

# PRESS RELEASE

1 October 2024



7th European Paper Bag Day

## Future in your hands

**Stockholm, 1 October 2024:** A recent global survey found that environmental concerns from consumers are increasing. And they are willing to change behaviour.<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the 7th European Paper Bag Day, The Paper Bag initiative would like to call on everyone to make their own contribution for a positive change, like using, reusing and recycling paper carrier bags or encouraging others to do so. “Future in your hands” is the overall theme of this year’s edition. It takes place around 18 October 2024, and is celebrated with different activities all over Europe.

In a world facing changing requirements due to climate change and the scarcity of raw materials, consumers are increasingly opting for sustainable lifestyle choices. Legislation in the EU encourages change in each EU member state, including among retailers. One impressive example of how powerful consumer behaviour can be when it comes to implementing change is the steep drop by 78% of single-use plastic bags used in Sweden between 2018 and 2023.<sup>2</sup> “Paper carrier bags are the perfect alternative if you forgot to bring your bag. They are produced from a renewable bio-based raw material, which means the raw material is infinite. Paper carrier bags are strong and can carry a wide range of products. They can be reused several times and after their final use easily recycled,” says Elin Gordon, Secretary General of CEPI Eurokraft. “Using paper carrier bags is an expression of a responsible lifestyle – it helps to reduce the use of fossil raw materials and plastic waste in the environment. One step of taking responsibility for the environment can be that simple – and it is a step to preserving our planet for future generations.”



“Future in your hands” is the theme of the European Paper Bag Day on 18 October 2024. Copyright: EUROSAC

### Wood – sustainable raw material

Did you know that the term sustainability was originally used in forestry? In 1713, it was first mentioned in the sense of long-term responsible use of wood as a resource in Germany.<sup>3</sup> Today’s concept of sustainable forest management – preserving forests for future generations – was developed on this basis. It includes maintaining the biodiversity, productivity, regeneration

<sup>1</sup> Bain & Company, The Visionary CEO’s Guide to Sustainability, November 2023

<sup>2</sup> Swedish environmental protection agency via weblink: <https://www.naturvardsverket.se/data-och-statistik/plast/plastbarkassar/>, retrieved: 20 August 2024

<sup>3</sup> Hannß Carl von Carlowitz, Sylvicultura oeconomica, Hauswirthliche Nachricht und Naturmäßige Anweisung zur Wilden Baum-Zucht, Erstauflage Leipzig 1713

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capacity and vitality of forests while leaving all interconnected ecosystems intact. FSC and PEFC are the best-known quality labels for wood. They guarantee that the wood for the paper carrier bags stems from sustainably managed forests. In these forests, trees are felled selectively, and new ones are planted for every harvested tree. Tree thinning ensures that the remaining trees have enough space to grow at their best. The wood from thinning is used as a raw material for paper production, as is process waste from the timber industry, such as branches and cuttings, which cannot be used for producing long-lived buildings, infrastructure projects and furniture.

## 1.8 tonnes paper recycled per second

Due to the long and strong wood fibres, the kraft paper used for high-quality paper carrier bags is very durable. The choice of glue and the construction of the handles add even more to a paper bag's strength. High-quality paper carrier bags can be reused several times. And if they are not suitable for another use anymore, they can easily be recycled in the regular paper waste stream. Europe had a high recycling rate for paper and cardboard packaging of 82.5% in 2021. Consumers who recycle their paper bags contribute to 1.8 tonnes of paper being recycled every second in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The fibres can then be used to produce new fibre-based products. "The example of a paper carrier bag demonstrates that many small choices in our everyday life can make a positive impact," says Gordon. "Each of us has the future in their hands."



High-quality paper bags are very strong and can carry a wide range of products. Copyright: Guus Baggermans on Unsplash

## 7th European Paper Bag Day

"Future in your hands" is the theme of this year's action day. With several **activities in different European countries** around 18 October, The Paper Bag initiative aims to inform retailers, brand owners and consumers about paper carrier bags as sustainable and efficient packaging that contribute to fighting climate change and plastic waste pollution so that they can make informed decisions. Everyone is invited to join the festivities and share their activities on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn using the hashtag **#EuropeanPaperBagDay**.

For further information, please visit [thepaperbag.org](https://thepaperbag.org) or contact Elin Gordon: +46 (0)70 275 7815, email: [info@thepaperbag.org](mailto:info@thepaperbag.org).

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, Recycling rates for packaging waste 2021, paper and cardboard packaging, last update: 19.10.2023

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## **The Paper Bag**

*“The Paper Bag” platform was founded in 2017 by the leading European kraft paper manufacturers and producers of paper bags. They dedicate themselves to promoting the advantages of paper packaging. “The Paper Bag” is steered by the organisations CEPI Eurokraft and EUROSAC. [thepaperbag.org](http://thepaperbag.org)*

**CEPI Eurokraft** is the European Association for Producers of Sack Kraft Paper for the Paper Sack Industry and Kraft Paper for the Packaging Industry. It has ten member companies representing a volume of 3 million tonnes of paper produced in eleven countries. [cepi-eurokraft.org](http://cepi-eurokraft.org)

**EUROSAC** is the European Federation of Multiwall Paper Sack Manufacturers. The federation represents over 80% of European paper sack manufacturers. Its members operate in 20 different countries. They produce some 5 billion paper sacks per year, representing 630,000 tonnes of paper converted in 55 plants. Sack manufacturers from all continents and bag manufacturers also contribute to the federation as corresponding members, and more than 30 suppliers (paper, film, machine or glue manufacturers) are registered as associate members. [eurosac.org](http://eurosac.org)