



## European Print and Paper Industry Unites Against 'Digital Only' Legislation

European social partners representing both employers and workers in the print and paper sectors, including Intergraf, Cepi, UNI Europa Graphical, FEPE, and IndustriAll Europe, have issued a [joint statement](#) raising concerns about the growing prevalence of digital-only approaches in European legislation.

The European Commission's increasing focus on digital transition in recent years has led to references to the potential elimination of printed paper products in various EU legislations, spanning industrial and medical products to consumer information. In response, the partners behind the joint statement emphasize that while they acknowledge the importance of digital transition, the 'digital by default' or 'digital only' approaches should not be viewed as neutral. Print plays a crucial role in an inclusive digital transition that upholds fundamental rights to access information for everyone while positively contributing to inclusion and education.

While acknowledging the importance of digital transition, the co-signatories argue against adopting a 'digital by default' or 'digital only' approach. Such approaches are not neutral and may exclude sections of the population, particularly older individuals, those with disabilities, people with limited incomes, and those lacking basic digital skills – which make up over one-third of EU citizens.

Studies have demonstrated that print offers distinct educational advantages and better comprehension compared to digital reading. The industry representatives stress that policymakers should consider these educational benefits and the potential social and economic risks associated with over-promoting digital solutions.

The partners highlight the sustainability of paper and print, pointing out that paper is based on renewable resources, primarily utilizes renewable energy in its production, and boasts a recycling rate of 70.5%. In contrast, the environmental footprint of digital solutions, including energy consumption and electronic waste, often goes unacknowledged.

The co-signatories collectively call upon EU policymakers to refrain from implementing 'digital by default' or 'digital only' legislation. They emphasize that print and digital communications should be considered simultaneously, taking into account ecological, circularity, inclusion, and freedom of choice factors.



## Intergraf protests the removal of print from the World Skills 2024

This competition has historically played a crucial role in promoting skilled individuals within the graphic field and raising awareness about the printing industry as a whole.

Unfortunately, WorldSkills has recently made the regrettable decision to eliminate Print Media Technology (Skill 11) from the 2024 competition in Lyon. Many countries have already invested significant resources to identify and prepare young talents in printing technology for this global competition. This decision is bound to be deeply disappointing for these aspiring participants.

In response, Intergraf has taken action by urging WorldSkills to reconsider this unfortunate choice and has reached out to printing associations in over 70 countries for their support in reversing the removal of print from the competition.

This decision not only affects the prospects of young individuals pursuing a career in printing but also undermines the public's understanding of the printing industry's vital role and its contributions to society. Printing technology is an industry with a promising future, and print products are an integral part of our daily lives. Excluding Print Media Technology sends a negative message to all young people learning this trade and diminishes the credibility of our industry.

## EU graphical sector's social dialogue Plenary to take place on 6 November

On 6 November 2023 European Commission is hosting a sectoral social dialogue committee for graphical industry Plenary chaired by UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf.

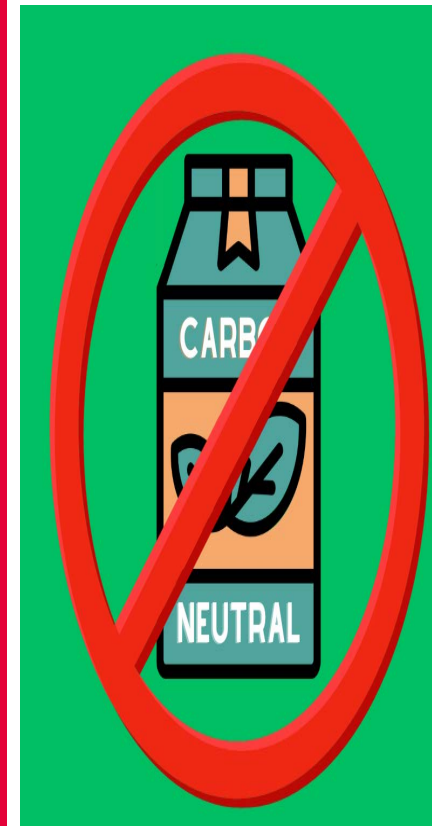
Social dialogue aims to foster ongoing communication between employers and workers, enhancing European governance by involving social partners in decision-making and policy implementation.

The agenda of the 2023 plenary is packed with topics ranging from joint statements released by social partners to various campaigns, such as "Circular Choices" for the EU's Bioeconomy and the Belgian Campaign to promote the graphic industry by FEBELGRA.

Anne Mangen, a professor of literacy at the Norwegian Reading Center, University of

Stavanger, will share her research findings comparing reading comprehension between printed texts and digital screens. Her study revealed that students who read printed texts outperformed those reading digitally, showing significantly higher scores on the reading comprehension test.

The plenary will cover updates on Packaging & Packaging Waste Regulation and conclude with discussions on the influence of AI on the graphical industry. Intergraf members are encouraged to register for the Social Dialogue plenary by contacting Sergejs at [smikaeljans@intergraf.eu](mailto:smikaeljans@intergraf.eu).



Visual by Green Queen Media

## Cracking down on greenwashing: EU to strengthen regulations & Two Sides campaign gains momentum globally

As the legislative procedure is about to start on the draft Directive on Green Claims, the European Parliament and Council agreed on 19 September to amend the Directive on empowering consumers for the green transition and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive.

The new rules will prohibit companies from making generic environmental claims unless they can substantiate them. Such generic claims include terms like "environmentally friendly", "natural", "biodegradable" and "eco". Additionally, "climate neutral" will no longer be allowed when it is based on emissions offsetting schemes.

In the meantime, Two Sides, a group promoting the print and paper industry, has communicated significant success in its anti-greenwash campaign, with more than 1,075 companies revising or eliminating misleading messaging since the campaign's start in 2010.

The initiative by Two Sides addresses the issue of companies presenting misleading green claims, which negatively impact the paper, print, and mailing sector. These claims often disguise cost-cutting efforts as environmentally friendly actions, such as promoting the switch to digital services with appeals like 'Go Green – Go Paperless' and 'Choose e-billing and help save a tree.'

Recent findings from the Two Sides 2023 'Trend Tracker' report indicate that 55% of European consumers view environmental arguments from companies advocating digital communications as deceptive and primarily aimed at cost reduction.

Globally, Two Sides has engaged with over 2,100 organizations making misleading statements about paper. Of these, more than 1,075 changed their communications. The campaign's reach spans Europe, North and South America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

In Europe, 682 companies have eliminated unsubstantiated claims regarding paper, including names like Dunelm, British Gas, Intermarche, American Express, and Sparebanken Vest.

Two Sides stressed the ongoing importance of addressing greenwash to safeguard the industry's excellent environmental record, protect the livelihoods of industry workers, and maintain print, paper, and postage volumes. Research conducted by Two Sides and Censuswide in 2021 revealed that greenwashing poses an annual threat of €337 million (£292 million) in value loss to the paper, print, and mailing sector in Europe alone.



# Latest developments in the European book sector



Significant developments in the European book sector have taken place, including new policy initiatives and shifts in education strategies.

## European Parliament adopts the report on the future of the EU book sector

On 14th September 2023, the European Parliament's plenary session adopted by an overwhelming majority an own-initiative [report](#) on the future of the European book sector, which highlights the sector's value in European societies and introduces recommendations to support its growth in the years to come.

The report highlights the crucial role of books in European societies, categorizing them as an 'essential good.' One of the innovative recommendations in the report is the establishment of the 'Printed in

Europe' label, designed to promote the European print industry in its entirety. Intergraf welcomes the report as it aligns with its initiatives and advocacy efforts towards the EU institutions. Intergraf created a coalition with publishers and paper manufacturers to promote books and the book sector.

## Study: Amazon and the packaging, publishing and printing industries

Intergraf recently met with book publishers and paper suppliers to explore collaborative efforts in bolstering the book sector. Book publishers (FEP) shared their latest statistics on book publishing, and CEPI presented data on paper consumption and production. The discussions laid the groundwork for potential joint initiatives, with a focus on developing guidelines for carbon footprint reduction and circular design principles.

During the session, Intergraf Secretary General Beatrice Klose presented findings from the study commissioned by Intergraf & UNI Europa Graphical and conducted by Syndex titled Amazon and the packaging, publishing and printing

industries. This study examines Amazon's impact on the on the different sectors and identifies particularly the publishing sector as vulnerable as an increasing amount of books is "self-published" via Amazon. In the field of printing mainly merchandising products are affected whereas packaging producers seem to largely cooperate with Amazon.

The Amazon study is available exclusively to Intergraf members upon an email request to [smikaeljans@intergraf.eu](mailto:smikaeljans@intergraf.eu).

## Amazon and the packaging, publishing and printing industries: an overview

Stefan Guga and Tudor Strătilă (Syndex)



## Sweden shifts focus from digital to printed textbooks in education

Sweden has recently reoriented its education system away from digital devices and back to printed textbooks. The [move](#) comes amid concerns about declining basic skills attributed to excessive digitalization in education, a shift spearheaded by the country's Education Minister, Lotta Edholm.

While Swedish students continue to score above the European average for reading, there has been a noticeable decline in performance between 2016 and 2021. This decline has raised questions about the impact of excessive screen time on learning outcomes. Some experts argue that an overreliance on screens may hinder students' ability to absorb and retain information effectively, while others emphasize the nuanced role of technology in education.

Intergraf's Swedish member organization, Grafiska Företagen has been advocating for a shift away from digital dominance in education. They have worked closely with policymakers to promote the importance of free access to textbooks and learning materials. Research shows that screen-based reading tends to encourage superficial comprehension, whereas printed texts are better suited to fostering a deeper understanding and improving reading skills, whether on paper or screens.



To support this shift towards printed materials, Sweden has allocated approximately SEK 650 million (equivalent to more than EUR 55 million) for printed schoolbooks in 2023 and SEK 500 million (about EUR 42.5 million) in 2024. The ultimate goal is to ensure that each student in primary schools has access to one printed book per subject. This substantial investment reflects Sweden's commitment to enhancing the quality of education by rebalancing the role of technology and traditional learning resources in the classroom.



## Intergraf members' Directors convene in Reykjavik to empower the European printing industry

Intergraf's national member associations are crucial for supporting printing companies throughout Europe, offering a wide range of services from advocacy and events to training and HR assistance. Many of these companies are SMEs, making the assistance provided by these associations especially valuable. Recognizing common challenges faced by printing companies and their national print associations, Intergraf plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration. Each year, Intergraf hosts a Directors' Conference where leaders from member associations come together to exchange insights, discuss operations, and enhance the quality of services provided.

This year's Directors' Conference took place in Reykjavik, Iceland, serving as a platform for comprehensive discussions covering a wide array of topics. Conversations centred on Intergraf's activities and those of its member organizations, encompassing both national and international industry perspectives. Key focal points included the challenges and opportunities arising from digitization, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the graphic industry, EU advocacy efforts, initiatives for reducing carbon footprint, print preservation strategies, considerations related to social legislation, advancements in membership services, developments within the book sector, communication strategies, educational endeavours, skill-building initiatives, and so forth.

During the conference, Dr. Kristinn Thórisson, Managing Director of the Icelandic Institute for Intelligent Machines and a PhD in the Department of Computer Science at Reykjavik University, delivered a presentation on the impacts of Artificial Intelligence on the graphic industry.

Intergraf extends a special acknowledgement to the host country's national association, Samtök Iðnaðarins, for their invaluable role in facilitating this meeting. Directors' recommendations will guide actions of Intergraf's Steering Committee, Working Groups, and the secretariat.



## WPCF members meet at Pack Print in Bangkok & re-elect President

The World Print & Communication Forum (WPCF) recently hosted a board meeting, held during the Pack Print International & CorruTec ASIA 2023 event in Bangkok, Thailand.

The WPCF members convened in person for the first time since their 2020 Mumbai meeting, uniting to address challenges confronting the global print and packaging sector, share expertise, and bolster cooperation among international printing associations.

Kamal Chopra was re-elected as President of the WPCF during the board meeting. This marks his second mandate of three years as President, highlighting the trust and confidence that worldwide association executives have in his leadership.

Sustainability was a prominent theme during the meeting and the joint conference with the Thai Printing Association. Members explored methods to promote eco-friendly practices in the printing and packaging sector, emphasizing sustainable materials, processes, and waste reduction.

Beatrice Klose, Secretary General of WPCF & Intergraf, highlighted the significance of industry associations as trusted sources of guidance, distinguishing them from costly private consultancies often lacking specialized knowledge. She underscored the importance

of considering the carbon footprint of substrates, particularly paper, which contributes over 60% to a printed product's carbon footprint.

Furthermore, Beatrice Klose addressed Asian printing associations at the Pack Print International event in Bangkok, advocating for a globally harmonized approach to carbon footprint calculation within the printing industry. This approach should align with the three scopes of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, encompassing indirect emissions (scope 3) of paper production due to its significant impact on the total carbon emissions of printed products or printing plants. She specified that the industry should strive for a global consensus to prevent greenwashing practices.

WPCF will soon release its highly anticipated 2023 Economic Report, providing economic insights into the global graphical industry. This resource will be exclusively available to Intergraf members and members of other international associations that are part of WPCF. If you're interested in obtaining a copy, reach out to us at [info@worldprintforum.org](mailto:info@worldprintforum.org).



## EVENTS

- Intergraf Currency + Identity Conference 2023 in Bilbao, 18-20 October 2023. More info [here](#).
- Sectoral Social Dialogue for the graphical industry Plenary in Brussels, 6 November 2023.

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