



CONFEDERATION OF
EUROPEAN PAPER INDUSTRIES



Social Dialogue of the European paper sector

Joint CEPI - IndustriAll position

“Free trade and fair competition for growth and jobs in Europe”

In spite of the difficult economic context and an increased competition in the global markets, the European pulp, paper and board industry remains a world leader and a net exporter as well as the provider of 1.5 million direct and indirect jobs in Europe.

EU markets have been fully open since January 2004, unlike some competitors in their home countries. 40% of EU paper and board exports face tariff barriers! The sector is seeking a level playing field for both its products and its raw materials through multilateral and bilateral negotiations and high level talks with EU trading partners. Free access to pulp and paper and board foreign markets, but also raw materials and energy is a must.

Fair competition is also vital to the European pulp, paper and board industry and its workers, who need to see unfair trade practices such as dumping and subsidies, protectionism and discriminatory measures fought. A strong set of trade defence tools is crucial to ensure, when necessary, the rapid implementation of efficient trade defence measures and restore a level playing field for our industry and workers. Strong support from the EU Commission is required in order to secure international trade rules and WTO obligations as well as bilateral agreements are well implemented by all EU trading partners and WTO members.

The opening of the foreign markets has to be achieved primarily through multilateral negotiations in WTO, by reflecting the recent developments that have seen emerging countries like China, Brazil or Indonesia turning into global industrial leaders.

As multilateral agreements require long negotiations and sustained efforts, a better access to foreign markets, raw materials and energy markets should be sought through the conclusion of ambitious bilateral trade agreement negotiations with a view to supporting the re-industrialisation of Europe and to promote the principles of fair trade. These negotiations should contribute to the suppression of tariff barriers as well as non-tariff barriers, and aim at regulatory convergence.

Plurilateral negotiations should also be encouraged as they can offer a pragmatic way to further liberalise trade while achieving other goals, such as the completion of ambitious climate change and environment protection targets. The European Social Partners in the pulp, paper and board sector are of the opinion that, due to their sustainable nature, all pulp, paper and board grades should be considered as environmental goods and therefore fully included in the environmental goods list currently being negotiated.

Pulp, paper and board are based on renewable raw materials originating from sustainable sources and are recyclable. They contribute directly and indirectly to environmental protection, climate action, green growth and sustainable development. They are manufactured by an industry that has substantially reduced its footprint on the environment, while reaching high social standards.

At the core of the bio economy, is the production of not only the original bio-based product - paper and board, but also new and innovative products that can substitute for fossil fuel-based products through the efficient use of renewable raw materials.

Allowing the European pulp, paper and board industry to compete on a level playing field at global level should be the aim of EU trade strategy as it is the best way to secure EU's competitiveness as well as investors' long-term commitment to Europe and create jobs and growth!

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