Shandong Sun Paper orders new fibre line from Valmet

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Chinese paper and pulp manufacturer Shandong Sun Paper is further expanding its pulp capacity. The group plans to build a new pulp mill with a production capacity of 600,000 tpy at its integrated pulp and paper site in Yandian in the Shandong Province and has tapped Finnish engineering company and service provider Valmet to deliver key pulp mill technology for the project. According to Valmet, the delivery includes a cooking and fibre line, a recovery boiler and ash crystalisation. Commissioning is scheduled for the last quarter of next year, Valmet said.

Shandong Sun Paper is part of the listed Shandong Sun Holdings Group. With a production capacity of more than 13 million t (and counting) – its product portfolio includes coated and uncoated woodfree papers, speciality papers, corrugated case materials and cartonboard – and a workforce of 19,000, the group is one of the largest and leading suppliers in China. In addition to plants in China, it also operates a factory in Laos.

Mondi launches €150m decarbonisation project at Slovak pulp and paper mill in Ružomberok

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Mondi SCP is significantly investing in energy transition at its Ružomberok mill in northern Slovakia. A €150m modernisation package – of which €30m will come from the EU's Modernisation Fund – has been launched to support the site's long-term competitiveness and climate goals. The cornerstone of the project is the installation of a new high-efficiency biomass boiler that will increase the share of renewable energy used on site, reduce natural gas consumption, and boost internal electricity generation.

Construction of the new boiler facility officially began in June 2025 following environmental clearance and public approval, according to Slovakia's national public-service news agency TASR. Completion is scheduled for 2027.

The new circulating fluidised bed boiler is designed for a nominal heat input of 160 MW, replacing the current 98.8 MW unit. It will enable efficient energy recovery from wood residues, biosludge, and paper rejects generated at the mill, and also serve as a backup for odorous gas incineration. A new 35 MW back-pressure steam turbine will improve heat recovery.

The boiler will be built in a newly constructed unit on the site of a former gas boiler. The scope of the investment also includes biomass silos, a wood crusher, and a modern flue gas cleaning system to reduce emissions of dust, acid gases, and nitrogen oxides.

According to Mondi, the project aligns with EU best available techniques (BAT) under Directive 2010/75/EU for large combustion plants. Slovak Environment Minister Tomáš Taraba, who attended the launch event, said the investment would safeguard jobs and heating supply in Ružomberok for decades to come. Mondi SCP board chairman Miloslav Čurilla added that internal power generation will rise to 90 per cent, greatly improving energy independence.

Stepak Bourdin to acquire tableware producer Le Nappage

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French disposable tableware producer Groupe Stepak Bourdin has annouced that it will acquire the company Le Nappage, also located in France. The two parties are currently in exclusive negotiations, according to a press release.

Le Nappage produces disposable products for table decoration, including paper napkins, nonwoven table runners and tablecloths, paper placemats, as well as cardboard plates through its subsidiary Sodipan Table. Sodipan Table was established in 2016 when Le Nappage took over SCA's tableware business. Le Nappage produces around 2 billion napkins and 75,000 km of tablecloths per year and employs 150 people. The company operates two sites in eastern France near the German border and also has subsidiaries in Italy (Le Nappage Italia) and Spain (Le Nappage Iberica).

According to Stepak Bourdin, Le Nappage is financially struggling. Nevertheless, the company remained strategically important thanks to its expertise and strong reputation, Stepak Bourdin said. The group explained that Le Nappage has long been a customer of its subsidiary Papeterie Le Bourray, making the businesses a natural fit.

Groupe Stepak Bourdin consists of the company Manufacture de l'Éphémère – formerly known as CGMP – and Papeterie Le Bourray, both located near Le Mans in northwestern France. The Le Bourray paper mill was acquired in 2019 from Arjowiggins, which at the time was undergoing insolvency proceedings.

Munksjö with binding offer for Ahlstrom's Abrasive business

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Finnish fibre-based specialty materials company Ahlstrom has received a binding offer from Munksjö for Ahlstrom's Abrasives business unit. The potential divestment would result in Munksjö acquiring Ahlstrom's share of the Arches plant in France, together with the Abrasives business unit, including all associated operations and personnel, the company said. The Arche mill is currently operated as a joint venture of the two companies, with Ahlstrom running three and Munskjö two paper machines.

Ahlstrom's Abrasives business unit offers a comprehensive portfolio of paper backing products, including latex-impregnated paper, heavy-weight paper for abrasive backings and high-performance papers for other applications.

The potential divestment to Munksjö would allow Ahlstrom to focus more intensely on its specialty materials portfolio, while providing Munksjö with additional capabilities to develop its decor paper business, the companies said.

"Definitive agreements for the acquisition would be entered into after information and consultation with employee representative bodies," Ahlstrom announced. The final closing of the transaction is subject to regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.

If approved, the transaction could close in the coming months. Ahlstrom said it was committed to maintaining business continuity during a potential divestment process and would make every effort to ensure a smooth transition of the business to Munksjö.

JIP-Papírny Větřní paper mill in Czech Republic to be closed

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The insolvent paper manufacturer JIP Papírny Větřní will close its plant in Větřní near České Budějovice in the Czech Republic. The insolvency administrator Zuzana Orbesovâ reported at the beginning of June that she had submitted an application to close the plant at the end of September 2025. According to local media reports, the Commercial Court of České Budějovice has approved this move. The measure is expected to affect 200 employees.

JIP Papírny Větřní is a paper mill with a long history dating back to 1867. The company, which once specialised in the production of graphic papers, now produces lightweight kraft papers for bags, masking papers, crepe papers and fluting.

The last years have not been easy for the company. According to Ms Orbesovâ, JIP Papírny Větřní filed for insolvency in 2013. All liabilities were subsequently settled and the company had been profitable until last year, she said. However, the consequences of the war in Ukraine had become apparent in the last two years, with energy costs and inflation rising. According to the insolvency administrator's office, it is not possible to operate the paper mill with the prospect of profit. In order to continue operations profitably, investments in the double-digit million range would be necessary. Attempts to find a buyer for the factory have reportedly been ongoing since 2023, but without success. Only one offer had been submitted, which was rejected by the owners, the insolvency administrator said.

Aspapel: Spain's pulp and paper industry expands output in 2024 but margins remain under pressure

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Despite a tough global backdrop and persistent cost pressures, Spain's pulp and paper industry recorded a significant year of recovery in 2024. The sector registered notable gains in both production and consumption, reinforcing Spain's position among the leading countries in Europe. Yet, this resurgence came without a corresponding boost in revenue, highlighting the complex dynamics facing manufacturers in a fiercely competitive international market.

Spain's paper and board production increased by almost 9 per cent per cent y-o-y in 2024, reaching more than 6.56 million t, according to data from the national industry association Aspapel. The biggest increase in output was registered for sanitary and household papers, with production rising by 14 per cent against the previous year to approximately 925,200 tpy. Production of printing and writing paper stood close to 721,800 t in 2024, an increase of 9 per cent compared to 2023. Production of specialty paper and board increased 2 per cent y-o-y to approximately 413,400 t. Packaging paper and board is the biggest segment of Spain's paper industry representing almost 70 per cent of total output. Production of packaging paper and board increased by 8 per cent y-o-y to slightly more than 4,50 million t in 2024.

Consumption of paper and board rose by 6 per cent, totalling 6.73 million t in 2024. Consumption growth was particularly strong in high-demand segments such as sanitary and household paper (+15 per cent) and packaging (+9 per cent), reflecting broader shifts toward e-commerce and sustainable logistics, according to Aspapel.

Pulp production increased by 5 per cent to almost 1.70 million t in 2024, while consumption increased by 20 per cent to nearly 2 million t.

With this, Spain remains the sixth-largest paper producer and fifth-largest pulp producer in the European Union. The industry association considers consumption to be one of the most relevant indicators for 2024 as it confirms the recovery in activity and reinforces confidence in the future of the sector.

Strong export activity for paper and board

In 2024, one of the bright spots for the industry was foreign trade. Paper and board exports jumped by 18 per cent to 2.89 million t, accounting for over 44 per cent of total output. Key destinations included Portugal, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany. Imports of paper and board grew 12 per cent to 3.06 million t. The slower pace of growth in imports has led to an improvement in

the sector's trade balance, Aspapel explained.

Pulp exports held largely steady, with only a slight dip of 1 per cent to 994.000 t. According to Aspapel, nearly 59 per cent of Spanish pulp production is destined for EU markets, particularly Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Poland. Pulp imports rose by 23 per cent to almost 1.30 million t in support of increased local consumption.

Revenue remains flat despite volume growth

Despite this notable increase in production levels, the sector's turnover failed to keep pace. Total revenue stood at €5.23bn in 2024, 1 per cent down from 2023. A detailed breakdown, however, reveals diverging trends: pulp sales revenue fell by nearly 13 per cent, while paper and board revenue edged up slightly by less than 1 per cent.

The lack of sales growth clearly illustrates the pressure on prices, i.e. the negative price development in 2024, both domestically and internationally. However, Aspapel also blames this stagnation on structural difficulties in the country: high energy and structural costs, which are said to be higher than in other countries, put the Spanish pulp and paper industry at a clear competitive disadvantage compared to suppliers from other countries and will negatively affect the industry's profitability despite its production strength, according to the association.

Industry consumes more paper for recycling and wood in 2024 as production increases

In 2024, Spain's industry collected a total of 4.46 million t of paper for recycling. Imports stood at 1.55 million t and exports at 810,400 t. Total recovered paper consumption increased by almost 8 per cent to 5.20 million t. The recycling rate thus stood slightly above 79 per cent.

The Spanish paper industry also consumed almost 5.58 million m³ of wood in 2024, 10 per cent more than in 2023. According to Aspapel, 88 per cent of the wood was sourced from domestic, "sustainably managed forests", strengthening its role in the circular economy and reinforcing its environmental credentials.

Two Sides: Consumers still prefer paper-based packaging

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Packaging made of paper or board still ranks highest in consumer preference. According to this year's Two Sides Trend Tracker Report, paper-based packaging is increasingly being used as a sustainable packaging alternative. Due to their recyclability and lower environmental impact, consumers prefer paper and board over other packaging materials, Two Sides writes in early July.

For the consumer survey, the organisation surveyed a total of over 12,000 people in Europe and asked them to rate materials based on key factors such as recyclability, biodegradability, environmental impact and ease of use. As regards biodegradability, 75 per cent of respondents voted for paper and board. 53 per cent of the people surveyed believed the materials were particularly environment-friendly and 51 per cent that they were the easiest to recycle.

The survey shows that when it comes to responsibility for sustainability, 39 per cent of surveyed consumers believe that governments and authorities should take the lead in reducing non-recyclable single-use packaging, followed by brands, retailers and supermarkets (22 per cent) and packaging manufacturers (20 per cent). 19 per cent of survey respondents see primary responsibility on individuals, Two Sides adds.

The packaging industry is under scrutiny due to growing pressure to reduce plastic waste and reduce CO2 emissions, the Trend Tracker Report continues. Two Sides sees fibre-based packaging as having an advantage because it is produced from renewable raw materials, it is recyclable and is part of a functioning collection system. In addition, the Trend Tracker report emphasises the need for industry, government, and advocacy to work together to educate consumers and clarify misconceptions e.g. about the lifecycle of packaging materials.

German RCP arisings decline again in 2024

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A total of 12.4 million t of recovered paper were collected in Germany last year, marking another year-on-year decrease in recovered paper arisings. Collection volumes were around 180,000 t lower than in 2023, according to recent statistics from the association “Die Papierindustrie”. This continues the established downward trend in collection volumes. Almost 3 million t less recovered paper was collected in Germany last year than in 2015.

However, last year’s decrease in recovered paper arisings coincided with an increase in the German paper industry’s its output. According to the association, mills improved their average capacity utilisation by more than 4 percentage points last year to over 84 per cent. The total production of paper, paperboard and cartonboard increased by three per cent to 19.2 million t, while apparent consumption even rose by more than 4 per cent to just under 15.9 million t.

The return rate for recovered paper, calculated as the rate of recovered paper arisings to paper consumption, declined as a result. The diverging trends in these two figures resulted in a 5 percentage point drop in the return rate to 78 per cent.

Recovered paper consumption now falling again after increase in 2024

German paper mills increased their consumption of recovered paper by almost four per cent to 16.1 million t last year. As a result, the recovered paper utilisation rate rose slightly to 84 per cent across all paper grades. Corrugated case material (107 per cent) and newsprint (106 per cent) continue to be the grades with the highest utilisation rates, although the rate reported for newsprint last year was slightly lower than in 2023.

The lowest reported recovered paper utilisation rate was observed for sanitary and household paper (39 per cent), and here, too, the rate had declined compared with 2023. By contrast, more recovered paper was used in the production of “other graphic paper” and the utilisation rate climbed by 9 percentage points to 47 per cent last year.

Supermarket paper and board (1.04) and old corrugated containers (OCC; 1.05) remain the dominant recovered paper grades in terms of consumption. These two grades accounted for nearly half of total consumption, accounting for more than 7.5 million t. While 8 per cent more supermarket paper and board and OCC were used in manufacturing last year, consumption of mixed paper and board (1.02) and sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) both slipped by around 2 per cent. Altogether, a little over 2.7 million t of mixed paper and 1.5 million t of sorted graphic paper for deinking were used last year. Kraft-containing grades experienced a 2 per cent growth in use in paper production in 2024, reaching almost 1.8 million t.

When it came to medium grades, consumption jumped by 3 per cent to just shy of 800,000 t. Consumption of high grades leapt by as much as 14 per cent to 700,000 t. Special RCP grades alone recorded a drop in consumption of almost one quarter to roughly 200,000 t.

Overall, German paper mills have used less recovered paper so far in the current year. Recent statistics from the association show that recovered paper consumption stood at a little over 6.7 million t between January and May of 2025. By way of comparison, Germany's paper industry had consumed close to 6.9 million t of recovered paper in the same period last year.

Over 88 per cent recovery rate for graphic recovered paper grades

The industry once again met its voluntary commitments regarding the collection and recovery of graphic paper last year. According to the Working Group on Graphic Paper (Agrapa), the recovery rate for 2024 was over 88 per cent. In its voluntary commitment to the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, the industry pledged to meet a minimum recovery rate of at least 80 per cent.

The recovery rate is calculated as the ratio of the amount of graphic recovered paper recycled to the apparent consumption of graphic paper. However, Agrapa did not provide specific figures on the exact quantity of recovered paper that was recovered.

In a voluntary commitment that was renewed in 2023, the ten participating industry associations also pledged to gradually phase out the use of mineral-oil based printing inks in newspapers. The use of mineral-oil based inks is to be discontinued completely by 2028. This year, the amount of mineral oil from newspaper printing inks that could potentially enter the recovered paper recycling stream is to be reduced by half compared to the reference year 2020, although in its latest statement, Agrapa said additional efforts were still needed to reach this goal.

UK recovered paper collections continue to decline amid weak export demand in 2024

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The UK recovered paper market experienced another turbulent year in 2024, with declining exports and falling collection volumes. Despite a slight uptick in domestic demand, particularly from the corrugated sector, overall market dynamics remained challenging.

According to figures published by the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI), consumption of recovered paper at UK mills increased by 3.0 per cent in 2024, reaching 2.63 million t – up by 77,000 t from the previous year. Old corrugated containers (OCC) remained the key driver of demand, with usage of corrugated grades rising by 7.3 per cent.

In contrast, the two other main recovered paper categories – mixed papers and woodfree – saw year-on-year declines. The downturn was most pronounced for mixed papers, including newspapers and magazines, which dropped by 1.6 per cent to 892,000 t.

Export demand, which continues to account for around 60 per cent of all UK recovered paper collections, fell further in 2024. Exports to India were particularly weak, plunging by nearly 30 per cent to below 1 million t. Exports to other Asian markets also declined, reaching just over 2 million t.

Only European demand showed a marked improvement, rising by almost 60 per cent to 860,000 t as the continent's paper markets recovered. Total UK recovered paper exports amounted to 3.79 million t, down 4.3 per cent year on year.

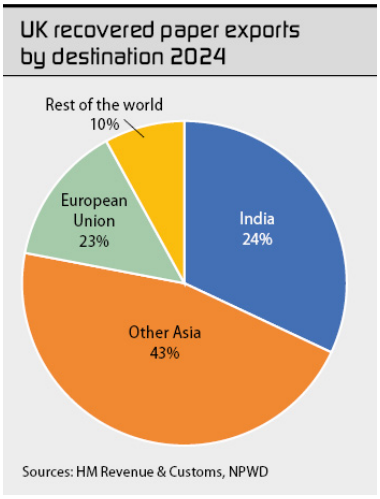
RCP collection and woodpulp consumption decline

UK recovered paper collections declined by 1.7 per cent to 6.30 million t in 2024. With paper and board arisings increasing slightly over the same period, the UK's overall recycling rate dropped sharply to 66 per cent – down from 71 per cent in 2023. CPI notes this is the lowest rate recorded in several years.

UK pulp markets also remained under pressure in 2024. High pulp prices, especially in the first half of the year, caused challenges for several CPI members.

UK consumption of wood pulp fell by 3.0 per cent to 870,000
t in 2024, a decline largely attributed to ongoing capacity

reductions at domestic paper mills. Pulp stocks at mills remained stable.



New momentum for UK paper recycling

After years of stagnation, 2024 marked a turning point for the UK's paper recycling sector, with significant policy developments reshaping the legislative landscape.

The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) highlights notable progress on the government's waste reform agenda – including advances in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), and particularly the Separation of Waste Regulations.

A central achievement for the paper-based industries was the government's decision to make separate collection of paper and board the default requirement for local authorities the confederation says in its report. CPI describes the move as a pivotal step towards improving material quality and aligning collection practices with circular economy goals.

UK paper and board industry rebounds in with growth in production and demand in 2024

Second half-year slower due to geopolitical development

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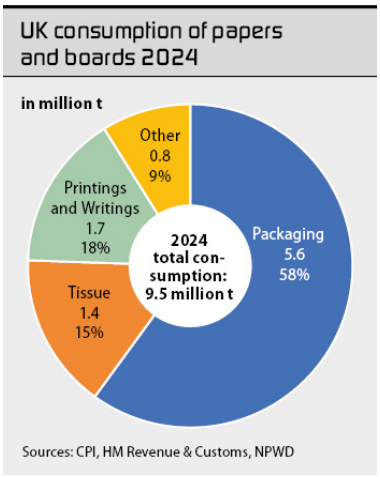
After a difficult 2023, the UK's paper-based industries experienced a notable recovery in 2024, with both consumption and production figures showing renewed momentum. The improvement, however, is largely attributed to the rebound from a particularly weak prior year. While the first half of the year was marked by broad-based growth, the second half was shaped by growing economic caution, amid the first Labour budget and concerns over the global impact of "Trumponomics".

Total demand for paper and board rose by nearly 5 per cent year on year in 2024. Industry sales revenues increased significantly from £12.7bn to £15.2bn, reflecting broad gains across all major segments: Packaging grew by 4.6 per cent, Printings & Writing (P&W) by 12.6 per cent, and Tissue by 1.3 per cent.

The most substantial gains were recorded in the P&W sector, which is almost entirely supplied by imports. The coated woodfree segment alone expanded by approximately one-third, contributing to total P&W consumption of 1.44 million t (+175,000 t) for the year.

Packaging demand increased by 4.6 per cent overall. Corrugated case materials (CCM), the sector's largest sub-segment, grew by a modest 2.6 per cent to 2.44 million t, while the smaller packaging grades recorded average gains of around 10 per cent. The mainly domestically supplied tissue sector posted limited growth of 1.3 per cent, impacted by recent capacity closures.

Consumption of primary papers and boards reached 6.78 million t in 2024. Secondary products consumption is estimated to have grown in line, with net imports of converted papers and boards rising by 20 per cent to 1.06 million t. Despite a slight reduction in net imports of paper-based transit packaging, the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) calculates the total volume of papers and boards placed on the UK market at 9.55 million t – a 5 per cent increase compared with 2023.



Domestic production gains limited by capacity closures

UK production increased by 2.0 per cent to 3.29 million t in 2024 (+65,000 t), recovering only part of the ground lost in 2023, when output declined by nearly 7 per cent. Growth was held back by ongoing capacity reductions, particularly in the tissue sector, which recorded a slight year-on-year decrease. Production of CCM, on the other hand, rose by 4.4 per cent to 1.44 million t.

The increase in production was mainly export-driven: Deliveries to the EU increased by over 8 per cent to 573,000 t, accounting for 78 per cent of all UK paper exports. Domestic deliveries remained broadly flat at 2.54 million t, just above the 2023 level of 2.53 million t. While demand for CCM improved, this was offset by weaker demand for tissue and other grades.

UK paper imports rise, EU remains top trade partner

It was imports that mostly benefitted from increased demand in the UK, with an extra 300,000 tonnes coming into the UK last year. Total imports for 2024 were 4.23 million t, contributing 62 per cent of total demand for primary papers and boards.

The value of total imports declined slightly, from £8.59bn in 2023 to £8.23bn in 2024. The EU remained the dominant supplier, accounting for 66 per cent of imports (2023: 67 per cent). A further 5 (5) per cent came from non-EU European countries, 20 per cent from Asia (up from 18 per cent), and 8 per cent from the Americas (down from 9 per cent).

The EU was also the top export destination for UK producers, with a 59 per cent share of outbound deliveries (2023: 57 per cent), followed by the Americas with 18 (19) per cent, Asia (12 (11) per cent), and other European countries (7 (9) per cent). Total export value remained unchanged at £4.62bn.

Corrugated board output steady amid challenging backdrop

The UK's corrugated sector, often viewed as a barometer of broader economic trends, recorded a modest increase in output. Corrugators operated by CPI members produced 4.31 million t of board in 2024, up 1.7 per cent year on year. However, adjusted for three additional working days in 2024, effective weekly output was nearly flat, rising marginally from 85.5m m² to 85.8m m² (+0.5 per cent).

Sheetfeeder production fared better, with total output increasing by nearly 5 per cent to 1.16 billion m², or 23.0m m² per week. The average basis weight of corrugated board remained unchanged at 451 g/m².

High energy costs remain a concern

Despite ongoing global crises, including conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and political upheaval (UK elections, US Trump administration, EU rightward shift), the CPI's President Kevin Bussey (Smurfit Westrock) sees a renewed sense of optimism for the UK paper industry. New paper mill investments – three currently underway – signal renewed international investor confidence in the UK market.

However, energy costs and policy uncertainty remain top concerns for the UK's energy-intensive paper sector. The CPI warns that UK papermakers face a growing competitive disadvantage due to persistently high energy prices and rapid decarbonisation targets.

The Labour government's more ambitious Net Zero agenda, including the Clean Power 2030 plan and an 81 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035, is expected to accelerate the shift away from natural gas-posing cost and infrastructure challenges.

The CPI is pushing for lower energy costs through schemes like the British Energy Supercharger and aims to maintain a level playing field for UK producers.

The president underscores the importance of a balanced industrial strategy, warning against "deindustrialisation via decarbonisation."

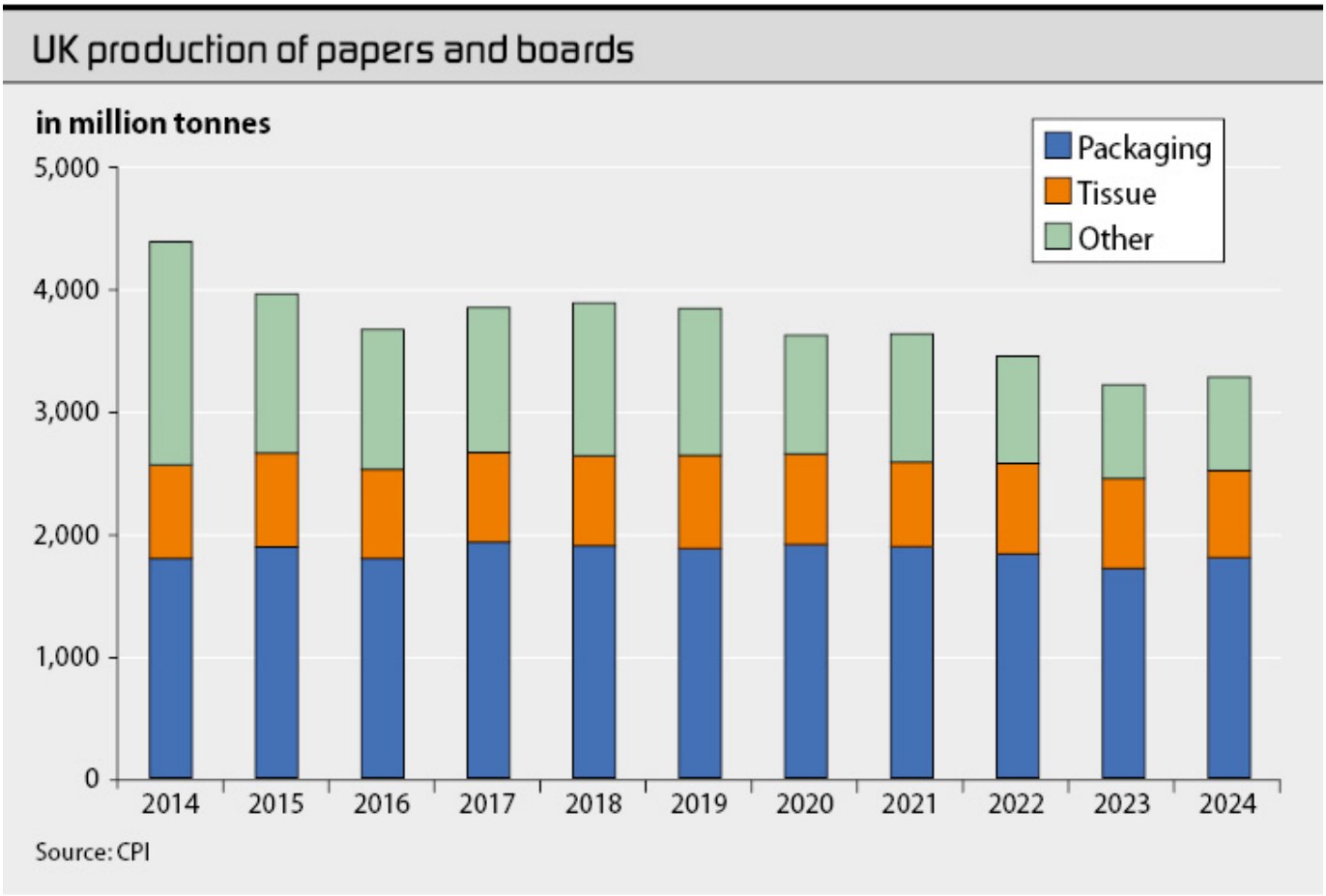
Director General Andrew Large, in his final review before his departure, reflects on CPI's achievements during his tenure: supporting the sector during COVID, promoting circular economy policies, and cutting energy costs for industry.

He warns that economic conditions remain fragile, with UK inflation forecast to rise again, and energy-intensive industries still under pressure despite falling interest rates.

CPI warns of EPR fee bias

With the UK's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme now law (as of January 2025), the CPI has voiced concern that the proposed EPR fee structure may distort the market in favour of plastics due to lower weight-based charges. The association also continues to engage with Defra to protect paper packaging competitiveness.

On the EU side, CPI notes that the final version of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) includes key exemptions for corrugated packaging from reuse targets – a crucial win for the fibre-based packaging sector. The association remains vigilant about future reuse policy developments in the UK and devolved nations.


UK production of papers and boards
in million tonnes
Packaging
Tissue
Other
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
Source: CPI

Caustic soda market: NaOH prices come under renewed pressure following upswing

Imploding chlorine derivative business fuels consolidation

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In the latest round of negotiations, caustic soda producers failed to defend the price level recently achieved in the paper industry, among other sectors. Ongoing and structural developments are keeping the industry on tenterhooks, with the result that its position appears somewhat weaker again. Caustic soda buyers like pulp and paper mills built up price pressure. Moreover, supply proved to be sufficient in May and June amidst fluctuating and latently declining demand. Monthly prices came under noticeable pressure in the course of the second quarter of 2025, leading to falling prices in the market. Maintenance-related shutdowns of chlorine and NaOH plants, of which several had been announced, were barely noticeable on the market at the end of the quarter, as reflected in negotiations for the third quarter of 2025.

Aside from negotiations for caustic soda (NaOH) deliveries from July 2025, consolidation in the chlorine industry is causing turbulence. According to experts, the outlook for the coming weeks and months suggests that further closures of production facilities will be announced. With high production costs, it is not only the German industry that is losing competitiveness. Challenging conditions in Germany and the EU are forcing structural changes throughout Western Europe. “The situation is simply bad, especially with regard to energy costs,” comments a market insider. Even with the prospect of being able to offset the overall decline in demand for caustic soda with growing demand from other areas, consolidation in the chemical industry is progressing with as yet unforeseeable consequences.

Paper mills stronger in negotiations

In negotiations for deliveries from July 2025, many NaOH buyers succeeded in convincing suppliers to retract the price increases for the second quarter. In some cases, discounts for the third quarter are said to have been higher than the increases for the previous quarter. Quoted prices are drifting back towards the €600 mark. In Germany, prices of €630-650/t are often mentioned. Overall, players have returned to the price level of the first quarter, industry insiders concur.

Caustic soda producers had managed to raise prices by €20-50/t in negotiations for the second quarter. The hikes were driven by maintenance shutdowns, which had noticeably restricted supply regionally and temporarily, as well as by a lack of lucrative imports that could have served as a fall-back. Planned and unplanned production losses had an impact on prices, underscore NaOH industry representatives. 50 per cent caustic soda based on 100 per cent concentration sold in April for €640-660/t.

Prices talks in March/April again reflected strong regional variations. In some cases, pressure from NaOH producers to raise prices is said to have caused prices to move towards the €700 mark. In some regions, where negotiations were quieter, hikes were moderate with prices at €630-650/t.

For Germany, players report some of the highest hikes in the second quarter, so discounts for the third quarter are correspondingly higher. Since other players also report smaller increases as well as discounts, quoted prices seem to show a wide range in the second as well third quarters.

Chlorine industry trims excess capacity

Capacity utilisation of chlorine producers had drifted towards the 60 per cent mark, especially in April and May, from well above 70 per cent earlier. Capacity utilisation will return to earlier levels, industry players are convinced. “But the industry cannot be satisfied with these figures,” say chlorine industry representatives. However, there is hope that the economy will pick up somewhat in the second half of 2025, and that the construction industry will also show recovery, which could benefit the PVC sector, a driving factor in the chlorine business.

Against this background, experts expect healthy supply of the by-product caustic soda. A shortfall in demand is also not to be expected in the foreseeable future, but against the background of the ongoing consolidation, regional supply bottlenecks cannot be ruled out.

Overall, however, industry experts expect demand for caustic soda in Europe to decline, with increasing fluctuations.

EUWID Price Watch Western Europe Caustic Soda
Second quarter 2025

Prices in € per tonne free delivered	Second quarter 2025	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2024
NaOH*	630 - 690	610 - 660	630 - 720

* 50% solution, calculated on a 100% concentration basis

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Paper sack industry enjoys slight growth in 2024

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Europe's paper sack industry slightly increased its production and deliveries compared to the previous year in 2024, according to statistics recently published by Eurosac, the European association representing paper sack manufacturers based in Paris. The figures show that deliveries including estimates for companies not belonging to Eurosac rose by 2.2 per cent compared with 2023 to land at 5.31 billion (2023: 5.2bn) paper sacks. This slight upturn came on the heels of a 15.9 per cent drop recorded in 2023 compared with 2022, the statistics show.

The cement and building materials sector remains the largest buyer for the paper sack industry, holding a 57 per cent share of the market. Notwithstanding this fact, cement sack deliveries declined again in 2024, ending the year with a 2.1 per cent slump to 1.10 billion units. On the other hand, deliveries of building materials sacks for uses outside the cement industry increased by 3.1 per cent to 1.95 billion units.

Eurosac reported the strongest growth in deliveries for paper sacks used in the food industry (excluding powdered milk), with volumes climbing by 6.8 per cent to 812.41 million units, while those for packaging for powdered milk fell by 6.7 per cent compared with 2023, a year when deliveries in this segment had already dropped by 6.2 per cent in a year-on-year comparison. Paper sack deliveries for animal feed and chemicals also performed well, each rising by 6.2 per cent to 812.41 million and 312.99 million units, respectively.

The largest downturn in relative terms was faced by paper sacks used for seeds, with deliveries tumbling by 7.9 per cent to 136.15 million units. This trend is also mirrored in production figures, which slipped by 9.5 per cent to 22,517 t, the statistics show.

Altogether, Europe's paper sack industry produced 660,892 t last year, an increase of 1.7 per cent and a turnaround after the previous year's 17.1 per cent dive.

Eurosac says it represents around 80 per cent of Europe's paper sack manufacturers. Across 20 countries, the association's members represent an annual production volume of around 5 billion paper sacks, processing roughly 630,000 t of sack kraft paper at a total of 55 locations.

CEPI publishes guidance on EUDR implementation

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 29/2025

To support pulp and paper mills in the practical implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), the European Confederation of Paper Industries (CEPI) has developed industry-specific guidelines. The guidelines, which were drawn up in collaboration with association members, are intended to provide a common understanding of the EUDR obligations within the industry, according to the association.

In the document, Cepi addresses fundamental terms used in the EUDR – such as what exactly is meant by 'deforestation-free' within the meaning of the regulation – and provides a total of four application examples and suggestions for the practical application of due diligence systems (DDS). Cepi also emphasises that this is not a legally binding guide, but should be consulted in addition to the text of the EUDR and the EU Commission's FAQs.

The document "Cepi Guidance on the EU Deforestation regulation" has 19 pages and is available free of charge online on the Cepi website at www.cepi.org/cepi-guidance-on-eudr-implementation/.

Higher prices for sack kraft paper take hold across the European market in the second quarter

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 29/2025



Manufacturers of brown and white sack kraft paper managed to institute price increases in Germany and Europe no later than the second quarter. Paper mills had already put forward demands to this effect back at the end of 2024. Although there were isolated reports that price hikes for both grades had been accepted for the first quarter, the upward movement in prices was confirmed across the board from April onwards, at the latest, insiders confirmed during the latest EUWID market enquiry at the start of July.

In conversations with EUWID, sources indicated that white (bleached) sack kraft paper had typically become €50-70/t more expensive in the second quarter. Brown grades, which have a more diverse supplier base in Europe, saw prices rise by €50-60/t in most cases during the second quarter, with smaller hikes of only €30-40/t mentioned here and there, as well.

Market players pointed out that paper mills justified the spring price increase by underscoring higher energy and raw material prices as well as good capacity utilisation in the first few months of 2025. For this reason, more than a few suppliers had attempted to implement a second price increase shortly after the first took hold. However, the general market situation and demand from the paper industry for brown and white sack kraft paper had both clearly stabilised towards the end of the second quarter making another increase in sack kraft paper prices more difficult, EUWID sources reported in early July.

Sack kraft paper buyers confirmed that lead times – previously somewhat extended – had returned to normal. Paper mills surveyed by EUWID reported that their order books had worsened again from late May or early June onwards. However, paper machines were still operating at good capacity utilisation, something that observers also attributed to demand from the e-commerce sector.

Industry insiders in the paper sack industry are observing the usual seasonal uptick in workloads. Experts described order books as pretty full, with demand especially strong for paper sacks used for seeds and foodstuffs. According to sources, demand from the building materials industry is traditionally higher in the summer than in the spring. Nonetheless, paper sack producers are feeling the effects of the ongoing crisis in the construction sector this year, which is having an impact on demand for mortar and cement

sacks. The majority of paper sack producers describe order intake in this segment as having room for improvement.

EUWID Price Watch Europe Sack Kraft Paper

Second quarter 2025

Prices in € per tonne	Second quarter 2025	First quarter 2025	Second quarter 2024
Sack kraft paper, brown, 70- 90 g, semi-extensible	930 - 1,080	870 - 1,030[1)]	880 - 1,000
Sack kraft paper, white, 70-90 g, semi-extensible	1,220 - 1,400	1,150 - 1,350[1)]	1,090 - 1,290

[1)] Price increases for individual orders became already effectve in the first quarter.

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EUDR: EU Parliament rejects country benchmarking system and suggests a fourth risk category

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 29/2025

The European Parliament has urged the European Commission to improve a benchmarking system categorising countries by their deforestation risk as part of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). On 9 July, the majority of MEPs voted in favour of a motion brought by the European People's Party (EPP) rejecting the country benchmarking system proposed by the European Commission in May and calling for adjustments. As a motion for a resolution, the vote is not legally binding for the European Commission.

The motion stresses that the proposed categorisation of countries is "based on outdated data and fails to incorporate all relevant and available risk indicators." Instead, MEPs urge the Commission to revise the benchmarking system and add a fourth category referred to as 'negligible risk'. According to the motion, a system with just three risk categories is insufficient to adequately differentiate between countries with vastly different levels of deforestation risk.

EPP fraction continues to call for a new 'no risk' category

Following the vote, the EPP fraction issued a statement repeating its call for a 'no risk' category for countries with stable or expanding forest areas. "Today's vote is a strong signal that we want practical, fair, and effective forest protection," said MEP Alexander Bernhuber, who tabled the objection on behalf of the EPP Group.

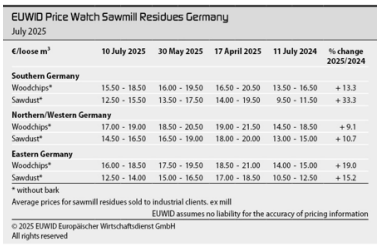
Christine Schneider, the EPP's lead negotiator for EUDR in the European Parliament, added, "We want to stop deforestation effectively, but not by drowning responsible forest managers in bureaucracy. The Commission's current approach imposes a blanket burden instead of targeting real risk."

When the Commission presented its classification proposal in May, a Commission spokesperson stressed to EUWID that no further changes were planned to the content of the EUDR to ensure its smooth entry into force by the end of 2025. Responding to a renewed request for information from EUWID, a European Commission spokesperson said that it had taken note of the vote. However, the spokesperson emphasised that the parliamentary vote was not legally binding and referred to the simplification package put forward by the Commission in April. This package is intended to help affected companies reduce administrative costs and the bureaucratic burden by 30 per cent, the spokesperson added.

Prices for sawmill residues in Germany continue to decline

Supply remains high due to brisk cutting activity through the end of June

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 29/2025



EUWID Price Watch Sawmill Residues Germany
July 2025

€/loose m³	10 July 2025	30 May 2025	17 April 2025	11 July 2024	% change 2025/2024
Southern Germany					
Woodchips*	15.50 - 18.50	16.00 - 19.50	16.50 - 20.50	13.50 - 16.50	+ 13.3
Sawdust*	12.50 - 15.50	13.50 - 17.50	14.00 - 19.50	9.50 - 11.50	+ 33.3
Northern/Western Germany					
Woodchips*	17.00 - 19.00	18.50 - 20.50	19.00 - 21.50	14.50 - 18.50	+ 9.1
Sawdust*	14.50 - 16.50	16.50 - 19.00	18.00 - 20.00	13.00 - 15.00	+ 10.7
Eastern Germany					
Woodchips*	16.00 - 18.50	17.50 - 19.50	18.50 - 21.00	14.00 - 15.00	+ 19.0
Sawdust*	12.50 - 14.00	15.00 - 16.50	17.00 - 18.50	10.50 - 12.50	+ 15.2

* without bark
Average prices for sawmill residues sold to industrial clients, ex mill
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By early July, monthly and quarterly contracts for sawmill residues in Germany showed lower prices for sawdust and MDF and pulp woodchips than those agreed in June and the second quarter. Depending on the initial level, price cuts for sawdust were again more pronounced than for woodchips, with reductions of €2-3/m³. Nationwide, the average price for sawdust is currently around €13-15/m³ ex works. For sales to the pulp industry, price reductions in the range of €1-2/m³ are reported for wood chips, depending on the initial level, with only isolated reports of price increases. The reductions of up to €3-4/m³ demanded for wood chips in the run-up to and at the start of negotiations, primarily by the pulp industry, could therefore not be achieved. The average price range for wood chips is currently around €15.50-17.50/m³ ex works. Overall, the price difference between wood chips and sawdust has thus widened further. The newly concluded contracts cover both monthly and quarterly terms. There is apparently a renewed increase in the number of monthly contracts, especially for sawdust.

Overall, negotiations have been rather tough so far, as most suppliers have pushed for prices to remain unchanged, citing consistently high, and in some cases rising, roundwood prices and uncertainties regarding roundwood availability in the coming weeks. Buyers, on the other hand, argue that there is a relatively high supply of residual wood, as the majority of sawmills continued to operate at what is considered an at least normal level for this time of year in June. In individual cases, somewhat larger residual wood stocks had built up again at some sawmill locations by the end of the second quarter.

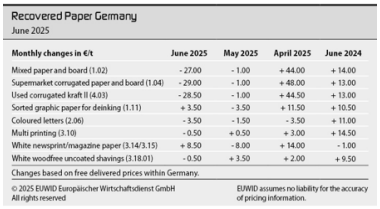
At the same time, raw material stocks are described as sufficient by the majority of value adders and as high by the paper and pulp industry. Due to production cuts, particularly at some stand-alone pellet plants, consumption of sawdust was also lower than expected in some regions, at least in June. However, following a recent upturn in end customer and trading business, pellet production is expected to increase again in the current month. Several maintenance and conversion shutdowns are planned for the particleboard industry in mid-July. Depending on the market situation, these shutdowns could be extended by a few days. MDF/HDF manufacturers already reduced production in May/June due to market conditions. Despite falling prices on international markets, German pulp producers have not yet made any statements that would indicate production cuts.

Suppliers and customers alike expect a decline in the supply of sawmill residues during the summer months. Several sawmills have announced that they will extend their company holidays or initially resume cutting only on a reduced scale after the holidays because of recently rather weak demand on the domestic and foreign softwood sawn timber markets and the gaps in roundwood supplies that are emerging from September onwards.

Germany: Recovered paper prices fall further in July – stabilisation expected from August

Exports from other European countries to Asia rise

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 5 min | Published in issue 29/2025



Recovered Paper Germany
June 2025

Monthly changes in €/t	June 2025	May 2025	April 2025	June 2024
Mixed paper and board (1.02)	- 27.00	- 1.00	+ 44.00	+ 14.00
Supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04)	- 29.00	- 1.00	+ 48.00	+ 13.00
Used corrugated kraft II (4.03)	- 28.50	- 1.00	+ 44.50	+ 13.00
Sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11)	+ 3.50	- 3.50	+ 11.50	+ 10.50
Coloured letters (2.06)	- 3.50	- 1.50	- 3.50	+ 11.00
Multi printing (3.10)	- 0.50	+ 0.50	+ 3.00	+ 14.50
White newsprint/magazine paper (3.14/3.15)	+ 8.50	- 8.00	+ 14.00	- 1.00
White woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01)	- 0.50	+ 3.50	+ 2.00	+ 9.50

Changes based on free delivered prices within Germany.

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The sharp slide in prices for mixed paper and board (1.02) and supermarket corrugated paper and board (1.04) has continued into July. Supermarket corrugated paper and board was "dragging down mixed paper" in the process. Despite weak demand, waste management companies are not reporting any volume pressures as arisings remain very low. Greater price stability is being reported for the medium and higher grades.

By June, the tide on the market had already turned. An analysis of information provided by recovered paper suppliers and consumers reveals that mixed paper and board (1.02) and supermarket paper and board (1.04) were €27/t and €29/t cheaper, respectively compared to last month. Used corrugated kraft II (4.03) fell by €28.50/t. Prices for sorted graphic paper for deinking (1.11) edged up by €3.50/t. Coloured letters (2.06) lost €3.50/t and multi printing (3.10) prices slipped by €0.50/t. White newsprint/magazine paper (3.14/3.15) prices rose by €8.50/t in June, while white woodfree uncoated shavings (3.18.01) slipped by €0.50/t.

This put prices for mixed paper still €39.50/t higher in June than they were six months earlier. The increase was even more pronounced for supermarket paper and board and used corrugated kraft II, which were up €56/t and €50/t respectively. Sorted graphic paper for deinking cost nearly the same as it had at the start of the year. Coloured letters were €10/t cheaper than at the start of the year, whereas multi printing was €14.50/t dearer. White newsprint/magazine paper prices had increased by a total of €27/t, and white woodfree uncoated shavings cost €2.50/t more.

In the current month of July, recovered paper prices are continuing to tumble, especially those of the mass grades 1.02 and 1.04. Market players report price reductions of €25-30/t this month, in some cases as much as €35/t. Kraft grades such as used corrugated kraft II, were also seeing decreases which brought them in line with or slightly below the other brown grades.

Weak demand for finished paper across Europe leads to postponed orders

In addition to the ongoing economic downturn, geopolitical uncertainties are also weighing on sentiment – in Germany, but also throughout Europe. In southern Europe, where there had recently been some optimism, the mood has now worsened considerably. Even the upcoming Christmas season has yet to provide a boost. Players along the value chain are sitting on the fence; orders are being deliberately delayed as sufficient material is available.

Against this backdrop, market participants report that mills producing recovered fibre-based packaging paper and board were taking downtime more frequently – sometimes at extremely short notice. Planned shutdowns for machine maintenance were often being extended. As a result, buyers had scaled back orders at short notice or even cancelled confirmed orders for recovered paper.

No RCP accumulation at suppliers' yards – mills' stock levels are rising

Still, waste management businesses saw no need for panic. Despite weak demand, recovered paper was not accumulating to any great degree at their yards or temporary storage facilities. Collection volumes remain very low, even lower than last year's already weak level. "We've almost never had this little material come in," said one waste management company. Paper mills, on the other hand, reported that their stocks levels were rising and their storage facilities nearing capacity.

Due to the low collection volumes and weak export prices, hardly any recovered paper is currently being shipped from Germany to Asia. The situation is different in the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and France, where significantly larger volumes are once again being exported in July, according to market players. While most EUWID contacts emphasise that export prices are still below those being offered on the German domestic market, some insiders already saw FAS prices approaching those of ex works quotes. Should export prices pull even, it could lead to larger export volumes from Germany again in the medium term.

Deinking prices slide despite low collection volumes

The market for graphic paper remains "catastrophic", experts said. Accordingly, prices for deinking grades have fallen in July despite the extremely low available volumes – though the drop has been far less steep than for the brown grades. Market insiders speak of decreases in the range of €5-10/t. They suggest that the only reason for the relatively ample supply is the continued weakness in demand.

Doubts about the future of grade 1.11 are growing. The cost-effectiveness of the sorting to produce this grade has long been questioned by suppliers. "We are fast approaching a situation where suppliers will crunch the numbers and insist on offtake guarantees," said one market participant. Some say that is already happening in isolated cases.

Prices for medium and higher grades are reported to be largely stable. Lower supply is helping to stabilise the markets. The tissue industry continues to be a reliable buyer as it is less dependent on the broader economy.

Producers in other segments, such as white-lined packaging paper and board, have, by contrast, scaled back their purchases. One tissue manufacturer joked: "We feel like war profiteers. I can't remember a time when were this relaxed heading into the summer."

High-white grades stable – pulp becomes more attractive

High-white grades, too, saw only marginal markdowns. Overall prices are steady, primarily because they had risen far less sharply in the spring than had the bulk grades. However, falling pulp prices and persistently high energy costs are also factors here. Tissue producers who use both pulp and recovered paper are now buying more pulp.

Price floor likely reached but fear of renewed panic persists

Many market observers believe that prices for mass grades have now bottomed out. Only limited reductions are predicted for August. At the same time, some experts warn that if German paper mills push prices too low, it might rekindle export interest and could trigger another round of panic-driven price increases in the event of a sudden surge in demand. Numerous market participants are therefore arguing in favour of holding prices at current levels. “At these price levels, both paper mills and waste management companies can get along just fine,” said one industry source.

However, the general state of the paper industry remains bleak. Falling prices for finished paper are placing a strain on the sector. The “moaning” from paper manufacturers is no longer seen merely as a negotiation tactic – the survival of the industry is on the line. In both the graphic and packaging segments, there is open speculation about further machine shutdowns, mergers or insolvencies.

EUWID price changes for German recovered paper in 2025

Price change €/t		June 2025 vs December 2024
Mixed paper and board	(1.02)	+ 39.5
Supermarket corrugated paper and board	(1.04)	+ 56.0
Used corrugated kraft II	(4.03)	+ 50.0
Sorted graphic paper for deinking	(1.11)	- 0.5
Coloured letters	(2.06)	- 10.0
Multi printing	(3.10)	+ 14.5
White newsprint	(3.14/3.15)	+ 27.0
White woodfree uncoated shavings	(3.18.01)	+ 2.5

The table presents the cumulative price changes for the named grades in the past 6 months.
Prices: free delivered to paper mills in Germany
EUWID assumes no liability for the accuracy of pricing information.

Source: EUWID

Germany: Paper mills' pricing plans often derailed by insufficient capacity utilisation

Surprising twist in third quarter price round for newsprint

EUWID + 16 July 2025 | ~ 7 min | Published in issue 29/2025

Numerous factors influenced the latest price round for newsprint in Germany: the march of digitalisation, the summertime slowdown, the sluggish economy and the impact of geopolitical developments. Facing insufficient utilisation of their machines, paper mills were sometimes forced to grant mark-downs, but industry representatives stress that prices were not reduced in all cases.

The most recent price increase for brown recycled corrugated case material (RCCM) was short-lived as paper producers completely rescinded these mark-ups in July. Markets insiders note this was partly due to the situation on the recovered paper market. Prices for all grades of cartonboard reportedly moved sideways on the German market at the start of the third quarter, meaning that the announced price increases in the recycled cartonboard market were only implemented in a very few cases.

Producers dissatisfied with outcome of newsprint price round

In a tough macroeconomic environment, the latest price round for newsprint in Germany gained momentum again shortly before it concluded. Paper producers are under pressure, they say, while buyers from publishing houses and printing companies as well as print customers also complain they are facing tough times.

It is hard to get a handle on what happened in the newsprint negotiations, commented one expert on the events of recent weeks. Market participants unanimously report that it initially looked like the two sides would be discussing a rollover of prices from the second quarter. Even in late June, representatives of the paper industry were still reporting stable prices in the delivery agreements for the third quarter, or occasionally marginal price reductions of €5/t. But just as the price round was coming to an end, the tone of the talks shifted due to the supply overhang and very poor demand in some areas.

Paper producers stressed their difficulties due to the ongoing high costs for raw materials and energy, which increases their risk of slipping into the red. They say they have reached their limits on the cost side. Ultimately, this means they may have to temporarily halt production if the business is not profitable.

Market insiders also note that there are noticeable activities from non-EU players in the newsprint segment in Germany. Low-priced offers were fuelling a sense of nervousness in the industry, coinciding with insufficient capacity utilisation at paper mills,

which insiders attribute to sometimes steep demand declines in some parts of Europe. Price talks often focused on utilisation of paper machines, so some producers prioritised securing volumes over prices.

The price round for deliveries from July 2025 resulted in mark-downs for newsprint. These were typically €5-15, but depending on the starting level, could be as much as €20/t. Consequently, many of the prices reported for standard newsprint 45 g in the EUWID market survey were between €585-600/t, but there were also figures mentioned below this range. Players confirm there were also agreements for the third quarter of 2025 that were signed early on and do not contain any changes. Multiple respondents said some contracts contained unchanged prices, so prices were not reduced across the board.

The paper industry is now on shaky economic ground, market insiders say, prices are not sufficient for the paper mills. The outlook appears challenging too, they add, and it looks like paper mills will have a difficult time achieving higher margins via increased prices. In addition, there are object deals with spot prices, which are being granted for major orders, such as flyers. The difference between contract and special deals prices can be irritating at times, EUWID was told.

The situation on the newsprint market in Germany remains weak, with only demand from the commercial printing segment appearing to be decent. Market experts believe the latest capacity cuts for newsprint were not sufficient to balance the market. They expect consolidation to continue, with more paper machines being mothballed.

Similar signs and needs are also recognised by respondents in the printing and publishing sectors. The publishing world is being shaken up, respondents say. Media companies are focusing more on their core markets. Consolidation is taking place and will continue in the sector, experts say. They predict an uptick in mergers and acquisitions as well as cooperations. Newspapers continue to build and strengthen content and production networks.

Experts also explicitly state that printing capacity is too high in the commercial printing business. Here, too, takeovers are on the horizon and the wave of insolvencies could continue, they say.

Prices for brown recycled corrugated case material decline

Demand and deliveries in the RCCM segment remain subdued. Yet, respondents surveyed by EUWID hold varying views: Some describe this as "normal summer weakness," while others complain of an especially deep slump that started early amidst generally weak order intake. The former say the poor sentiment in the segment is primarily due to the newest additional capacities, but note these are having negligible impact on the market so far, apart from a psychological effect.

The economy in Germany is forecast to rebound in the second half of the year. Some industry players are already seeing early signs that demand is normalising, possibly driven by the latest price reductions. Others refuse to make any predictions, saying they are unable to comment on what business might look like this autumn.

The near-term price trend is also unpredictable. During July, prices for brown grades have fallen by €40/t across the market. This erases the cost-driven increase implemented in April/May. Events on the Polish market were a contributing factor here, according

to EUWID respondents. Prices there were already trimmed by €20 in June and a further step of the same size took place in July. The softening price trend is primarily attributed to recovered paper costs: After RCP prices surged earlier this year, putting paper mills in a predicament and driving finished paper prices higher, the subsequent sharp decrease in recovered fibre prices has caused prices for recycled corrugated case material to retreat as well. The recovered paper market will continue to influence prices for finished paper in August, a month with traditionally weak deliveries.

Observers suspect that spot deals will be made for August deliveries. Moreover, there are likely to be more production curtailments to curb overcapacity. Mills might soon be unable to bear these conditions, EUWID respondents say. Even if a significant economic rebound occurs, excess capacities could not be absorbed quickly.

There have been no changes recently in prices for white-top testliner.

Cartonboard prices move sideways into H2

Almost without exception, prices on the German cartonboard market were flat heading into the third quarter or second half of the year. On the folding boxboard (GC) market, this trajectory was clear quite early on, since by mid-May no producers had announced any price changes for the second half of the year. At the same time, however, producers of folding cartons were unable to leverage this situation to negotiate lower prices. In part, this was because producers made it clear they were unwilling to make any concessions in light of their high costs – irrespective of the market conditions. Another factor was that order books at folding cartons producers remain quite modest, so they were not in a position to offer large batch sizes to create pressure. Even if objects were attractive to board producers, allowing them to increase utilisation at their machines, board mills were reportedly unwilling to compromise on prices. New contracts replacing those that expired at the half-year point were sometimes signed with prices fixed for only three more months.

The German market for recycled cartonboard also saw a uniform price trend in the GD board segment. After the upward adjustment at the start of the second quarter, there were no further steps in any direction. This also reflects the fact that some cartonboard factories had failed in their attempts to raise prices again as of the third quarter, even though recovered paper prices were putting major pressure on their margins. The softening of recovered paper prices in June foiled these plans, EUWID was told. Machine capacity utilisation is described by some market players as generally good or better than had been expected at the beginning of the year, while other companies report being less busy.

The same is true for utilisation rates on machines making unlined chipboard: Activity levels are good and delivery times are sometimes longer, players say. Although the upward price trend for recovered paper had an even stronger impact here than for GD board, producers were nevertheless rarely successful with their most recent price demands. The majority of players surveyed say prices are moving sideways.

Pro-Gest extends CNC debt restructuring procedure, assigns sale mandate for Mantua containerboard mill to Lincoln International

14 July 2025 | Igor Dugandzic | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 29/2025



The extension of the CNC (Composizione Negoziata della Crisi) negotiated settlement procedure provides a protected framework in which the company can proceed with strategic asset sales and maintain access to credit facilities, according to Pro-Gest.

Italy's largest independent paper and corrugated packaging group Pro-Gest, has announced a six-month extension of its crisis resolution process, known in Italy as the *Composizione Negoziata della Crisi* (CNC), as it works to finalize its comprehensive debt restructuring. The move reportedly underscores the company's commitment — and that of its stakeholders — to a recovery plan focused on financial stabilization and operational continuity.

The CNC procedure was initiated in January 2025 and involves only the parent company Pro-Gest. Giampaolo Provaggi, who was appointed as the expert advisor overseeing the negotiations, will continue to steer the dialogue between creditors and the company, according to Pro-Gest. The talks are "well advanced and expected to be finalised in the coming months," the group announced.

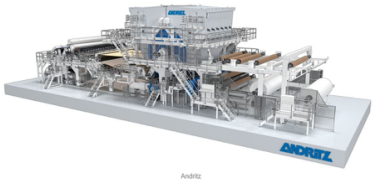
The extension of the CNC procedure also provides a protected framework in which the company can proceed with strategic asset sales and maintain access to credit facilities. Among recent developments, Pro-Gest confirmed the closing of the sale of its stake in Scart Imballaggi Srl to Tri-Wall Italia Packaging Systems Srl. Additionally, the company has mandated Lincoln International Srl to manage the sale of its recycled corrugated case material (RCCM) mill in Mantua, as part of the broader turnaround strategy.

In the meantime and despite ongoing challenges in the market, the group reports that it is maintaining full operational continuity across its locations, while reinforcing its relationships with employees, customers, suppliers, trade unions, and credit institutions.

Fripa orders new tissue machine from Andritz

11 July 2025 | Igor Dugandzic | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 29/2025

German sanitary and household paper and products manufacturer Fripa has tapped Austria's technology group Andritz to supply a new tissue machine for the company's plant in Miltenberg.



Prime Line TM S2200 is set to become a flagship reference for sustainable, high-performance tissue production in Central Europe, says Andritz.

The new Andritz-supplied tissue machine has a web width of 2.72 m and a design speed of 2,200 m/min, and is geared for an annual production capacity of 37,000 t.

The project will be executed on an EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) basis with commissioning of the new TM scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026, according to Andritz.

The order is included in Andritz's order intake for the third quarter of 2025 but the value of the order will not be disclosed, Austria's technology group announced.

Cascades to close its Niagara Falls corrugating medium mill

10 July 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 29/2025



Canadian packaging and tissue group Cascades has announced the closure of its Niagara Falls mill in New York State. The site operates one paper machine with a capacity of around 180,000 tpy (200,000 short t) of corrugating medium. The company plans to idle production on 3 September 2025 at the latest. 123 employees are affected by the measure. Closure costs are estimated at approximately $5m.

A first machine at the Niagara Falls mill was already closed in 2023. This PM produced corrugated case material with a capacity of 82,000 tpy (90,000 short t). Now, the site will be closed completely.

Cascades says the move is part of an optimisation of its packaging production platform. "The future growth momentum for Cascades and our customers is very promising, and we are well positioned to capitalise on opportunities for strategic and sustainable growth. We know what we need to do to get there—simplify, optimise and focus," said Jean-David Tardif, Executive Vice-President, Packaging.

Sappi Europe plans partial restructure of Alfeld Mill in response to market pressures

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Sappi Europe has launched a consultation process with employee representatives at its Alfeld Mill in Germany, aiming to partially restructure the site amid ongoing financial strain and a structural decline in paper demand across Europe.



Sappi plans to restructure operations at its Alfeld mill

The move follows years of efforts to improve profitability at the Alfeld Mill, which have succeeded in reducing losses but have not fully offset the impact of a complex product and asset portfolio. The mill faces increasing difficulty in sustaining operations under current and foreseeable market conditions, Sappi said in a statement.

To secure long-term viability, the company is proposing the closure of paper machines 1 and 4, along with offline coater 2 and the sheet finishing department. The changes would allow Sappi to streamline operations, better match production with shifting market demand, and focus on its most profitable and efficient product segments.

Up to 200 jobs may be affected by the planned restructure, according to the company.

The proposed measures form part of Sappi Europe's ongoing strategy to optimise its asset base, reduce operational complexity, and reinforce the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of its operations in the region.

Sappi had only recently expanded the Alfeld Mill's product portfolio with the start-up of a new coating line and the introduction of barrier products.

"As we respond to evolving market expectations for lower-carbon, resource-efficient materials and work to ensure a competitive and resilient future for our European operations, these difficult decisions are necessary," said Marco Eikelenboom, CEO of Sappi Europe.