



March 06

## **EU Strategy on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources 2005 – A response from the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment**

### **Introduction**

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE), welcomes the recent adoption by the European Commission of a Thematic Strategy on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources. This is the first time that such a Strategy has been developed at the EU level and the Commission is to be commended for its efforts in translating the aspirations expressed in the 6<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme on resource use into a credible basis for current and future actions in this area.

### **A Life Cycle Approach with Clear Objectives**

Regarding the Strategy itself, ACE supports its key objectives, namely to continue to improve the productivity of the EU's use of resources as well as to decouple further the environmental impact of resource use.

The focus on a life cycle approach is also welcome and is consistent with the need to take a more holistic approach to the use of resources. Allied to this approach is the need to have more and better data and information on resource flows into and within the European Union. Greater knowledge will help identify where environmental impact can best be further reduced and resource productivity increased.

### **Co-operation with Economic Actors**

The co-operation of economic actors is vital for optimising eco-efficiency in the utilisation of raw materials and in the production of goods and services. ACE welcomes the fact that the Commission wishes to explore the modalities for such cooperation via the development of sectoral plans for different resource users. However, it will be important to set clear ground rules at the outset to ensure that this cooperation will actually contribute to attaining the Strategy's objectives.

A further potential benefit of increased sectoral dialogue would be strengthened coherence between EU RTD efforts and the Strategy's objectives. Similar benefits could also accrue from greater coherence with the Environmental Technology Action Plan (ETAP).



## Monitoring and Reporting

ACE notes the intention of the Commission to bring forward aggregate indicators for measuring and reporting the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy by 2008. The beverage carton industry has extensive experience with respect to the measurement of its resource productivity and environmental impacts and fully supports efforts to make more transparent both the use of resources and their environmental impacts.

## Coordination with Sectoral Plans and Programmes

Sustainable management and the use of natural resources, particularly those within the EU territories, can be accomplished via specific actions, e.g. resource plans and programmes which are current or in the process of development. For the beverage carton industry and especially the board producer members, coherence between the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources Strategy and a number of actions is essential to avoid conflicting objectives and potential extra costs.

Three such plans and programmes deserve mention here. The proposed EU Action Plan on Sustainable Forest Management, the proposed Biodiversity Strategy and the proposed Action Plan on Biomass Energy. All of these are important initiatives in their own right and all relate to a renewable resource – the forest. However, they need to be carefully shaped and coordinated to maximise their contribution to the sustainable use of forest resources and the livelihoods dependent on them. This is best achieved by adopting a sectoral dimension to resource use as proposed by the Strategy. ACE and its member companies would be willing to assist the Commission in further developing this approach.

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## About ACE

ACE - The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment - represents leading beverage carton packaging manufacturers and their main European paperboard suppliers in EU environmental policy developments.

Beverage carton producers Tetra Pak, SIG Combibloc and Elopak develop manufacture and market systems for the processing, packaging and distribution of food, and we produce packaging material at 23 plants in Europe.

About 98% of the paperboard used by ACE members in beverage cartons in Europe is produced by Stora Enso in Skoghall (Sweden) and Imatra (Finland), AssiDomän in Frövi (Sweden) and Korsnäs in Gavle (Sweden).

These paper mills producing paperboard for beverage cartons and the beverage carton manufacturers in ACE together employ close to 30,000 people worldwide.