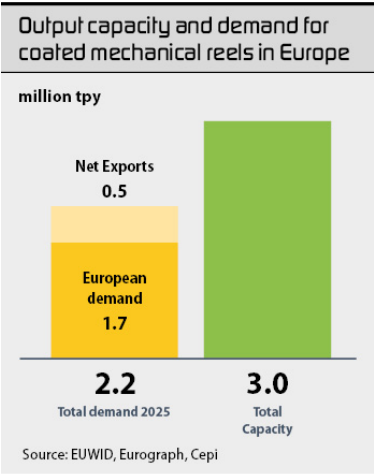


European publication paper market has overcapacity in the magazine paper segment

Planned JV between UPM and Sappi would change LWC/MWC market

 **EUWID** + 14 May 2026 | [Bernd Hecht](#) | ⌚ ~ 4 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Despite the capacity reductions carried out in the second half of 2025, there is still excess capacity in the European market for publication paper, especially in the magazine paper segment. While producers report relatively good capacity utilisation for newsprint (standard and improved grades), the existing production capacity for SC and LWC/MWC paper continues to outstrip demand. For all grades, the gap between supply and demand is expected to widen over the course of the year amid ongoing demand contraction.



Relatively good capacity utilisation in newsprint segment

Producers of newsprint currently report good capacity utilisation: Market insiders often estimate the rate to be around 85 per cent, but there are some differing reports. When recently contacted by EUWID, market participants mentioned capacity utilisation rates ranging from 81 per cent to more than 90 per cent of the existing production capacity.

At present, output capacity for standard and improved newsprint in Europe amounts to approximately 3.5 to 4 million tpy; in some cases, paper machines are also being used to make SC paper. Last year, European producers delivered a total of around 3.1 million t of standard newsprint, plus several hundred thousand tonnes of improved grades. This includes exports to non-European markets, which added up to more than 700,000 t of standard newsprint, according to industry association Euro-Graph. In addition there are around 200,000 t of imports into Europe by North American suppliers.

Significant capacity overhang persists for SC and LWC/MWC

Much lower capacity utilisation levels are being reported in the magazine paper market. For SC paper and LWC/MWC paper, current machine bookings are in the 70-75 per cent range, say market insiders. In the SC segment, where it is not always clear to differentiate how capacity gets allocated to SC paper and newsprint, total production capacity is believed to be almost 2 million tpy. Last year, European producers sold approximately 1.2 million t in the local European market last year, plus exports of around 150,000 t.

A similar discrepancy between capacity and demand is evident in the market for LWC/MWC. Even after the machine closures last year – at Sappi (Kirkniemi), UPM (Kaukas) and Kabel – the market still has around 3 million tpy of capacity. By contrast, total demand is roughly 2.2 million t, including 0.5 million t of exports to non-European markets.

Consumption continues to contract in 2026

In 2025, there was a further significant decline in the consumption of publication paper in Europe. According to Cepi and Euro-Graph, consumption across all paper grades was down by a high single-digit percentage or more compared with the previous year. If this downward consumption trend continues on a similar trajectory in 2026, the gap between supply and demand would expand to more than 650,000 t. In absolute figures, European demand for standard newsprint declined by about 187,000 t in 2025 compared with 2024. SC paper saw a decrease of 193,000 t, while demand fell by 158,000 t for coated mechanical paper and by 115,000 t for the other uncoated mechanical papers.

It is still unclear whether demand will drop off as markedly in 2026 as it did last year. Some market insiders expect a more moderate decrease in the current year. But even assuming the decline is only 5 per cent across all grades, this would equate to roughly 300,000 t less paper demand.

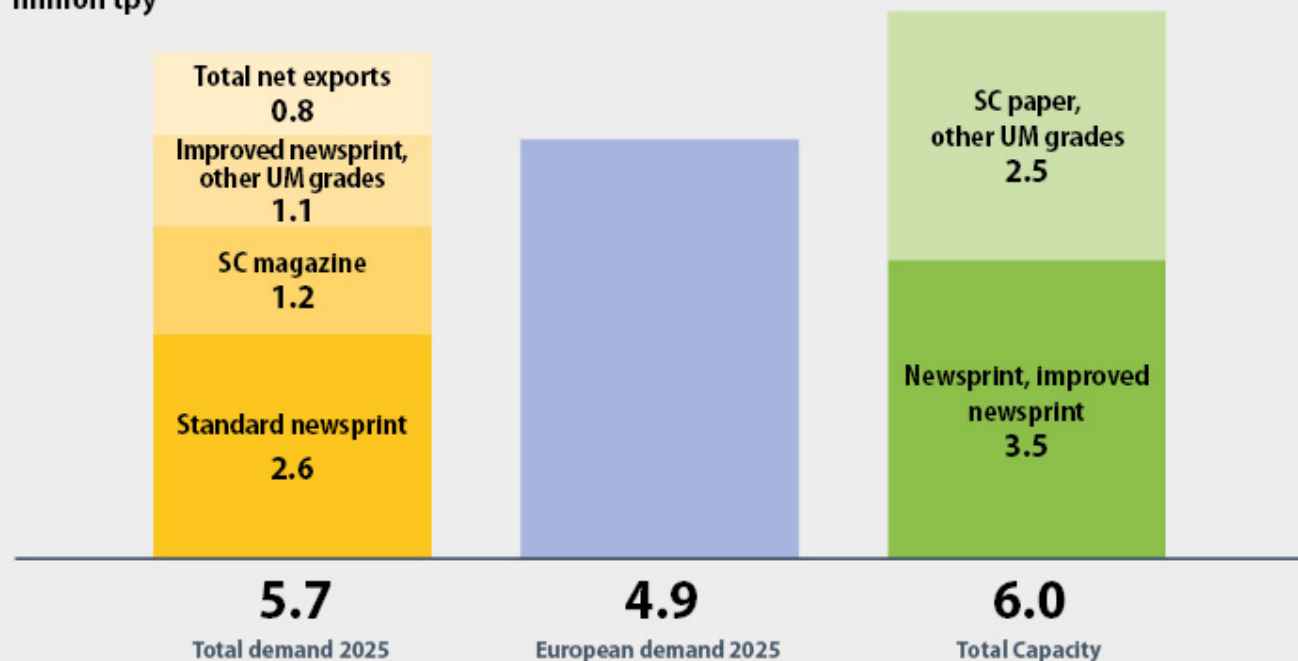
Further capacity closures expected in early 2027

The planned joint venture between the graphic paper businesses of UPM and Sappi will create a new situation in the European market, especially for coated mechanical paper. The two companies currently have combined production capacity of around 1.8 million tpy of LWC/MWC in Europe. Total demand stood at 2.2 million t last year, including exports to non-European markets. The sites that manufacture these grades are located in Finland (Rauma and Kirkniemi), Germany (Augsburg) and the UK (Caledonian Paper).

When announcing the planned joint venture, the company said that it would adjust production capacity in line with market demand and concentrate production at the most suitable capacities and sites. The European Commission is now conducting an in-depth investigation of the proposed transaction and has until 26 October 2026 to decide whether to approve the joint venture. Prior to this and the potential closing of the merger towards the end of 2026, it is highly unlikely that corporate decisions about potential closures or shifting of production capacity will be made. However, one can expect that if the joint venture is approved and becomes operational towards the end of this year, such steps would likely follow soon thereafter.

Production capacity and demand for newsprint, SC and other uncoated mechanical paper in Europe

million tpy



Source: EUWID, Eurograph, Cepi

Unirima: Italian end-of-waste status puts recovered paper outside Diwass scope

Parliamentary question to Commission / Legal opinion from Anno Oexle

 **EUWID** + 14 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 6 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

The digitalisation of the EU's administrative procedures for transfrontier waste shipments as of 21 May is intended to enable better monitoring and streamline processes for authorities and businesses. In the view of the Italian recovered paper association Unirima, however, obligatory registration for the EU's Digital Waste Shipment System (Diwass) platform will lead to more rather than less bureaucratic hassle.



Simultaneously, the association contends that recovered paper exporters in Italy are not required to use the platform, as the material they are shipping is no longer waste under domestic law, assuming it complies with Italy's end-of-waste (EoW) criteria for this material stream.

Unirima asserts that the national rules should also apply for recovered paper shipments to other EU member states. According to Italy's Ministerial Decree No. 188/2020, recovered paper that conforms to specific criteria no longer falls under the scope of waste legislation once it leaves the sorting plant rather than only when it enters the pulper at a paper mill. Once EoW or "product" status is achieved, it can be transported within Italy without the accompanying documentation that is otherwise necessary for waste transports.

Unirima holds that such "product" shipments should also be possible to other EU states, meaning recovered paper could be delivered to international customers without the need for Diwass registration and the Annex VII form for green-listed waste. The association argues that Italy's EoW decree complies with the stipulations of the EU Waste Framework Directive (WFD) on EoW rules and was properly notified to the European Commission in accordance with the Single Market Transparency Directive (Directive (EU) 2015/1535). The other EU member states and the Commission did not raise any objections to the Decree, according to the industry association.

Differing national views on waste status covered in Article 29 of WSR

Unirima also points to Article 29 of the 2024 version of the EU Waste Shipments Regulation (WSR) regarding classification issues. In paragraph 1 of this article, material with end-of-waste status is explicitly excluded from the scope of the Regulation.

However, if the responsible authorities in the place of dispatch and the destination cannot agree whether a delivery should be classified as waste or non-waste, paragraph 2 of Article 29 says the material “shall be treated as if it were waste for the purpose of the shipment”. Yet, the same paragraph requires that responsible authorities take into account “any conditions or decisions” taken at the EU or member state level with respect to EoW classification.

Unirima maintains that the provision should not be applied at all to recovered paper with EoW status from Italy because it is a product. It would be “regulatory lunacy” if recovered paper is classified as a raw material within Italy and suddenly becomes waste again as soon as it crosses the border, according to the association. This would also call into question the purpose of the EoW concept in general, Francesco Sicilia, Unirima’s managing director, told EUWID.

Italian MEPs ask Commission for clarification

This issue has now also reached the European Parliament. In a question for written answer submitted to the European Commission in late April, four Italian members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from The Left group inquired about mutual recognition of national EoW schemes to foster the circular economy.

The MEPs asked the Commission to confirm that “any materials that comply with [EoW] criteria and which can be shipped as non-waste goods in the country that enacted the relevant EoW regulations” cannot be made subject to provisions of the WSR by any other EU member state when the materials are exported. Classification as waste “unfairly strips these materials of their EoW status”, the MEPs said.

They also asked: “Does the Commission agree that it should ensure the mutual recognition of member state EoW regulations as a means of fostering the circular economy, facilitating the free movement of goods and preventing the emergence of trade barriers within the single market?” The Commission’s response to this parliamentary question has not yet been published.

Law expert sees potential restrictions on free movement of goods

Owing to the significance of the questions raised, EUWID contacted waste and administrative law expert Anno Oexle from the German law firm Okl & Partner for an initial assessment of the issue. In his view, the notification of national EoW regulations in accordance with the Single Market Transparency Directive does not result in automatic EU-wide recognition of a member state’s rules regarding EoW status.

With respect to cases in which authorities differ on whether material is to be classified as waste or non-waste in trans-border shipments, Mr Oexle also pointed to the rule in Article 29 paragraph 2 of the WSR. “This would mean that Italian recovered paper would be classified as waste for the purposes of cross-border shipments –if that corresponds to the legal interpretation of the responsible authorities in the destination country,” the expert said.

However, he also sees a lack of legal clarity regarding the substantive criteria to be applied when determining end-of-waste status under the relevant Waste Shipment Regulation provisions. “At present, it is generally assumed – albeit without any detailed legal justification – that each member state may determine (end-of-)waste status under its own national legislation,” Mr Oexle said.

However, in his view, there are two possible arguments against this interpretation: First, Article 6 of the WFD explicitly grants member states the authority to determine EoW status. If a member state – such as Italy in this case – has already decided on a national EoW regulation in the form of a decree, Article 6 could mean that other member states are bound by this decision. They would then be unable to revise this assessment of the same material under their own legal regulations to the same waste, Mr Oexle says.

A second possible argument is rooted in the EU principle of the free movement of goods, one of the bloc’s fundamental freedoms. Mr Oexle notes that the principle of mutual recognition is a key pillar of the free movement of goods. In his view, there may be a case that, simply based on the free movement of goods, it is in principle legally appropriate to recognise a decision made by Italy within its jurisdiction regarding the free marketability of a material as a product.

Conversely, refusing to recognise such a decision would constitute a restriction on the free movement of goods, according to Mr Oexle. Any such restriction would need to be justified, and simply saying “we have always done this differently” would not provide sufficient legal grounds.

EU Commission official points to mutual recognition as way forward

For its part, the European Commission has repeatedly stressed in its preparations for the planned Circular Economy Act (CEA) that it wants to strengthen the EU internal market for waste, secondary raw materials and circular products. The Commission plans to present its legislative proposals in September, said Aurel Ciobanu Dordea, Director Circular Economy at the Commission’s Directorate-General for Environment, speaking at the IFAT trade fair.

On the issue of end-of-waste status, he stressed that greater emphasis would need to be placed on mutual recognition in the future, particularly as the European Commission’s capacity for developing additional EU-wide EoW criteria was limited. The European umbrella association Recycling Europe, of which Unirima is a member, had called on the Commission in April to establish EU-wide EoW criteria for recovered paper to create greater legal certainty. At the time, the association also requested clarification about the mutual recognition of national EoW schemes.

Kram invests in die-cutting technology and logistics

 **EUWID +** 13 May 2026 |  ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Polish packaging manufacturer Kram is expanding its production and logistics structures. A new die-cutting line was installed at its main plant in Dzierzgoń in northern Poland, southeast of Gdansk, in March 2026. The machine is made by Chinese manufacturer MK Masterwork, and supplied and installed by Heidelberger Druckmaschinen. The company said that the purchase and installation of the new die-cutting machine is part of a comprehensive modernisation process. Kram continuously upgrades and adapts its machine pool to new standards.

At the same time, Kram formally inaugurated a new logistics centre in Pólko at the end of March. The town is located about 30 km from the main plant. The total capital expenditure related to the installation of the new punching machine in Dzierzgoń and commissioning of the logistics centre in Pólko amounted to around PLN30m (about €7m), the company told EUWID. The main reason for implementing both investments was to improve the level of service offered by Kram. The expected effects include an increase in production capacities, greater efficiency, reduced order processing times and optimised logistics.

In the near future, Kram says it plans to further modernise its board converting machinery, especially for printing, gluing and welding.

Kram produces packaging made of paper, board and films for the food industry. The company's portfolio includes cups, bowls and other foodservice packaging as well as solutions for bakery and confectionery applications. The family-run company has now been in existence for 35 years, operating three production sites and is employing over 500 persons.

Ence swings to Q1 loss as volumes and prices decline

 **EUWID** + 13 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Ence Energía y Celulosa showed a mixed performance in the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025, combining improved efficiency and product mix with lower sales and volumes, and weaker overall profitability.

Cash cost in pulp business, excluding extraordinary impacts, improved significantly in the reporting period, declining to €479/t from €510/t in the first quarter of 2025. This reflects progress in operational improvements and efficiency gains, supported by ongoing cost control measures under the Efficiency and Competitiveness Plan, as well as the cost reduction and decarbonisation initiatives at the Navia pulp mill, Ence says. At the same time, the share of specialty pulp in total deliveries, including initial fluff volumes from the Navia mill, increased to 34 per cent, up from 30 per cent a year earlier, supporting the company's shift toward higher-value products.

However, profitability in the first quarter 2026 was negatively affected by temporary disruptions and extraordinary factors, including strikes at the Navia pulp mill which reduced the mill's production by 46.000 t. These effects generated an estimated €7m impact (around €43/t at cash cost level) in the pulp business. In addition, severe storms in Spain had a negative effect on the Renewables business: Ence estimates that the storms impacted renewable energy production by almost 40 GWh.

In the first three months of the year, Ence produced 13 per cent less pulp than in the same period of last year, and 22 per cent less than in the previous quarter. The drop in production is largely attributed to the Navia strike, which reduced output at the mill by 19 per cent year-on-year and 42 per cent quarter-on-quarter. The group also sold less pulp in the first quarter: total pulp deliveries amounted to approximately 207,000 t, down by 4 per cent year-on-year and 15 per cent quarter-on-quarter. The average pulp sales price in the first quarter was €495/t net, compared to €558/t in Q1 2025 and €471/t in Q4 2025. As a result, sales in the pulp business fell by 15 per cent year-on-year to €102m.

Against this background, the group's profitability remained under pressure. Ence reported net result of -€18m (Q1 25: €2m), while Ebitda stood at just over €1m (€35m).

Despite these headwinds, the company continued to advance its strategic transformation toward specialty pulp and improved its cost base, positioning it for stronger performance once operating conditions normalise.

Looking ahead, Ence is also set to benefit from a markedly improved market environment. After a historically low price level in 2025, pulp prices are now trending upward, the group states. By the end of March list prices for hardwood pulp in Europe rose to \$1,286/t, compared with \$1,100/t at the close of 2025. Current transactions are being negotiated at around \$1,380/t, and a further

increase to \$1,430/t for implementation in May has already been announced, Ence stated in the first quarter 2026 report that was published at the end of April.

Further support comes from ongoing disruptions in global supply chains. Difficulties in importing pulp and paper from Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America are reportedly tightening supply in Europe, giving regional producers greater pricing power. Against this backdrop, Ence says to be well positioned to capitalise on rising prices and strengthening market conditions.

Ence results		
million €	January - March	
	2026	2025
Key figures		
Sales	154	187
EBITDA	1	35
Operating result	-18	12
Net result	-18	2
Busines area review		
Pulp		
Sales	114	135
EBITDA	-1	29
Production, 1,000 t	186	214
Deliveries, 1,000 t	207	216
Renewable Energy		
Sales	41	52
EBITDA	3	6
Source: Ence		

SCA's first quarter earnings down by half

 **EUWID +** 13 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

SCA's Q1 results saw a significant decline this year compared with the previous year. The Swedish company posted a net profit of SEK380m, less than half the figure for the first quarter last year. The Ebitda fell by a third, while sales declined less sharply by 8 per cent to SEK4.7bn. The trend generally pointed downward, as SCA's first quarter results were also weaker than in the fourth quarter of 2025.

In particular, the Pulp and Wood divisions recorded a sharp decline compared with the same quarter of the previous year, although it should be noted that the pulp division returned to the black following a negative Ebitda in the fourth quarter of 2025. The Containerboard business was also heavily impacted. SCA was able to offset some of the declines through growth in the Renewable Energy division whose results were positive.

The company attributed weaker group results in particular to lower year-on-year selling prices and unfavourable currency effects. High raw material costs also weighed on earnings, SCA said, adding that a high rate of self-sufficiency in wood raw material, energy and logistics mitigated the impact of rising costs.

Overall, uncertainty had increased due to geopolitical turmoil and trade barriers, making the market situation more difficult, SCA explained. The recent events in the Middle East had a limited direct, but certainly indirect impact on the company in the form of higher transport costs, it added. To address the challenging market conditions, the company focused on cost control. e.g. by cutting jobs.

Pulp prices lower due to rebates

SCA described demand for pulp in the first quarter as weak, at least in Europe and the USA. In China, demand was at a normal level. In terms of selling prices, prices for NBSK in Europe were gradually increased during the quarter but the average price of pulp from the division was lower in Q1 than in Q4 2025, SCA notes. The company attributes this to higher rebates in the market.

Compared to the same quarter of the previous year, the division's Ebitda slumped by 88 per cent in Q1 2026. However, the company was able to emerge from the red after suffering a loss in Q4 2025. SCA explained that costs for planned maintenance shutdowns had been higher in Q4 and raw material costs in Q1 2026 had been lower.

SCA's Containerboard division halved its Ebitda both compared to the same period last year and the fourth quarter of 2025. The division was heavily burdened by a combination of low selling prices and high energy costs. Deliveries developed positively, but

demand continued to be impacted by continued weak industrial production, SCA said. At the same time the company underscored that demand improved somewhat towards the end of the quarter. Stocks of European manufacturers are said to have fallen slightly.

Earnings from SCA's Wood division also declined sharply in the first quarter, with Ebitda down nearly 80 per cent compared with Q1 2025. Selling prices were higher than last year but deliveries declined and raw material costs increased, according to SCA. The Forestry division, by contrast, was able to defend or slightly improve its previous year's result thanks to higher selling prices.

Energy segment advances to SCA's second-strongest division

For the Energy division, Q1 2026 was a good quarter, with SCA reporting that the segment delivered a record result. The Ebitda surged by over 50 per cent to SEK206m compared with the first quarter of 2025, marking the second-highest result in the group after the Forestry division. The division owes the performance mainly to increased energy prices, according to SCA. The company also commissioned a new wind farm in Jämtland, Sweden. The leasehold business in wind power reportedly remained stable. At the end of the first quarter, about 20 per cent (around 11 TWh) of Sweden's installed wind power capacity was located on SCA's land, the company adds.

SCA results		
SEK million	January - March	
	2026	2025
Key figures		
Sales	4,740	5,161
EBITDA	1,107	1,651
Operating result	543	1,119
Net result	380	800
Business area review		
Forest		
Sales	2,547	2,486
EBITDA	884	879
Wood		
Sales	1,303	1,498
EBITDA	49	236
Deliveries, 1,000 m ³	451	524
Pulp		
Sales	1,623	1,940
EBITDA	40	320
Deliveries, 1,000 t	256	257
Containerboard		
Sales	1,735	1,674
EBITDA	104	239
Deliveries kraftliner, 1,000 t	258	235
Renewable Energy		
Sales	662	603
EBITDA	206	134
Deliveries own wind power, GWh	82	49
Source: SCA		

German print sector remains under pressure despite modest recovery in April

 **EUWID+** 13 May 2026 | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

The mood in the German printing and media industry improved slightly in April 2026, but the sector still appears far from a sustained recovery. According to the German Printing and Media Industries Federation (BVDM), the seasonally adjusted business climate index increased marginally by 0.4 per cent compared with March to 87.8 points, but remained below the level recorded in the same month of last year.

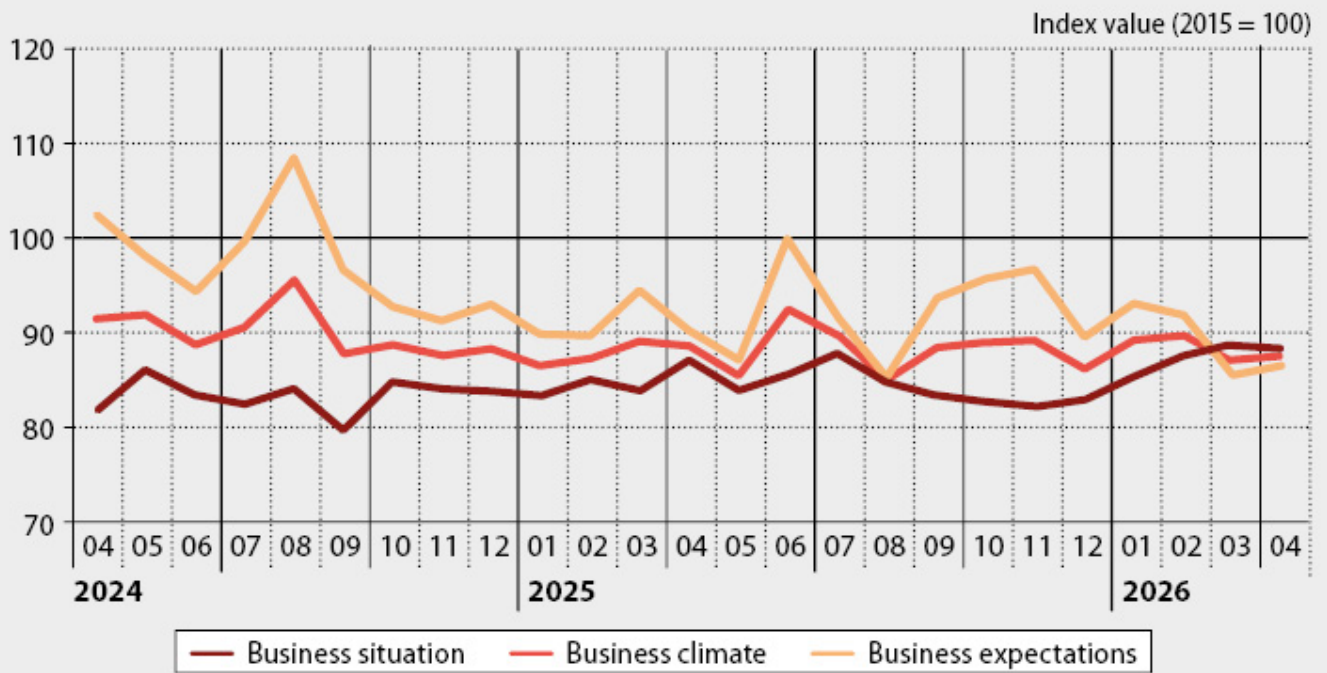
Weak demand continues to be the industry's main burden. According to the survey, 49 per cent of the companies questioned cited a lack of orders as a production constraint. By contrast, labour shortages were cited by only 20 per cent of respondents, suggesting that staffing issues have become less pressing amid weaker demand.

While companies assessed their business expectations for the next six months somewhat more positively than in March, their assessment of the current business situation deteriorated slightly. Overall, the industry therefore remains in a difficult market environment.

Capacity utilisation also weakened further. According to the BVDM, utilisation rates in April were 4.4 per cent lower than in the same month of last year. Despite some stabilisation in order books, market participants therefore continue to describe the business situation as strained.

Another notable aspect is that many companies still expect selling prices to rise. According to the survey, 46 per cent of respondents anticipate higher prices over the next three months, while only 4 per cent expect prices to decline. This clearly reflects the rising cost and margin pressure in the industry.

Economic situation of the German printing industry



Source: Ifo, BVDM

German paper industry still views printed products as a loophole, even after EUDR revision

 **EUWID** + 13 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

The German paper industry association Die Papierindustrie believes that, despite the latest clarifications and simplifications to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) published by the European Commission, the regulation still contains notable shortcomings. In comments made to EUWID, the association pointed to remaining gaps in the scope of the rules. In particular, it views the exclusion of printed products in HS/CN chapter 49 from the regulation's scope as a "missed opportunity". At first glance, however, the association did not expect the revised text to result in any major changes overall.

While paper and numerous printed items classified under other categories, such as packaging, remain covered by the EUDR, this no longer applies to many printed products. As a result, the association warns that a "major loophole in the system" effectively remains wide open. Imports of printed products such as children's books from third countries could therefore enter the EU market without being subject to the same EUDR requirements on deforestation-free supply chains, the association pointed out.

Such fibres could find their way into the European paper and recovered paper loop via this route. "The Thünen Institute is already working on methods and reference materials to identify tropical wood in paper, among other things, in order to detect illegal wood flows," the representative body of the German pulp and paper industry stated.

If problematic fibres were to enter the European paper loop via imports of printed products, the association felt that this might contaminate the cycle and damage the reputation of Germany's highly circular paper industry – despite its compliance with the EUDR. In individual cases it would be almost impossible to prove that fibres originated from imported printed products, the association said.

In addition, there is a potentially significant competitive disadvantage. Printed products that could be produced at a lower cost outside the EUDR obligations could be placed on an EU market where European companies have to comply with strict documentation and due diligence requirements for comparable wood and paper streams.

In the association's view, printing companies are in practice unlikely to fall under the core EUDR obligations as "first-placer" on the market, given the current role logic in the supply chain. The association stated that the removal of HS/CN 49 products "did not primarily relieve domestic value creation, but instead leaves an entry point wide open and effectively opens up the market to players whose business models would otherwise fail to meet EUDR data and proof requirements."

At the same time, consumers were left with a false sense of security. The association stated that many assumed that an EU regulation, such as the EUDR, meant that paper products as a whole were safeguarded, yet this particular loophole was almost impossible for outsiders to comprehend.

Paper mills still pushing for higher prices on German market at the start of May

Pushback against publication paper manufacturers' plans to charge more

 13 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 4 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Magazine paper manufacturers in Germany are continuing to push for further price increases, arguing that the hikes achieved in April were insufficient to restore economically viable margins. However, experts agree that the LWC and SC paper markets remain oversupplied, prompting swift resistance from publishers and print buyers against additional May increases where contracts allowed.

Following initial kraftliner price increases in April, additional paper mills are seeking to implement similar hikes in May, supported by specific market factors. Producers are less aligned on the extent of the planned increases for semi-chemical fluting prices.

Resistance often slows publication paper producers' pricing plans

The market for LWC and SC papers remains unsettled as paper mills continue to push for higher prices. Industry representatives consistently report that the April round of price increases failed to achieve a sustainable improvement in margins, as the proposed hikes have not been implemented to the extent producers had hoped for.

Market insiders say buyers were willing to make only limited concessions, particularly for SC paper. Prices have often increased by €10 to 20/t, usually with validity for the entire second quarter. In the case of LWC, the price increases achieved for April are said to have been more pronounced, with reports ranging from €20 to 40/t. Efforts by some paper mills to retain the option of further price increases through short-term supply agreements have added to market uncertainty. However, manufacturers' attempts to implement additional increases during the second quarter met with strong resistance from printers and especially publishers.

In isolated cases, paper suppliers are reportedly still pushing for price hikes. More commonly, however, market sources say that discussions on price increases for uncoated and especially coated magazine papers have been postponed to a later date – even though increases for some LWC deliveries are reportedly expected to take effect in May.

For both segments, supply agreements continue to vary considerably from one customer relationship to another. The market for so-called project or special business also remains highly fragmented, despite paper manufacturers' intensive efforts to secure higher prices here.

Representatives of the paper industry stress that rising costs continue to challenge virtually all paper mills. However, the generally difficult market environment is creating a mixed picture and, above all, considerable uncertainty. Moderately proposed price increases are frequently being postponed across the market. Experts explain that the lack of any real supply tightness is hampering the implementation of higher paper prices, even under the best circumstances. A number of paper manufacturers are now targeting the third quarter for margin improvements. However, industry insiders also doubt that demand developments in July will support any further round of price increases.

Both coated and uncoated publication paper grades are said to be readily available on the market. Industry sources report that several paper mills are currently operating with low capacity utilisation, which is fuelling competition for orders.

In addition, publishers and advertisers have indicated that they may have to respond to higher paper prices by reducing print volumes. They describe current business conditions as difficult and the overall consumer climate as inadequate. According to market participants, the advertising market continues to decline, affecting both magazine and commercial print segments.

Higher kraftliner prices likely to take hold across the board in May

Initial price increase announcements on the kraftliner market had pointed to May implementation, but later notifications advanced the hikes to April. Producers were aiming for increases of €80-100/t.

Mirroring the different announcement dates, implementation of manufacturers' price plans on the market in Germany was likewise mixed. A few corrugated board producers already accepted higher prices for April, with everyone else following suit in May. The market appears broadly aligned on the scale of the increase, with May hikes for brown kraftliner largely matching those already implemented in April.

In April, a few converters had attempted to avoid paying higher prices for brown kraftliner, in particular, by moving around orders, but with limited success. Machine-related disruptions at several kraftliner mills and reported supply interruptions from North America have strengthened order books for European producers. According to market participants, these temporary supply-side factors, combined with the earlier price increases for recycled corrugated case materials, have supported implementation of the kraftliner hikes.

Market players in Germany are somewhat at odds over the price increase for semi-chemical fluting. A wide range of figures is still circulating, and discussions in early May have so far provided little indication of where prices will ultimately settle. Market insiders said the only certainty was that May would bring prices closer to the announced hikes of up to €60/t.

By contrast, white-top kraftliner hikes have shown greater consistency, with several producers already implementing increases of €40/t in April and others expected to follow in May.

Consumption of softwood pulp remains low in Europe, March pulp port stocks decline markedly

 **EUWID** + 13 May 2026 | ⌚ ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

In March 2026, European paper mills utilised slightly more pulp than they did in the preceding month. According to Utipulp, around 862,000 t of chemical market pulp was processed in its member countries. This figure was around 5 per cent higher than in February 2026, but roughly 2 per cent lower than in March 2025.

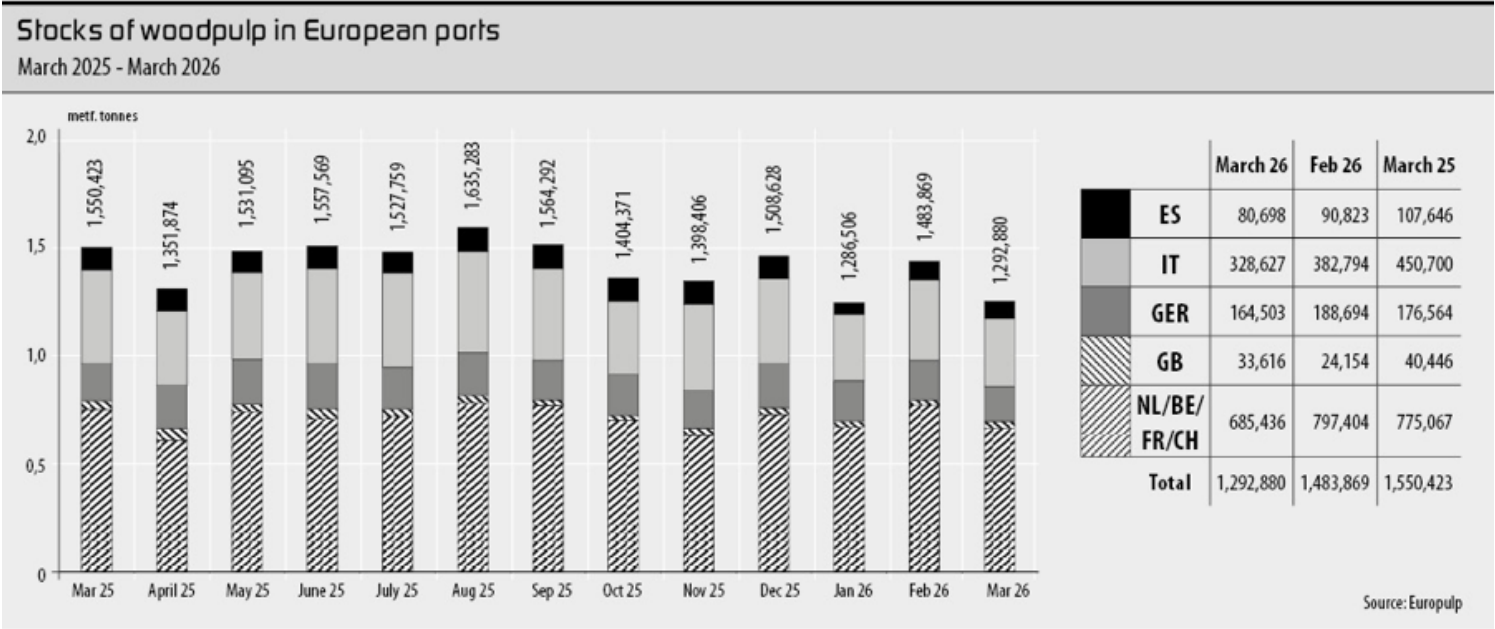
The first quarter thus marked a continuation of the weak demand trend observed in recent years. While February had been slightly above the prior-year level, March was a weaker month again. Overall, pulp consumption in the first quarter of 2026 amounted to around 2.48 million t, slightly below the approximately 2.5 million t recorded in the same period of the previous year.

Consumption of bleached hardwood kraft pulp amounted to around 579,000 t in March, up by about 6 per cent over February. Mills used around 227,000 t of bleached softwood kraft pulp, which was also higher by around 5 per cent compared with the preceding month.

Comparing the first quarter of 2026 against the prior-year period, hardwood and softwood pulp again showed differing trends, confirming the general trend. The volume of bleached hardwood pulp used was around 1.66 million t, exceeding the prior-year level of around 1.63 million t. By contrast, consumption of bleached softwood pulp dropped off significantly from 721,000 t in the first quarter of 2025 to 665,000 t in the most recent quarter.

Inventory levels at paper mills in Europe decreased slightly in March. According to Utipulp, pulp stocks amounted to around 697,000 t. This figure was about 2 per cent lower than in February 2026 and 1 per cent below the level of March 2025.

Expressed in the number of production days, total inventory levels in March were unchanged at 26 days. Stocks of bleached hardwood kraft pulp amounted to 24 days, while inventories of bleached softwood kraft pulp corresponded to 32 days.



Europulp reports markedly lower pulp stocks

Pulp stocks held at European ports in March 2026 were considerably lower compared with the preceding month, returning roughly to the January level. According to Europulp, total stocks amounted to 1.29 million t in March. This was around 13 per cent below the level of February 2026 and 17 per cent lower than March 2025.

There were regional variations, but declines were reported in nearly all major port regions. The drop-offs were once again especially pronounced in the ports of the Netherlands/Belgium/France/Switzerland, where stocks decreased by around 14 per cent month-on-month to 685,000 t of pulp. In Italy, pulp inventories also fell by around 14 per cent compared with February and amounted to 329,000 t. Compared with one year earlier, this figure was down by a hefty 27 per cent. A downtrend was also recorded in Germany, where stocks amounted to 165,000 t in March, according to Europulp. This equated to a decline of around 13 per cent compared with February. The 81,000 t of pulp stored at Spanish ports was down by around 11 per cent versus the preceding month.

One exception was the UK, where pulp stocks rose month-on-month by around 39 per cent to 34,000 t.

Inventories and consumption of pulp consumers in Europe								
March 2026								
tonnes		UNBLEACHED		BLEACHED / SEMI-BLEACHED			Total	Previous year
		Sulphite & Kraft	Softwood sulphite	Hardwood sulphite	Softwood kraft	Hardwood kraft		
Inventories								
February	2026	7,681	28,291	10,780	229,759	432,840	709,351	746,511
March	2026	8,132	26,473	8,514	233,233	420,760	697,112	704,711
Consumption								
February	2026	8,265	30,719	16,204	216,888	547,742	819,818	793,552
March	2026	8,454	30,884	17,008	227,158	578,879	862,383	882,666
NB: Total and previous year total do not include DIP and CTMP, figures are constantly revised.								
Each national Association has to provide an estimation for 100% of the national volumes out of their samples (from 80% to 100% depending on the countries).								
Source: UTIPULP								

Hardwood pulp prices rise due to tight availability, diverging trend for NBSK

Mounting pressure for further capacity adjustments in softwood pulp market

 12 May 2026 | [Karolina Utracki](#) |  ~ 5 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

The markets for hardwood and softwood pulp continue to drift apart in Europe. While bleached hardwood kraft (BHK) pulp once again became significantly more expensive in April and overall supply is described as tight, quotes for northern bleached softwood kraft (NBSK) pulp were mostly flat at the March level. Market participants attribute the diverging trends primarily to availability: Hardwood pulp is scarce in Europe right now, while softwood pulp is still abundantly available.

EUWID Price Watch Western Europe			
April 2026			
CF European pulp	April 2026 ¹⁾	March 2026	April 2025
Softwood pulp			
Bleached softwood pulp			
From Scandinavia and Canada in 01	1,402 - 1,412	1,407 - 1,420	1,404 - 1,422
From Scandinavia and Canada in 02/4	1,402 - 1,407	1,400 - 1,415	1,399 - 1,409
Southern softwood from the CE in 01	1,354 - 1,362	1,358 - 1,364	1,358 - 1,377
Southern softwood from the CE in 02/4	1,390 - 1,400	1,390 - 1,400	1,345 - 1,359
Bleached hardwood pulp			
Black spruce from Scandinavia in 01	1,740 - 1,775	1,738 - 1,739	1,640 - 1,684
Eucalyptus pulp			
From Portugal/Spain in 01	1,740 - 1,775	1,738 - 1,739	1,640 - 1,684
From South America in 01	1,740 - 1,775	1,738 - 1,739	1,640 - 1,684
From South America in 02/4	1,700 - 1,705	1,700 - 1,708	1,700 - 1,720
Southern hardwood in 01	1,707 - 1,741	1,694 - 1,700	1,694 - 1,697
Southern hardwood in 02/4	1,700 - 1,740	1,700 - 1,740	1,710 - 1,740
Hardwood BK 780P			
From Scandinavia and Canada in 01	610 - 1,405	610 - 1,407	597 - 1,400
From Scandinavia and Canada in 02/4	610 - 1,405	610 - 1,407	610 - 1,400

¹⁾ Exchange rate as of 7 May 2026: USD 1 = 0.9181.
²⁾ As the basis of the last publication, negotiations for March had not yet been concluded. The final settlements amounted to USD 600-1,400/ton.
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Most market participants agree that the current market is not being driven by strong customer demand for any pulp grade. “Nobody needs more pulp, but some producers are not supplying the market as expected,” explained one seller of bleached eucalyptus kraft (BEK) pulp. Utipulp statistics for the first quarter of the year confirm that the years-long downward trend in market pulp consumption in Europe continues. In the view of numerous market participants, the market is actually being shaped instead by supply and logistic effects, especially for hardwood pulp.

Hardwood pulp producers announce further price hike for May

Against this backdrop, producers of bleached hardwood kraft pulp fully implemented their announced price hike of \$50 on the market in Europe. Players mentioned list prices of \$1,380/t for April. Moreover, prices may be poised to climb further, since some suppliers, including the market leader, have announced another increase of \$50 in May to bring list prices up to \$1,430/t.

A main factor buoying the hardwood pulp market is persistently tight availability. Respondents often report significant delays in deliveries of BEK pulp from South America. Several suppliers reported that ships are arriving three to five weeks later than planned. One reason for this is that ships are traveling slower to save fuel, given the constantly rising fuel costs. “Shipping is a catastrophe,” said one supplier.

Additional support for producers’ plans comes from interrupted production and reduced availability at individual suppliers in Europe. Many market participants pointed to the recent insolvency of Fibre Excellence in France and the company’s cessation of production. Although these missing volumes are minor on a global scale – the company produced bleached hardwood pulp as well as bleached and unbleached softwood pulp – the psychological effect is much larger, EUWID was told. The absence of this player intensifies the feeling of an already tight market, insiders say.

Moreover, at the end of last year, numerous paper producers in Europe had been expecting a very weak market in 2026 and had thus kept their contractual volumes low. But to the surprise of various industry experts, demand for paper in several segments has held up better than expected so far. Especially in the fine paper segment, market participants report seasonally good capacity utilisation and frontloading effects as a result of early announcements of paper price increases. Now, many paper producers are simultaneously on the hunt for additional volumes on the spot market, which were said to be scarcely available for hardwood pulp.

It is notable, however, that players do not interpret the current market situation as a sign of a lasting upturn in demand. On the contrary, real demand for paper remains weak worldwide, experts say. At the same time, safety and buffer stocks are being built up throughout the supply chain. Several respondents therefore warned that the current good capacity utilisation in individual paper segments should not be overrated.

Accordingly, many market participants have a cautious outlook for the coming months. In the short term, numerous respondents expect that the price hikes announced for hardwood pulp in Europe as of May will mostly or fully go through. But there are growing signs that the market is nearing a plateau. Players are keeping an especially close eye on the market in China, where prices for hardwood pulp are now largely stagnating, while demand is still described as weak.

EUWID Price Review Pulp Western Europe				
First quarter 2025				
per tonne of European pulp	First quarter 2024	Fourth quarter 2023	First quarter 2025	
Bleached softwood pulp				
Softwood kraft				
From Scandinavia and Canada in 601	1,302 - 1,428	1,268 - 1,303	1,409 - 1,475	
From Scandinavia and Canada in 100%	1,332 - 1,475	1,402 - 1,505	1,480 - 1,580	
Southern softwood from the US in 601	1,252 - 1,384	1,234 - 1,328	1,383 - 1,465	
Southern softwood from the US in 100%	1,406 - 1,480	1,440 - 1,450	1,453 - 1,510	
Bleached hardwood pulp				
Birch pulp from Scandinavia in 601	1,025 - 1,134	920 - 968	964 - 1,068	
European pulp				
From Portugal/Greece in 601	1,025 - 1,134	920 - 968	964 - 1,068	
From Scandinavia in 601	1,025 - 1,134	920 - 968	964 - 1,068	
From South America in 100%	1,220 - 1,330	1,040 - 1,120	1,080 - 1,160	
Southern softwood in 601	980 - 1,100	870 - 914	910 - 1,010	
Southern softwood in 100%	1,170 - 1,280	1,010 - 1,080	950 - 1,100	
Hardwood in 70%				
From Scandinavia and Canada in 601	479 - 537	463 - 512	562 - 605	
From Scandinavia and Canada in 100%	579 - 620	562 - 596	610 - 660	
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Oversupply continues to weigh on NBSK

By contrast, the market picture for northern bleached softwood pulp (NBSK) remains significantly weaker. Although producers here also attempted further price hikes in Europe in April, the market appears to be stalling above the level of around \$1,650/t. EUWID respondents say that the envisaged hikes could not be realised so far and they reckon the adjustments have almost no chance of success. Given that the summer business is expected to be even weaker, “we have to fight simply to maintain the current level,” said one NBSK supplier.

In contrast to hardwood pulp, there is still good supply in the market for NBSK. According to respondents, additional volumes are available practically any time. And on the spot market, more aggressive offers are reappearing after a period of calmer conditions. In some cases, there are reports of spot deals being done below the €600/t mark again.

The structural problems in the softwood pulp market are still there, numerous market participants assert. In addition to weak demand, there are substitution processes in favour of hardwood pulp, while the softwood market has excess capacities. Moreover, there is mounting price pressure in China, EUWID was told. Chinese paper mills have weak capacity utilisation, while inventory levels are high, according to market insiders.

In the short term, numerous respondents believe there is barely any leeway for a price hike in the NBSK pulp market. European producers in particular, with their high costs for wood and energy, are thus increasingly struggling. Many market participants say the future of pulp production in Germany especially is in jeopardy. After all, wood prices in Scandinavia have softened over the past months, but they remain high in Central Europe and Germany. Simultaneously, the procurement radius of the pulp mills continues to widen due to scarce raw material availability. And this is doubly painful when logistics becomes more expensive, as has happened in recent weeks.

Several respondents therefore expect that NBSK pulp mills could be temporarily idled or even permanently closed in the summer. Such steps are expected not only in Central Europe but also potentially in the Nordics.

EU approves Suzano acquisition of Kimberly-Clark tissue business

12 May 2026 | 🕒 ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

The European Commission has cleared Suzano's planned acquisition of Kimberly-Clark's International Family Care & Professional (IFP) business in an unconditional Phase I decision. According to the Commission, the transaction does not raise competition concerns in the European Economic Area (EEA).



The deal, which was notified on 31 March 2026, concerns the acquisition of Kimberly-Clark IFP NewCo B.V., a newly established Netherlands-based subsidiary of Kimberly-Clark Corporation that was created for the proposed transaction. Kimberly-Clark IFP business includes the production and sale of tissue products such as toilet paper and facial tissues across Europe, Africa, South and Central America, Puerto Rico, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania.

Brazilian pulp producer Suzano is the world's largest suppliers of bleached eucalyptus kraft (BEK) market pulp, a key raw material used in tissue production. Suzano also manufactures tissue products in its domestic Brazilian market.

In its assessment, the Commission focused in particular on the vertical integration aspects of the transaction, namely the combination of a major BEKP supplier with a tissue products manufacturer.

According to the Commission, rival tissue producers in the EEA would continue to have sufficient access to BEKP following the merger. Suzano's market share in the EEA was described as moderate, while several alternative pulp suppliers remain active in the market. The Commission also pointed to currently available spare capacity in the BEK pulp market.

The Commission further noted that tissue manufacturers in the EEA generally source BEK pulp from multiple suppliers and would not face major barriers when switching suppliers if necessary. In addition, Brussels concluded that the relatively limited market position of Kimberly-Clark IFP in the EEA would make it difficult for the merged company to profitably foreclose competing tissue manufacturers.

The Commission therefore concluded that the combined entity would neither have the ability nor the incentive to restrict access to BEK market pulp for other tissue producers in the EEA.

Graphic Packaging announces job cuts and divestment of Croatian operations

 **EUWID** + 11 May 2026 | [Frauke Schmidt](#) | ⌚ ~ 2 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

US packaging group Graphic Packaging Holding Company (GPI) is planning to cut more than 500 jobs and divest operations in Croatia as part of a broad restructuring and efficiency programme. The measures follow a 90-day business review and are intended to reduce the cost base and optimise the company's manufacturing and site network. GPI also announced portfolio simplification measures and a stronger focus on core markets and core regions, without providing further details. In this context, the company referred to the planned divestment of "non-core assets in Croatia".



The assets in question are likely to include the Croatian folding boxboard subsidiary Istra Grafika. Based in Kanfanar in the Istria region, the company produces folding cartons mainly for the food, pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries. [Istra Grafika was acquired by AR Packaging](#) in 2019, which itself [became part of GPI in 2021](#). The group justified the current measures by pointing to difficult market conditions, particularly overcapacity in coated primary fibre paperboard grades in North America and Europe.

Graphic Packaging has already closed several mills or consolidated production capacities in recent years, most recently the Middleton, Ohio, and East Angus, Québec, paperboard mills.

Weak European consumer demand weighs on international operations

The difficult market environment was also reflected in the company's business figures: GPI reported sales of \$8.6bn for 2025, down from \$8.8bn the previous year. Adjusted Ebitda declined from \$1.7bn to \$1.4bn.

The international division, which comprises 30 packaging plants in Europe as well as six additional sites in Australia/New Zealand, Brazil, Indonesia and Nigeria, benefited from higher volumes and favourable currency effects, lifting sales to \$2.2bn. However, high costs, intense competition and subdued consumer goods demand weighed on the business particularly in Europe, causing the division's operating profit to decline. GPI stressed that its international activities remained strategically important due to their broad geographic footprint and cooperation with multinational consumer goods companies.

The Americas Paperboard Packaging division, the group’s largest business segment, continued to suffer from weak demand and ongoing price pressure in the paperboard and packaging markets in 2025. The company pointed to overcapacity in coated primary fibre paperboard grades, which intensified competition. In North America, GPI continues to rely on a strongly integrated model with its own paperboard production and a broad network of converting plants.

New Chief Executive Officer Robbert Rietbroek announced that the company would place greater focus on operational excellence, cost discipline, customer service and optimisation of the global manufacturing network going forward.

He also pointed to progress in new packaging solutions and paper-based alternatives to plastic packaging. In the first quarter of 2026, the company reported 13 new patent filings and several awards for sustainable packaging solutions.

Graphic Packaging International results		
\$ million	2025	2024
Key figures		
Sales	8,617	8,807
Adjusted EBITDA	1,395	1,682
Operating result	804	1,119
Net result	444	658
Business area review		
Americas Paperboard Packaging		
Sales	5,889	6,191
Operating result	818	1,072
International Paperboard Packaging		
Sales	2,208	2,130
Operating result	139	174
Source: Graphic Packaging		

Dutch specialty paper producer Coldenhove files for insolvency

 **EUWID** + 08 May 2026 | Valeria Buß |  ~ 1 min | Published in issue 20/2026

Dutch specialty paper manufacturer Coldenhove Paper is undergoing insolvency proceedings. After filing for insolvency, the company was declared bankrupt by the court of the Gelderland province on 6 May following the expiry of the moratorium, says a document from the Dutch insolvency register. Local media report that 110 employees are affected by the measure. Options for restructuring are now to be explored.



For Dutch trade union CNV, the insolvency comes as no complete surprise. "Declining demand and rising energy costs had become an increasingly serious problem," said the unions director Maayke Kasper. The introduction of the US import tariffs had compounded the situation. This combination of factors had left Coldenhove unable to continue operating profitably, Ms Kasper added.

When it comes to energy costs, CNV is calling for government intervention. "In neighbouring countries, production is often much cheaper thanks to state subsidies. In addition, the power grid is overloaded, permitting procedures are complex and time-consuming, and there is uncertainty over CO₂ levies. Dutch plants are struggling significantly to compete internationally," Ms Kasper said in a union statement.

Coldenhove is a manufacturer of specialty materials and is primarily specialised in transfer papers for sublimation printing, a technique for printing digital images onto fabrics which uses heat to transfer dye onto carrying materials. The 365-year-old paper mill in Eerbeek also produces sterile barrier papers for medical applications, as well as other transfer and specialty papers, including printable kraft papers for envelopes, stationery, and lightweight packaging.

Coldenhove was taken over by US specialty paper manufacturer Neenah Paper in 2017. In 2024, British investment firm Inspirit Capital acquired the mill but reportedly sold it again to a consortium of private investors in July 2025.

Aquakraft increases CCM capacity at Ferizli mill

 **EUWID** + 07 May 2026 | [Frauke Schmidt](#) | 🕒 ~ 2 min | Published in issue 20/2026

Turkish paper producer Aquakraft Kağıt ve Ambalaj and Voith have signed a contract for a comprehensive rebuild of PM 2 at Aquakraft's Ferizli mill near Istanbul. According to Voith, the rebuild is intended to significantly modernise the production line and increase production capacity by around 60 per cent. The project will also enable Aquakraft to expand its range of containerboard grades.



Aquakraft's PM2 containerboard mill in Ferizli, Turkey, will be upgraded by full-line supplier Voith through 2027.

The rebuild includes upgrades to the approach flow system, the installation of a new two-ply forming concept, a revamped press section and modifications to the dryer and end sections. Voith will also modernise the stock preparation system and integrate existing equipment into a new line for bleached and unbleached kraft pulp.

Following the rebuild, PM 2 will produce corrugating medium, testliner, high-performance testliner and white-top liner in basis weights ranging from 80 to 200 g/m². The machine is designed to operate at speeds of up to 1,200 m/min. Start-up is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2027.

Aquakraft is the newest investment of Turkish industrial group [Asko Holding](#) and represents the company's entry into the paper and packaging sector. The Ferizli site was officially opened in 2025 and comprises 80,000 m² of covered production area within a total site area of 180,000 m², Aquakraft writes on LinkedIn. According to the information available, the mill was initially designed for an annual production capacity of around 200,000 t of paper. Aquakraft currently focuses on fluting and testliner grades produced from 100 per cent recovered paper, but aims to broaden its paper production portfolio. The company states that the facility directly employs around 500 people.

The PM 2 was originally supplied by Voith in 1992 as Zanders' PM 3 in Mönchengladbach, Germany, before being relocated to Turkey in 2025. After the machine produced its first commercial containerboard in September 2025, Aquakraft decided to further develop the line together with Voith.

Bekir Yemsen, General Manager at Aquakraft, said the rebuild would prepare the paper machine for the company's next growth phase by significantly increasing capacity, broadening the product portfolio and reducing energy consumption.

This capacity expansion is part of a series of major investments in the Turkish containerboard industry. Since 2024, more than 2 million tpy of new production capacity has been started up in the country. These projects include [Kipaş Kağıt's new paper machine in Söke](#) with a production capacity of 600,000 tpy and [Modern Karton's PM 6 in Zonguldak](#) with a capacity of 650,000 tpy.

Essity initiates strategic review of consumer tissue business, sale not excluded

07 May 2026 | 🕒 ~ 1 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Essity has started a strategic review of its Consumer Tissue business area, which includes tissue products for households. While different alternatives are to be evaluated, the company does not rule out a divestment of the division. However, no such decisions have yet been taken, it stresses.



The review will evaluate strategic alternatives with the aim of "creating the best possible conditions" for the business, the company says. "Essity's Consumer Tissue business has a strong offering [...]. The strategic review will evaluate different options for the ownership of Consumer Tissue and is part of our efforts to optimise Essity's product portfolio," commented Ulrika Kolsrud, Essity's President and CEO.

Essity describes itself as the leading consumer tissue manufacturer in Europe and the second largest player in Latin America. The Consumer Tissue division recorded sales of SEK43.5bn, which corresponds to 31 per cent of the group's total sales, and Ebitda excluding items affecting comparability of SEK5.2bn in 2025.

The division runs 29 production facilities and employs around 13,000 people worldwide, Essity says. The portfolio includes products such as toilet paper, household towels, handkerchiefs, facial tissues, moist tissue and paper napkins under brands such as Lotus, Tempo, Zewa, Cushelle, Plenty, regio and Familia. The company also produces consumer tissue for retailer's own brands and private label.

On its website, Essity describes the consumer tissue market as undergoing significant transformation. Economic pressures were prompting many households to shift preferences from premium to more cost-effective products, the company said. At the same time, new competitors were reshaping the competitive environment, driving the need for strategic differentiation. Sustainability had also become a defining expectation, it added.

Germany introduces transition period for use of Diwass until the end of 2026

 **EUWID +** 05 May 2026 | [Frauke Schmidt](#) |  ~ 3 min | [Published in issue 20/2026](#)

Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMUKN) confirmed at the end of April that a nationwide transitional arrangement has been agreed with a view to the digitalisation of administrative procedures related to trans frontier shipments of green-listed waste such as recovered paper within the EU.



Recovered paper shipments within the EU may continue to use paper-based Annex VII documents until the end of 2026.

Germany is therefore following the solution recommended by the [European Commission](#) at the end of March. Under this approach, the Annex VII document for cross-border deliveries of wastes not subject to the notification procedure may continue to be used in paper form for the time being, even though the revised EU Waste Shipments Regulation (WSR) will generally require the digital exchange of documents from 21 May 2026 onwards. The reason given is delays in the technical development of the European Diwass platform.

According to the BMUKN, the competent authorities will not impose sanctions until and including 31 December 2026 if parties involved in cross-border shipments of non-notifiable waste are not yet able to process Annex VII documents digitally via the EU's Digital Waste Shipment System (Diwass).

In such cases, the required documents may continue to accompany shipments in paper form during transport. However, the authorities stressed that the new version of the Annex VII form under Regulation (EU) 2024/1157 will have to be used from 21 May onwards, even during the transition period.

Submission of paper-based Annex VII documents to the competent authorities will not be required during the transition phase. However, the electronic data exchange platform Diwass must be used from 1 January 2027 at the latest, according to the ministry.

BUKEA: "two-day rule" suspended until end-2026

According to Hamburg's Authority for Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture (BUKEA), the much-criticised "two-day rule" has also been suspended until the end of 2026. The rule requires Annex VII documents to be submitted or uploaded no later than two working days before the start of a shipment and made available to the other parties involved. Industry representatives criticise the rule as "detached from reality" and "unworkable".

BUKEA also confirmed that registration in Diwass will not yet be required during the transition period. However, in its communication dated 28 April, the BMUKN urged all parties involved in waste management to register in Diwass without delay.

No national implementation law for Diwass adopted yet

Market participants say additional uncertainty stems from the fact that Germany has still not adopted national implementing legislation for the revised WSR. This legislation is expected to regulate, among other things, potential administrative offences and sanctions related to Diwass. It remains unclear when the legislation will be adopted, Andreas Otto, recovered paper expert within Germany's recycling association Bvse, told EUWID.

Mr Otto added that other EU member states have signalled that they will also continue to accept paper versions of the Annex VII document until the end of the transition period on 31 December 2026. These countries include Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain and France. While Germany requires the use of the new Annex VII form, Denmark, for example, is reportedly still using the current version of the form.

Paper documents to remain in use for imports from non-EU countries after 2026

According to BUKA, shipments from non-EU countries such as the UK will continue to be handled using paper documents even after 2026. However, from 1 January 2027 onwards, suppliers from third countries such as the UK or Switzerland will have to be registered in the system by their European contractual partners. BUKA also stated that these suppliers must use the new Annex VII form from 21 May 2026 onwards, albeit still in paper form.

Germany's recycling, waste management and paper industries had previously warned of major disruptions to the circular economy. In letters sent to the environment ministries of the German federal states and the BMUKN in mid-April, the associations stated that the obligation to use Diwass posed a risk that cross-border shipments of non-hazardous waste within the EU could either effectively come to a temporary standstill or result in ordinary operational activities being deemed non-compliant."