



Celebrating the second European Paper Bag Day

Stockholm/Paris, 14 October 2019. After a successful launch in 2018, the European Paper Bag Day enters the second round on 18 October 2019 with many different activities and celebrations throughout Europe. The annual action day was initiated by the platform “The Paper Bag,” the association of Europe’s leading kraft paper manufacturers and paper bag producers, to celebrate paper carrier bags as sustainable and functional packaging that are reliable shopping companions and contribute to fighting climate change. Everyone is welcome to join the activities and discussions.

“Against the background of the sustainable and circular approach of the EU’s bio-economy strategy, we aim at encouraging consumers to combine their personal packaging choices with a good choice for the environment,” explains Kennert Johansson, Acting Secretary General of CEPI Eurokraft. “By celebrating the European Paper Bag Day we want to raise awareness to the advantages of paper carrier bags as sustainable packaging that contribute to reducing littering and environmental pollution.” Paper bags are made from wood, a natural and ever-growing resource. In Europe, they are sourced from sustainably managed forests. Thanks to the continuous replanting of trees, Europe has had a positive net change in forest area during the last 25 years. During this period, the forest area has increased by 17.5 million hectares. This corresponds to almost half of the area of Italy.¹ Sustainable forest management maintains biodiversity and ecosystems and provides habitat for wildlife, recreational areas and jobs. Moreover, trees act as a carbon sink, which makes them effective to mitigate climate change.

Advantages at a glance

In an infographic, “The Paper Bag” summarises the most important facts about paper bags. “In a world facing challenges like globalisation, climate change and a scarcity of raw materials, it is vital that consumers can make informed decisions,” says Kennert Johansson. “The

Paper bags contribute to fighting climate change

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natural and renewable resource

 - based on wood
 - ever-growing resource
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from sustainably managed forests

 - continuous replanting of trees: in the past 25 years, the forest area has increased by 17.5 million hectares. This equals almost half of the size of Italy
 - maintains biodiversity and ecosystems
 - provides habitat for wildlife, recreational areas and jobs
- 

effective against climate change

 - trees act as carbon sink
 - average annual sequestration of carbon in European forests offsets the emissions from a country like Germany
 - CO₂ stored in wood fibre remains in paper bags
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100% biodegradable

 - degrades within 2–5 months
 - no harm to environment
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100% recyclable

 - 72.3% paper recycling rate in Europe
 - recycling reduces emissions
 - contributes to climate change mitigation
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helps reduce plastic waste

 - alternative to plastic bags
 - no plastic littering
 - no microplastics
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reliable shopping companion

 - carries up to 12 kg
 - uniform test standards indicate the weight and volume a bag can carry
 - can be reused several times
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demonstrates environmental commitment

 - in line with sustainable consumer lifestyle
 - expresses brand engagement towards environment
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attractive to consumers

 - 80% believe: a brand printed on paper is more pleasant and attractive
 - 86% would rather choose paper bags

 Detailed information on www.thepaperbag.org

¹ <https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/INFOGRAFIA1.pdf> accessed on 30.09.2019

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infographic provides relevant arguments which should be taken into account.” In addition to the environmental aspects, consumers can rely on a strong packaging that carries anything up to 12 kg. Whether for fashion, beauty or decorative items, food or electronics, paper bags can be reused several times² and recycled. If for some reason they end up in nature, they degrade within 2–5 months and do not harm the environment. “Paper bags are perfectly in line with a modern and sustainable consumer lifestyle,” states Kennert Johansson. “With our activities around the European Paper Bag Day, we want to motivate more people to show environmental responsibility in their packaging choices by using, reusing and recycling paper bags. With our kick-off activities in 2018, we were able to inspire many people, among them teachers, to contribute with their own ideas and activities.”

Successful start in 2018

An excerpt of last year’s event shows the range of activities carried out during the European Paper Bag Day. To name just a few, in Austria, the company Zellstoff Poels/Starkraft involved the local municipality by distributing paper bags to local companies for free in the Poels region for 1.5 years. Mondi produced a video starring an oversized paper bag which was central to a social media campaign. In France, Gascogne Papier partnered with a charity event, providing free bags to the organisers and participants. In Russia, the Segezha Group cooperated with a children’s retail chain: more than 40,000 paper bags were distributed for free. In Sweden, Bong Retail Solutions invited the public to an open house and offered a guided tour of their production facilities.

Upcoming celebrations and 2019 activities

On behalf of the members of “The Paper Bag,” many different activities will take place around 18 October throughout Europe and on social media channels. Some examples: in Spain, the “La bolsa de papel” group will visit the Minister of Environment to draw attention to the advantages of paper carrier bags. In Italy, the Milan-based “Gruppo Shopping Bags” will launch a video on social media to educate consumers about the reusability and recyclability of paper bags. In Ponte San Nicolò, Sacchettificio Nazionale G. Corazza will invite employees’ families and citizens to open house tours of their paper sack production facility, conduct



For a video promoting their forestation activities, at Mondi Frantschach in Austria, employees, kindergarten and school kids planted 100 trees. Copyright: Mondi

² “Evaluation of physico-mechanical properties of paper bags for use in transporting retail products”, ITENE.

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a flash mob and provide schools with paper sacks for waste collection. To raise attention towards sustainable forestry as a central element of the value chain of paper bags, Mondi will provide seedlings in reusable paper bags and carry out forestation activities with the employees and local communities of their mills in Poland, Sweden, Austria, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. The Segezha Group distributed paper bags for free during The Golden Turtle International Wildlife Art & Photography exhibition (6 Sep–2 Oct), in Moscow, Russia.

How to participate

All communications activities and local events taking place around the action day will be communicated on the social media channels of “The Paper Bag” under the hashtag #EuropeanPaperBagDay: on the Facebook fan page [“Performance powered by nature”](#) and the LinkedIn profiles of [EUROSAC](#) and [CEPI Eurokraft](#). Consumers are invited to participate in the discussions, or to join in with their own activities, using the hashtag.

The Paper Bag

The “The Paper Bag” platform was founded in 2017 by the leading European kraft paper manufacturers and producers of paper bags. They dedicate themselves to promoting the advantages of paper packaging. “The Paper Bag” is steered by the organisations CEPI Eurokraft and EUROSAC.

For further information, please visit www.thepaperbag.org or contact Kennert Johansson: +46 (0)8 783 8485, email: info@thepaperbag.org.

Note to editors

CEPI Eurokraft is the European Association for Producers of Sack Kraft Paper for the Paper Sack Industry and Kraft Paper for the Packaging Industry. It has eleven member companies representing a volume of 3.0 million tonnes of paper produced in twelve countries. www.cepi-eurokraft.org

EUROSAC is the European Federation of Multiwall Paper Sack Manufacturers. The federation represents over 75% of European paper sack manufacturers. Its members operate in 20 different countries. They produce more than 5 billion paper sacks per year, representing 650,000 tonnes of paper converted in 60 plants. Sack manufacturers from all continents and bag manufacturers also contribute to the federation as corresponding members, and more than 20 suppliers (paper, film, machine or glue manufacturers) are registered as associate members. www.eurosac.org