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Corrugated: circular by nature, and ready for a sustainable future!

Brussels, 28 May 2018

The FEFCO Summit brought together 200 high-level corrugated industry representatives and their suppliers from 23-25 May. The sun was shining bright in Stockholm and the mood was as positive as the market perspectives discussed during the event.

Jan Klingele, FEFCO's re-elected President, warmly welcomed the participants, highlighting the many achievements of FEFCO and the positive opportunities ahead despite some challenging market situations.

On the first day, an impressive speaker line-up addressed key strategic issues. Thorbjörn Sagerström from SWIF – the Swedish Corrugated Packaging Association, kicked off the day.

He was followed by inspiring keynote speeches from two industry leaders. First, Saverio Mayer, CEO Europe for Smurfit Kappa, spoke of the need for efficiency, security and agility: *"The greater the demands for corrugated, the greater the complexity to manage, the more opportunities we have to make the difference."*

Then Eduardo Posada, CEO Gondi Group presented the Mexican market, a real eye opener for the European industry.

Pia Sandvik and Marco Lucisano from RISE highlighted the importance of research in the field of cellulose-based materials and the enormous possibilities that can be generated from it.

Emma Watkins from the Institute for European Environment Policy presented an update on new EU legislation on circular economy. She observed that *"In the EU, there is a shift in thinking from waste to circularity"*.

FEFCO's Nathalie Schneegans presented the association's highly successful communication campaign, **"Circular by Nature"**, which focuses on demonstrating the overall recyclability of Corrugated Packaging and its circularity.

Mats Lindgren from Kairos Future ended this first day with a very forward-looking speech on ways to improve the strategic innovation capabilities of a company.

Throughout the first day, speakers reminded the audience that corrugated packaging really checks all the sustainability boxes, stressing how it is a true recycling champion contrary to some alternative fossil-based materials. In a context where sustainability is a fundamental benefit, the outlook and market trends look very promising for corrugated packaging.

On the second day, the Summit highlighted how a close partnership with customers and the retail sector could benefit the whole supply chain and the end-consumer. Under the headline "Listen to your customers", top speakers included Daniel Bornemann – Simon-Kucher & Partners, Neil Osment – NOA-PRISM, Ian Schofield – Iceland Foods, Uwe Streiber – Zalando, and Ulf Tillman – IKEA.

A switch to a more sustainable packaging alternative seems to be possible. Ian Schofield, Own Label Manager at Iceland Foods is working on making their private label completely plastic-free by 2023. He reminded participants that “It is not only fish – plastic packaging is affecting our entire food chain”.

Gary Saunders, Chairman of the FEFCO Market & Environment Committee, and Thomas Maiwald, also from FEFCO, presented the positive results of the initiative the association developed to help a major retailer adopt a well-designed corrugated packaging solution for transporting and displaying Fruit and Vegetables.

Finally, in his closing address, Jean-Paul Macharis, FEFCO Vice President, encouraged the industry to build on the momentum where the consumer demand for sustainable and recyclable packaging is increasing. There are fantastic opportunities in e-commerce, in the fight against food waste, and future technical developments that will allow corrugated packaging to stand out!

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Note to the editors

FEFCO (European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers) represents the interests of the European Corrugated Board Manufacturers. Headquartered in Brussels, FEFCO has 17 Association members, all European national corrugated packaging organisations. The role of the Federation is to investigate economic, financial, technical and marketing issues of interest to the corrugated packaging Industry, to analyse all factors which may influence the industry, and to promote and develop its image.

Europe's corrugated industry in Europe makes about 43.9 billion square metres of board per year, enough to cover Denmark. It has 401 companies, 672 plants and accounts for 90,000 jobs. Corrugated is already a complete, high-performance material design, and delivery system, with thousands of possible combinations of board types, depth, weight, adhesives, and coatings. The average box today is more than 5% lighter than 15 years ago and contains around 7% more recycled material.