

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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## DRAFT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION TO THE MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE RECOVERY AND REUSE OF WASTE PAPER AND BOARD

(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

COM(80) 237 final.

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

### Introduction

The European Community Action Programme on the Environment, 1977 - 1981, which was approved by a declaration of the Council of the European Communities and representatives of the Member States meeting in Council on 17 May 1977 (1), explains the need for an "active anti-waste policy" and sets out priorities in this field - the recycling of waste paper and board is one such priority. The Programme covers the prevention of waste, its reclamation and recycling as well as eventual reuse.

The Committee on Waste Management, (2), established to aid the Commission in the formulation of a Community anti-waste policy, adopted the recovery and reuse of waste paper and board as its first priority and approved, at the meeting of 4 October 1977, a programme of work in this field.

### Economic Aspects

1. In its reply to the Commission's questionnaire of 14 July 1978, the European Confederation of the Pulp, Paper and Board Industry, (CEPAC), calculated the EEC annual deficit in fibrous raw materials in the paper sector (paper, pulp, wood and waste paper) in 1976 to be 16 million tonnes a year (converted into tonnes of paper equivalent) against a consumption of paper and board of 30 million tonnes a year. Consumption of approximately 30 million tonnes has therefore been covered to the tune of 14 million tonnes, (i.e. about 45%) by fibres of Community origin (3). Of these 14 million tonnes, only 5 million are wood fibres coming from Community forests, the remaining 9 million tonnes being fibres recycled from waste paper; this represents a recovery rate of about 32% (4).

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(1) C.J. No: C 139 of 13 June 1977

(2) O.J. No: L 115 of 1 May 1976

(3) Although it should be remembered that fibre recycled within the Community may have been imported from third countries.

(4) The recovery rate represents the ratio between the total tonnage of waste paper recovered and the apparent consumption of paper and board.

Again, taking the 1976 consumption of 30 million tonnes and bearing in mind that approximately 15% ends up in long-lived products or is irrecoverable, (5 million tonnes), the quantity of waste paper which is theoretically recoverable within the E.E.C. amounts to around 25 million tonnes. Of this only about 10 million tonnes are recovered at present. Approximately 15 million tonnes are still being disposed of as waste, mainly in general household waste. The European economy is therefore losing the raw material value of these 15 million tonnes. (Assuming disposal costs of around 30 UCE per tonne of household refuse, their disposal is costing the economy more than 450 million UCE per year in waste disposal costs.)

2. Observing that the total quantity of waste produced in the Community can be estimated at 1.700 million tonnes per year, the Community Action Programme on the Environment states that the Community must promote an active policy to combat waste by, inter alia :
  - a. reducing the pollution caused by the accumulation of waste;
  - b. contributing to the harmonious development of economic activity in accordance with the aims of the EEC Treaty, a development which can only be inhibited by the increased cost of raw materials, by the Community's dependence on others with regard to supply and, in the long term, by the growing scarcity and consequent increased cost of certain raw materials.
3. It remains to be seen whether, and under what circumstances, Community resources of wood and waste paper can be used and developed. The forecasts of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (F.A.O.), and of CEPAC in their answer to the Commission questionnaire of 14 July 1978 show that external supplies may well be difficult in the medium and long term.

The most favourable projection shows that the wood pulp production of Scandinavia, which is currently the main supplier of the E.E.C., will increase by 35% between 1970 and the year 2000 - an increase of roughly 6 million tonnes. In view of the trend towards greater integration in

the Scandinavian industry, it is probable that this extra quantity will be delivered in the form of paper and not pulp.

For South America, the forecasts depend very much on how internal consumption develops. The available quantity of paper pulp, however seems unlikely to exceed 1 million tonnes before 1990. Investment in Africa is not sufficient to have a decisive influence on supplies to the Community before the year 2000.

Supplies from Asian countries will be largely used to meet domestic needs in the foreseeable future and any surplus quantities seem likely to be directed towards Japan. Also the export policies of these countries may be unpredictable. Thus it is to North America, and in particular Canada, to whom the Community must look to ensure the supply of imported pulp to Europe between now and the year 2000. North America supplies to the Community are of marginal importance in relation to their domestic market since they barely account for 10% of output - but represent a significant percentage of EEC imports and this dominant position in supplying the Community market will grow stronger. These countries' export prices and quantities will be largely determined by their internal demand and will be an additional cause of instability in the Community market.

The Community's dependence on external factors and the uncertainty of supplies from non-member countries make it all the more urgent for the E.E.C. to develop its own resources policy to the fullest extent possible since further development of E.E.C. pulp wood supply will merely enable the future pulp deficit to be kept at its present level.

An E.E.C. own resources policy should therefore be based on pulp wood and waste paper. This policy should be developed in parallel with research to find alternative uses for waste paper, which will have the added benefit of increasing stability in the waste paper market, although paper making seems likely to remain the predominant outlet for waste paper.

4. The following more detailed points on the waste paper situation allows a more accurate picture to be formed of the conditions and limits applying to its re-use and of the measures required, where appropriate, to increase consumption.

a. Firstly, whilst the development of pulp wood resources in the Community has been on a limited scale, waste paper has already been developed to a significant extent and, in general, the optimum rate of utilisation could be reached even more quickly.

b. The general trend is confirmed by a recent report by the O.E.C.D. (1). The report shows that there was a fairly sustained growth in waste paper usage in 1973-4, a noticeable contraction in 1974-5 and a recovery in 1975-6. It should also be noted, however, that in the Member States, except for the Netherlands, Italy and to a lesser extent the Federal Republic of Germany, the demand for all categories of waste paper did not increase between 1973 and 1976.

It should be understood that the economic crisis and the resulting economy measures, particularly in packaging, have dampened the growth of paper and board consumption. 1978 levels barely reached those of 1973.

c. Demand for waste paper between 1973 and 1976 was quality based. In categories III (high quality waste paper) and IV (mixed papers) demand fell in almost every case. For category I (newspapers and magazines) and even more so in category II (corrugated paper) demand rose in nearly all Member States.

d. In general the likelihood of increased waste paper utilisation remains firm, but it is likely to be less than the 12 to 13 million tonnes of waste paper by 1980 which the Massus report (2), basing itself on a mean annual growth rate of 5%, predicted. This is because many factors in the economic environment have changed since the onset of the crisis. Growth in the consumption of waste paper, in particular, is

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(1) "Structure and evolution of the supply and demand for the various qualities of waste paper" - O.E.C.D. (DSTI/IND/PP/78-01) of 21 March 1978. (p. 18)

(2) Waste Paper in the E.E.C. - 1974

much weaker in view of the direct link between consumption and the quantities of waste paper recycled.

e. Future action at Community level should take the problems of fibrous paper resources and environmental protection into account. The following priority measures with regard to demand for waste paper must be considered :

- i. the different preparatory techniques, especially de-inking and decontamination aspects, should be improved in order to make paper products which contain a certain proportion of recycled fibres competitive in the eyes of the consumer both with regard to quality and price. The Community's research programme is designed to achieve this improvement (1);
- ii. the compulsory use by public authorities of recycled paper for office purposes and for hygiene papers should be promoted. However insignificant this measure might at first appear, its impact would be considerable in view of the amount of paper which the authorities in the Member States, and the Commission, consume;
- iii. existing specifications for the various paper products should be re-examined to ensure that the quality of paper and board manufactured is best suited to its use. More waste paper might thus be used, while investment and operating costs would be reduced since certain stages of production such as bleaching might turn out to be unnecessary.

These measures should be accompanied by two supporting actions:

- the public should be made more aware of the benefits and availability of recycled paper;
- consultation procedures between the paper industry, paper users, the recovery trade and the public authorities should be set up, where they do not already exist.

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(1) O.J. No : L 107 of 21 April 1978.

5. In conclusion it should be remembered that :

- each recycled tonne of waste paper enables a substantial saving of wood to be made, since, very roughly, one tonne of chemical pulp requires 3.5 tonnes of wood, (this observation would hold good, even though a greater use of pulp wood may be desirable in the interests of sound management of forestry resources);
- it can be less polluting to use recycled fibres rather than paper pulp (if one considers the manufacturing processes involved.) The elimination of the sludge resulting from de-inking does, however, raise problems;
- experience shows that if waste paper rather than domestic virgin pulp is used a very significant amount of energy can be saved over the entire production cycle.

#### International Action

Other international bodies have also studied this problem. The Waste Management Policy Group of the O.E.C.D. in particular has followed similar lines and is presently finalising a Recommendation which will be forwarded to the O.E.C.D. Environment Committee. The aims of the O.E.C.D. draft Recommendation are parallel in concept to those in the annexed draft Recommendation.

#### Action by the European Community

In 1975 the Council adopted the Directive on Waste (75/442/EEC), which sets out the basis for the elimination, recovery and reuse of wastes and which makes the Member States responsible for measures to promote these aims.

The Committee on Waste Management, established in 1976 to aid the Commission as a high level advisory body has already adopted the recovery and reuse of waste paper and board as a first priority issue, has approved a programme of work in this field and supports the principles and aims of this Recommendation.

Brief summary of the situation in the Member States

Belgium : A recommendation on using more recycled paper and board in the public service exists but existing specifications need to be revised before any worthwhile results can be achieved. There is no legal requirement for the use of an identification mark.

Denmark : The national administration is obliged to use recycled paper as far as possible. There is no legal requirement for the use of an identification mark.

Federal Republic of Germany : There is no obligation on the public services at present to use recycled paper and board, but the possibility of lowering specifications to enable more recycled products to be used is being examined. (The Innenministerium tries to use as much recycled paper as possible.)

France : Has been developing an active policy to increase the recovery and re-use of waste paper. Via the intermediary of the Intervention Fund for the Improvement of Nature and the Environment (FIANE) the Ministry of Industry has earmarked FF 3.8 million to promote the recycling of waste paper. In 1978 there was a substantial increase in the measures to promote the recovery and re-use of waste paper, i.e. :

- a) increase in funds to promote waste paper recycling;
- b) de-inking plant capacity stepped up from 10.000 to 20.000 tonnes per year. The ultimate aim is to reach 100.000 tonnes per year;
- c) development of outlets for recycled paper by means of a government circular urging ministries, departments and public undertakings to make priority use of recycled paper and by means of agreements to be concluded with industry to determine the extent to which recycled fibres can be used. Since 1 January 1978 the Official Journal of the French Government has been printed on recycled paper.



Ireland: No action at present.

Italy: Public services are being encouraged to use recycled paper and board.

Luxembourg: All public services are recommended to order and use recycled paper "as much as possible" for reproduction and copying.

Netherlands: There is no obligation on the public services to use recycled paper and board

United Kingdom: No obligation exists, but the authority responsible for buying paper and board for Central Government gives a "measure of preference" to products with a recycled content and the authorities' technical staff work together with the paper industry to develop specifications which will enable a greater use to be made of products containing recycled fibres.

### Conclusion

The annexed draft Recommendation recognises that there are three main aspects to the problem of reusing waste paper and board. Firstly, it aims to carry out the tasks set out in the Action programme on the Environment. It is secondly, a logical extension of the action begun by the Directive on Waste (75/442/EEC) in that it gives precision to the general policy aims set out in that framework Directive. Finally it recognizes that there are important and complex economic problems to be solved.

Given the involved nature of the problem outlined above, the fragmentary response to this problem in the Member States, and without prejudicing any formal proposal that the Commission might find desirable or necessary to submit at a later date, it is proposed that the Council should address a Recommendation to the Member States that they base their future national actions in this field on the aims and principles which are referred to therein.

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In the opinion of the Commission, a Council Recommendation is the better response to the problems outlined above. It is a quick response to a given situation, a response moreover which has the backing of a majority of the Member States and the Committee on Waste Management. In the case where the annexed draft Council Recommendation demonstrably does not achieve its aims, the Commission will submit additional proposals as necessary.

**DRAFT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION TO THE MEMBER STATES CONCERNING THE RECOVERY  
AND REUSE OF WASTE PAPER AND BOARD**

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**THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the draft Recommendation submitted by the Commission,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Whereas the Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 17 May 1977 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment states that priority in work on waste shall be given, inter alia, to the question of waste paper;

Whereas Article 3(1) of Council Directive 75/442/EEC of 15 July 1975 on waste<sup>(1)</sup> states that Member States shall take appropriate steps to encourage the prevention, recycling and processing of waste, the extraction of raw materials and possibly of energy therefrom and any other process for the re-use of waste;

Whereas waste paper constitutes a significant percentage of urban waste and is technically recoverable as a valuable secondary raw material for the manufacture of certain paper and board products;

Whereas the production of paper and board using recycled fibres consumes less energy and can be less polluting than the same production using virgin raw materials;

<sup>(1)</sup> O.J. No: L 194 of 25 July 1975

Whereas there is a deficiency (over 50%) in the Community's present needs of raw materials for paper and board manufacture which has to be made up by imports from non-member countries;

RECOMMENDS that Member States define and implement policies to promote the use of recycled paper and board and particularly:

- encourage the use of recycled - and recyclable - paper and board, especially in the national administrations, public bodies and those national official services which can set an example;
- encourage where feasible, the use of recycled paper and board containing a high percentage of mixed waste paper;
- re-examine, in the light of recent technological advances, the existing specifications for paper products which restrict, for reasons other than adequacy of a product for its task, the use of recycled paper;
- implement programmes of consumer and manufacturer education to promote paper and board products made from recycled fibres;
- develop and promote uses for waste paper other than as raw material for the manufacture of paper and board.