Brussels, 18 March 2020

Statement from the European paper and board converting industry

Continued cross-border and intra-country movement of paper & board packaging is essential for the continued safe distribution of food and pharmaceutical packaging during the COVID-19 crisis

The undersigned associations are concerned that the increased imposition of border controls, as Europe tackles the COVID-19 outbreak, will impede or prevent the effective supply of raw materials to packaging converters or finished packaging supplied to the pharmaceutical and food manufacturing sectors.

We are grateful for the efforts of the European Commission to date, such as the issuing of "Guidelines for Border Management" and are keen to partner the Commission's efforts to ensure supply chains can operate effectively.

Packaging facilitates the hygienic and effective supply of pharmaceutical and food products. The imposition of a nationwide lock-down and border closures will rapidly cause manufacturers supplying packaging into these essential markets to reduce or cease production; this will result in significant disruption in the supply chain of foods and pharmaceuticals.

The paper & board packaging sector is seeking clarification that companies involved in the supply of raw materials and converters who manufacture the packaging for these markets, are excluded from restrictions that may be imposed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and that their businesses can continue to operate and keep the pharmaceutical and food manufacturers' supply chain effectively operating.