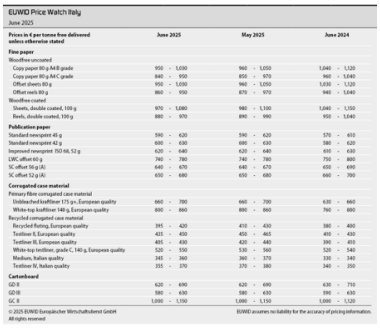
Prices for fine paper and recycled containerboard start falling in June in Italy

Declining raw material prices and soft demand amplify downward pressure

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 12 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Italy
June 2025

Prices in € per tonne free delivered unless otherwise stated	June 2025	May 2025	June 2024
Fine paper			
Woodfree uncoated			
Copy paper 80 g A4 B grade	950 - 1,030	960 - 1,050	1,040 - 1,120
Copy paper 80 g A4 C grade	840 - 930	850 - 970	960 - 1,040
Offset sheets 80 g	950 - 1,030	960 - 1,050	1,030 - 1,120
Offset reels 80 g	860 - 950	870 - 970	940 - 1,040
Woodfree coated			
Sheets, double coated, 100 g	970 - 1,080	980 - 1,100	1,040 - 1,150
Reels, double coated, 100 g	880 - 970	890 - 990	950 - 1,040
Publication paper			
Standard newsprint 45 g	590 - 620	590 - 620	570 - 610
Standard newsprint 42 g	600 - 630	600 - 630	580 - 620
Improved newsprint ISO 58, 52 g	620 - 640	620 - 640	610 - 630
LWC offset 60 g	740 - 780	740 - 780	750 - 800
SC offset 56 g (A)	640 - 670	640 - 670	650 - 690
SC offset 52 g (A)	650 - 680	650 - 680	660 - 700
Corrugated case material			
Primary fibre corrugated case material			
Unbleached kraftliner 175 gs, European quality	660 - 700	660 - 700	630 - 660
White-top kraftliner 140 g, European quality	800 - 860	800 - 860	760 - 800
Recycled corrugated case material			
Recycled fluting, European quality	395 - 420	410 - 430	380 - 400
Testliner II, European quality	435 - 450	450 - 465	410 - 430
Testliner III, European quality	405 - 430	420 - 440	390 - 410
White-top testliner, grade C, 140 g, European quality	520 - 550	530 - 560	520 - 540
Medium, Italian quality	345 - 360	360 - 370	330 - 340
Testliner M, Italian quality	355 - 370	370 - 380	340 - 350
Cartonboard			
GD II	620 - 690	620 - 690	630 - 710
GD III	580 - 630	580 - 630	590 - 630
GC II	1,000 - 1,150	1,000 - 1,150	1,000 - 1,120

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The recycled corrugated case material market in Italy experienced its first price cuts in June, with mark-downs of up to €20/t. Falling recovered paper prices, the start-up of new capacity and slack demand all contributed to the significant pressure on prices. Paper manufacturers cannot rule out additional price decreases for July. By late June, the extent of any additional price cuts was still under discussion in most cases.

Dwindling raw material prices and slack demand amidst ample supply are issues in other parts of the Italian market, too. The paper industry's customers want to use this situation to assert their price plans and think that they are well on track to secure lower prices already for deliveries in July. In a few markets, suppliers are trying to manage supply by taking downtime, albeit often without success. An ample paper and board supply from Asia and South America is playing a key role in Italy. These suppliers are opening the door for new alternatives for buyers time and again and are setting the price trend more and more often.

Fine paper prices falling in Italy after failed attempt to increase prices

The fact that fine paper prices are falling in Italy ultimately comes as no real surprise. A few suppliers, especially those providing coated woodfree paper, still tried to assert their market position into May in hopes of implementing some kind of price increase, but they ultimately failed to achieve their price goals. They were also unable to prevent the subsequent downward slide in prices.

A few sources told EUWID that many woodfree coated and uncoated paper prices were already on the brink in May. In the woodfree uncoated paper segment, for instance, significant amounts of paper imported from Asia entered the market in April and May following delivery delays, further exacerbating the imbalance between supply and demand on the market in Italy.

Starting in April, pulp prices have also started to decline, and this downward spiral continued through May and June. This had ultimately encouraged customers to demand price cuts for primary fibre-based paper. And it also prompted some paper producers to leverage the lower pulp cost pressure by offering reduced sales prices to win additional orders.

European paper mills have been operating at low capacity utilisation for months now and are repeatedly taking downtime to reduce output and save costs, where possible. However, such capacity management measures ultimately achieved little, as the market was immediately flooded with cheap imported paper, one manufacturer lamented in a conversation with EUWID. As a result, some paper mills opt to maintain production and serve customers with low-priced paper. At current spot prices for pulp, even non-integrated paper mills might once again offer paper at attractive prices without immediately risking financial ruin, another EUWID contact noted.

More sceptical market players do not feel that the price cuts are a solution to the problems facing the paper industry. Low order backlogs and poor capacity utilisation are not issues unique to the paper industry. The printing industry is suffering, too, and it is not sure if printers will start ordering more only because paper becomes cheaper. Nevertheless, even these observers believe that the downturn in fine paper prices will be difficult to halt.

A few EUWID sources believe that the outcome of negotiations between the paper industry and big customers about deliveries from July onwards will prove pivotal for what happens to prices in Italy. Although these quarterly and half-yearly contracts are less common in a shrinking market and have lost some of their significance in recent years, they are still regarded as an key indicator of market trends.

For a few others, however, the evolution of demand, or more specifically, the balance between supply and demand during the summer months, is even more important. According to these sources, European paper mills will only be able to enter September with reasonable price levels if the market avoids a total summer lull and customers are not saturated with low-priced paper from the spot market.

Publication paper producers seeking stable prices as buyers hope for price cuts

Talks to discuss prices and delivery terms for the third quarter were not entirely done and dusted on Italy's publication paper market in the last and penultimate weeks of June. Even though the final outcome of price negotiations was still not available as this issue went to press, the pattern of talks between buyers and sellers already points to a clear direction and suggests some initial conclusions about the likely trend in prices in Italy.

A few newsprint producers as well as coated and uncoated magazine paper manufacturers had reportedly entered talks with buyers seeking higher prices. However, sources in Italy said that they had rarely made their desire clear, and when they did, they were not able to present it to customers with much conviction. At the same time, the majority of suppliers had been content with the idea of rolling over prices at the second quarter's level and engaged in only minimal talks with buyers.

By contrast, buyers adopted a clearer stance ahead of negotiations, categorically rejecting any attempt to raise prices for deliveries from 1 July or any other point in the third quarter in light of current market conditions. Several buyers went one step further, saying that they intend to accept unchanged prices from the second quarter in a worst-case scenario. They also indicated that negotiations have been particularly tough for larger print runs – especially for magazine papers – and that, in these cases, price reductions are likely to be achieved.

The paper industry's customers are basing their demands on spot market prices and, as has been reported several times since the start of the year, would gladly lock in contract prices at the lower end of the price range. Some market players in Italy repeatedly offered prices of €580/t free delivered for 45 g standard newsprint and more rarely for 42 g in May or June. A few customers are also pointing to imports of light-weight newsprint grades from Canada, which have been up for grabs for roughly €600-610/t for quite some time in Italy.

European paper manufacturers consider such prices to be ruinous and are refusing to accept them in contracts. They fear that, at these prices, they would have no margin left to absorb future fluctuations in raw material and energy costs.

Along with pricing concerns, manufacturers are also concerned about how sales will evolve in the weeks and months to come. As one magazine paper producer pointed out, capacity closures had yielded little to no improvement so far this year. Poor capacity utilisation was making manufacturing more costly than originally envisaged and is weighing heavy on paper mills' profitability, another source lamented.

Recycled containerboard prices falling in June, no price change for kraftliner

The tide has turned on Italy's recycled corrugated case material (RCCM) market. After paper manufacturers failed to fully implement their price hikes plans in April and May, the market first stalled and first price cut then followed in June. EUWID sources on both sides of the market reported smaller mark-downs to the tune of €10-20/t for brown grades and price reductions of €10/t in most cases for white-top testliner. But that is not all: in talks about July deliveries, suppliers and buyers were reportedly discussing more price cuts, typically €10-20/t for brown grades and another €10/t for white grades.

At the end of the day, most EUWID sources described the same conditions on Italy's recycled corrugated case material market. Weak to average demand is coinciding with abundant supply, which has been further boosted by the start-up of new capacity in Europe, including a 420,000 tpy RCCM mill in Italy. Competition among the different paper mills is intensifying as a result. Observers point out that two of the three companies commissioning new mills in 2025 are not integrated, meaning they do not operate downstream corrugated board and packaging plants and instead sell exclusively to third parties. The third manufacturer is partially integrated, but does not run any sheet feeder plants in Italy.

Corrugated sheet producers have felt well stocked, not least since the start-up of new RCCM capacity in the second quarter. For months now, they said that they have been able to take their time searching for the best deals combining the lowest price, good service and high quality. This often increasingly goes hand in hand with a certain reluctance to buy, especially in cases when prices are falling. Convinced that prices would be even lower in one month's time, customers only bought what was absolutely necessary in May and June, one paper producer lamented.

The situation on the Italian kraftliner market appears somewhat different, at least when it comes to prices. After minor increases in April and May, manufacturers were able to keep prices stable in June. European producers are reportedly benefiting from customers' uncertainty in dealing with US shipments. Sources said that concerns about possible surging import tariffs on US goods are leading to cautious purchasing of US kraftliner and, in turn, to greater interest in European kraftliner.

On the whole, demand was decent, as is typical for June and July, one supplier explained. However, another supplier noted a lack of orders from certain industries, particularly for heavy-duty and transport packaging.

Corrugated board and packaging manufacturers also have their own difficulties to contend with. For one thing, demand is reportedly surprisingly weak, and output is a few percentage points lower than last year, both in terms of area and weight. Some converters report having faced negative growth since the beginning of the year. For others, weak business in the second quarter has erased good figures recorded in the first quarter. Unfortunately, falling paper prices mean that price increases for corrugated board and corrugated packaging cannot be fully implemented, or that previously achieved mark-ups are now being questioned by customers.

Competition in the corrugated sheet business is further exacerbated by the increasing market presence of integrated manufacturers. Due to weak packaging business, these companies are selling more corrugated sheets to third parties, with pressure on prices mounting as a result, sources in Italy said.

Insiders told EUWID that the paper industry had already responded, and would have to continue to respond to the unsatisfactory market situation, with further shutdowns, one paper manufacturer asserted. Another paper manufacturer expressed little hope that temporary downtime could have any influence on the market. Any supply gap would be immediately filled with paper from other sources, not least from new mills in Italy, Austria, and France, this source explained.

Mounting pressure on prices on Italy's cartonboard market

The situation for suppliers of white-lined chipboard (WLC) active on the Italian market continued to deteriorate as the second quarter drew to a close. Demand, which had already been quiet before, reportedly softened further in June. This slowdown in GD board segment is said to be due to general economic reasons in the first place, but also to the fact that suppliers in certain sales segments are increasingly having to compete for orders with low-priced GC board imports, occasionally losing business to Asian competitors. Order intake for GD board is thus described as generally weak and inadequate as mid-year arrived.

In light of this situation, price discussions on the GD board market picked up again in May and June, with downward pressure on prices intensifying. A few buyers told EUWID that they had already managed to secure lower prices in June. A few others indicated that they had negotiated a price cut of €20/t, or more in some instances, for deliveries starting in July. Buyers note that with the recent drop in prices for ordinary recovered paper grades and with energy prices continuing to return to normal, the argument of costs, used by manufacturers in recent months to justify price increases and stable prices, no longer holds water.

Manufacturers made mixed comments about what the future might have in store for Italy's GD board market. A few board producers admit to suffering from weak demand. They are reporting poor capacity utilisation, and thus see little way to hold on to the smaller hikes achieved in March or April. "Anyone looking for orders will have to settle for lower prices," one supplier pointed out. Others are less forthcoming on the subject: While the Italian market is described as highly competitive and price-sensitive, they note that, despite weak demand and ongoing oversupply, the final word on pricing for the third quarter has not yet been spoken.

The future trend in prices was a hot topic on Italy's folding boxboard (FBB) market, too, in June. Converters, in particular, are eager to focus on this topic during talks. Buyers are underscoring slack demand and surplus supply on the market. A new board machine in Finland is reportedly not the only reason why supply has risen in Europe. The weak US dollar and current tariff policies also meant that European manufacturers have been exporting less cartonboard to the US for weeks now, insiders told EUWID.

Delayed shipments from Asia have taken on special importance in the Italian GC board market in recent months. Wholesalers and traders are currently holding substantial inventories and must sell them to customers as quickly as possible. This is essential to ensure they can place further orders in a timely manner, especially in light of the upcoming entry into force of EUDR requirements.

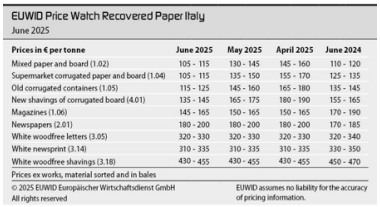
Given these circumstances, they see opportunities for reductions in GC board prices. If not for deliveries from July onwards, then lower prices are expected to take hold by the final quarter of the year at the latest, one expert remarked.

In conversations held with EUWID in June, manufacturers on their part placed less emphasis on prices and more on the overall conditions on the Italian and broader European market for GC 2. They, too, reported a persistent surplus supply and, as a rule, expressed dissatisfaction with both order intake and capacity utilisation.

A few manufacturers are therefore planning temporary production stoppages over the summer. These interruptions were actually maintenance-related downtime, but would probably be extended for commercial reasons, EUWID sources said. Some other interviewees are sceptical about the market impact of temporary shutdowns in the current climate and stress the need for more permanent capacity closures in Europe.

Another round of hefty price cuts for ordinary recovered paper grades in Italy

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 5 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Recovered Paper Italy
June 2025

Prices in € per tonne	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	June 2024
Mixed paper and board (1.02)	105 - 115	130 - 145	145 - 160	110 - 120
Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)	105 - 115	135 - 150	155 - 170	125 - 135
Old corrugated containers (1.05)	115 - 125	145 - 160	165 - 180	135 - 145
New shavings of corrugated board (4.01)	135 - 145	165 - 175	180 - 190	155 - 165
Magazines (1.06)	145 - 165	150 - 165	150 - 165	170 - 190
Newspapers (2.01)	180 - 200	180 - 200	180 - 200	170 - 185
White woodfree letters (3.05)	320 - 330	320 - 330	320 - 330	320 - 340
White newsprint (3.14)	310 - 335	310 - 335	310 - 335	330 - 350
White woodfree shavings (3.18)	430 - 455	430 - 455	430 - 455	450 - 470

Prices ex works, material sorted and in bales

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After May brought a trend turnaround in prices for ordinary recovered paper grades in Italy, another significant downward step occurred in June. Good availability and softening demand led to the mark-downs, which erased most of the ground gained in previous price surges. Old corrugated containers (OCC) were more affected than mixed paper, so prices for the two grades have moved closer. By contrast, prices of deinking grades and higher recovered paper grades remained largely unchanged in June.

The availability of OCC has improved significantly in recent weeks, according to market participants. While this grade had been scarce in March and April, leading to frantic purchasing, in May there was once again more than enough recovered paper to be found on the market, with some insiders reporting an oversupply. This situation continued in June, according to EUWID respondents. Availability was described as good or very good and buyers said sourcing material was no problem. As the export business to Asia had been very weak in recent weeks, a lot of OCC remained within Italy and buyers' inventories had ballooned, market participants explained. The export business had picked up in June but only slowly, and there were still significant volumes to be found on the market, they added.

Several buyers reported having large volumes of OCC on hand, especially at the beginning of the month. Demand from paper producers was thus somewhat subdued, as suppliers confirmed.In addition, a few machines were idled in the paper and coreboard industries, although usually only for a few days. Moreover, buyers had felt that the recent price surges for the ordinary grades had been much too large and many were convinced that prices would retreat sooner or later.

Therefore, prices for old corrugated containers (1.05) and supermarket paper and board (1.04) fell by a further €30-35/t in June, after having been trimmed by €20/t in May. Several reports from players on both sides of the market pegged the cumulative reductions over the past two months at around €50-60/t.

Mixed paper now nearly as expensive as OCC

The situation on the market for mixed paper and board (1.02) was somewhat different. This grade is less available on the free market because the majority of volumes in Italy are allocated via the Comieco consortium, so prices here declined less sharply. Depending on the starting price, mark-downs in June could vary considerably, but was often between €15-25/t, or occasionally as much as €30. As mixed paper had already proved more resistant to the downward trend in May, the price gap to OCC became unusually narrow. According to players surveyed by EUWID, prices of the two grades differed by just €5-10/t in June.

Barely any supermarket paper and board was trading hands, and when it did, it fetched same price as mixed paper. Due to the popularity of e-commerce, mixed paper now contained a greater share of corrugated board than it used to, so the difference to grade 1.04 was now less significant, noted one respondent.

Several respondents had the impression that the situation calmed down somewhat compared with May, especially in the second half of June. While some suppliers were complaining a few weeks ago that OCC volumes were sometimes not being called off by paper mills due to their high inventory levels, this was apparently no longer the case in June. Supplies remained abundant, but the waste management companies and merchants surveyed reported no problems finding takers for their volumes. Collections are generally still weak, they say. Moreover, many merchants often accepted bids from Asia again in June and thus could find alternative sales channels.

Exports to Asia picking up again

For suppliers, prices on the Far East export market were still not especially attractive in June, but they are slowly approaching the prevailing level in Italy. OCC was usually shipped to Asia for €110-120/t ex works in June. Some higher prices were achieved, but only in cases where transactions were concluded very early in the month or already in May. Although prices of €115-125/t could still be achieved for deals on the Italian market, many suppliers in Italy nevertheless started selling more to Asia due to the softening domestic demand. While some players were already exporting considerable volumes again, most said that the export business had not yet returned to normal.

Some market participants expect that the export business could pick up even more in July. Others were not as sure. In any case, export demand will play a role in determining how prices for ordinary grades develop in Italy. Increasing exports could have a stabilising effect on prices for OCC in Italy. Many insiders believe, however, that a further – albeit smaller – price cut is possible in July. A few contacts said it would also depend on the Italian paper manufacturers' order books and whether they opted to take machine downtimes. In the final days of June, most players had a wait-and-see attitude. Nobody wanted to make the first move, several players stressed.

Price stability for magazines with a few exceptions

The market for deinking grades was generally quite stable in June. Demand for magazines (1.06) was somewhat subdued, according to market participants, but no major changes were seen compared with the previous months. Supply remains rather tight. Players on the market often reported stable prices, but there were also occasionally said to be reductions of €5/t for this grade. Prices for newspapers (2.01) were generally flat in June. Supply and demand were said to be balanced and unchanged. Yet, a

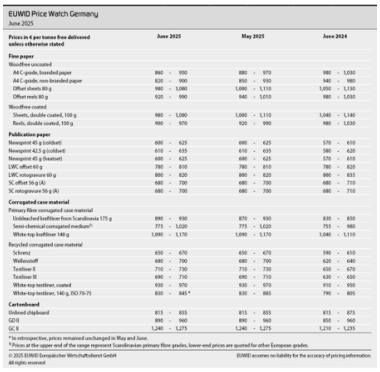
few merchants would not rule out the possibility of a modest price decrease in July for this grade.

For the higher recovered grades, June was another month without much change. Prices for white woodfree letters (3.05), white newsprint (3.14) and white woodfree shavings (3.18) were steady at the same level as in May. The decreasing pulp prices were a topic here and there, but did not have any influence on prices in June, according to market participants. Demand was described as stable. The tissue industry continues to make regular purchases, EUWID was told.

Germany: Pricing efforts more difficult in many packaging segments

LWC/SC paper markets under pressure despite rays of hope in graphic segment

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 10 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Germany

June 2025

Prices in € per tonne free delivered unless otherwise stated	June 2025	May 2025	June 2024
Fine paper			
Woodfree uncoated			
A4 C-grade, branded paper	860 - 950	880 - 970	980 - 1,030
A4 C-grade, non-branded paper	820 - 900	850 - 930	940 - 980
Offset sheets 80 g	960 - 1,080	1,000 - 1,110	1,050 - 1,130
Offset reels 80 g	920 - 990	940 - 1,010	980 - 1,030
Woodfree coated			
Sheets, double coated, 100 g	980 - 1,080	1,000 - 1,110	1,040 - 1,140
Reels, double coated, 100 g	900 - 970	920 - 990	980 - 1,030
Publication paper			
Newsprint 45 g (soldbert)	600 - 625	600 - 625	570 - 610
Newsprint 42.5 g (soldbert)	610 - 635	610 - 635	580 - 620
Newsprint 40 g (basket)	600 - 625	600 - 625	570 - 610
LWC offset 60 g	780 - 810	780 - 810	780 - 820
LWC rotogravure 60 g	800 - 820	800 - 820	800 - 835
SC offset 56 g (A)	680 - 700	680 - 700	680 - 710
SC rotogravure 56 g (A)	680 - 700	680 - 700	680 - 710
Corrugated case material			
Primary fibre corrugated case material			
Unbleached kraftliner from Scandinavia 175 g	890 - 930	870 - 930	830 - 850
Semi-chemical corrugated medium[1]	775 - 1,020	775 - 1,020	755 - 980
White-top kraftliner 140 g	1,090 - 1,170	1,090 - 1,170	1,040 - 1,110
Recycled corrugated case material			
Schrenz	650 - 670	650 - 670	590 - 610
Wellenstoff	680 - 700	680 - 700	620 - 640
Testliner II	710 - 730	710 - 730	650 - 670
Testliner III	690 - 710	690 - 710	630 - 650
White-top testliner, coated	930 - 970	930 - 970	910 - 950
White-top testliner, 140 g, ISO 70-75	830 - 845*	830 - 885	790 - 805
Cartonboard			
Unlined chipboard	815 - 855	815 - 855	815 - 875
GD II	890 - 960	890 - 960	850 - 960
GC II	1,240 - 1,275	1,240 - 1,275	1,210 - 1,235

* In retrospective, prices remained unchanged in May and June.

[1] Prices at the upper end of the range represent Scandinavian primary fibre grades, lower-end prices are quoted for other European grades.

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In the publication paper market, several paper mills had been hoping to bring up the topic of price hikes in the latest price round. But despite the urgency, it appears that negotiations about mark-ups for LWC and SC paper have been unsuccessful. In both markets, the supply overhang and declining demand made implementation difficult. In the recycled corrugated case material market, it had already been very challenging for paper mills to achieve the most recent price increase for recycled corrugated case material, which was needed due to the upward price trend for recovered paper (RCP). Now, with RCP prices reversing course in June, this increase may be rescinded.

The corrugated industry is putting more pressure on paper producers, after activity levels dropped off dramatically in April. Players in the cartonboard sector are also keeping an eye on the recovered paper market. A few companies were eyeing renewed price increases for GD board as of July.

Producers hope for stabilisation of publication paper prices

Despite the massive challenges in the market for LWC and SC paper, there are a few rays of light. Representatives of the paper and printing industries express hope that the economy will pick up in the second half of the year, which could benefit paper mills and printing firms. Market experts expect positive effects on demand from the advertising sector. They also point to the experience of many advertising customers as well as studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of print products, such as flyers.

Moreover, in light of the energy demands of digital solutions, it should be made clear that printed products are by no means more harmful to the environment, respondents say. In light of this, the magazine sector is also cast in a too negative light, experts say. Despite the ongoing march of digitalisation, several titles have recently expanded the reach of their print products. As a result, players are hoping that the demand trend will remain smooth, albeit downwards.

Nonetheless, the paper mills and printing companies surveyed by EUWID usually described business in May and June as very poor. The market lacks dynamics, comments one player. Customers' ordering was often very restrained. While some paper mills continue to have modest or-der intake, others are seeing a slight increase in the demand trend for July and thus positive signals for August. Some printing firms are noticing an early and profound summer slump, but believe the order trend is heading in the right direction.

Paper producers are not at all happy about the price round for the third quarter of 2025. Although price hikes for SC paper and LWC were urgently needed, the best producers could achieve was a roll-over of second-quarter prices, the EUWID survey found. Implementing mark-ups is not realistic in the current market environment, several market experts stress.

According to industry insiders, paper mills' repeated calls for price increases were acknowledged but largely disregarded. It appears that the talks about delivery conditions as of July 2025 have not yet been concluded in all cases. Some printers are insisting on price mark-downs, according to experts. The majority of EUWID respondents do not expect fundamental changes, though.

However, tough negotiations are taking place for larger offset print objects in the SC paper segment. And for LWC, too, the price pressure applied by many buyers can be effective even though producers say that the closure of the insolvent Kabel mill in Hagen underscores how precarious their situation is. The price round in the rotogravure segment appears to be somewhat steadier and calmer. Especially with regard to LWC, a key aspect appears to be limited supply options.

According to experts, the business with magazine paper continues to be shaped by uncertainty and oversupply for both paper mills and printing companies. Respondents note it is unclear how global geopolitical events will impact the overall economy, in particular energy prices. Market participants warn that nobody should assume that the consolidation measures carried out so far in the publication paper industry will be sufficient to correct the situation. Further closures of production capacity are urgently needed if paper supply is to be brought in line with the demand trend.

The paper industry in Europe has 12 paper machines with roughly 3.5 million tpy of capacity for mechanical coated paper, meaning the supply overhang is more than 1 million t. The 14 SC paper machines have a combined production capacity of around 2.5 million tpy, representing an excess supply of nearly 1 million t.

By now, almost all paper mills have begun to develop and market alternative paper grades, as they urgently need to better utilise existing production capacities. For the most part, this has taken the form of upgrades, for example to make improved paper grades, or expanding the existing portfolio to incorporate papers for other end uses. But even with niche or specialty products, it is difficult to find a "safe haven" alternative to generate sales, commented one market expert. This requires patience and time, he added.

Prices for recycled corrugated case material up for discussion in late June

From the very beginning, paper producers had a tough time introducing the most recent price hike of €40/t for recycled corrugated case material. In the end, the mark-up was only accepted late in April for implementation in May. But even early on, the adjustment was not as uniform (both in timing and amount) and stable as paper mills needed it to be, in light of their heavy cost burdens.

That price round was set off by surging RCP prices, but converters were not willing to accept the step without putting up some resistance – because it was clear that they would barely be able to pass along this increase to their own customers by summer.

After prices moved sideways from May into June, the most recent step was looking shaky at the end of June and is poised to be renegotiated for July. The reports indicating that only half of the adjustment is being negotiated for July are not a sign of inconsistency, but rather reflect that the full increase was never fully achievable in all cases from the beginning.

It looks like this latest price hike could boomerang back to the paper mills, since RCP prices seem to be heading significantly lower in June, thus strengthening the arguments presented by paper buyers.

At the time of the EUWID market survey in late June, the outcome of the ongoing negotiations between converters and producers for July was still up in the air. It is clear, however, that the increase for white-top testliner was only recorded in the books but not actually applied.

Acceptable first quarter but steep downward trend on corrugated sheets market since April

Based on the developments in the first quarter, companies in the corrugated sheets industry had a sense of hope that the situation could be improving. Demand at the time remained stable with slight growth. But from the beginning of the second quarter, the positive expectations on the market quickly evaporated, with some EUWID respondents describing business in April as catastrophic.

One market participant explained optimism now means hoping that things will not deteriorate further. The month of May also did not bring any turnaround in the demand trend. The mild euphoria in the wake of the election of a new German government was soon replaced by uncertainty due to US tariff policy.

It is still too soon to get a good picture of the market in June, especially since there are usually ups and downs over the course of the month – sometimes the market is better at beginning of the month, sometimes at the end. There are players who report having a good June, in particular those with a strong position in the beverage sector, as well as companies that expect the current month to be weak. For some companies, June is an important month before school lets out and the summer holiday season begins. When June is weak, the summer lull is starting far too early, they say.

At the same time, prices for corrugated case material were ticking higher again. In a market with weak demand, it is almost impossible to negotiate with customers shortly before summer about passing along higher costs yet again, EUWID was told. Moreover, long-time industry experts had suspected that the price step in May, which was once more based on the upward price trend for RCP, might prove unsustainable.

In June, the price trend reversal for RCP is quite evident, so calls for the mark-ups to be completely rescinded are growing louder. For individual grades that generally track the price trend of brown recycled corrugated case material grades, some of the price steps scheduled for June were not implemented at all.

In terms of deliveries, the industry had been expecting growth in 2025 to be more or less flat. It appears that players still hold this view, but everybody also stresses that reliable planning is almost impossible due to the global uncertainties.

Differing approaches for GD board prior to start of Q3

Producers of GD2 board are taking various approaches to pricing as of July, according to EUWID respondents surveyed in mid-June. After quotes for GD2 were lifted in April, a few cartonboard producers are conducting or have already concluded negotiations about a further step as of 1 July. But these definitely do not represent the majority of suppliers, according to insiders.

Quite a few players from the cartonboard industry say they first want to secure volumes and continue observing the situation on the RCP market before trying to adjust prices. Buyers from the folding cartons industry confirmed to EUWID that there had been attempts by some GD producers to achieve higher prices for July. But given the quiet market situation, converters see little need to discuss price increases shortly before the summer holiday season in Germany and Europe.

Capacity utilisation for GD2 could be better in June and delivery times remain short, the market survey found. Order books in the market for unlined chipboard are said to be somewhat better. Here, market participants say bookings on the board machines are “quite okay,” although there is also some room for improvement. Considering the tough macroeconomic environment, players are not really that dissatisfied.

Producers of GC2 board did not try to raise prices as of July, the market survey in mid-June found. Suppliers of fresh fibre-based board (folding boxboard) say that demand has recently declined slightly again, which definitely plays a role in their decision in light of the already volatile situation. At the same time, suppliers say they are faced with increasing pressure from the folding cartons industry to make price concessions at the mid-year point. But the cartonboard mills are also facing margin and cost pressure. Agreeing to reductions at this time without securing a significant increase in order volumes – and when considerable additional capacities are slated to come on the market soon – is “potential suicide,” one industry insider remarked.

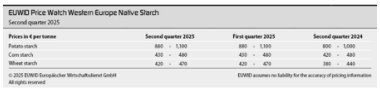
GC2 board continues to be available on short notice, within a range of between 2-4 weeks, depending on the geographic location of the factories.

Players in the folding cartons industry also report varying levels of activity. The food industry continues to order stable volumes from packaging producers, while demand from the pharmaceutical industry has also recently picked up slightly again, the market survey found. Yet, the majority of folding cartons producers surveyed by EUWID do not see much impetus that could drive an upturn in the coming weeks.

Starch market: Oversupply and price pressure cause trouble for wheat starch producers

Paper mills fend off price hike demands and achieve mark-downs

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 3 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Western Europe Native Starch
Second quarter 2025

Prices in € per tonne	Second quarter 2025	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2024
Potato starch	880 - 1,100	880 - 1,100	800 - 1,000
Corn starch	420 - 480	420 - 480	420 - 480
Wheat starch	420 - 470	420 - 470	380 - 440

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A supply overhang persists on the market for native starch products. Any idea of price hikes that starch producers may have had was quickly dispelled in the competition to acquire contract volumes. Instead, many buyers are citing falling wheat prices when demanding mark-downs for deliveries of wheat starch in the third quarter.

The tough competition between suppliers on the market for starch products continued in May and June. Market watchers say they had mistakenly believed that the expansion of packaging paper capacity would lead to a noticeable uptick in starch demand. Consumption pattern at many a paper mill is often volatile, making it difficult to efficiently operate starch factories, industry experts complain. Given the cost burden, poor capacity utilisation and lack of profitability, the situation is no longer tenable, say several starch industry representatives.

Looking forward, companies are facing increasing planning uncertainty and have difficulty forecasting their business development and cost situation due to the macroeconomic situation and many geopolitical uncertainties around the globe.

Native wheat starch remains under pressure

The outcome of the latest price round is one reason for the dissatisfaction expressed by producers of native cereal starches. Once again, producers were foiled in their attempts to increase volumes and margins. The profitability of the starch factories has been questionable for some time and the outlook for summer only intensifies the economic uncertainty, industry experts say.

Wheat prices on the commodities exchange have recently softened somewhat. Lower purchase prices for wheat, however, will not necessarily result in better margins for wheat starch producers as they find themselves pressured by customers to lower their sales prices to reflect the movement in raw material prices. Paper mills have certain expectations heading into the price round for the third quarter of 2025 with buyers calling for price reductions, market players unanimously report.

In some cases, the talks on terms and conditions for third quarter deliveries, however, are reportedly still primarily focused on maintaining existing prices. Suppliers are pushing hard to roll over the delivery conditions from the second quarter, EUWID was told. Yet, industry insiders also mentioned outliers below the usual price range. In this hotly contested market, suppliers were also some-times discussing price reductions, depending on the region and starting level. In highly competitive markets, delivery agreements for native wheat starch could be €10-20/t below the typical quotes of €425-440/t. Red ink will be spilled if prices approach the €400 mark, experts stress.

In the wake of this, the business with native corn starch is also suffering. The usual gap to prices for wheat starch is still in place, players say.

The market for potato starch has also come under pressure. Producers reportedly have well-filled warehouses. The need to reduce inventories has resulted in price movement, say market experts. During the second quarter, there were reportedly already offers at prices lower than the bracket reported by EUWID. For the third quarter, considerable mark-downs are reportedly being negotiated. This situation could also influence the quotes for cationic potato starch.

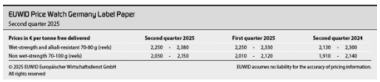
Hopes for growth in packaging industry

In the paper industry, the use of potato starch for a few specialty products has become established. Depending on the region, the somewhat less expensive pea starch is used in many cases. In Central Europe, producers of packaging papers and corrugated packaging are predominantly applying cereal starches, especially wheat starch. Given the expansive growth ambitions of the packaging industry a few years ago, starch producers had been expecting increased demand, particularly for native wheat starch. But the additional recycled corrugated case material capacities have not led to a corresponding uptick in demand for starch. As experts explain, the start-up of new capacities has resulted in a redistribution of volumes. Overall, the rates of capacity utilisation in the paper industry have suffered as a result of the new and rebuilt paper machines coming online.

Nevertheless, market watchers expect business to develop positively. One reason for optimism is the expectation that the economy will rebound in the second half of 2025, which would also benefit paper mills and starch factories. Moreover, players report increased demand for specialty applications, such as packaging solutions. Here, niche markets are proving to be growth markets, industry experts say.

Label paper market in Germany experiences weak Q2, especially for wet-strength grades

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Germany Label Paper
Second quarter 2025

Prices in € per tonne free delivered	Second quarter 2025	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2024
Wet-strength and alkali-resistant 70-90 g (reels)	2,250 - 2,380	2,250 - 2,330	2,130 - 2,300
Non wet-strength 70-150 g (reels)	2,050 - 2,350	2,010 - 2,120	1,910 - 2,140

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Most producers and converters of label paper told EUWID at the end of June that the second quarter of 2025 had been weak. Low demand was reported in particular for wet-strength grades, according to several players. “April was still quite good, then May was pathetic and things did not improve in June,” summarised one producer. One manufacturer said that simply for seasonal reasons, there really should be “more drive” in the market. Moreover, the temporary absence of one supplier should have led to more demand for other players.

Converters say that volumes in the second quarter of this year were likely as much as 15 per cent below the prior-year level.

This decrease in demand for wet strength and alkali-resistant papers is attributed in part to the shrinking beer market in Germany. “Many breweries are struggling,” players note. The revival of beverage cans could also account for some of the decline in volumes of reusable glass bottles and thus labels, industry insiders suspect.

And, of course, the general economic uncertainty and sluggish consumer spending come into play. These factors also affect demand for non-wet strength label papers, but players on both sides of the market believe that current developments in this segment are not as critical. “However, we have the impression that customers are ordering more than they actually need,” comments one producer.

There is some market chatter about short-time work at label printing companies and market-related downtimes at individual paper mills – but these rumours were not confirmed by EUWID respondents.

At the end of June, delivery times for non-embossed label paper were said to be 2-3 weeks, with occasional mentions of 4-5 weeks.

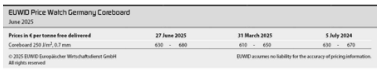
Both sides confirmed an upward price trend in the second quarter of 2025. As previously reported, producers of label paper had announced higher prices as of 1 April or 15 April. Depending on the supplier, targeted increases ranged between 5-7 per cent or 7-8 per cent for both paper grades. One player was looking to charge an additional €80/t for wet strength label papers and €60/t for non-wet strength papers.

The market survey in late June heard differing views about the success of the implementation. Paper producers usually reported that they were unable to implement the full targeted amount – and, in a few cases, anything whatsoever. Where they did succeed, producers were able to lift prices by up to €50/t for wet strength and alkali-resistant label paper and by €20-30/t for non-wet strength grades. Converters, on the other hand, say they had to accept exactly the amount producers wanted.

The negotiations for the third quarter of 2025 were still ongoing by the time of the EUWID market survey. Despite falling raw material prices, there were many signs that prices would roll over at the second-quarter levels.

German coreboard prices increase despite weak demand in the second quarter

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 27/2025



EUWID Price Watch Germany Coreboard
June 2025

Prices in € per tonne free delivered	27 June 2025	31 March 2025	5 July 2024
Coreboard 250 Jm², 0.7 mm	630 - 680	650 - 650	630 - 670

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Italian coreboard manufacturers were reportedly the frontrunners in Europe to demand higher prices for coreboard in the first quarter. According to respondents, these demands initially fizzled out on the German market. It was only announcements from other players that got the proverbial ball rolling, after which prices in Germany were increased swiftly.

However, producers' demands tending towards €60/t have not been implemented fully, according to reports. Most respondents said that upward corrections in the second quarter amounted to between €20 and €30/t in Germany. Since market prices are currently very inconsistent, some companies have also made higher corrections, but these did not account for the majority of reports.

The situation in the core industry is generally very tense for suppliers as well as converters. Operating levels of core producers continue to be stable but at a low level, according to insiders. Capacity utilisation at some sites is said to be very low. Reduced shifts characterise the picture, and there is talk about introducing short working hours, EUWID repondents said. All in all, the mood among core producers was clearly not cheerful in June.

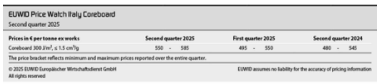
Coreboard producers, for their part, report that they would rather withdraw volumes from the market than reduce their sales prices. The burden created by high recovered paper prices was too high and had remained with paper mills for too long for prices to be discussed, even in the face of high availability, they stressed. In the view of some respondents, the lack of any reaction to the permanent closure of a coreboard machine shows how tense the situation is on the coreboardmarket. The closure triggered no panic among converters nor did it give rise to additional ordersat other coreboard mills, according to the respondents.

Coreboard manufacturers mention another problem they are struggling with: in phases when the entire paper market is struggling with weak demand, suppliers operating swing machines are edging into the coreboard market. Conventional producers of coreboard are angry that the push not only disrupts market volumes but also that injection of products that are not comparable undermines prices.

Italian coreboard prices in Q2 rise on high recovered paper costs

Weak demand and machine stoppages continue

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 3 min | Published in issue 27/2025


EUWID Price Watch Italy Coreboard
Second quarter 2025

Prices in € per tonne ex works	Second quarter 2025	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2024
Corebaord 300 g/m², ≤ 1.5 cm³/g	550 – 580	495 – 550	480 – 540

The price bracket reflects minimum and maximum prices reported over the entire quarter.

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It was another challenging quarter for Italy's coreboard and cores industries. Demand was generally lacklustre in recent months, with recovered paper costs surging suddenly from March onwards. Coreboard producers had to respond and adjust their selling prices, which they succeeded in doing, although the increase fell short of their expectations. That being said, a turnaround in prices looked to be looming as the quarter drew to a close.

The second quarter did not usher in a significant improvement in demand on Italy's coreboard market. A few manufacturers observed a couple of bright spots at various points and noted a somewhat improved order situation in some cases. However, this did not persist throughout the entire quarter, and other suppliers described overall demand as rather weak. Market-related machine stoppages remained commonplace, with producers usually reporting around two to five days of downtime per month.

To protect margins, some coreboard manufacturers in Italy had already announced plans to increase prices at the start of the year, citing generally rising costs, including for energy. This led to an initial round of price hikes in the first quarter. According to suppliers, these negotiations were not easy, but ultimately, they were able to implement a market-wide increase averaging around €20/t in March.

However, it soon became apparent for suppliers that this would not be enough, as recovered paper prices had since soared. EUWID research found that the price of recovered paper grade old corrugated containers (OCC) leapt by a total of €65/t in March and April in Italy. This prompted coreboard producers to re-engage with their customers and push for further increases in their sales prices. They argued that the sharp rise in raw material costs could not be absorbed and needed to be passed on.

Apparently, this argument was convincing, and manufacturers succeeded in raising coreboard prices by an average of €35/t in the second quarter. The increase could vary, depending on how much each manufacturer had already managed to implement in the previous month. According to statements made by EUWID sources, coreboard prices have increased by an average total of €55/t since the upward movement began in March.

In the second quarter, prices for coreboard with a ply-bond strength of 300 J/m² and a bulk of up to 1.5 cm³/g in Italy therefore ranged from €550-585/t ex works. Prices had stood at €515-550/t in March, and increased by €35/t in April to €550-585/t, where they stayed through May and, in most cases, also in June.

Downward trend in prices expected in July

However, some market players noted that certain suppliers were already making pricing concessions in June. Isolated cases of reductions of €10-15/t were reported for June, but these did not apply across the entire coreboard market. Most market players anticipated that such price cuts would take effect only in July. The main reason cited was once again the recovered paper market, where prices have dropped just as rapidly as they previously increased. EUWID research found that OCC prices fell by a total of €50-55/t in May and June. There is little optimism for a significant recovery in demand in July, however.

Market conditions for cores were similar than those seen on the coreboard market. Demand is considered rather weak, too. However, an integrated cores producer said that it was somewhat more consistent than coreboard demand. Another cores manufacturer remarked that while business could be better, at least volumes have held steady year-on-year. On the whole, there was no significant sense of dissatisfaction. Margins were not brilliant, but had developed better over the past year than in the coreboard sector, where price cuts in 2024 had been stronger, one respondent said.

As for prices, cores prices typically follow those for coreboard with a time lag and do not mirror every movement. Market players reported stable prices for cores in the first quarter. For the second quarter, a few of them are now reporting smaller hikes. Another manufacturer told EUWID that only the very lowest prices had been raised.

Italy: production, imports, exports and consumption

January - March 2025

	Production		Imports		Exports		Apparent consumption	
	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24
Total paper and board	**2.070.940**	**+ 1,7**	**1.368.566**	**- 3,0**	**882.519**	**- 5,7**	**2.556.987**	**+ 1,9**
Newsprint	0	-	75.970	- 15,4	407	+ 6,0	75.563	- 15,5
Other graphic paper	312.188	- 15,4	295.330	+ 5,6	227.916	- 17,6	379.602	+ 2,0
Uncoated	81.398	- 34,3	160.618	+ 3,3	67.481	- 29,9	174.535	- 4,7
mechanical	n. a.	-	45.542	- 8,8	6.939	+ 9,3	n. a.	-
woodfree	n. a.	-	115.076	+ 9,0	60.542	- 32,7	n. a.	-
Coated	230.790	- 5,8	134.712	+ 8,5	160.435	- 11,0	205.067	+ 8,5
mechanical	50.274	- 5,6	58.825	+ 15,0	66.949	- 10,5	42.150	+ 42,2
woodfree	180.516	- 5,9	75.887	+ 3,9	93.486	- 11,4	162.917	+ 2,2
Household and sanitary paper	412.624	- 1,5	17.846	- 2,3	229.895	+ 0,2	200.575	- 3,5
Packaging paper and board	1.254.644	+ 8,4	965.749	- 4,2	408.540	- 1,7	1.811.854	+ 3,5
Corrugated case materials	719.028	+ 9,8	529.597	- 10,5	68.270	- 46,3	1.180.355	+ 5,5
Corrugating medium	413.435	+ 22,9	185.575	- 10,8	30.090	- 56,2	568.920	+ 19,6
Linerboard	305.593	- 4,1	344.022	- 10,3	38.180	- 34,7	611.435	- 5,0
Cartonboard	n. a.	-	265.598	+ 6,0	121.614	+ 48,4	n. a.	-
Other packaging grades	535.616	+ 6,5	170.555	+ 2,9	218.656	+ 5,9	631.499	+ 0,1
Other paper and board	91.484	+ 1,5	13.669	- 8,2	15.761	+ 10,4	89.393	- 1,5
Paper	74.463	+ 4,4	11.143	- 4,2	11.966	+ 10,1	73.640	+ 2,1
Board	17.022	- 9,3	2.526	- 22,5	3.795	+ 11,6	15.752	- 15,4
Pulp	**n. a.**	**-**	**777.483**	**- 1,1**	**38.810**	**- 19,3**	**738.672**	**+ 0,1**
Woodpulp	n. a.	-	772.223	- 1,2	38.779	- 18,8	733.444	± 0,0
Mechanical	n. a.	-	7.505	- 5,0	1.425	+ 342	6.081	- 22,8
Chemical/semi-chemical	n. a.	-	764.718	- 1,1	37.355	- 21,7	727.363	+ 0,2

	Apparent collection [1]		Imports		Exports		Consumption	
	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24	tonnes 2025	% 2025/24
Recovered paper	1.812.145	+ 3,7	73.773	- 5,4	516.513	- 7,8	1.369.405	+ 8,2

[1] Consumption + Exports - Imports n. a. = not available

Source: Assocarta

PackUK issues guidance on 2025 recyclability assessment requirements

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Packaging producers obligated under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations in the UK have voiced concerns over the time and resources required to meet 2025 first-half recyclability assessment obligations. Producers must report their Recyclability Assessment (RA) by the statutory deadline of 1 October 2025. This feedback has come from large producers across various sectors, according to a statement by scheme administrator PackUK.

In response, while maintaining its commitment to introduce modulation of Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) fees from the 2026-2027 assessment year, each of the UK's four environmental regulators has published a Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) outlining enforcement expectations regarding producers' obligation to report their Recyclability Assessment Methodology (RAM) recyclability assessments for the first half of 2025.

Under the Regulations, producers must assess and report the recyclability of household packaging supplied. Reports covering January to June 2025 (H1) are due by 1 October 2025, and July to December 2025 (H2) reports by 1 April 2026. Where insufficient information is provided, packaging is treated as the least recyclable in its category, triggering the highest modulated fee.

For the first year of modulation (2026-2027) only, PackUK will use producers' H2 2025 RA reports as sufficient evidence of packaging sustainability for the entire 2025 reporting year.

Producers who do not submit H1 2025 assessments will have modulated fees calculated by extrapolating H2 2025 RAM ratings across the full year. Depending on H2 2025 results, fees will be:

- Increased by 20 per cent for packaging rated less recyclable (Red) where the 2025 H2 RA report shows that the household packaging is less recyclable

- Reduced, using funds generated from Red-rated packaging, for packaging rated more recyclable (Green)

- Unchanged for Amber-rated packaging

Pack UK stressed that all other reporting requirements remain unchanged, including the need to report flexible and rigid plastics separately. It also warned that failure to submit H2 2025 re-cyclability assessments constitutes an offence and would result in all packaging being treated as Red, attracting the highest disposal fee.

Landa restructuring, looking for investment

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Israeli digital print supplier Landa Digital Printing (LDP) has announced restructuring measures in order to align the company to the current business environment. The company will look for an investor and make more than 100 of a total of 500 employees redundant, according to local news. In a statement, LDP said that it was restructuring to align the company with the current business environment.

“The company is experiencing growth and, over the past year, has seen an increase in new customers, with a 30 per cent rise in the number of printing presses installed at customer sites, including many repeat orders from key customers,” LDP stated.

“Although the company’s potential is very clear, it now requires greater investment than initially anticipated, in light of the market environment, customer caution due to geopolitical and economic uncertainties, the ongoing war in Israel, and other commercial challenges.”

LDP’s Nanography technology is a unique form of inkjet that involves printing onto a heated transfer belt, rather than directly onto the substrate.

The Israel-Gaza war, and wider conflict in the region, has battered Israel’s economy. Tourism has plummeted, there are labour shortages due to work permits for Palestinians being halted, and thousands of Israelis have been conscripted or called up as reservists due to the conflict.

Direct Welsh Government investment at Wepa Bridgend

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

An £8m Welsh Government investment madein loans, equity and grants is helping tissue pro-ducts manufacturer Wepa to reduce energy con-sumption at its British site in Bridgend. The investment is also contributing to safeguarding 325 jobs at the site, the Welsh Government said in a statement. It is part of a significant investment made by the company to reduce energy consumption at its Maesteg site and boost production capacity.

Wepa mill manager Jordi Goma-Camps Trave said: “We highly appreciate that the Welsh Government supports this important project for Wepa. It will not only improve the sustainability of our manufacturing process, but also increases our production capacity and contributes to the future viability of the site.”

In May 2025, Germany‘s tissue paper and products group Wepa announced plans to build a new tissue machine rated for a capacity of 70,000 tpy at its Bridgend site. The new TM is to replace an older machine built and installed in the 1970s.

Stora Enso considers divesting its forestry operations in Sweden

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Stora Enso is considering spinning off its forestry assets and operations in Sweden into a listed company. The company says that as part of its increased focus on renewable packaging, it will review various strategic options for its forest holdings and forestry businesses in Sweden, including the possible spin-off of these businesses into a new company wholly owned by Stora Enso shareholders. The aim would be to create two robust and independent companies to fully realise the value of both the forest assets and the core packaging business. Both companies would have greater focus and strategic flexibility.

The spin-off forestry company would be Europe's largest listed pure forest company and would have unique assets with expected long-term value creation and potential for new revenue streams, the company explains.

Stora Enso recently announced that it would sell 175,000 ha of forest in Sweden worth €900m. Following the sale, the company still has a forest portfolio of 1.2 million ha in Sweden with a productive forest area of 1.0 million ha and a value of € 5.8bn. While these assets are an integral part of its timber supply chain, they have a distinct operational, financial and strategic profile, Stora Enso says. The spin-off of the forest and forestry businesses is designed to maximise shareholder value while focusing on the company's long-term strategic goals.

Stora Enso intends to provide information on the status of the strategic review of the divestment plans by the end of this year.

DS Smith Rouen starts up new biomass boiler

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

DS Smith has commissioned the new biomass boiler at its Rouen recycled containerboard mill in north-west France, replacing the previous coal-fired boiler. The new boiler processes around 94,000 t of biomass per year, mainly sourced from local industrial and municipal waste, including construction and furniture waste, 70 per cent of which comes from Paris and 30 per cent from Normandy, says DS Smith. Biomass used also includes by-products from the company's own paper production. The recycling concept would keep up to 70,000 t of waste wood out of landfill every year, DS Smith says. In addition, the new boiler will reduce the mill's CO_2 emissions by 99,000 tpy.

DS Smith describes the €90m investment as "one of Europe's largest mill transformations". The company also plans to add a steam turbine with a capacity of 10 MW of electricity. The project was supported by local authorities and the French environment and energy authority ADEME with a subsidy of €15m.

At its Rouen paper mill, DS Smith produces recycled corrugated case material in the basis weight range of 85-135 g/m2. The PM 5 operating there has an output capacity of 300,000 tpy.

Pulpac announces SIG and Optima as new shareholders

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Sweden's dry moulded fibre technology company Pulpac has atracted new investors. Pulpac recently announced that Optima, a Germany-based global technology leader in advanced packaging machine solutions and SIG Innoventures, a venture capital subsidiary of the Swiss packaging solutions company SIG Combibloc will join the company as new shareholders.

The strategic investment by SIG Innoventures and Optima would broaden Pulpac's existing group of investors and strengthen the company's capacity to meet increasing demand for its Dry Moulded Fibre technology products, Pulpac said.

According to Pulpac, the company has made a significant progress with its technology over the past year, expanding its range of applications. This is reportedly attracting major players on the packaging markets who are searching for scalable, eco-friendly and cost-efficient fibre-based packaging solutions as an alternative to single-use plastic.

Afry to conduct feasibility study for e-methane plant

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Swedish technology company Afry has been appointed by Arctic Sisu, a Finnish e-fuel company, to conduct a feasibility study to build a large-scale e-methane plant in Kotka, Finland. The project spread over three phases aims to generate annually 900-950 GWh of renewable e-methane using CO_2 obtained from the nearby Kotka pulp mill.

The study will help Arctic Sisu to take an investment decision that is expected in 2026. The e-methane plant will come up near the existing pulp and paper mill, it is learnt. Described as the first of its kind in Europe, the plant will capture and reuse the CO_2 from pulp production as raw material. E-methane is held to be a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels in the maritime sector.

MM Neuss commissions CHP power plant in partnership with E.ON

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Mayr-Melnhof (MM) and energy supplier **Eon** have successfully commissioned a combined heat and power (CHP) plant at MM's Neuss site in Germany. The CHP plant has an electrical output of 22 MW and thermal output of 59 MW. According to the companies, it is the first CHP plant of this scale in Europe to be fully automated and operated on a market-oriented basis. Construction of the plant began in September 2022 and was completed on schedule in December 2024. Eon will operate the facility and plans to continue doing so until at least 2045. MM Neuss mill runs one board mill with an installed capacity of 410,000 tpy of white-top coated recycled liner and GD 2 board.

Fedrigoni partners with Palantir to drive digital transformation with AI

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Italian speciality paper manufacturer **Fedrigoni** has entered a multi-year strategic partnership with US-based software company **Palantir Technologies** to accelerate its digital transformation through artificial intelligence. The collaboration, announced in mid-June, initially focused on stock optimisation and demand forecasting, but is now being extended to support broader digital transformation objectives across Fedrigoni's global operations, e. g. improve operational agility, responsiveness to market developments and overall efficiency.

Ahlstrom starts up new production line in Turin

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Finnish specialty paper producer **Ahlstrom** has started up its new production line for filtration media at its plant in Turin, Italy. The project was announced in February 2024 and aims at expanding Ahlstrom's offering for indoor air quality and automotive industry, including new products for the production of electric vehicles. With the investment, the company says it reacts to growing demand for premium molecular applications such as cabin and fuel cell air intake filtration, as well as HVAC and cleanroom.

Aspa Bruk pulp mill gets new wastewater treatment plant

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

A new wastewater treatment plant is being installed at the Swedish Aspa softwood pulp mill, which was acquired by **Sweden Timber** from Ahlstrom last year, at a cost of SEK100m. The plant will be supplied by Axolot and is scheduled to go into operation by the end of this year. It will help to reduce phosphorus and suspended solids emissions and also effectively treat per- and polyfluorinated alkyl compounds (PFAS). Axolot says it is the largest electrocoagulation plant built in Europe.

Rutland Partners exits Walstead Group

EUWID + 02 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Walstead Group's private equity shareholder, Rutland Partners, has indicated that it is looking to realise its investment in the company, which they have held since 2016. Consequently, Walstead has engaged Alix Partners to manage the sale process which is expected to launch later this year and is not expected to complete until 2026. Walstead's executive team, who hold a significant stake in the company, will continue to lead the group during and after the sale is concluded.

Administrators seek options for Krystals's Ellesmere Port site

30 June 2025 | Frauke Schmidt | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 27/2025

UK packaging manufacturer Krystals has ceased trading and entered administration, resulting in the redundancy of approximately 80 employees, according to Joint Administrators Gareth Harris and Chris Ratten of RSM UK Restructuring Advisory LLP.



Krystals's Ellesmere Port site is up for sale

Krystals operated out of two sites in Lincoln and Ellesmere Port, producing pharmaceutical and corrugated packaging products. All operations ceased with immediate effect on 23 May, and no outstanding contracts remained in place.

Since then, the Joint Administrators have completed the sale of plant and machinery associated with a bottling facility at the Lincoln site. The remaining equipment in Lincoln is to be sold via auction.

Meanwhile, the Administrators are actively exploring future options for the Ellesmere Port site. Interested parties are encouraged to come forward regarding the potential acquisition of the business's remaining assets or the site itself.

Krystals's Ellesmere Port facility is situated adjacent to Progroup's UK sheet feeder plant and was supplied with corrugated sheets via a conveyor bridge. However, production at the Progroup site was not affected by the insolvency.

UK paper industry celebrates excellence at 2025 Paper Gold Awards

25 June 2025 | Frauke Schmidt | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 27/2025

Outstanding achievements in sustainability, innovation, skills development, and community engagement were recognised at the 2025 Paper Gold Awards, hosted by the British Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) on 17 June 2025.



Winners of the 2025 Paper Gold Awards

The awards ceremony, held in London, was chaired by CPI Director General Andrew Large and featured a keynote speech by Jonathan Ashworth, Chief Executive of Labour Together and former Labour Shadow Cabinet Minister.

In his address, Mr Ashworth commended the sector for its long-standing resilience and innovation, praising both its technical excellence and commitment to sustainability. While noting the serious challenges posed by global uncertainty and energy costs, he spotlighted the industry's progress in waste reduction and circular economy practices. Mr Ashworth also spoke about the importance of young talent, stating how impressed he was with the industry's new generation of professionals.

Seven categories were recognised this year – Recycling, Sustainable Innovation & Net Zero, Community Engagement, Health & Safety, Skills, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), and Young Talent.

This year's Paper Gold Medal, which recognises a unique and sustained contribution to the UK paper industry, was awarded to Robert McClements.

CPI's Andrew Large highlighted the increasing engagement with the awards: "In every category, the number of entries has grown, and they all show the achievements and innovations of the UK's paper-based industries. I am especially pleased that the new Young Talent award had many entries at an incredibly high standard. The future of our industry seems to be in safe hands."

The winners are:

RECYCLING AWARD: Saica Pack, Hartlepool

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION & NET ZERO AWARD: Holmen Board and Paper / UPM Caledonian

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD: Essity Prudhoe Mill

HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD: (WINNER) – Essity Oakenholt Mill, (HIGHLY COMMENDED) – DS Smith Kemsley, (HIGHLY COMMENDED) – WEPA UK

SKILLS AWARD: DS Smith

EDI AWARD: (WINNER) – DS Smith, (HIGHLY COMMENDED) – Smurfit Westrock UKI Corrugated

YOUNG TALENT AWARD: (WINNERS) – Filip Kisiel, Smurfit Westrock SSK & Josephine Cooper, DS Smith, (HIGHLY COMMENDED) – Firaz Nasar, Northwood Tissue & Izzy Pearce, DS Smith

THE PAPER GOLD MEDAL: Robert McClements