NEWS FLASH

2025 **AUGUST**

INTERGRAF

New EU Regulation on Political Advertising: what it means for printers

In 2024, the European Union adopted Regulation (EU) 2024/900 on the transparency and targeting of political advertising. This legislation, which applies to all forms of political advertising, both online and offline, aims to increase transparency by ensuring that citizens can clearly identify political advertising and the entities behind it. The Regulation will enter into application on 10 October 2025.

Printing companies may fall under the scope of the Regulation if they are directly involved in the design or dissemination of political advertisements. This includes activities such as designing campaign materials or managing direct mail distribution. In such cases, printers will be considered political advertising service providers and will be required to comply with specific obligations under the Regulation. These obligations include ensuring that contractual arrangements are in line with the Regulation's requirements, maintaining records related to political advertising services provided, and transmitting relevant information to the publishers of the advertisement.

Printing companies that are not directly involved in these activities, such as those printing pre-approved materials, will not bear direct obligations under the Regulation. However, they may play a supporting role in helping clients meet compliance requirements for printed materials.

While the Regulation outlines general requirements, an Implementing Regulation will provide detailed specifications, including the required labelling format for printed political advertisements.

A dedicated factsheet outlining printers' obligations is now available upon request to members of Intergraf.

For now, printing companies working with political clients are encouraged to review their service offerings and contractual practices in light of the upcoming requirements.

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European paper recycling hits 75.1% in 2024

The European Paper Recycling Council (EPRC) has published its latest monitoring report, confirming a recycling rate of 75.1% for 2024. This figure reflects continued progress along a consistent multi-annual trajectory. It confirms that the paper sector remains firmly on course to meet its voluntary target of achieving a 76% recycling rate by 2030.

"The European market for paper recycling is well-functioning, and we are on track to meet our self-imposed recycling target of 76% in Europe by 2030. Paper is the most recycled material in the EU, and Europe's paper sector is setting global benchmarks for recycling rates, which is something I am very proud of. This is the result of a long-standing commitment: the paper industry and its suppliers have been pioneers of circularity, defining as early as 2002 a common understanding andstrategybimproving pape recycling."

Valeria Salvadori, Chair of the EPRC

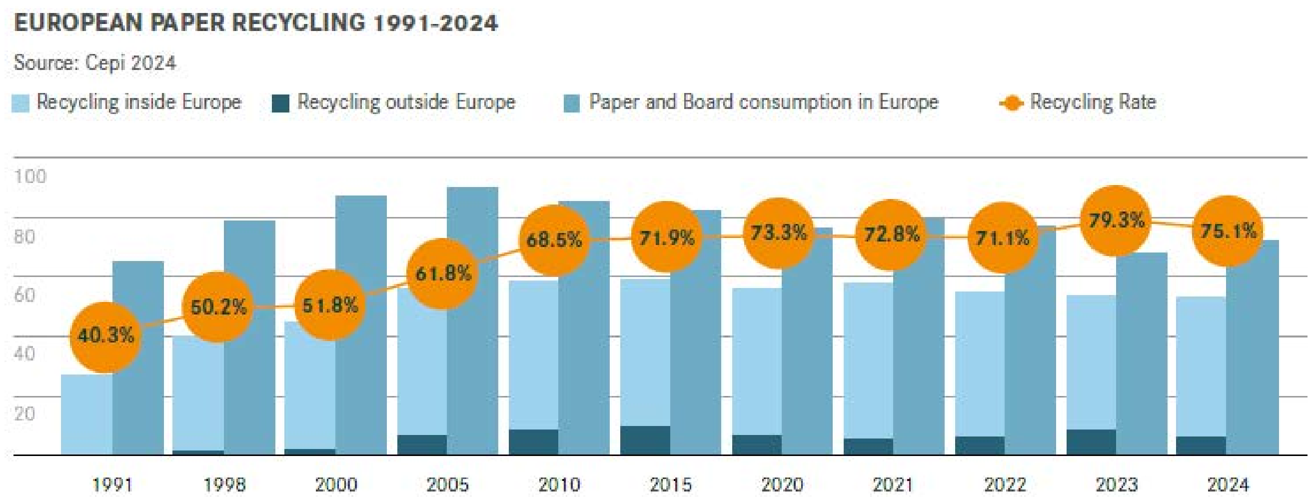
Although the rate represents a slight decrease compared to the 2023 figure, the earlier uptick was attributed to a temporary destocking trend observed across various industrial sectors. The 2024 result still demonstrates the underlying strength of the internal market for paper for recycling and is in line with the sector's long-term progress.

The recycling rate is calculated as the ratio between recycled used paper including the net trade of Paper for Recycling (PfR) and the consumption of new paper and board.

Europe continues to lead globally in paper recycling, with North America ranking second at 68.2%. Most European countries already exceed a 70% recycling rate.

Among all packaging materials, paper-based packaging stands out with the highest recycling rate, reaching 83.1%.

The EPRC emphasises that further improvements depend on strengthening collection systems, enhancing the recyclability of paper products, and supporting waste prevention through eco-design. Innovation across the paper value chain and stronger collaboration among stakeholders remain essential to tackling the systemic challenges of recycling.



Report on UK door drops in 2024: fewer items, greater impact, renewed advertiser confidence

The 2024 DMA x JICMAIL Door Drops Report reveals that while UK door drop volumes and spend declined, the channel's effectiveness and strategic value have grown. Total volumes fell 13% to 3.27 billion items, and spend decreased to £171.7 million from £194.9 million in 2022, mainly due to high print costs and Royal Mail industrial action in early 2023. However, advertiser confidence began to rebound in the second half of the year, with modest growth in Q3 and Q4.

Despite lower volumes, the number of advertisers using door drops rose by 3%, from 3,054 to 3,155. This reflects a shift toward smarter, data-driven targeting over traditional mass-distribution tactics. As a post-cookie solution, door drops are gaining recognition for their transparency, accountability, and acquisition potential.

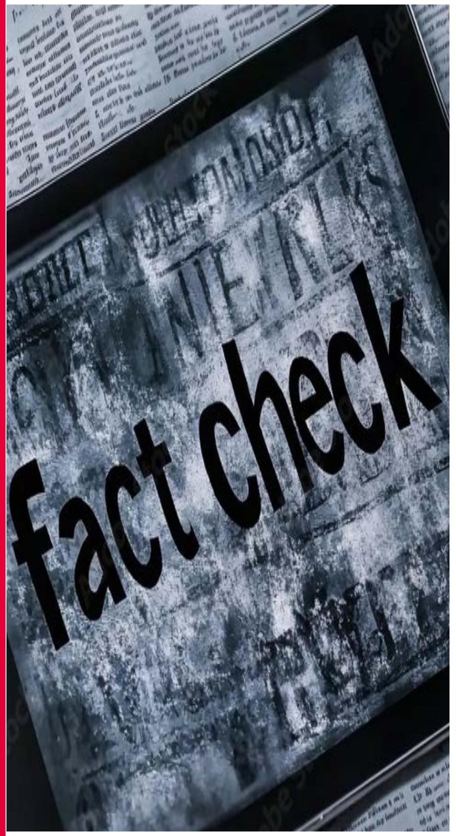
Effectiveness metrics also improved. Purchase rates rose from 2.3% to 2.8%, voucher use from 1.4% to 1.8%, and website visits hit 2.6%. In-store visits grew to 1.3%, and word-of-mouth sharing increased from 7.9% to 8.9%, underscoring the channel's impact on brand discovery.

Engagement strengthened throughout 2023, with average read time rising from 52 to 62 seconds in Q4. At just £0.07 per minute of attention, door drops remain one of the most cost-efficient media channels, second only to TV.

Each UK household received an average of 2.23 items per week. Every item was shared with 1.05 people and interacted with 3.05 times, generating over 3 million impressions per million items. Engagement grew among under-35s and ABC1 households, highlighting door drops' reach beyond traditional demographics.

Sector trends varied: financial services, local government, retail, and tradespeople increased activity, while restaurants, telecoms, and supermarkets reduced spend. A shift in creative formats was also observed, with more use of envelopes and booklets over standard leaflets.

Despite economic pressures and evolving media habits, door drops continue to deliver accountable, high-impact performance. As digital advertising faces growing scrutiny, door drops remain a proven, scalable way to engage consumers at home.



Gen Z reaffirms trust in professional journalism

Contrary to popular belief that Generation Z is disengaging from established news media, recent US research indicates a growing reliance on professional journalism, particularly in moments of uncertainty. Studies from Raptive and Common Sense Media highlight a clear trend: while social media remains central to Gen Z's daily communication, trusted journalism continues to serve as a vital source of clarity and credibility.

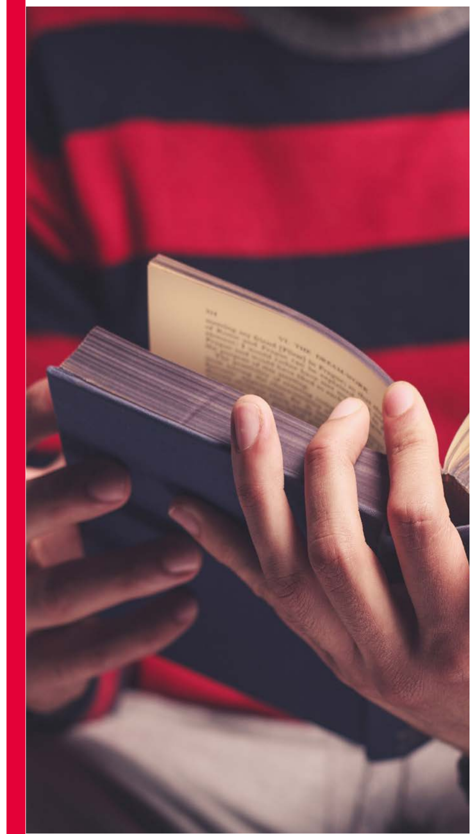
A recent example from Owasso High School in Oklahoma illustrates this shift. Following the unexpected death of a student, misinformation quickly spread on social media. In response, many students actively sought out reliable reporting from established news outlets, demonstrating a conscious effort to separate fact from speculation.

This behaviour aligns with findings from media literacy expert Hannah Covington. She observes a growing awareness among young people about the risks of misinformation—particularly AI-generated content and manipulated visuals. Sixteen-year-old Andie Murphy exemplifies this shift: once an avid follower of influencer content, she deleted her Instagram account due to concerns about misinformation and now consults multiple reputable news sources to verify facts.

Raptive's 2025 report reveals that nearly half (49%) of Gen Z respondents verify online information by turning to credible sources, and 55% express greater trust in established experts than in influencers. Common Sense Media similarly reports a rising scepticism among teens toward synthetic media, further reinforcing the value of verified information.

Covington also notes that teens are increasingly holding each other accountable, fact-checking within their own networks and promoting a culture of shared accuracy. While Gen Z may not engage with traditional news daily, they consistently return to trusted journalism—such as CNN or the Associated Press—when faced with complex or personal stories.

Rather than rejecting traditional media, Gen Z appears to be redefining its relationship with it. Their engagement is intentional, issue-driven, and rooted in a strong desire for trustworthy information in a rapidly evolving media environment.



German book market sees decline in first half of 2025

The German book market experienced a noticeable downturn in June 2025, with revenues across the main distribution channels such as stationary bookstores, e-commerce, railway bookshops, department stores, and electronics & drugstores falling by 7.5% compared to the same month in 2024. The decline is largely attributed to fewer trading days this year, as holidays such as Pentecost and Corpus Christi occurred in June rather than May, as was the case last year.

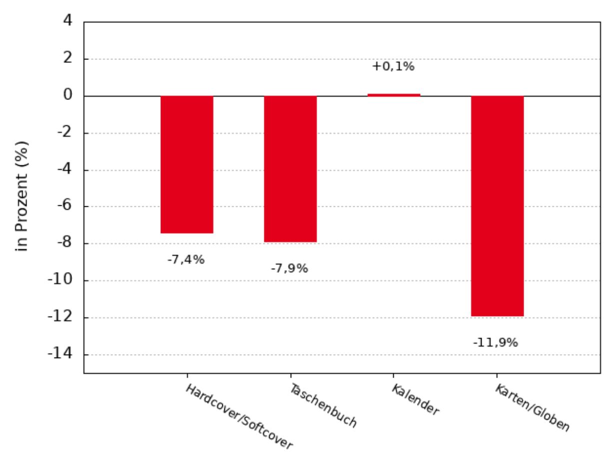
The number of units sold in June dropped by 9.4%, while the average price paid per book increased by 2.1% to €15.57. Despite this slight upward trend in prices, it was not enough to offset the sharp drop in volume, resulting in a significant decline in turnover.

Over the first half of 2025, the market generated 3.3% less revenue than in the same period in 2024. Unit sales fell by 6.1%, while average prices rose by 2.9%. Physical bookstores performed slightly below the overall market in June, reporting an 8.4% drop in turnover and an 11% decline in sales volume. Cumulatively, turnover in this segment from January to June was 2.9% lower than in the previous year, with prices increasing by 3.6%.

All major product categories reported declines in June. Fiction, the largest category by market share, was down 6.0%. Children's and young adult books fell by 6.2%, while non-fiction declined by 3.9%. Scientific and technical titles saw the steepest decline at 20.3%. However, fiction was the only category to post growth over the first half of the year, with a modest 0.9% increase compared to 2024.

Sales by edition format followed a similar trend. Hardcover and softcover books saw a 7.4% decline, paperbacks were down 7.9%, and globes/maps dropped by 11.9%. Calendar sales held steady, with a minimal increase of 0.1% in June, following strong performance in May.

Looking ahead, the traditionally stronger second half of the year may bring renewed momentum, especially during the back-to-school and holiday periods. The market will be watching closely to see whether this seasonal uplift will be enough to balance the negative results of the first six months.



Nitrocellulose shortage impacts ink and varnish supply across Europe

A growing scarcity of nitrocellulose (NC) is affecting industrial sectors across Europe, particularly the production of inks and varnishes. The shortage is linked to Europe's increased commitment to military rearmament, with NC now being prioritised for defence-related applications.

Nitrocellulose is a key raw material in many ink and varnish formulations. However, as military demand rises, industrial users are facing constrained supply and significant price increases. Some companies have received quota estimates, but these do not guarantee actual delivery due to limited production capacity in Europe and the prioritisation of military-grade NC.

In countries where NC production is state-controlled because of its military significance, availability for industrial applications has been further reduced. As a result, manufacturers of NC-based inks and varnishes are struggling to secure enough raw material, making production increasingly difficult.

Industry customers may face both rising costs and disruptions in supply. Companies are strongly encouraged to contact their suppliers for specific details and to plan accordingly.

EVENTS

- Intergraf Directors' Conference 2025, 13-16 September, The Hague, the Netherlands
- Sectoral Social Dialogue for the graphical industry Plenary in Brussels, 25 November 2025.

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