

Recyclability of printed paper and board articles for use in food packaging

The European printing ink industry welcomes any initiative aimed at enhancing the recycling of recovered graphic paper into new graphic paper. In this respect, EuPIA - the European Printing Ink Association – supports the “European Declaration on Paper Recycling”, a voluntary cross-industry commitment to a sustainable increase in paper recycling, and is a member of the European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC).

Since the early 1990’s, the printing ink industry has closely co-operated with the INGEDE, the international association of the deinking industry, in research programmes identifying areas where improvement in the deinking characteristics of printing inks is required so that any effect on the recycling process is minimised.

As a result, where necessary, EuPIA members have developed and offered to the marketplace printing inks with improved deinking properties.

Besides its recycling for the production of graphic paper, printed graphic paper is also recycled to paper and board for packaging. A significant share of this material is used for food packaging.

If the recycled paper or board is made from printed paper or board, inevitably printing ink components will be present in the recycled material, and may come into direct contact with the packed food. If the paper and board had been printed with printing inks supplied by EuPIA members, then the raw materials for the manufacture of these inks have been selected according to the criteria of the EuPIA Exclusion Policy for Printing Inks and Related Products. However, with very few exceptions, printing inks intended for graphic, general packaging and food packaging applications are not designed to come into direct contact with food, and therefore, the raw materials used in printing inks do not generally meet food standards.

Under these circumstances, it is the responsibility of those placing recycled paper and board on the market for food packaging purposes to assess any risks associated with this use. Where necessary they should take appropriate measures to ensure that any transfer of substances from the packaging to the foodstuff occurs below acceptable levels, compliant with the requirements of Framework Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004.

Where appropriate EuPIA will provide technical assistance to allow the paper industries to carry out any risk assessment they consider necessary.

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