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## OVERVIEW ON PAPER AND BOARD RECYCLING IN EUROPE

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### Abstract

In Europe, recovered paper is a valuable raw material for the paper industry already since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, actually corresponding to half of the total use of fibres for paper and board production. The aim of this paper is to describe the present status of paper recycling in Europe and thereby to create a data basis for evaluation the results of the FP7 project “Recovered Paper Sorting by Innovative Technologies – SORT IT. The overview is based on specific questionnaires addressed to the collection companies and paper mills from country partners in SORT IT project, as well as on public data available from CEPI - Confederation of European Paper Industries and COST Action E48 - Limits of Paper Recycling. Statistics have shown that in 2008, paper was recycled at the rate of 66.6% in Europe, but there are differences between geographical regions of Europe. North Central Europe are close to maximal collection rate (75%), South-West Europe is close to average and South-East region is net importer for recovered paper and has potential to increase all indicators. The analysis of the answers to the SORT IT questionnaires intended for paper mills and collection companies has shown that only 41.8% of total RP production in SORT IT countries is sorted and manual sorting was confirmed as the dominant method. Generally it was evidenced that further increase of collection rate will request the exploitation of marginal sources from which material was not normally collected because of high contamination. This means that a special attention should be paid to development and improvement of the collection / sorting systems and sorting techniques.

*Key words:* collection rate, paper and board recycling, recycling rate, recovered paper, sorting, utilization rate

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