EUROPE GLOBAL CHAMPION IN PAPER RECYCLING:
PAPER INDUSTRIES MEET AMBITIOUS TARGET

Brussels, 3 July 2006

The European industries recycling paper and board today announced that they have met the ambitious target they set in 2000; to push the European paper recycling rate to 56% by the end of 2005. This makes Europe the global leader in paper recycling, and paper the most recycled material in Europe. The figure announced stands at 55.4%, well within the (+/- 1.5% points) margin set.

Recycling makes a vital contribution to Europe’s sustainable development, economically as well as environmentally, creating jobs as well as saving energy and natural resources and the European Commission has stated its aim to make Europe a recycling economy.

The rate of growth in paper and board recycling in Europe today is rapid. A total of 46.6 million tonnes of paper and board were recycled in Europe in 2005. This is an impressive 24%, or 9 million tonnes, higher than in 1998, the base year against which the target was set. More than half of the paper used in Europe today is now made from recovered paper.

The cooperation of the different industries along the paper chain has been central to reaching this target: by working together they have reinforced the ‘paper loop’ essential to the recycling process.

The paper and board industry’s commitment to increase recycling has also been an important factor. This commitment has allowed the recovered paper industry to be confident in a stable market and to invest in increased recovery of paper. The industries have also worked together to maintain and improve the quality of recovered paper; guidelines to industry were developed and issued during the lifetime of the declaration. Efforts have also been made to identify previously untapped sources of recovered paper, such as streams that were land filled or incinerated.

When looking at targets for increasing recycling rates it is important to consider the percentage of paper that can actually be recycled. If we take into account paper that cannot be recycled such as archives and libraries, or papers used in construction materials, then the maximum theoretical recycling rate for paper would be 81% instead of 100%. In addition, the percentage of paper and board consumed in Europe that is recycled is actually greater than 55.4%, as the industry target only counts the paper and board recycled within Europe. It does not include the paper recovered here and then recycled outside of Europe, for instance in Asia.

Industry set the voluntary target with the launch of ‘The European Declaration on Paper Recovery’ in 2000. It is not content to sit on its laurels however and a new and more ambitious Declaration is under preparation for 2006 –2012. Further information will be announced in the autumn.

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Notes to Editors

• Europe’s position as the current global champion in paper recycling can be easily verified when comparing Europe’s recycling rate target of 56% by 2005 with targets from other regions across the world. The American Forest and Paper Association, for example, has set itself a recycling rate target of 55% for 2012 including exports for recycling in Asia.

• The European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC) determined 1998 as the base year against which the target was set, as the most up to date statistics available at the time of drafting the Declaration in 1999 were those from 1998.

• For more detailed information on the Commission’s aim to make Europe a recycling economy and the relative position of paper as a recycled material, we suggest the Commission’s thematic strategy on waste and recycling COM(2005)666 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0666en01.pdf


The European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC)
The ERPC was set up after the launch of The European Declaration on Paper Recovery in November 2000 (http://www.cepi.org/files/English%20Declaration-170729A.pdf) with the aim to monitor the progress made towards meeting the targets set out in the European Declaration. In the Declaration the industry pledges to take actions to further improve its environmental performance and increase the recycling rate to 56% (+/-1.5%-points) by 2005.

The ERPC consists of the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), the European Recovered Paper Association (ERPA) and the European Federation of Corrugated Manufacturers (FEFCO) as its Signatories. In addition it also has Supporters, which include the European Federation of Waste Management and Environmental Services (FEAD), the European Paper Merchants Association (EUGROPA) and the International Confederation for Printing and Allied Industries (INTERGRAF) as well as the European Commission Directorates General Enterprise and Environment, who act as Observers. The ERPC monitors the progress of the Declaration openly and transparently and co-ordinates the joint work to achieve the set targets.

For further information on the ERPC and its work, please consult its website www.paperrecovery.org, or contact the ERPC secretariat, Mr Jori RINGMAN, on tel +32 2 627 49 19, +32 478 255 070 (mobile) or email: j.ringman@cepi.org

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