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COVID-19: flexo printing proven as an essential service

The fast spread of COVID-19 across Europe has understandably consumed the minds and activities of governments, businesses, and consumers. Ensuring the continued supply of essential products like food and medicines has become the top priority during the extended period where people have been instructed to stay at home.

Increased pressures on packaging producers

Flexo print is the dominant technology for printed packing in Europe. As a result of people facing weeks at home, many have changed their shopping habits, impacting the needs of supermarkets to fill their shelves - consequently adding pressure on the supply chain to deliver.

Packaging protects and extends the self-life of food, whilst also providing information on the product. Similarly, the printed elements of packaging for medicine instruct people how to use them safely. Therefore, it is now clearer than ever before that Europe depends on the packaging value chain, of which flexo printers are at the heart.

Supply chain for solvents and border controls

FTA Europe made a [joint statement](#) with Intergraf, which represents Europe's printing industry, to call attention to shortages and price increases of essential solvents. Namely: synthetic ethyl alcohol and IPA. This is due to increasing production of medical disinfectants which can be made using the same solvents. Printers have a specific need for synthetic ethanol and IPA, and FTA Europe is working to draw attention to the fact that disinfectants can be produced using alternative solvents, whereas printed packaging cannot. The campaign has successfully pressured the

Belgian government to lift restrictions that were introduced to encourage disinfectant production. FTA Europe and our members will continue work at EU and national level on this problem.

Another pressing issue for the flexo value chain has been the prospect of delays due to border closures. The European Commission has issued guidance to the Member States to ensure minimal disruption, [here](#), and FTA Europe has joined calls from industry to ensure the free flow of the transport of goods and raw materials for manufacturing industries.

FTA Europe Diamond Awards postponed

Another major impact of the crisis has been the mass cancellation of events. This unfortunately includes FTA Europe's Diamond Awards, which was due to take place in June 2020. We have taken the decision to postpone the Diamond Awards until **22 April 2021**. We want to prioritise the safety of participants and hold the event at a time when this will not be compromised. It will be held at the same location, the Intercontinental Hotel in Düsseldorf, during the first week of drupa which has also been rescheduled. The judging session to select the finalists will take place in **October 2020**.

Looking to the future

Europe's energies will be focussed on dealing with the COVI-19 crisis for the foreseeable future. The implications for industry could be significant, and the true extent may not be realised for many months. Nevertheless, the flexo industry's products are essential for the functioning of society, and FTA Europe will continue to promote and protect our companies.

Whats the latest at FTA Europe?

Happy birthday FTA Europe!

FTA Europe celebrated its 5th anniversary on 5 February 2020. It was a great opportunity to reflect on the past few years and set goals for the future. More from President Sante on this here: <http://bit.ly/2Ur4UtK>



Years of FTA Europe



Diamond Awards: new date, new sponsors

The effects of COVID-19 for the flexo industry and Europe as a whole are, as stated on the previous page, a serious situation. Nevertheless, with the new date of **22 April 2021** secured for the Diamond Awards, FTA Europe is positively focussing on the future. We are also very pleased to announce three new sponsors. **SOMA** and **Sinapse Print Simulators** as Gold Sponsors, and **Allstein GmbH** as a Silver Sponsor. Thank you to all our generous sponsors for your continued support!

President meets with national members

A key part of FTA Europe's work is to bring the flexo industry in Europe together to achieve common objectives. Over the past months,

President Sante has travelled to FTA Europe's member associations in France, Sweden, and Spain. This ensures that FTA Europe is kept closely informed of key issues at national level, and maintains regular communication on our strategic goals.

New Technical Committee

A particular focus of these discussions has been the establishment of FTA Europe's Technical Committee. This committee will be the Board's source of expert knowledge. Members have been appointed by each national association. These people will advise the board on projects for FTA Europe and on developments in the industry.

New Associate Member category

Another exciting development has been the creation of a new member category: the Associate Flexo Group (AFG). Flexo printing companies in countries which are not currently FTA Europe members, or pre-press or supplier company associations are eligible. The aim of this new category is to make the flexo industry in Europe stronger and better connected. More information on how to join here: <http://bit.ly/375Qymg>

Commercial Print Conference

FTA Europe was also present at the Commercial Print Conference in February, organised by its sister association Intergraf. This event was an excellent opportunity to network with the wider printing industry, and to hear the latest updates on the commercial print market. The event had a particular focus on sustainability and the circular economy which are essential considerations for printers.

2021 FTA Europe Diamond Awards

22 April 2021

InterContinental Hotel Düsseldorf

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

DIAMOND SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSOR (1 LEFT!)
€ 5,000

Appear in promotional material, both online and in print; have visibility during the ceremony; 1 X 10-seat table; present to one winner; banner at the ceremony showing logo

SILVER SPONSOR
€ 2,500

Visibility in the promotional material and during the award ceremony; 10-seat table for € 1,350 + VAT OR 2 free tickets

COCKTAIL AND AFTER PARTY SPONSOR (X3)
€ 2,500

Visibility in the promotional material; visibility during the cocktail reception (preceding and following the ceremony)

If you are interested in sponsoring the ceremony or for further information, please contact your national flexo association or Annie Scanlan ascanlan@fta-europe.eu

Individual tickets: € 185 + VAT

10-seat table: € 1,500 + VAT

www.fta-europe.eu

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ASSOCIATION

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Events

2020

TBC/2020 E-Pack Europe, Amsterdam, NL

TBC/2020 ATEF Graphispack's national flexo awards, ES

JUNE/JULY

30/06 - 02/07/2020 WCPC course 'Advanced Manufacture by Printing & Functional Applications'

SEPTEMBER

NEW DATE 17/09/2020 EFIA's national flexo awards, York, UK

OCTOBER

TBC/10/2020 Diamond Awards judging session, Brussels, BE

NEW DATE 22/10/2020 Absolute Flexo Future 2020 - Flexo technology in 2025, Halmstad, SE

2021

MARCH - APRIL

NEW DATE 25/02 - 03/03/2021

InterPACK, Düsseldorf, DE

NEW DATE 20-30/04/2021

drupa 2020, Düsseldorf, DE

NEW DATE 22/04/2021

FTA Europe Diamond Awards, Düsseldorf, DE

FTA Europe supports flexo education this summer

Rapid change in the technology used by printing companies as well as the types of products demanded by consumers drives the need to ensure there are properly skilled people available to work.

FTA Europe is proud to announce its support a course taking place this summer. Between 30 June and 2 July 2020, the WCPC holds the course 'Advanced Manufacture by Printing & Functional Applications'. It takes place in Swansea, UK.

Printing is in the midst of a transformational rebirth

Advanced functional nano and micro materials will be drivers in the 4th industrial revolution. Printing is in the midst of a transformational rebirth by delivering benefits across a multitude of industries, helping to increase technical performance and reducing cost. There is a need to understand the underpinning science and technology of these printing process.

This Workshop provides a comprehensive overview of "wet" technologies for printing functional materials, sensors and large area electronics, together with the methodologies for quality control and product evaluation.

Registration: <http://bit.ly/2TkTUwU>

EU Policy Corner

In a city like Brussels which runs on meetings and events, the abrupt halt to this way of working due to COVID-19 has been disruptive. It must not be forgotten, however, that only a few weeks ago, the European Commission put forward three strategies for the future of Europe's industry, SMEs, and the circular economy. The strategies contain both legislative and non-legislative proposals, aimed at stimulating the economy and enhancing competitiveness. There is a strict focus on the so-called "twin digital and ecological transitions". Therefore, the strategies all interlink. Below are the key actions announced by the European Commission which will impact the flexo printing industry. For more detail on any of these issues, please contact info@fta-europe.eu. A high quality PDF can also be viewed and downloaded on [our website here](#).

	DIGITAL TRANSITION	ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION	SKILLS & INVESTMENT
NON-LEGISLATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital education plan Support for data cloud infrastructure and robotics development SME Digital Crash Courses Digital volunteers for SMEs Increasing number of Digital Innovation Hubs across EU Digital tracking of resources used in production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Advisors for SMEs through the Enterprise Europe Network Green Deal Investment Plan Big Buyers and Networks Initiative to promote sustainable products Chief Trade Enforcement Officer: sustainability in trade deals with third countries High level exchanges between Member States on the circular economy; stepping up of regional, local, national and EU cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Skills Agenda for Europe with dedicated SMEs component Pact for Skills & European Education Area Gender balance in industry Invest EU Identification of industrial ecosystems for investment Industrial Forum, toolboxes, knowledge sharing Info Portal for SMEs for opportunities in trade deals
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up to the European Data Strategy: common data spaces and fair data economy Increasing uptake of crypto assets by SMEs through a new Digital Finance Strategy European Data Space for Smart Circular Applications Implementation of Single Digital Gateway with focus on SMEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable chemicals strategy Sustainable product policy: new principles; recycled content; restricting 'single-use'; incentives for sustainability performance Review Ecodesign Directive Revision EU consumer law for circularity: eco labels + requirement to substantiate environmental claims EU taxonomy for "green" investments & renewed Strategy for Sustainable Investments Review of essential requirements of packaging (recyclability, re-use) Labelling to facilitate sorting recyclable materials + for compostables and bio plastics Rules for recycled content in food contact materials Waste reduction targets & harmonisation of separate waste schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan on the Capital Markets Union to diversify sources of funding New labels for products which have SME friendly supply chains Support for Member States implementing Directives on preventative restructuring and Second Chance & Directive on Late Payments
	Review of all new and existing legislation to reduce burdens on SMEs. EU SME Envoy to filter new initiatives.		

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Industry News

Four printers give their view on the COVID-19 crisis

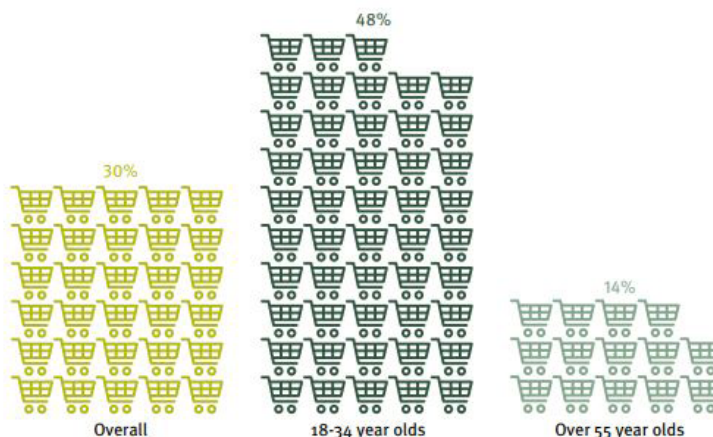
Grafkom has published an interview with four printers on how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting their businesses and how they are handling it. Read the interview: <https://bit.ly/3an92jJ>.

Consumer confusion over green claims

Think tank and charity Green Alliance has produced a report containing insights from the packaging industry, including brands, in regards to the pressure to become more sustainable. They use surveys to show the public concern about plastics in particular and that people are switching brands due to the packaging. Interviews with industry showed that the public is very confused about what 'bio-based,' 'compostable' and 'biodegradable' mean.

Read the report: <https://bit.ly/2yockoH>

Percentage of shoppers claiming to have switched their regular food brands because of their attitude to packaging



© Green Alliance, January 2020

Flexible packaging plays a key role in prevention of waste and mitigation of global warming

A study by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (ifeu), commissioned by Flexible Packaging Europe (FPE), has found that "flexible packaging is a more effective route to resource efficiency and reducing carbon footprint than using rigid packaging formats or focusing entirely on recycling". Read more: <https://bit.ly/39nbwgs>

Robotics solving packaging challenges

This article discusses how robotics will help address current problems with packaging and meet consumer demand through greater customisation potential, faster turnaround times and creating unusual packaging. Read more: <https://bit.ly/39z2OvI>

Personalisation and augmented reality is the future

"Consumers today are increasingly craving immersive, real-life experiences." Nielsen presents its global survey which indicates what the future holds: solutions to simplify the end customer's life; immersive shopping experiences; and more individualisation of products. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3awWshR>