

Why Tissue Paper is The Smart Choice for a Sustainable World

The original sustainable material



 An illustration of a hand holding a small green plant with two leaves, set against a circular background with small white dots.

Tissue paper is a sustainable material, made from trees. For the paper industry, sustainability has been a way of life for centuries.

Too much of what is produced on our planet is made from non-renewable materials. Once used they are gone forever. Fortunately, this is not the case for paper. Trees have an average growing cycle of 50 years, so the industry has always had to think long-term. Through sustainable forestry practices the tissue paper industry regrows and regenerates its raw material and provides a sustainable resource for our planet.

And trees are positively beneficial for our planet. They capture and store billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide while at the same time providing the earth with much needed, pure oxygen. They emit particularly large quantities of oxygen during the growing phase, hence underlining the importance of continually replanting trees.

Trees play a crucial role in the earth's eco-system and paper boasts first-class environmental credentials. It is natural, biodegradable, recyclable, and comes from a renewable resource.

COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Tissue paper producers are committed to driving sustainable practices throughout their individual businesses. They are also looking to increase sustainability across the supply chain – from water and energy through to transport, recycling and recovery.

In line with the true spirit of sustainability, the industry's overall goal is to

do nothing that will have a negative impact on future generations – economically, socially or environmentally. In safeguarding supplies for future generations, it supports forest certification as a way of documenting sustainable forest management.



SUPPORTING CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

Third-party certification is one of the best ways to ensure that suppliers meet recognised standards. It lends credibility to the sector and offers reassurance to both customers and consumers. Tissue paper producers therefore support the various international and national forest certification schemes that offer third party verification or certification of compliance. In Europe, over 80% forests owned by paper companies are certified and European forests have been growing by an area of 1,500 football pitches every day.

The paper sector is also signatory to the Legal Logging Code of Conduct which condemns illegal logging. The EU timber regulation furthermore upholds industry standards and ensures that only products from legally sourced wood are sold within the EU. Some 11% of timber felled in the world is used to make paper, and 83% of Europe's paper mills are certified by an environmental management system.

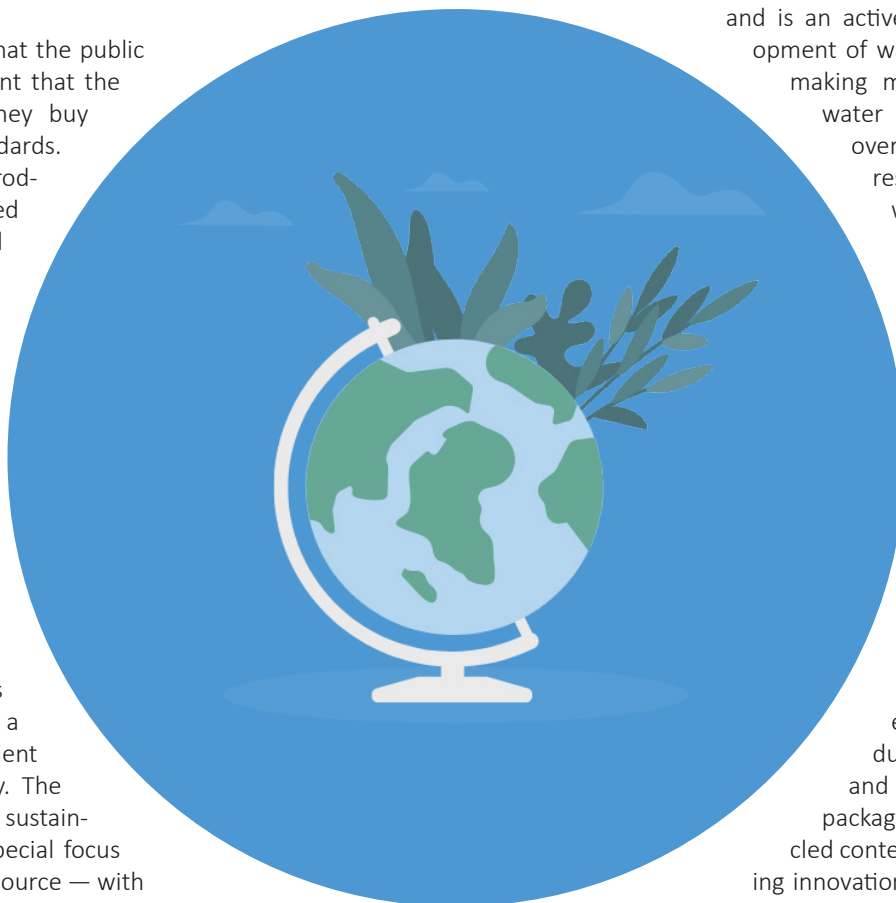
Obviously it's important that the public knows this and is confident that the tissue paper products they buy uphold the highest standards. That's why many tissue products carry well recognised stamps such as FSC and PEFC labels as well as the EU ecolabel and regional labels such as Nordic Swan and Blue Angel.

SUPPORTING THE EU AND UN GOALS

Tissue paper producers are active supporters of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan – a key building block of the European Green Deal, which aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. The goal of the Action Plan is sustainable growth and it lays special focus on turning waste into a resource – with more prevention, reuse and recycling and the phasing out of wasteful practices like landfill.

This goal of enabling sustainable consumption and production is also reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production. Tissue products have an important role to play here. They are essential for people's health and hygiene. While paper is the most recycled material in Europe, with recycling rates of over 70%, tissue paper, because of its applications in toilet

paper, disposable towels and tissues etc, is usually a single-use product which typically goes to waste after use. Tissue products nevertheless fit neatly into existing waste management schemes and could even provide a benefit – such as incineration with energy recovery or composting.



DRIVING CIRCULARITY UP AND DOWN THE VALUE CHAIN

Many tissue paper producers are supporting the development of new, circular business models using innovation to create closed-loop products and processes. This will serve to increase product recovery and minimise waste.

There is a focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transferring to renewable energy and decreasing

water use. Some 58% of the Europe's pulp and paper industry's energy consumption already comes from renewable biomass, and it is proud to be the largest single user and producer of bio-energy in Europe. The paper sector also produces over 90% of its on-site electricity through co-generation.²

The sector also continues to work on reducing its impact on water consumption and is an active partner in the development of water stewardship. Paper making machines have reduced water consumption by 30% over the past 10 years as a result of more efficient water circulation³, and while in the 1970's 250m³ of water was needed to produce one tonne of pulp, today it requires just 50m³.

The concept of 'reduce reuse recycle' is something that many individual producers are taking seriously. They are promoting zero waste to landfill, eliminating waste, reducing packaging weight and fostering recyclable packaging and the use of recycled content. They are also exploring innovation in product design and development.

In the area of 'reduce', the industry is seeing the emergence of new products that use less material for the same functionality. It is also witnessing new sustainable products that use fresh, wood-based fibre, recycled fibres and alternative fibres. It is important to promote circularity in this regard in order to increase the availability of paper for recycling as a secondary raw material.

Recycling plays an important role in the sustainability of the paper cycle.

² CEPI sustainability report, ³ Kemira,



Recycling paper cuts down on energy, wood fibres and waste water treatment in the production of tissue paper. Paper recycling rates rise every year and currently stand at 71% in Europe.⁴ Tissue paper producers are working together with their packaging suppliers to turn waste into a resource through collection sorting and recycling.

PLACING THE CUSTOMER AT THE CENTRE

Key to driving a more sustainable and circular tissue paper industry is placing customers at the centre and ensuring that they are kept informed. Many tissue paper producers provide easy-to-understand information about sustainable products, proper waste disposal, anti-littering and recycling. It is provided to both consumer and professional customers to keep them up-to-speed and encourage them to play their part in driving circularity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of maintaining health and hygiene across populations. Tissue paper products play an essential role in reducing the risk of infection. They will continue to be essential in promoting good hygiene within the general population in the years ahead.

⁴ <https://www.paperforrecycling.eu/>



MORE INFO ON
<https://europeantissue.com/tissue-paper>

**QUESTIONS?
GET IN CONTACT WITH**

Fanis Papakostas
Chairman European Tissue Symposium
fanis.papakostas2@gmail.com