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### European Paper Sector Plans Revisions to EN643

Transfrontier pressures faced by recovered paper exporters have led to a decision to update the **EN643** List of Standard Grades of Recovered Paper which was last revised in 2001.

The decision has been taken by European paper mills, through their trade association CEPI (Confederation of European Paper Industries) and recovered (waste) paper merchants through ERPA (the European Recovered Paper Association), who have both agreed to create a working group to modernise the list.

**EN643** is used as a reference document for recovered paper exports but its content has fallen behind in the face of regulatory pressures over percentages of contaminants allowed within exports.

Explaining the proposal to update the list, David Symmers, chief executive of the UK's Independent Waste Paper Processors Association, said that one reason behind the proposed changes is the increasing focus of regulators on the transfrontier shipment rules.

#### IMPURITIES

Speaking to the recent BVSE recovered paper conference in Germany, Mr Symmers said: "Both the recovered paper industry and the papermaking industry understand that recovered paper is not a perfect material and can contain impurities - some of which are tolerable in small amounts but some are not.

"Unfortunately the environmental regulators do not always understand the commercial acceptance of impurities. Not only do they not understand that small proportions of contaminants cannot always be economically removed and that is normal accepted trade practice, but they can also find it hard to comprehend that different types of paper may be blended together."

Mr Symmers went on to say that a comprehensive **EN643** Standard with realistic tolerances could be useful in improving understandings with regulatory authorities.

He added: "We need a standard that can be used to support the quality standards we produce and one that helps provide a balance between commercial practicality and environmental perfection."

The aim, he said, is to take **EN643** and revised it in order to change it from "an 'intra-European' standard, to one that is meaningful in the current era, and is suitable for use in an increasingly active world market".

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Some of the aims of the revisions will be:

- to clearly identify materials that are prohibited, or prohibitive, or are tolerable within defined proportions
- to define tolerance levels for each grade, that reflects the ability of paper mills to accept and use material without the need for further sorting or processing, prior to pulping
- to have more accurate and comprehensive grade descriptions that better inform buyers, and others, about the nature of the paper included in the different grade qualities.
- to have a Standard that is comprehensive, and covers the full range of grades produced throughout Europe, for use by mills across the world - including Europe.

## FUTURE

Looking ahead, Mr Symmers said that an initial meeting in April has been arranged with CEPI, to formalise the procedure and agree basic structures. The ERPA working group is close to completing a draft revision which, if approved by the ERPA council, will be circulated to each national association and to CEPI for further consultation.

And, Mr Symmers added, that he hoped waste management companies would support the revised standard through FEAD, their trade association.

## OTHER STANDARDS

In the UK, waste management companies are working on their own standard for recovery of materials from materials recycling facilities (MRFs), which is expected to say that material from some MRFs can have a specific percentage of impurities.

Originally the waste industry, through its trade association, the Environmental Services Association, had been involved in a Waste and Resources Action Programme working group, looking at a single cross-industry scheme also to be supported by the paper industry and recognised by the Environment Agency.

This has since been abandoned with the waste industry saying in 2005 that it did not want to sign up to any form of maximum percentage contamination of recovered paper as an indicator of quality for export under the green list.

Since then, the UK paper industry has also looked at setting up its own paper standard scheme, but there is now some speculation that this could be delayed while revisions are made to EN643.

The position of a WRAP-supported **Publicly Available Standard (PAS105)**, on recovered paper sourcing and quality, which according to the standards organisation **BSI**, was published in 2005, remains unclear.

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