

## Europen hits back on sustainable packaging charge

By Rory Harrington, 25-Jan-2010

**The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment (Europen) has rejected the charge that the packaging sector hasn't done enough to reach a consensus over what constitutes sustainable packing.**

Julian Carroll, managing director of the body, said the packaging industry was undertaking a huge amount of work on the matter but added the complexity of the issue, as well as the disparate nature and number of industry sectors, meant it was just not possible to formulate a single definition.

The Europen chief was responding to a study published last week by PricewaterhouseCoopers entitled *Sustainable packaging: threat or opportunity?* The report warned that the pressure for more sustainable packaging was set to increase but that in order to influence the agenda, the packing sector must become more proactive in developing a harmonised definition of what sustainable packing is and how sustainability can be measured.

### Ongoing work

Carroll said: "While many of the points the report contains are pertinent to the subject matter we are disappointed that the researches have failed to identify and portray an up-to-date picture of how the packaging value chain is presently managing this issue.

*"Contrary to what the report suggests, there is a great deal of work already completed and further work in progress among packaging value chain companies on the issue of packaging and its place in the sustainability agenda."*

In May 2009, the trade body, in conjunction with ECR Europe, published a guide for corporate decision makers entitled *Packaging in the Sustainability Agenda*. Its contents were developed and endorsed by a group of major retailers, packaged goods manufacturers, packaging material suppliers and packaging manufacturers, such as Tetra Pak, STI Group and Ball Packaging Europe, said Carroll. The guide concluded there is no such thing as inherently sustainable packaging and instead sets out clear guidance and practical advice on how packaged goods companies can work to ensure that their packaging choices can contribute to the achievement of their corporate sustainability goals.

### Consumer Goods Forum

A second major project to evaluate sustainable packaging was launched in late 2008 by the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF). The initiative aims to develop common definition and principles of metrics for packaging in the context of sustainable development. The goal of the project is to improve understanding and communication on the contribution of packaging to sustainable development. Europen and the US-based Sustainable Packaging Coalition are providing supporting technical information, added Carroll.

The list of participants in the CGF's Global Packaging Projects includes a host of world-leading players from the packaging sector, including Dupont, Tetra Pak, O-I, Crown Europe and Sealed Air. Manufacturing giants such as Nestle, Unilever, Coca-Cola and Kellogg have been joined by retailers like Walmart, Carrefour, Tesco and Kroger.

A fourth meeting of the working team took place last week in Toronto with over 70 delegates in attendance.

*"To suggest that the packaging industry has no clear consensus about what constitutes sustainable packaging is, in the opinion of Europen, not supported by the present facts", said Carroll. "Therefore Europen strongly recommends that PricewaterhouseCoopers researchers expand their research on this topic in order to present their clients with a more accurate and up-to-date appraisal of the current situation."*

Copyright - Unless otherwise stated all contents of this web site are © 2000/2010 - Decision News Media SAS - All Rights Reserved - For permission to reproduce any contents of this web site, please email our Syndication department: [Administration & Finance](#) - Full details for the use of materials on this site can be found in the [Terms & Conditions](#)