

ACE VISIT: FOLLOWING THE JOURNEY OF BEVERAGE CARTONS FROM COLLECTION TO RECYCLING

On the 10th of May, the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) organised a field visit to a waste sorting centre and a recycling plant. Representatives from EU Member States, European Commission and other organisations were able to discover the journey made by used beverage cartons, from sorting and recycling, to use in new products.

"Achieving the objectives of the Circular Economy Action Plan and the ambitious packaging waste recycling targets proposed by the Commission means stepping up action on all packaging waste streams, including beverage cartons. This in turn requires improving their separate collection, ensuring sufficient capacity of appropriate recycling facilities and 'circular solutions' for all materials contained in composite packaging," says Sarah Nelen, Head of Unit Waste Management & Secondary Materials in the Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission.

Renewi - based in Houthalen, Belgium - collects lightweight packaging and sorts it into pure and high quality 'ready to recycle' materials. Luc Van den Bergh, Sector Manager Authorities, comments: *"For us at Renewi, waste is a state of mind, an opportunity. We want to give new life to the waste we collect. We transform a wide range of used materials into useful products and raw materials for our customers, like recycled paper, metal, plastic, beverage cartons, or glass."*

Participants also learned about innovation supporting recycling of beverage cartons. Van Houtum BV - based in Swalmen, the Netherlands - applies innovative technologies to produce tissue for household and industrial uses and has a vision to establish circular models for raw materials.

Bas Gehlen, Managing Director, explains: *"Our tissue mill has been recycling used beverage cartons for the production of hygienic paper since 2016. Innovation and partnerships are key to achieve the true potential of a circular economy."*

"We hope our visit demonstrated our industry's commitment to recycling. Collection is the prerequisite to any type of recycling. Legislation, in turn, is crucial to ensure that packaging is collected for recycling," adds Annick Carpentier, ACE Director General.

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Note to Editors

ABOUT ACE

ACE provides a European platform for beverage carton manufacturers and their paperboard suppliers to benchmark and profile cartons as renewable, recyclable and low carbon packaging solutions. Engaging with stakeholders and partners seeking high environmental stewardship, it contributes expertise to EU policy, legislation and standard-setting.

ACE members include beverage carton producers Tetra Pak, SIG Combibloc and Elopak; they develop, manufacture and market systems for the packaging and distribution of food, and produce packaging material at 20 plants in Europe. A great majority of the paperboard used by ACE members in beverage cartons in Europe is produced by Stora Enso in Skoghall (Sweden) and Imatra (Finland), and BillerudKorsnäs in Gävle and Frövi (Sweden), who are also members of ACE.

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