

Repacar: WSR revision could "create captive market" for recovered paper

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Repacar's Manuel Dominguez raised concerns that lower prices resulting from export restrictions could be "the end of our industry".

Representatives of the European recovered paper industry said the proposal for revising the EU Waste Shipments Regulation (WSR) was a threat to their businesses and to the free market at the Bureau of International Recycling's spring convention in Barcelona last week.

BIR paper division president Francisco Donoso of Dolaf Servicios Verdes highlighted the global role played by Asian paper manufacturers who produced over half (54 per cent) of the world's 340 million tonnes of paper and board output in 2020. At the same time, they consumed around 95 million tonnes of recovered paper, 45 per cent of the total and almost twice as much as European paper manufacturers (53 million tonnes).

Given the importance of the Asian market for European recovered paper traders, proposals that would effectively restrict EU exports to non-OECD countries were "a threat" to the sector, particularly if "we are not able to make it a little more flexible than the current project". As currently proposed, "Exports to Asia are going to be much more difficult than at the moment," said Mr Donoso.

Also raising industry concerns was Manuel Domínguez, director of the Spanish paper recycling association Repacar, who presented an overview of the legislative proposal's most important provisions. He expects the new rules for exports from the EU to countries outside the OECD to become binding in 2026. Unless the revision proposal underwent significant modification, Mr Domínguez argued that there was "a great risk of creating a captive market within the European countries", with a lower price level which could be "the end of our industry".

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