Press Release

Brussels, 1 September 2010

Europe shows global leadership in recycling

The latest Monitoring report of the European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC) shows that Europe has achieved a world record level of paper recycling in 2009. The rate reached 72.2% which is again higher than the target set in its Commitment for 2010 of 66%. The total amount recycled in paper mills came to 58 million tonnes in 2009.

“The economic recession continued in 2009 and made the paper consumption drop to the level of 1998. This, together with industry’s continued effort to increase recycling made, for the second year in a row, the recycling rate jump up, resulting in a record high 72.2%.” explained Jori Ringman, Secretary of the ERPC. The recycling rate is the ratio between the recycling and the consumption of paper.

A swing in the opposite direction may occur when the economy recovers as recycling may not be able to immediately match up to the reviving paper consumption; the recycling rate is likely to drop, temporarily. In 2010 the recycling rate is estimated to be under 70%, closer to the original target of 66% (±1.5%-points).

“Recycling is intrinsically a self-adjusting mechanism which, with a lag of three to six months, will adapt to any volume of consumption”, Ringman reminded. “In the trend, the industry will continue on its path to meeting ambitious targets of recycling paper at a steadily increasing rate in Europe”, he said. Since 1998, the base year of the first voluntary commitment, the paper industry has increased the annual paper recycling by 45%, growing from less than 40 million tonnes of paper recycled annually to 58 million tonnes last year.

For the commitment period of 2006 to 2010, PricewaterhouseCoopers has independently verified the recycling rate calculations using the International Standard on Assurance Engagements ISAE 3000. The 14 members of the Council have also made good progress in the qualitative targets laid out in its Commitment particularly with respect to eco-design and waste prevention.
Notes to Editor:

- The European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC) was set up after the successful launch of the first ‘European Declaration on Paper Recovery’ as an industry own-initiative in November 2000 with the aim to monitor the progress made towards meeting the targets set out in the European Declaration. In 2006 the industry committed itself to meet a voluntary recycling rate target of 66% in EU 27 plus Switzerland and Norway by 2010, which is higher than in any other region in the world, and qualitative targets in areas such as waste prevention, eco-design, and research and development.

- ERPC monitors the progress of the European Declaration openly and transparently and coordinates the joint work to achieve the set targets. Additionally, ERPC
  o coordinates the commitments of all the Signatories and Supporters.
  o takes steps to improve the quality of the information available.
  o discusses all relevant matters regarding the successful operation of the European Declaration.
  o coordinates public information on the achievements of the European Declaration
  o produces annual reports.

- Members of ERPC are CEPI, CITPA, ERPA, ETS, INGEDE, INTERGRAF, FEPE. Supporters include the EADP, ENPA, EuPIA, FAEP, FEICA, FINAT, RADTECH Europe. The European Commission, DG Environment and DG Enterprise, are permanent observers to ERPC.

- The Monitoring Report 2009 can be downloaded from www.paperrecovery.eu or you can request a paper copy by contacting the ERPC.