Nordic Paper's results slightly improved year-on-year

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Swedish specialty paper producer Nordic Paper closed the 2024 financial year with improved earnings figures overall, benefiting in particular from stronger demand for its greaseproof papers. Ebitda, operating profit, net profit and sales revenues all increased in 2024 compared to 2023, and paper sales volumes were also up on the previous year. Sales revenues even rose to a new record level, and Nordic Paper also describes the Ebitda achieved as the second highest in the company's history. Sales prices were lower on average last year than in the previous year, but this was compensated for by increased sales volumes.

Demand for Nordic Paper's products (kraft paper, greaseproof paper) developed favourably last year, explains CEO Anita Sjölander in her statements on the annual report. Only in the market for kraft paper did demand decline somewhat at the end of the third quarter and into the fourth quarter.

Business in the two divisions therefore developed somewhat differently. Sales volumes and earnings figures in the greaseproof paper division reached new highs, Nordic Paper reports. The European Packaging Ordinance, which came into force in the fourth quarter of 2024, also contributed to the strong demand. It provides for a ban on greaseproof paper containing PFAS, which is due to come into force in 2026. Nordic Paper explains that it does not add PFAS to its papers to achieve greaseproof properties and has benefited from the new regulation.

Nordic Paper says that the somewhat weaker demand in the kraft paper market was particularly noticeable in the paper sacks segment. The relatively slow ramp-up of the Bäckhammar pulp and paper mill following the maintenance-related downtime also had a somewhat negative impact on sales figures. However, the decline in sales of kraft paper is mainly due to the 2 per cent drop in sales prices, while deliveries and the product mix had a more positive effect.

Nordic Paper reports that demand for greaseproof paper was good throughout the year, which mainly led to a 12 per cent increase in sales. On average, sales prices were lower than in the previous year. There were no currency effects on turnover, as was also the case with kraft paper.

Nordic Paper expects demand to remain stable overall in the first half of the year, with strong demand for greaseproof paper and somewhat weaker demand for kraft paper. Nordic Paper sees some price pressure in both market segments.

The extended acceptance period for the takeover bid by US investment company Strategic Value Partners (SVP) ended on 9 January this year. As a result, the holders of 85.67 per cent of the company's shares have agreed to SVP's takeover bid for Nordic Paper.

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Nordic Paper is an independent pulp and paper manufacturer with operations in Europe and North America. The company runs three paper mills in Sweden, and one in Norway and Canada each. At the Bäckhammar mill in Sweden, the company also produces pulp for vertical integration.

Nordic Paper results

million SEK	October - December 2024	October - December 2023	January - December 2024	January - December 2023
Key figures				
Sales	1,134	974	4,668	4,472
EBITDA	189	170	806	775
Operating result	150	132	654	623
Net result	114	65	465	416
Deliveries, 1,000 t	63.5	62.8	287.4	273.3
Business area review				
Kraft Paper				
Sales	490	472	2,277	2,327
EBITDA	99	82	392	594
Operating result	82	67	331	534
Deliveries, 1,000 t	43.1	45.8	208.8	203.2
Natural Greaseproof				
Sales	658	508	2,448	2,189
EBITDA	119	95	446	282
Operating result	100	76	366	203
Deliveries, 1,000 t	22.7	18.8	88.0	78.1

Source: Nordic Paper

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Ontex to sell Turkish tissue operations to Dilek Grup

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Belgian tissue products producer Ontex has announced the sale of its operations in Turkey to Turkish company Dilek Grup. A binding agreement had already been signed, the company said in a press release. The transaction is still subject to approval by the Turkish competition authority and is scheduled to be finalised during the third quarter.

Ontex operates one production site and a sales office in Turkey, both located in Istanbul. The plant produces predominantly branded personal hygiene products such as baby dipaers and incontinence products. In 2024, the Turkish Ontex subsidiary generated sales of €90m. It is part of Ontex' Emerging Markets division.

Ontex said it was approaching the conclusion of its strategic refocus on retail and healthcare brands in Europe and North America. Last year, the company already sold its Algerian business. The company's European operations have also seen some restructuring lately. Ontex closed one site in Belgium in 2024 and restructured its operations in the country, which led to the loss of almost 500 jobs.

Ontex produces baby dipaers, incontinence products and feminie care products, which are sold either under Ontex' own brands or as private label products. The company operates production sites in eight European countries as well as in Brazil, Mexico, the USA and currently still in Turkey. It also has sales offices in Australia, Russia and the UK. The group employs a total of 7,500 people.

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Metsä explores plans to switch production at Husum mill

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Metsä Tissue and Metsä Board are starting a pre-engineering project to investigate possible changes of the product portfolio at the integrated Husum mill in Sweden. The planned investment would create new capacity of around 80,000 tpy of food packaging paper and siliconised greaseproof paper.

In March 2024, Metsä Board launched a programme to explore alternative product opportunities for board machine 2, which currently produces 250,000 tpy of uncoated white-top kraftliner.

The pre-engineering phase is expected to take 12 months and the investment decision could be taken in the first quarter of 2026 at the earliest, according to Metsä. Start-up of the rebuilt line would be in Q4 2027. The production of white-top kraftliner will continue at full capacity until then.

Metsä Board's Husum mill in Sweden is an integrated board and pulp mill that produces 600,000 tpy of folding boxboard and 730,000 tpy of bleached chemical pulp in addition to white-top kraftliner.

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Wellteam installs new machinery

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German corrugated board and packaging producer Wellteam installed a new corrugator at its Herford plant, replacing an existing machine. By starting up the new corrugator manufactured by German machine building company BHS Corrugated, Wellteam also increased its working width from 2.50 m to 2.80 m. The production line will now attain a speed of 350 m/min in the future, up from previously 250 m/min.

In addition, the company installed a new carton gluing machine at its Diebrock plant in order to be better positioned to meet the requirements of the kitchen furniture industry. Furthermore, some further 17,000 Euro pallet spaces were added to Wellteam's existing fully-automatic high-bay ware-house previously counting 18,000 spaces for Euro pallets.

With effect from the beginning of 2025, Friedrich-Wilhelm Schöneberg, the company's founder and senior managing director, resigned from his office as managing director of the Wellteam group.

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Germany: Tough negotiations about envisaged price hike for white-lined chipboard

Coreboard market observing pricing plans of Italian producers

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It was difficult to get a clear picture of the German cartonboard market in early February. The dominant topic is the calls from a number of producers looking to raise prices for GD board (white-lined chipboard, WLC). These mark-ups were reportedly implemented in some cases, while other market participants say the overall trend has stalled.

The cartonboard market for continues to have a significant oversupply, while demand remains weak. Against this backdrop, buyers have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Business in the cores market in Germany started off modestly in the new year but appears to be picking up. Nevertheless, cores producers have been forced to accept marginal concessions in some cases. While Italian coreboard producers announced price hikes during January, it was still unclear whether such a step will occur in Germany.

Tough price negotiations for WLC in Germany

In the first week of February, it was still unclear whether and how the price hike for GD board would be implemented. Producers who had announced mark-ups as of 1 January continue to discuss specific steps with customers in the folding cartons industry. Players provided differing information to the EUWID market survey: Some said higher prices for GD had been accepted as of 1 January, while others reported these increases would take effect only as of 1 February or even as late as March. In many cases, the mark-ups in January were €20-30/t, but this amount was not accepted by all buyers.

Demands for price hikes from a few market-relevant GD producers are occurring in a market characterised by significant excess capacity as well as ongoing sluggish demand from end customers. Buyers are using the latter as arguments to either fend off or, failing that, postpone the price increases. The planned closure of RDM's cartonboard mill in Barcelona is having very little influence on price negotiations on the German market, insiders say, adding that there will hardly be an impact on availability. Several EUWID respondents described the market as being in a state of forced stability: Producers' costs are too high to reduce prices, while the market is too weak for price hikes.

Overall, the order situation for GD board has improved compared with the start of the year. Insiders describe demand as stable to slightly rising but not really satisfactory. Lead times amount to 2-3 weeks in most cases, so availability is not a problem. GD board producers attribute the increase in call-offs from folding cartons producers to restocking and orders placed before a potential price hike.

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The trend on the unlined chipboard market inGermany is similar, the market survey found. Demand has been stagnating in recent weeks, or has improved slightly in some cases. Nevertheless, there are still no signs of a rebound, so some board mills are idling capacity for individual days or even an entire week at a time. A few integrated producers are shifting volumes internally to compensate for the weak external market, EUWID was told. At the time of the market survey in early February, there was barely any price movement for unlined chipboard. There were scattered reports about further concessions for some orders of additional volumes. Other players, however, want to keep prices as stable as possible and are waiting to see what happens with recovered paper prices.

Suppliers of GC board (FBB) say their order backlogs have grown slightly. The German folding cartons industry had started ordering more after the year-end holidays, though the uptick was not as pronounced as producers had been hoping for. Some industry insiders believe this is just a “flash in the pan with temporary additional volumes,” while others believe it represents a modest overall improvement. Converters continue to place last-minute orders for smaller batch sizes, which makes it difficult to plan the machine bookings, say market insiders. Demand is largely stable but at a low and level, and orders are volatile. Demand in the pharma industry has been declining, EUWID was told. Availability is not an issue, with delivery times of 3-4 weeks.

After GC prices rose at the start of the year, individual buyers who did not yet accept the January increase are now facing similar mark-ups. Otherwise, respondents are looking ahead to the start of the next quarter and some players are already mulling new pricing plans.

First calls for higher coreboard prices

As some companies extended their Christmas holidays until 6 January, the market for cores in Germany started off the new year rather slowly. Eventually, however, activity returned to seasonally normal levels. Producers said this was driven by customers restocking inventory and stabel demand in general. They say order levels are just barely adequate as long as they remain stable, but the situation must not get any weaker.

For cores producers, competition is not yet as cut-throat as it has become in other paper converting segments. Players say they have to make small price concessions now and again, but prices have generally been stable since the fourth quarter of 2024. Soon, however, it might be necessary to talk about price hikes with customers.

During January, Italian coreboard producers announced price hikes of €60/t. At that point, only a few German producers announced price steps, whereas most players adopted a wait-and-see attitude. But, given the lack of support from their German peers, some Italian coreboard producers have already walked back their demands – sometimes partially, sometimes completely.

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Considering historical patterns, this would be an unusual time of year to announce price hikes for coreboard – especially if the argument is recovered paper prices, since it is unclear where these are currently heading. When Italian coreboard producers announced their hikes, there were not yet verifiable trends for recovered paper prices in Germany. What was clear, however, was the rise in energy costs, which presents more of a challenge for some sites than recovered paper prices.

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Pulp has become UPM's biggest business, key pillar of 2024 annual results

Commercial production at Leuna biorefinery postponed to second half-year

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Finnish UPM group declared better year-on-year results for 2024 despite declining business in the second half of the year. The company's full-year financial results reflect differences in the performance of its business divisions. Against virtually unchanged sales, UPM posts consolidated Ebitda of €1.73bn (2023: €1.57bn) and a net profit of €463m (€394m) for the year. UPM's operating results remained likewise almost unchanged year-on-year at €604m (€608m).

UPM posts substantial (non-recurring) impairments for 2024 exceeding the previous year's figure by €200m. The biggest among them is a value adjustment for the assets of its biorefinery in Leuna, Germany, which will commence full-scale operation later than planned. Quality assurance checks in the sugars-to-chemicals process conducted in late 2024 indicated that corrective works were necessary, which would take several months to complete, the company said. Meanwhile, the sequential ramp-up of the other units at the plant continues. Regular commercial production at the refinery will begin in the second half of the year, UPM announced. UPM said it would sharpen its focus in development work for its bio-products division as it is strategic for restructuring. The company has exited the bio-composites business and also plans to withdraw from the market for biomedicals.

The higher costs for the Leuna refinery as well as construction delays have made an impairment of €373m. Other larger impairments caused by events in the 2024 business year are the closures of the Raflatac plant in Kaltenkirchen (€36m) and the Hürth newsprint mill (€40m) as well as the idling of PM 3 at the Nordland mill, all located in Germany. The divestment of the Steyrermühl mill in Austria generated proceeds of €21m.

UPM posted higher consolidated earnings thanks in large part to the results of its Fibre division (pulp and wood), whose sales have overtaken those of the Communication Papers division to rank first. The new Pasos de los Toros pulp mill in Uruguay is currently operating to capacity and has boosted the group's pulp output and deliveries. Higher average selling prices and lower variable costs also supported the division's results.

Communication Papers, UPM's second largest di-vision, now has over 10 plants in Europe and the USA. The group attributes receding Ebitda from printing and writing papers to 11 per cent lower average selling prices and weaker deliveries, which could not be offset by higher selling prices and lower variable costs. Demand for newsprint in 2024 remained almost unchanged (+1 per cent) year-on-year. Demand for magazine paper receded by 5 per cent. For fine paper, demand increased by 5 per cent compared with 2023. UPM observes marginal growth of 1 per cent in Europe for printing and writing papers.

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For its Raflatac division, UPM posts slight growth in sales and profit for the reporting year. Against unchanged overheads, Ebitda of the division increased, helped by higher deliveries and stable profit margins. The market for self-adhesive materials grew worldwide last year, especially in Europe, UPM adds.

Market conditions for the Specialty Papers division (labels and packaging materials, graphic paper for various applications) last year were solid, according to UPM. Deliveries increased and variable costs receded more than prices.

Leaving aside current geopolitical uncertainties, UPM expects year-on-year growth in deliveries and lower fixed costs in the first half of 2025 against narrower margins. 2025 has begun with similar pulp prices and lower electricity costs compared with the previous year. UPM's new pulp mill is expected to drive pulp deliveries. The company also expects sales growth for labelling materials, speciality papers and plywood. Deliveries of printing and writing paper will fall, UPM believes.

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UPM results

million €	October - December		January - December	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Key figures				
Sales	2,632	2,531	10,339	10,460
Comparable EBITDA	436	465	1,734	1,573
Operating result	-105	211	604	608
Net result	-95	161	463	394
Business area review				
UPM Fibres				
Sales	1,001	781	3,728	3,044
Comparable EBITDA	191	109	844	407
Operating result	22	25	419	116
Pulp deliveries, 1,000 t	1,449	1,153	4,945	4,139
UPM Energy				
Sales	161	192	627	628
Comparable EBITDA	59	45	188	189
Operating result	57	40	181	182
Electricity deliveries, GWh	3,032	3,480	11,328	12,059
UPM Raflatac				
Sales	382	367	1,562	1,485
Comparable EBITDA	32	36	177	146
Operating result	-16	26	88	81
UPM Specialty Papers				
Sales	368	374	1,467	1,485
Comparable EBITDA	38	71	208	172
Operating result	21	53	132	98
Paper deliveries, 1,000 t	368	370	1,429	1,407
UPM Communicaton Papers				
Sales	688	799	2,953	3,598
Comparable EBITDA	126	218	344	544
Operating result	106	185	190	174
Paper deliveries, 1,000 t	757	856	3,263	3,528
UPM Plywood				
Sales	109	91	430	422
Comparable EBITDA	13	13	65	77
Operating result	6	8	42	50
Plywood deliveries, 1,000 m^3	120	97	482	429
UPM Other Operations				
Sales	157	192	623	802
Operating result	-316	-100	-434	-101

Source: UPM

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SCA post higher sales and profits in 2024, pulp business improves on higher prices and deliveries

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Swedish forest products company SCA was able to continue its positive development in 2024 with a solid balance sheet for the fourth quarter and, ultimately, posted a strong result for the full year. Sales increased by 12 per cent to SEK20.23bn. Ebitda and operating profit were up by approximately 5 per cent and 4 per cent on the previous year, at SEK7.14bn and SEK5.03bn respectively. After deducting financial items and income taxes, SCA generated a net profit of SEK3.64bn, approximately SEK14m higher than in the previous year. In its 2024 annual report, SCA highlights the strong Ebitda margin of over 35 per cent that the company was able to achieve despite the difficult market environment. The net margin was 18 per cent.

SCA increased output and deliveries in 2024, driven by the new containerboard machine in Obbola and the CTMP line in Ortviken. Most products were sold at higher prices than in the previous year, but the company also benefited from positive exchange rate developments. On the other hand, higher raw material costs and higher expenses for maintenance shutdowns had a negative impact on earnings. However, SCA was able to counteract the cost increase in the global market thanks to its own wood raw materials and energy. “SCA’s competitive advantage lies in the combination of a well-invested and thereby competitive industrial business and a high rate of self-sufficiency rate in strategically important areas such as wood raw materials, energy and logistics,” the company explained.

The Forest division benefited from higher sales prices for roundwood and pulpwood and the Wood division registered an increase in sawn timber and wood products prices. The two divisions increased their sales by 14 per cent and 7 percents over the previous year. In the wood products business, SCA also managed to increase its operating profit and almost double it compared to the previous year.

Higher sales prices and additional deliveries also led to better results in the company‘s Pulp segment. Sales in the pulp division were 17 per cent higher than in the previous year and operating profit rose by 78 per cent compared to 2023 despite additional expenses for wood raw materials and maintenance measures.

The Containerboard business was less profitable than in 2023 despite higher sales volumes and higher sales prices. Sales increased by 10 per cent, but higher raw material costs had a negative effect on profits causing Ebitda to fall by 23 per cent year-on-year. Operating profit in the Containerboard segment was 71 per cent below the previous year’s figure.

SCA also recorded declines in Ebitda and operating profit in its Renewable Energy business. On the one hand, higher prices for bioenergy gene-rated higher sales, on the other, higher raw material prices and lower prices for tall oil had a negative impact on profits.

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SCA reported low electricity prices in Sweden in the fourth quarter. In addition, lower blending requirements in Sweden and increased imports from China created an imbalance in the renewable fuels market, resulting in lower market prices for tall oil and liquid biofuels in the fourth quarter.

SCA results

million SEK	October - December		January - December	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Key figures				
Sales	5,135	4,384	20,232	18,081
EBITDA	1,649	1,635	7,143	6,807
Operating result	1,113	1,119	5,027	4,857
Net result	820	833	3,639	3,625
Business area review				
Forest				
Sales	2,323	1,994	8,830	7,748
EBITDA	901	1,189	3,531	3,511
Operating result	837	1,129	3,282	3,279
Wood				
Sales	1,416	1,264	5,539	5,158
EBITDA	234	65	927	550
Operating result	161	1	642	328
Deliveries, 1,000 m^3	504	506	1,956	1,948
Pulp				
Sales	2,052	1,616	8,058	6,893
EBITDA	286	67	1,680	1,213
Operating result	111	-97	997	559
Deliveries, 1,000 t	257	232	988	945
Containerboard				
Sales	1,618	1,460	6,434	5,850
EBITDA	242	292	932	1,212
Operating result	46	92	142	482
Deliveries kraftliner, 1,000 t	209	223	893	839
Renewable Energy				
Sales	531	552	2,050	1,879
EBITDA	90	172	451	690
Operating result	71	153	377	613
Electricity own wind power, GWh	75	30	183	149

Source: SCA

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Sappi‘s Q1 results improved beyond expectations

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Results for the first quarter (October-December) of the 2024/2025 financial year at Sappi were better than the company had expected. Thanks to cost reductions, increased operational efficiency, higher dissolving pulp prices higher sales volumes in the Pulp, Packaging and Speciality Papers divisions, higher profits were generated across all divisions, the company reports, despite rather unfavourable macroeconomic conditions, weaker consumer spending and overcapacity in paper markets.

Sappi increased its comparable Ebitda to $203m (2023: $130m). At $121m operating profit returned to the black (-93m), and the company posted a net profit of $70m (-126m). Quarterly sales increased to $1.36bn ($1.27bn).

Volume growth was achieved in the Pulp, Packaging and Specialties and Forestry Business segments, while deliveries of graphic paper declined slightly.

Less demand for graphic papers is in line with the long-term structural decline in the market, which can be seen again after the volatile development of the market in the past years of crisis, Sappi explains. At Sappi, this development meant around 3 per cent less sales of graphic papers in the quarter, although average prices for the quarter remained almost unchanged (+1 per cent). However, by reducing costs and operating more efficiently, Sappi was able to increase the division’s profits.

Sappi’s Pulp Business Area reported a strong improvement in results, driven by good demand for dissolving pulp (DP). The manufacturers’ capacity utilisation was high and the price for hardwood DP trended upwards during the quarter.

The profit trend in the Packaging and Speciality Paper divisions was also positive compared to the previous year, explains Sappi, albeit from a comparatively low base. While the division saw sales volumes rising by 14 per cent in North America, there was less evidence of a market recovery in Europe due to weak consumer spending and overcapacity.

Despite a relatively stable market outlook and in view of the negative impact of planned technical shutdowns and the planned rebuild of PM 2 at the US Somerset mill from woodfree coated paper to SBS board, Sappi expects a lower comparable Ebitda in the second quarter of its financial year than in the first. After an approximately 70-day rebuild in the current quarter the PM is scheduled for commissioning in April this year.

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Sappi results

million $	October - December 2024	2023
Key figures		
Sales	1,363	1,272
EBITDA*	203	130
Operating result	121	-93
Net result	70	-126
Business area review		
Europe		
Sales	557	575
EBITDA *	37	28
Operating result	12	-174
Deliveries, 1,000 tonnes	465	494
North America		
Sales	466	398
EBITDA*	71	76
Operating result	46	23
Deliveries, 1,000 tonnes	371	320
South Africa		
Sales Pulp and Paper	341	307
Sales Forestry	19	14
EBITDA*	93	55
Operating result	69	57
Deliveries Pulp + Paper, 1,000 tonnes	371	357
Deliveries Forestry, 1,000 tonnes	294	235
Deliveries (1,000 t)		
Pulp	346	335
Packaging + specialties	325	285
Graphic papers	536	551
Forestry	294	235

* excluding special items

Source: Sappi

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Utipulp registers decline in consumption in December, but companies consume more market pulp in 2024

EUWID + 12 February 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 7/2025

European converters consumed a total of 727,000 tof market pulp in December 2024, reports Utipulp, the group of European market pulp users. This means pulp consumption was 6 per cent lower than in the corresponding prior-year month and 14 per cent below the figure recorded in November. The consumption of bleached softwood kraft pulp dropped by 16 per cent compared to the previous month and was 6 per cent lower than in December 2023, while the decrease in the consumption of bleached hardwood kraft pulp amounted to 14 per cent compared to the previous month and 5 per cent compared to December 2023.

Consumption of unbleached sulphite and kraft pulp by market pulp users in December was unchanged from November at some 7,000 t, but was 20 per cent down compared to the same period last year. At 27,000 t consumption of bleached softwood sulphite market pulp was 5 per cent down on November and 15 per cent down on December 2023. In December 2024, consumption of bleached hardwood sulphite market pulp stood at 12,000 t, 11 per cent higher than in November and 28 per higher than in December 2023.

In 2024, Utipulp's member companies consumed about 9.9 million t of market pulp, i. e. around 6 per cent more than in the previous year. At 6.36 million t, the consumption of bleached hardwood kraft pulp rose by 10 per cent compared to the previous year, while the consumption of bleached softwood kraft pulp remained almost unchanged at around 3.0 million t.

Stocks held by European market pulp users increased slightly in December to 694,000 t, up 5 per cent from the previous month. Inventories of bleached hardwood kraft pulp were 7 per cent higher than a month earlier. Utipulp recorded 4 per cent growth compared to November for bleached softwood kraft pulp.

However, compared to the corresponding prior-year month, converters had almost 8 per cent less market pulp in their stocks in December 2024. While inventories of bleached softwood kraft pulp were 2 per cent higher in December than in the corresponding month of the preceding year, user inventories of bleached hardwood pulp were 13 per cent lower than in December 2023.

In December, consumers' market pulp inventories amounted to 25 days of production, which was one day more than in the preceding month. According to Utipulp, user inventories still lasted for 29 days of production in the corresponding month of 2023.

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Inventories and consumption of pulp consumers in Europe

December 2024

tonnes		UNBLEACHED	BLEACHED / SEMI-BLEACHED					
		Sulphite & Kraft	Softwood sulphite	Hardwood sulphite	Softwood kraft	Hardwood kraft	Total	Previous year
Inventories								
November	2024	9,575	24,107	9,195	207,119	412,204	662,200	740,197
December	2024	9,126	28,302	8,118	221,263	427,452	694,261	750,966
Consumption								
November	2024	7,055	28,294	10,816	258,915	542,353	847,433	827,045
December	2024	7,055	26,836	12,046	216,627	464,305	726,869	770,878

NB: Total and previous year total do not include DIP and CTMP, figures are constantly revised.
Each national Association has to provide an estimation for 100% of the national volumes out of their samples (from 80% to 100% depending on the countries).

Source: UTIPULP

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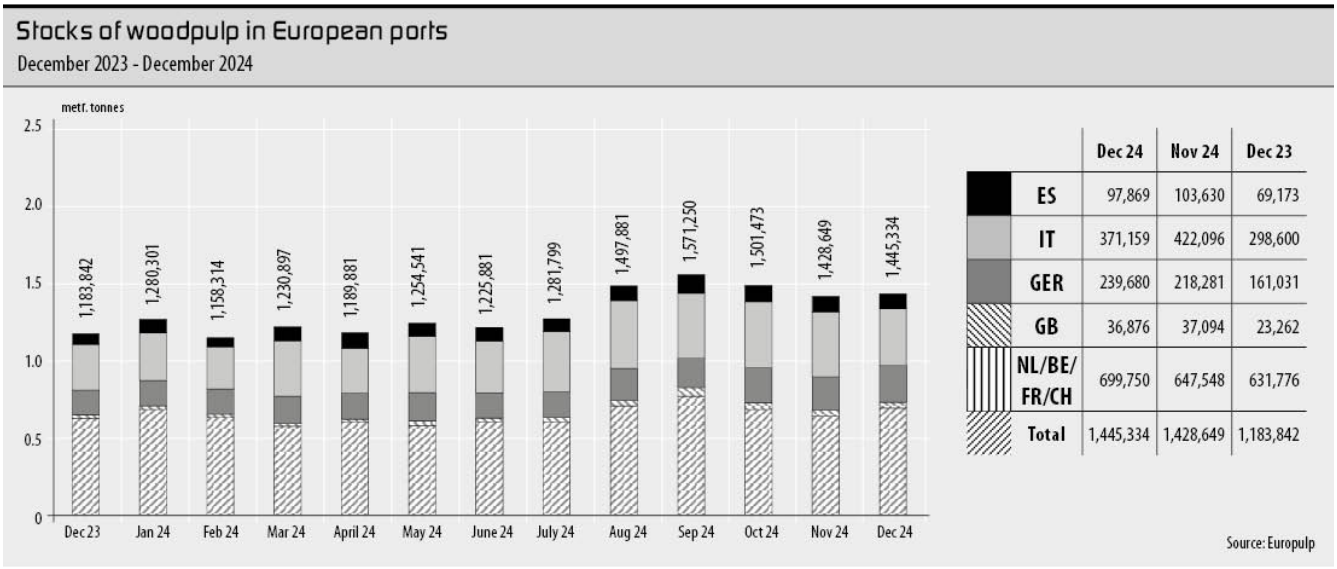
Slight rise in stocks of woodpulp in European ports at the end of 2024

EUWID + 12 February 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 7/2025

In December, Europe's large ports recorded wood pulp inventories of 1.45 million t, which was around 1 per cent more than a month earlier. German port stocks increased by 10 per cent, while stocks in France, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands rose by around 8 per cent compared to November 2024. In contrast, Italy and Spain recorded a decline in volume of 12 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively.

Compared to the corresponding prior-year month, however, the volume of wood pulp stored at European port warehouses was substantially higher in December 2024. Germany recorded a 48 per cent increase to almost 240,000 t, and Spain registered a 41 per cent increase to just under 98,000 t. Totalling 371,000 t, wood pulp stocks at Italian ports climbed by around 24 per cent, and the ports of France, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands had a total of 700,000 t of pulp in their warehouses, which was around 11 per cent more than in December of the previous year.

Due to traditionally lower stocked quantities, the increase from December 2023 was particularly pronounced in the UK, where Europulp recorded 59 per cent growth to just under 37,000 t.



	Dec 24	Nov 24	Dec 23
ES	97,869	103,630	69,173
IT	371,159	422,096	298,600
GER	239,680	218,281	161,031
GB	36,876	37,094	23,262
NL/BE/FR/CH	699,750	647,548	631,776
Total	1,445,334	1,428,649	1,183,842

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Wepa to produce fibreboard at German Kriebstein mill

EUWID + 12 February 2025 | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 7/2025

Sanitary paper producer **Wepa** plans to start producing fibreboard at its mill in Kriebstein, Germany in the first half of 2025, according to a report in the local community newspaper. A WetLap system to bale processed fibre from recovered paper and a closed-loop water recycling plant to reduce fresh-water consumption will be installed in the new building currently under construction. The building reportedly also offers interim storage space for fibre bales to meet production needs for two days. Wepa produces handkerchiefs and cosmetic tissues and employs 265 people at the Kriebstein mill.

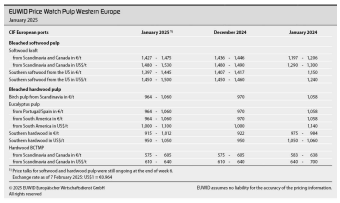
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Market pulp suppliers pushing for quick price increases at the start of the year

Customers want to leverage negotiating position in a slow market

EUWID + 12 February 2025 | ~ 4 min | Published in issue 7/2025



EUWID Price Watch Pulp Western Europe
January 2025

CIF European ports	January 2025 [1]	December 2024	January 2024
Bleached softwood pulp			
Softwood kraft			
from Scandinavia and Canada in €/t	1,427 – 1,475	1,436 – 1,446	1,197 – 1,236
from Scandinavia and Canada in US$/t	1,483 – 1,530	1,480 – 1,490	1,290 – 1,330
Southern softwood from the US in €/t	1,397 – 1,445	1,467 – 1,477	– 1,150
Southern softwood from the US in US$/t	1,450 – 1,500	1,493 – 1,503	– 1,240
Bleached hardwood pulp			
Birch pulp from Scandinavia in €/t	964 – 1,060	970	1,058
Eucalyptus pulp			
from Portugal/Spain in €/t	964 – 1,060	970	1,058
from South America in €/t	964 – 1,060	970	1,058
from South America in US$/t	1,000 – 1,100	1,005	1,140
Southern hardwood in €/t	915 – 1,012	922	875 – 984
Southern hardwood in US$/t	950 – 1,050	950	1,010 – 1,060
Hardwood BCTMP			
from Scandinavia and Canada in €/t	575 – 685	575 – 685	583 – 638
from Scandinavia and Canada in US$/t	610 – 640	610 – 640	640 – 700

[1] Price talks for softwood and hardwood pulp were still ongoing at the end of week 6.
Exchange rate as of 7 February 2025: US$/€ = 0.964

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At the beginning of the year, it is not yet entirely clear where prices are heading on the European pulp market. Producers of both hardwood and softwood pulp aimed to introduce a price hike for January. In addition, a few producers have also announced another price mark-up for February. The majority of players therefore expect rising pulp prices on the European market. In the first week of February, negotiations were still ongoing to determine the size – and sometimes the timing – of the price increases.

Producers of bleached eucalyptus kraft pulp (BEK) are adamant that their prices must rise and will rise. Several producers told EUWID they had already added the full amount of $100/t to the list price and are now charging list prices of $1,100/t. A few other producers said they had not yet concluded talks with certain customers, so were less willing to share information. On the whole, however, it appears that these customers will also be unable to avoid a considerable price mark-up on the market in Europe. One producer stressed this should ideally be the full $100/t because that would be the only way to offset the inflation in discounts that had been granted to customers in the contracts for 2025 and bring net prices back to a normal level.

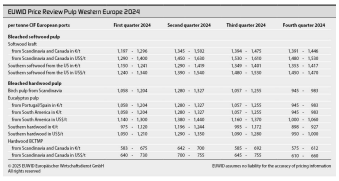
The price talks for northern bleached softwood kraft (NBSK) pulp were not quite as intense at the end of January and in early February, especially since various producers had taken differing positions. Ultimately, some prices here remained unchanged at the previous month's level while others were lifted by around $50/t to reach $1,530/t.

On the European markets for both BEK and NBSK pulp, some producers have underscored their pricing positions and are targeting another mark-up for February, usually of $60/t. They believe such a move is supported by the developments in other globally important pulp markets. Here, the manufacturers are looking primarily to China. According to pulp producers, the demand situation in China has improved as of lately, and coupled with lower inventory levels, this has been enough to raise net prices for both softwood and hardwood pulp by $20-30/t over the past two to three months.

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Market pulp manufacturers also expect demand in China to pick up further with the end of the Lunar New Year festivities from mid-February and believe that further increases can be realised in the market. As a result, and thanks to more favourable logistics, China would again be significantly more attractive than Europe in terms of price and manufacturers could gradually withdraw volumes from Europe, they say.



EUWID Price Review Pulp Western Europe 2024

per tonne CIF European ports	First quarter 2024	Second quarter 2024	Third quarter 2024	Fourth quarter 2024
Bleached softwood pulp				
Softwood kraft:				
- from Scandinavia and Canada in €/t	1,197 - 1,296	1,345 - 1,532	1,366 - 1,475	1,391 - 1,446
- from Scandinavia and Canada in US$/t	1,290 - 1,406	1,450 - 1,656	1,530 - 1,650	1,480 - 1,538
Southern softwood from the US in €/t	1,150 - 1,241	1,290 - 1,419	1,349 - 1,401	1,355 - 1,417
Southern softwood from the US in US$/t	1,240 - 1,340	1,390 - 1,540	1,480 - 1,550	1,450 - 1,478
Bleached hardwood pulp				
Kraft pulp from Scandinavia	1,058 - 1,204	1,280 - 1,327	1,057 - 1,255	945 - 983
Eucalyptus pulp:				
- from Portugal/Spain in €/t	1,058 - 1,204	1,280 - 1,327	1,057 - 1,255	945 - 983
- from South America in €/t	1,050 - 1,204	1,280 - 1,327	1,057 - 1,255	945 - 983
- from South America in US$/t	1,140 - 1,300	1,380 - 1,440	1,140 - 1,370	1,080 - 1,068
Southern hardwood in €/t	975 - 1,120	1,196 - 1,244	995 - 1,172	886 - 927
Southern hardwood in US$/t	1,055 - 1,270	1,290 - 1,350	1,090 - 1,290	990 - 1,000
Hardwood BCTMP				
- from Scandinavia and Canada in €/t	583 - 675	642 - 700	585 - 692	575 - 612
- from Scandinavia and Canada in US$/t	640 - 736	700 - 755	645 - 755	630 - 668

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The pulp industry's customers, on the other hand, often take an opposing position. They point out that the current price hikes for BEK and NBSK pulp in Europe are not market-driven but are merely intended to correct net pulp prices in response to the growing number of discounts agreed in the contract business for 2025. In the case of BEK pulp, the industry is not even able to cite expensive fibre costs or limited availability as arguments for their prices demands, one pulp buyer stressed.

Several customers said they were therefore all the more surprised by how firmly pulp producers were standing their ground in the negotiations. One tissue paper producer said to be annoyed by the approach taken by pulp producers and therefore did not call off much pulp in January, but was unable to find a way around the price hike with business going forward. Another tissue producer reported having good pulp inventories for the next month or two and said the company would purchase volumes from the spot market, if necessary.

Some other paper producers are also unwilling to give up their negotiating positions easily. One fine paper producer explained that because demand for new paper has been mostly modest, the need for pulp has been limited in recent weeks and paper mills still have fairly large pulp stocks.

Prices on the spot market did not move much in January. EUWID respondents reported that a small price increase of $20-30/t had to be paid as of the second half of the month. Despite this slight upward trend, which is expected to become consolidated in February, customers reportedly still managed to purchase volumes at unchanged prices.

Supply is not as abundant as it was a few months ago, which is now mainly being felt in some secondary markets, yet the available volumes are still more than sufficient, a pulp trader told EUWID. In particular, a few manufacturers are said to still have considerable stocks of eucalyptus pulp and are using the opportunity on the spot market to make room for incoming deliveries, explained a pulp buyer.

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PPPC posts record monthly deliveries in December, annual market pulp deliveries slightly below 2023

EUWID + 12 February 2025 | ~ 2 min | Published in issue 7/2025

At 5.14 million t in December 2024, global market pulp deliveries set a new monthly record, according to the Pulp and Paper Products Council (PPPC) World-20 Chemical Market Pulp Statistics report. Producers delivered around 1 per cent more market pulp than in December 2023 and not less than 11 per cent more than in November. The capacity utilisation rate stood at 94 per cent in December, up from 88 per cent in November but down from 96 per cent in December 2023.

Overall, producers delivered about 54.68 million t of market pulp last year. In terms of volume, this was only slightly less than in 2023, but, due to higher capacities, utilisation was lower in 2024, standing at 86 per cent compared to 89 per cent in 2023.

A total of 1.95 million t of market pulp were delivered to China in December, 7 per cent more than in the preceding month but still almost 1 per cent less than in the corresponding prior-year month. At 18.52 million t, total deliveries to China were 10 per cent lower than a year earlier.

At 676,000 t, market pulp deliveries to the North American market were almost as high in December 2024 as in the same month 2023, but 10 per cent higher than in November. In 2024 as a whole, producers sold 7.71 million t and therefore almost 4 per cent more market pulp to North America than in the previous year.

The highest growth was recorded in the European market. At 1.19 million t, the sales volume registered in December 2024 was nearly 7 per cent higher than a month earlier and 10 per cent higher than in December of the previous year. In 2024 as a whole, producers sold just under 14 million t of market pulp in Europe, almost 11 per cent more than in the preceding year.

Producer stocks of bleached softwood pulp amounted to 42 days at the end of December. This was a day less than in November but two days more than in December of 2023. As far as bleached hardwood pulp is concerned, inventories amounted to 48 days at the end of December, four days less than in November but 11 days more than in the corresponding prior-year month.

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World market pulp statistics
December 2024

1,000 t	Dec. 2024	Nov. 2024	Dec. 2023
Shipments	**5,140**	**4,647**	**5,087**
Bleached Softwood	1,946	1,812	1,927
Bleached Hardwood	3,034	2,692	3,000
Unbleached kraft pulp (UKP)	158	140	157
Sulphite	2	2	3
Producer inventories (Days of supply at month-end)	**46**	**48**	**38**
Bleached Softwood	42	43	40
Bleached Hardwood	48	52	37

Compiled data based on a sample of 20 countries (17 current producers and 3 past producers included in the historical data) which together account for 82 per cent of world chemical market pulp capacity.

Source: Pulp and Paper Products Council

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Russian paper mills adapting to new realities and avoiding chaos

Flexibility and investments safeguard sites / Trade has shifted to the East

EUWID + 11 February 2025 Alexander Ungemach | ~ 9 min | Published in issue 7/2025



The Russian paper industry is finding partners in China to help it grow.

In retrospect, 2024 was another year of growth for Russia's pulp and paper industry. Many sources observing events surrounding Western sanctions imposed on Russia had anticipated chaos and the virtual demise of more than local paper companies. After all, Europe has traditionally been a key sales market for pulp, newsprint and corrugated case material made out of primary fibre. What's more, European companies were important suppliers of paper and board, chemicals and technical equipment sought-after in Russia. However, Russian companies have been relatively quick to compensate for the volatility caused by the sanctions. They have redeveloped and realigned sales markets and supplier structures. This transformation has led to a shift towards the East. In light of the annual growth and investment activity by Russian companies, critics are raising questions about whether the West has exhausted all sanction options or if the West's sanctions against the West have achieved nothing.

Russia's pulp and paper industry found itself compelled to undergo a profound transformation in the wake of Western sanctions, which are primarily enforced by the EU and USA. Along with embracing sustainability issues where Russia was lagging behind, such as the green economy and circular economy, the country experienced acute pressure to adapt as it faced the challenge of developing new sales markets and supplier industries and replacing imports and services from the West in areas including chemicals and plant engineering. Russian experts confirmed to EUWID that the lack of domestic competition meant that Russian pulp and paper companies had always relied on European experts. As a result, businesses and the Russian State were and are facing existential pressure to transform as quickly as possible. Experts told EUWID that market players were proving inventive and resilient in the process.

2024 expected to be another year of growth

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At least a glance at industry production statistics suggests that the transformation has been successfully completed. Additionally, experts pointed out that consumption was growing more quickly than GDP on the domestic market. Businesses are installing new capacity, with volumes of corrugated case material made out of pulp and recovered fibre increasing in particular. Moreover, the Russian domestic market for pulp is growing on the back of mounting demand in the tissue sector.

Official statistics show that Russian GDP increased by 4 per cent in 2024, with a 2 to 2.5 per cent improvement forecast for 2025. According to Rosstat, the first 11 months of 2024 ended with pulp production of 7.79 million t, a 0.2 per cent improvement compared with the prior-year period. Paper and cartonboard output climbed by 5.7 per cent compared with the same stretch in 2023 to land at 9.71 million t between January and November. Russian manufacturing of corrugated board and cartonboard packaging also jumped by 5.7 per cent to 8.24 billion m². Insiders expect that all 12 months of 2024 might have produced a 10 per cent increase in output. The statistics forecast that growth will continue at a pace of 8 per cent in 2025.

Observers painted a different picture of the graphic paper market. Like the Western European markets, Russia is experiencing a decline in demand. It is only for office paper in Russia and the CIS region that market players see a trend towards a more stable demand.

Over the past decade, the Russian forestry, pulp and paper industry has increased its total production by more than 20 per cent, according to experts.

Russia has found new partners

Russia's pulp and paper mills have refocused their operations. Many changes were purely structural, such as the switch from newsprint to corrugated case material. Others have been the result of new realities. The introduction of new paper grades, such as graphic paper and cartonboard, has helped to improve capacity utilisation, while at the same time replacing former imports.

Several Russian experts believe that this process is not yet complete and that it is also fraught with risks. Making adequate profits has been a major problem for the Russian paper industry. Companies have sought new markets, especially in the East, in order to minimise the loss of revenue. This sometimes meant exporting at unprofitable prices.

Global markets were highly competitive, including the pulp, newsprint and corrugated case material businesses in China and India. Making a profit in these markets proved to be challenging.

What's more, the shift to Eastern markets has been a major effort for companies. The experts highlighted the difficulties involved in finding new customers, as well as the logistical challenges involved in setting up distribution channels.

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Observers describe the development of supplier structures for chemicals and technical equipment as an existential challenge. Suppliers now mainly come from South-East Asia, taking over some of the business previously supplied by companies in EU member states.

New trade flows have been established here, too, though. It is not unusual for business with Russia to be conducted via third countries that have not joined the West in imposing sanctions. Experts and a variety of media outlets repeatedly and consistently reported that Turkey and countries in the Middle East, Central Asia and South-East Asia were among them. These countries serve as intermediaries for all kinds of business, functioning as a loophole for Western sanctions.

In light of this situation, Russian experts feel that pulp and paper mills have successfully diversified their portfolios and embarked on a lasting transformation. Investment and imported technology are paving the way for expansion in the growing packaging segment, sources said, adding that the increasing focus on products made from recycled fibre was notable. This is in line with the country's decision to introduce extended producer responsibility for packaging. Alternative fibres are also a growing topic of discussion.

APPM planning to invest in new PM and pulp

Pulp and Paper Mill Arkhangelsk (APPM) is planning to undertake three major projects and continues to take steps to improve its environmental efficiency and vertical integration. Firstly, the company is planning to build a machine to make recycled corrugated case material in the Moscow region. The new machine will allow paper converters owned by APPM to receive products made in-house and meet extended producer responsibility requirements.

The second project relates to fluff pulp production in Arkhangelsk. APPM was reportedly adding another grade to its pulp portfolio that could be used in hygiene paper production, including by Arkhbum Tissue.

The third project involves the recommissioning of an idled PM in Novodvinsk. The machine is to have a capacity of around 80,000 tpy of corrugated case material made out of primary fibre.

Moreover, APPM reported that Arkhbum Tissue Group is growing by increasing its vertical integration. New tissue machines at the Arkhbum Tissue’s Kaluga site contribute to a higher degree of integration. Arkhbum Tissue has boosted tissue capacity at the Kaluga site by 40,000 t to roughly 140,000 t in 2024, using more bleached sulphate pulp made by APPM. A higher degree of integration is also to be expected for corrugated case material, thanks to two corrugators installed at the Voronesh-2 site.

Volga starting up another paper machine

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As part of an investment project, JSC Volga commissioned its upgraded PM 6 with a capacity of 140,000 tpy of corrugated case material. The first trial runs took place at the end of November 2024. The comprehensive modernisation project, which concentrated on improving automation and the machine's energy efficiency, allowed the machine to make lightweight testliner in 60-120 g/m², which was sought-after on the global market, especially in e-commerce packaging.

Volga mentioned having invested a significant sum in the project, which involved converting the PM, commissioning a recovered paper line and adding a gas turbine. The investment project took place with support from the region of Nizhniy Novgorod, including a preferential loan of RUB1.5bn from the Federal Industrial Fund.

Ilim continuing to shift focus to the East

The Ilim Group has strengthened its presence in China and intends to boost its sales there, too. The group recently inked a three-year agreement with the administration of Guangdong Province. This deal aims to help sell Ilim products in the region and enable the group to use official infrastructure.

Ilim notes that two of the group's three mills are located in Siberia, near the border with China, which explains its involvement in this region. What's more, Ilim served customers in the South-East Asian countries of Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia, among others. The company ships products to India and other countries via the port of St. Petersburg and Turkey.

Preliminary figures show that Ilim, an integrated pulp, corrugated case material and graphic paper manufacturer, ended 2024 with record output of 4 million t. The company increased its exports, particularly to China, which received 2.4 million tonnes of product, 300,000 tonnes more than in 2023.

Ilim commissioned a new integrated production machine in Ust-Ilimsk, which has a designed capacity of 600,000 tpy of kraftliner and involved a total investment of US$1.6bn. Additional investment projects valued at over RUB16bn were in the pipeline, including the modernisation of a PM in Bratsk with a design capacity of 300,00 tpy of kraftliner.

Kondopoga broadening its footprint

Kondopoga Pulp and Paper Mill, which is part of Karelia Pulp, commissioned a recovered paper line at the start of 2025. This work was part of an investment project aiming to increase capacity and expand its portfolio of products.

With a budget of RUB700m and financial support from the Republic of Karelia, the project is the second part of an investment package that began in 2023 with a transport and packaging line. The newsprint specialist would now process around 70,000 tpy of recovered fibre that would serve as feedstock for the production of corrugated case material.

Straw pulp project in Siberia

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A straw pulp project is underway in Krasnoyarsk. To this end, a company will be established to promote the production of straw-based fibre as a biodegradable raw material in Achinsk. This fibre is to be used in the production of single-use tableware and packaging. The project is backed by the Agency for Cooperation for the Development of the Siberian region of Yenissey and the merchant TK Prostory Sibiri.

A statement from the agency indicates that the project was open to interested stakeholders. The company plans to invest RUB1bn or roughly €10m in the project, which will create 100 jobs and is set to take place from 2026 to 2028.

“On average, we can get about three to four tonnes of straw from each hectare of wheat, oats or rape. Our plant will be able to process 72,000 tpy of straw. Based on this, we will cultivate 24,000 ha of land in the Krasnoyarsk region as part of our efforts,” said Prostory Sibiri, a grain, legume and oilseed trader.

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UPM Kymi pulp mill resumes production

EUWID + 11 February 2025 Igor Dugandzic | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 7/2025



Finnish forest products company UPM has resumed production at the UPM Kymi pulp mill in Kouvola after a shutdown lasting several days. Pulp production had to be interrupted on 3 February due to a strike in the chemical industry resulting in a lack of chemicals. Production remained idle for almost one week before supply of chemicals was restored and pulp production could resume last weekend.

The Kymi pulp mill operates two fibre lines with a total production capacity of 870,000 tpy of market pulp, producing bleached softwood kraft and birch pulp.

The pulp mill was the victim of a strike in the ongoing collective agreement dispute between the Finnish Industrial Union and the companies in the chemical industry. The strike primarily targeted the nearby Kemira Chemicals plant in Kouvola. Kemira workers had downed their tools between 3 and 8 February, interrupting supply of chemicals to the Kymi pulp mill.

The Industrial Union has called for further strikes in the chemical industry starting on 10 February. This time, however, the strike was not affecting the Kemira chemicals plant in Kouvola and thus would not impact pulp production at the Kymi mill, a spokeswoman for UPM Pulp said. Other UPM Pulp production plants in Finland were not affected by the strikes in the chemical industry, the company spokeswoman explained.

Paper production at the affiliated Kymi paper mill was also unaffected and continued without interruption, UPM confirmed.

The Kymi paper mill runs two paper machines with a total production capacity of 715,000 tpy of woodfree coated and uncoated paper. Paper produced at Kymi is used for printing books, magazines, catalogues, advertising, envelopes as well as office and label papers.

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RCCM machine at Eren Paper to start up in late 2025

EUWID + 10 February 2025 Frauke Schmidt | ~ 1 min | Published in issue 7/2025

The new recycled containerboard machine at Eren Paper's Shotton mill in Wales is targeted to complete the project at the end of 2025 and ramp up in 2026.



Dr Sabri Çimen, CEO and Member of the Board, Eren Paper, at the 110th Conference of the Sheet Plant Association (SPA) in Daventry, Britain

The machine will transform the British market for both recycled containerboard and recovered fibre, Dr Sabri Çimen, CEO and Member of the Board of Eren Paper announced at the 110th Conference of the Sheet Plant Association (SPA) in Daventry, Britain, at the start of February 2025.

The new containerboard machine will produce up to 750,000 tpy of recycled containerboard in the 70 to 100 gsm range, converting 830,000 t of recovered paper. With a design speed of 2,000 m/min and a wire width of 10.9 m, it will be the largest and fastest machine of its kind in the UK and one of the largest in Europe.

When the machine reaches capacity, the UK will become a net exporter of corrugated case material, while it currently is a net importer (2023: over 500,000 t). Furthermore, a lot more recovered fibre will be converted domestically: In 2023, the UK exported roughly 4 million t of the collected 6.4 million t of RCP.

At the same time, Eren will also start up a new tissue plant with a capacity of 67,000 tpy at the Shotton site. The start-up was scheduled to take simultaneously with the containerboard machine. According to the planning permission, Eren plans to install three tissue machines with a total capacity of 210,000 tpy in later stages of the development.

This article was corrected on 12 February 2025. In the earlier version, we wrote that the machine start-up would take place in early 2026. We apologise for the error.

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Metsä Group appoints Jussi Vanhanen as new CEO

06 February 2025 | ~ 1 minPublished in issue 7/2025

Jussi Vanhanen has been appointed the new CEO of Metsäliitto Cooperative and President and CEO of Metsä Group.



Jussi Vanhanen, new CEO and President of Metsä Group

He will take up his new position on 1 July 2025, when Metsä Group's current President and CEO, Ilkka Hämälä, will take up special duties within the company. Mr Hämälä will continue in this role until 23 October 2025, when he will retire.

Mr Vanhanen has been a member of Metsäliitto Cooperative's Board of Directors since 2022 and is already familiar with the key aspects of the company.

Jussi Vanhanen comments: "I am grateful for this vote of confidence. Metsä Group is a great company with strong operating principles, a clear direction and committed and competent employees. I'm looking forward to working closely with all employees to further develop the company and strengthen its position in the global markets."

Jussi Linnaranta, Chairman of the Board of Metsäliitto Cooperative, add: "Ilkka Hämälä has had a long and successful career in the company and has played a key role in the growth and development of Metsä Group. During his time as President and CEO, significant development investments have been made, the largest being the construction of the Kemi bio-products mill. Resource efficiency and the use of by-products, as well as the introduction of the principles of regenerative forestry and land use, are signs of responsible business and solutions for the bio- and circular economy."

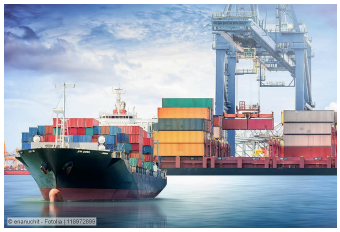
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EU's Waste Shipment Regulation could disrupt recovered paper exports from 2027

Deadline for non OECD countries to notify the EU on 21 February

EUWID + 06 February 2025 Frauke Schmidt | ~ 5 min | Published in issue 7/2025



RCP exports outside the EU might be severely restricted from May 2027

From May 2027, the EU's revised Waste Shipment Regulation will restrict exports of recovered paper and other secondary raw materials to non-OECD countries unless they can demonstrate compliance with certain environmental criteria. Non-OECD nations must notify the European Commission of their wish to import non-hazardous waste from the EU. In addition to their declaring their intent and ability to process such wastes sustainably, applicants must specify the waste and waste mixtures they wish to receive. Notifications must be submitted by 21 February 2025. However, as of 5 February, no requests had been received. With key buyers like India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand at risk of exclusion from the future list of countries authorised to receive exports of EU waste, industry experts warn of significant market disruption and increased bureaucracy.

The EU's new Waste Shipment Regulation (WSR, regulation 2024/1157) may reduce the amount of recovered paper exported from the EU to countries outside the OECD from May 2027. The aim of the WSR is to prevent illegal shipments of waste through better enforcement and to improve the traceability of shipments of non-hazardous ("green-listed") waste. Materials recognised as end-of-waste are not subject to the WSR.

Under the revised WSR, shipments to OECD countries will be possible, but monitored. Shipments of Green-listed waste to non-OECD countries will be banned from 21 May 2027, unless the destination countries are have been included in the list of "authorised countries for shipment".

To be included on this list, non-OECD countries must notify the EU of their willingness and ability to receive recyclables like recovered paper and treat them in an environmentally sound manner, as specified in Annex VIII of the WSR. The necessary declarations and supporting evidence must be submitted by the competent national authorities prior to the 21 February 2025 deadline.

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The European Commission will then assess the application and draw up a list of non-OECD countries that will be allowed to receive exported EU RCP for recycling. A first list will be compiled by 21 November 2026, with the ban on exports to all other countries coming into force on 21 May 2027. The list will be updated every two years. This means that countries missing the application deadline will not be able to receive non-hazardous from the EU until at least two years after the initial ban goes into effect.

But simply applying to the Commission on time is not enough. All recycling facilities in non-OECD countries wishing to receive exported EU waste must be audited prior to export to demonstrate that they will treat the secondary raw materials in an environmentally sound manner. The requirements for this are listed in Annex X of the WSR. The audit requirements also apply to facilities in OECD countries, but these countries can be exempted from the audit requirements by concluding a bilateral agreement with the EU.

Is end-of-waste the answer?

As mentioned above, materials recognised as end-of-waste are not subject to the WSR. Such end-of-waste regulations are already in place in some EU countries and regions, including the EU's largest recovered paper exporters Italy (1.8 million t in 2023) as well as Spain, France, the German Länder of Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia and the Belgium region of Wallonia. The UK, Europe’s biggest recovered paper exporter, will also not be affected as it is no longer a member of the EU.

However, market experts told EUWID that there could still be some restrictions on RCP exports from these countries and regions, depending on the wording of the legislation.

The impact of the WSR on Europe's recovered paper markets could be huge, as five of the six largest buyers of EU RCP are the non-OECD countries India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand accounting for over 80 per cent of EU RCP exports. Turkey, which received 6 per cent of EU RCP shipments in 2023, is an OECD member, while Indonesia and Thailand are OECD candidate countries.

Criticism: "Bureaucratic nightmare"

As of 5 February, no non-OECD country had notified the EU, according to experts. This could mean that RCP exports from many EU countries and region to these important receiver countries will no longer be possible after 21 May 2027.

To speed things up, the European Recycling Industries Confederation (EuRIC) has been in contact with authorities and trade associations in the main non-OECD countries receiving RCP from the EU to ensure the continuation of recovered paper exports to these countries.

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In December and January, EuRIC focused on the major RCP import countries, talking not only to trade partners and associations, but also to embassies and chambers of commerce. EuRIC also organised a workshop with selected countries to inform them of the requirements of the WSR. "Close cooperation is essential in this matter," said Andreas Otto, Vice-President of ERPA, EuRIC's paper recycling branch.

At the same time, Mr Otto and other stakeholders are critical of the EU's approach. "Many of the affected countries had not even been aware of the 21 February 2025 deadline," Mr Otto told EUWID. Experts also warn that the costs for facilities in non-OECD countries to go through these processes is high. "It is a bureaucratic nightmare," Mr Otto said, echoing the sentiments of other experts.

Extension of the deadline?

The interruption to recovered paper exports to non-OECD countries may have a significant impact on recycling markets within the EU: In 2023, net exports of recovered paper from CEPI countries (EU 27 + UK, Switzerland and Norway) reached over 7 million t.

EuRIC has expressed concerns over the potential consequences of this interruption of exports and plans to request that the EU consider either extending the 21 February deadline by at least six months or applying it flexibly. Furthermore, EuRIC is calling upon the EU to postpone the application of the 2027 export ban and to engage with third countries to secure outlet markets for European RCP, thereby safeguarding the competitiveness of the EU's recycling industry.

However, market insiders saw a faint indication that there might be some improvement. In response to on-going criticism from both businesses and governments, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has acknowledged in January's "Competitiveness Compass" that there is a need to reduce red tape in the EU. In the long-term, this could lead to a simplification of the Waste Shipment Regulation, market experts speculate.

This article was updated on 10 February 2025.

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International Paper concludes takeover of DS Smith

05 February 2025 | ~ 1 minPublished in issue 7/2025



International Paper (IP) has finalised the takeover of British paper and packaging group DS Smith on 31 January. This marks the creation of an industry giant and global player in fibre-based packaging solutions in North American and European markets. The two companies put combined pro forma annual sales at US$28bn.

IP said at the end of January that pursuant to the acquisition, it would issue 0.1285 of new shares of common stock for each ordinary share of DS Smith, resulting in the issuance of approximately 179,847,780 new shares of IP common stock. The new shares started trading on the New York Stock Exchange and the London Stock Exchange on 4 February.

The completion of the deal comes after the EU gave green light to the transaction on 24 January under the condition that IP sells five of its plants in Europe. The site's concerned are the French Cabourg corrugated sheet plant as well as the four corrugated packaging plants Saint-Amand and Mortagne in France, Bilbao in Spain and Ovar in Portugal. IP has not yet made any announcement about the sale or potential buyers.

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