase as the minimum, and in some cases entered the talks with even higher demands. One North American manufacturer had tabled far steeper price hikes, but these ultimately failed to gain full traction. The UK and the whole of Europe has become a less attractive destination for North American producers because of higher transportation costs, relatively high sales prices in the US and Asia and capacity cutbacks in their home market.

All paper producers agree that the increases achieved so far are barely enough to offset the rise in costs. Further price hike announcements are therefore widely expected for the third quarter, not least because some prices have been fixed for the entire first half.

SC paper also became £20/t more expensive. There are also arrangements under which prices do not rise right at the start of the second quarter, but only over the course of April or May. Sources said that the full £20/t price hike would not be in place until June in these cases. Compounding matters, one producer is demanding an additional energy-related surcharge on top of the price increase, which is said to be non-negotiable.

Sources reported somewhat larger hikes for LWC than for uncoated publication paper grades, putting them at roughly £30/t. One producer has unveiled plans to charge another €40/t for coated mechanical reels throughout Europe, which were to take effect in April as well. However, it was still unclear up to the last minute whether this second increase would actually take hold.

Consumption and demand for publication are largely moving along the same lines as in the recent past in the UK. With the structural decline in consumption continuing, it is clear that the latest price increases are driven entirely by costs. Sources occasionally told EUWID that quite a few newsprint manufacturers in Europe were reasonably busy. The LWC segment is also said to be seeing somewhat better capacity utilisation rates than a year ago, following recent capacity cutbacks. Call-offs in the first quarter were, by and large, in line with expectations. On the whole, though, overcapacity remains a feature of the European publication paper market.

### **Brown recycled corrugated case material prices edge higher in the UK as well**

In the wake of the steep rise in energy costs, corrugated case material prices are soaring in the UK, too. Manufacturers initially managed to tack on £80/t for brown recycled corrugated case material with effect from 1 April. Price momentum was more muted for other grades monitored by EUWID. What's more, price increases originally scheduled for April have been postponed until May and, in some cases, scaled back. As things stand in April 2026, brown kraftliner prices are expected to rise by roughly £50/t, while white-top kraftliner and white-top testliner look set to become roughly £35/t more expensive.

However, opposition to the plans for May hikes is already forming. A few converters say that there is growing pushback. Market players are also highly sceptical about one supplier's announcement that it plans to push through another hefty increase for brown recycled grades with effect from May, at least in mainland Europe.

In the meantime, comparatively good demand for containerboard continued to play out in April. Like their counterparts in mainland Europe, British paper mills have reportedly experienced a marked improvement in capacity utilisation. That being said, insiders question whether this uptick is not at least partially due to orders being brought forward in advance of higher prices taking effect. It is seen as uncertain whether this level will hold, especially since the impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has hardly been felt in the UK and the rest of Europe. "The higher costs we have seen so far at the pump, as painful as they are, will not be the end of it," one expert warned.

Demand for corrugated sheets and packaging in the UK was generally positive into early April, before the first signs of a slowdown emerged. In many cases, lead times for sheets have returned to normal, at three working days to a week.

At the same time, market players are implementing price increases, typically in the range of 8 to 13 per cent. Higher sheet prices usually take effect automatically and without delay, whereas adjustments for packaging and other corrugated products tend to follow later and to a lesser extent, not least because sheet prices account for only part of total packaging production costs. This pattern does appear to be shifting, though. A few packaging producers are only able to raise their prices in July because of quarterly contracts, but many others are now trying to pass higher costs on to customers as quickly as possible.

Mark-ups for packaging and other corrugated board products are similar in size to those for sheets, typically in the range of eight to 11 per cent, peaking at 13 per cent. By way of rationale, packaging manufacturers said they are facing higher prices for containerboard and sheets, as well as rising energy and transportation costs and a steep spike in the minimum wage.

Uncertainty about what the future has in store remains high. May is traditionally a month of public holidays and school breaks in the UK, meaning that the underlying trend in demand is unlikely to become clearer before July. Experts also believe that the news of higher prices might have prompted temporary stock-building along the supply chain.

A possible recession might also open up opportunities, especially for smaller and independent converters. Customers might increasingly look for low-cost yet reliable suppliers. Efficient and flexible suppliers could reap the rewards, especially since large manufacturers are continuing to take capacity out of the market. Following the announcement that five former DS Smith corrugated board and packaging plants will close their doors, International Paper now plans to shut another site in the UK. The future of two of Smurfit Westrock's plants is reportedly on the table, as well.

### **Surcharges and price hikes for cartonboard coinciding with lacklustre demand**

Price increases and surcharges have made a deep imprint on the UK's cartonboard market in April. Virtually all European producers have informed their customers of plans to charge more. While recycled cartonboard producers largely announced higher prices, suppliers of primary fibre-based grades are opting to introduce surcharges. In both cases, prices are to rise by around £30/t, with GC 2 (folding boxboard) prices rising by £35/t in a few cases and some quotes of £20 or £25/t made for GD 2 (white-lined chipboard), as well.

The original plan was for the increases to take effect as early as April and to apply to confirmed orders as well. However, converters were often able to fend this off. As a result, producers revised their demands, with surcharges and increases in list prices now mostly applying only to new business and thus, in practice, not taking effect until deliveries from early May. In many cases, no fixed period has been agreed upon either, with the new prices or surcharges simply applying "until further notice."

Nevertheless, a clear picture is still not emerging. A few buyers told EUWID that one or two manufacturers had still not notified them of any plans to charge more for GC or GD. Others were still successfully fending off surcharges as this issue went to press, arguing that manufacturers had not clearly specified the conditions under which these increases would be withdrawn.

A few market players interpreted the fact that the mark-ups for GC and GD were similar in size as an "opportunistic move." They pointed out that cost escalation has been much more pronounced for GD producers than their counterparts in the GC segment, where many mills are comparatively energy self-sufficient. "It is quite clear that GD manufacturers fear further volume losses and have therefore had to forgo a larger price step," one expert remarked.

At the same time, Asian suppliers either left their prices unchanged or raised them by less than their European competitors. Nonetheless, the conflict in the Middle East is strengthening the position of European producers: concerned about security of supply, British converters are increasingly turning back to European sources to safeguard deliveries, even though there have so far been hardly any delays or issues with shipments from Asia.

Manufacturers went much further for laminated, dispersion or barrier cartonboard grades, with hikes of £50-60/t reported, sometimes for confirmed orders. By way of explanation, producers underscored the steep rise in costs for plastic and announced plans to commit to prices only on a short-term basis going forward.

Demand for cartonboard and folding cartons in the UK was largely disappointing in April. Insiders described the market as “frozen” in light of the global crisis. Many companies are taking a wait-and-see approach and shying away from risk, with uncertainty alone paralysing business.

The rising price of cartonboard is likely to raise the pressure on converters even more. They, too, are facing higher production and freight costs and trying to pass these on to their customers. Given ongoing surplus capacity in packaging manufacturing, it is unclear how far this can succeed.

Experts do not think that a recovery is coming any time soon. On the contrary, the fact that inflation has risen to 3.3 per cent in the UK indicates weakening purchasing power and subdued customer spending. Any boost to domestic demand is likely to come from much higher air fares and the higher price of petrol and diesel, which might prompt more British consumers to spend their summer holidays at home rather than abroad.

| UK key market data                                           |                |                |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| January 2026                                                 |                |                |              |
| in tonnes                                                    | January        |                |              |
|                                                              | 2026           | 2025           | %            |
| <b>Production</b>                                            |                |                |              |
| Corrugated case materials                                    | 119,809        | 124,954        | - 4.1        |
| Recycled Fluting                                             | 57,250         | 57,526         | - 0.5        |
| Testliner                                                    | 62,559         | 67,428         | - 7.2        |
| Parent reels of tissue                                       | 59,579         | 58,169         | + 2.4        |
| Other papers and boards,<br>incl. printing and writing paper | 87,658         | 95,888         | - 8.6        |
| <b>Total paper and board</b>                                 | <b>267,046</b> | <b>279,011</b> | <b>- 4.3</b> |
| <b>Apparent Consumption</b>                                  |                |                |              |
| Packaging paper and board                                    | 305,267        | 324,079        | - 5.8        |
| Corrugated case materials                                    | 201,946        | 212,898        | - 5.1        |
| Kraftliner and SC Fluting                                    | 29,894         | 30,849         | - 3.1        |
| Recycled Fluting                                             | 69,619         | 72,926         | - 4.5        |
| Testliner                                                    | 102,433        | 109,123        | - 6.1        |
| Cartonboard and other board for<br>packaging                 | 82,441         | 88,225         | - 6.6        |
| Packaging papers                                             | 20,880         | 22,956         | - 9.0        |

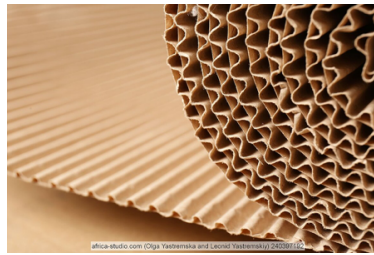
|                                                              |                |                |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Parent reels of tissue                                       | 94,883         | 88,746         | + 6.9        |
| Printings and writings                                       | 105,445        | 100,040        | + 5.4        |
| Uncoated mechanical                                          | 14,556         | 14,805         | - 1.7        |
| Uncoated woodfree                                            | 44,880         | 41,896         | + 7.1        |
| Coated mechanical                                            | 25,015         | 23,166         | + 8.0        |
| Coated woodfree                                              | 20,992         | 20,174         | + 4.1        |
| Other papers and boards                                      | 46,405         | 46,800         | - 0.8        |
| <b>Total paper and board</b>                                 | <b>551,999</b> | <b>559,665</b> | <b>- 1.4</b> |
| <b>Exports</b>                                               |                |                |              |
| Corrugated case materials                                    | 15,652         | 9,363          | + 67.2       |
| Recycled Fluting                                             | 5,011          | 3,604          | + 39.0       |
| Testliner                                                    | 10,641         | 5,759          | + 84.8       |
| Other papers and boards,<br>incl. printing and writing paper | 42,892         | 46,293         | - 7.3        |
| <b>Total paper and board</b>                                 | <b>58,544</b>  | <b>55,656</b>  | <b>+ 5.2</b> |
| <b>Imports</b>                                               |                |                |              |
| Corrugated case materials                                    | 97,789         | 97,307         | + 0.5        |
| Kraftliner and SC Fluting                                    | 29,894         | 30,849         | - 3.1        |
| Recycled Fluting                                             | 17,380         | 19,004         | - 8.5        |
| Testliner                                                    | 50,515         | 47,454         | + 6.5        |
| Parent reels of tissue                                       | 35,410         | 31,204         | + 13.5       |
| Other papers and boards,<br>incl. printing and writing paper | 210,299        | 207,800        | + 1.2        |
| <b>Total paper and board</b>                                 | <b>343,498</b> | <b>336,311</b> | <b>+ 2.1</b> |
| <b>Fibre</b>                                                 |                |                |              |
| Woodpulp mill usage                                          |                |                |              |
| Sulphate Bleached Softwood                                   | 24,303         | 22,765         | + 6.8        |
| Sulphate Bleached Hardwood                                   | 34,503         | 31,527         | + 9.4        |
| Other grades of woodpulp                                     | 17,615         | 20,826         | - 15.4       |
| Woodpulp imports                                             |                |                |              |
| Sulphate Bleached Softwood                                   | 23,559         | 15,189         | + 55.1       |
| Sulphate Bleached Hardwood                                   | 32,876         | 35,326         | - 6.9        |
| Other grades of woodpulp                                     | 1,584          | 2,347          | - 32.5       |
| Recovered paper                                              |                |                |              |
| Mill usage                                                   | 202,437        | 225,840        | - 10.4       |
| Collection                                                   | 578,284        | 547,580        | + 5.6        |

Source: CPI

# Mondi announces further plant closures in Germany, Poland and Hungary

 **EUWID** + 27 April 2026 | [Konstantin Stoll](#) |  ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

The Mondi Group is planning to close additional converting plants. After announcing three closures in February, the company now said that another three plants would be shut down in Germany, Hungary and Poland.



*Mondi will cut more corrugated board capacity this year.*

The sites in Germany and Poland are part of Mondi's Corrugated Solutions business division. The company plans

to close its Polish corrugated board plant in Dorohusk by the end of September 2026. The German site in Lehrte, which offers contract packing and fulfilment services, is to cease operations by the end of December 2026, a company spokesperson told EUWID. Mondi had integrated the Lehrte site as part of its acquisition of Schumacher Packaging's Western European assets, the spokesperson added.

The Hungarian plant Szada is planned to be closed by the end of September as well. The site is part of Mondi's Consumer Flexibles business and produces paper bags from the Eco Wicket Bags product range. Mondi puts the total number of employees affected by the closures at 450.

## Capacity closures now extend to six plants

Only in February, the Mondi Group had announced plans to close three converting plants in order to strengthen its competitiveness. This included two sites for the production of paper sacks, namely the paper sack plants in Hammelburg, Germany, and Nyíregyháza, Hungary. The Turkish corrugated board plant in Gebze was also said to be part of the group's capacity adjustment measures.

With the additional closures announced at the end of April, the total number of sites Mondi plans to shut down rises to six. The integrated paper and packaging manufacturer emphasised that customers would be supplied from other Mondi production sites.



# Général Emballage to invest in 350,000 tpy RCCM mill in Algeria

23 April 2026 | [Frauke Schmidt](#) | 🕒 ~ 1 min | Published in issue 18/2026

**Algerian corrugated packaging producer Général Emballage is planning to build a new recycled containerboard (RCCM) mill in Naâma.**

The paper machine will have a capacity of 350,000 tpy, a web width of 7.5 m and a design speed of 1,200 m/min. It is designed to produce testliner and fluting grades and will be the largest machine of its kind in Africa, according to Andritz, which will supply the complete line. The scope of supply includes stock preparation, the paper machine, winder, automation and digitalisation systems, as well as spare and wear parts and service agreements. Start-up is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2028. The order value is in the low three-digit million euro range.



*Representatives of Général Emballage und Andritz signing the contract for the delivery of a new paper production line*

Ramdane Batouche, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Général Emballage, described the project as a milestone investment. He said Andritz had been selected for its technology as well as its ability to address the company's specific requirements, adding that he expects a long-term partnership between the two companies.

Headquartered in Akbou (Wilayah of Béjaïa), Général Emballage is a vertically integrated producer of corrugated board and packaging, covering the value chain from recovered paper collection through paper production and corrugating to the manufacture and printing of packaging. The company operates three sites in Akbou, Oran and Sétif and employs around 1,300 people.



# Lecta CEO Van Nieuwenhuyzen to step down after recapitalisation and break-up

22 April 2026 | 🕒 ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

**Lecta Group CEO Gilles Van Nieuwenhuyzen will retire on 30 April, marking the end of his tenure following the company's recent recapitalisation and strategic break-up into three independent businesses.**



The move comes shortly after Lecta completed a [financial restructuring](#) and [separated its operations into three standalone entities](#), each with its own management team and financing structure.

With the group structure dissolved, the role of a central Group CEO will be discontinued.

Mr Van Nieuwenhuyzen, who is set to turn 67 in the coming weeks, described the timing of his departure as a “natural moment” after overseeing both the recapitalisation and organisational overhaul.

“For me this is a natural moment to step down from my CEO role and enter a new phase in life,” he said. “The group has been recapitalised successfully, and we now have three companies in place with their own management and financing to drive value creation.”

Chairman Javier Abad credited Van Nieuwenhuyzen with steering the company through a period marked by significant volatility in energy markets, pricing and geopolitical conditions. He highlighted the CEO's role in advancing the group's strategic transformation and completing the recapitalisation process finalised earlier this month.

Following the restructuring, Lecta's former operations will now be run as three separate companies:

- **Garda Group (fine papers and distribution)** will be led by Corrado Lignana, who has been with the company since 2012 and brings extensive commercial experience in fine papers and specialties.
- **Adestor Self-Adhesives** will remain under the leadership of Ricard Balart, who has headed the business since 2022 and has longstanding experience in the label and self-adhesives sector.

- **Specialties (Torraspapel)** will be overseen on an interim basis by Ruben Hernando from 1 May. Hernando, a former CEO of DS Smith Southern Europe, has more than 30 years of experience in the paper industry. A permanent appointment is expected to be announced in due course.

The restructuring marks a significant shift for Lecta, with the newly independent companies expected to pursue their own strategic and financial paths going forward.

# CEO Paul Sanderson to leave The Recycling Association

10 April 2026 | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 18/2026](#)

**Paul Sanderson will step down as CEO of The Recycling Association (TRA), with the successor search currently under way.**

Mr Sanderson will leave TRA in August to take up the role of chief executive at the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association.

The British industry body has begun the search for a successor, with applications open until 24 April.



*Paul Sanderson, CEO of TRA*

Mr Sanderson commented: "I've really enjoyed my three years at the helm of The Recycling Association, working with great members, those who serve on the governing council and the wider industry. I am proud of what has been achieved on that time on behalf of our members, and growing our membership from 110 when I joined to almost 170 now. But I am now going to take an opportunity to work with the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association and a change of emphasis working with companies producing household and industrial cleaning products."

Founded in 1975, The Recycling Association represents recycling organisations and waste management companies across the UK.

