

## Embracing implementation and engagement: Intergraf's outlook for the printing industry in 2026

As the printing industry moves into 2026, the focus shifts decisively from legislative uncertainty to implementation and strategic engagement. After several years of intense regulatory activity at EU level, the year ahead will require printers and their supply chains to translate policy decisions into workable, day-to-day practices while continuing to adapt to evolving market expectations, sustainability goals and technological change.

For Intergraf and its members, 2026 represents a year of pragmatic action, targeted support and efforts to improve industry's visibility and contribution to the society at the EU level, combining regulatory guidance with high-level dialogue and sector-wide collaboration.

Given the exclusion of a large share of printed products from its scope, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) will gradually lose its centrality for the printing industry over the course of 2026. Following the one-year postponement adopted in late 2025, printing companies that remain affected by the Regulation will nevertheless be expected to finalise their compliance systems as the EUDR moves closer to full application.

The European Commission has indicated that its focus will be firmly on implementation rather than legislative revision. Intergraf will continue to assist members through practical guidance, training initiatives and structured dialogue with EU institutions.

Alongside its regulatory work, Intergraf will place strong emphasis on industry dialogue, thought leadership and international cooperation in 2026.

On 19 February 2026, Intergraf will organise Shaping the Future with Books 2026 in Brussels, bringing together printers, publishers, policymakers and experts to explore the future of books, reading and printed content in a rapidly evolving cultural and regulatory environment. Find out more about the event and register here. Later in the year, the industry will gather for Print

Matters 2026, which will take place in Budapest. Combining Intergraf's General Assembly with a high-level conference, Print Matters 2026 will provide a key platform for discussing policy developments, market trends and strategic priorities for the European printing sector.

In addition, Intergraf will continue its work in the security printing domain through Currency+Identity Conference 2026, scheduled to take place in Copenhagen. The event will celebrate its 50th anniversary and focus on developments in currency, identity documents and secure print, addressing technological innovation, resilience and trust in an increasingly digital world.

In a year where regulatory obligations intersect with market transformation, collaboration across the value chain will be essential. Intergraf's role in 2026 will remain clear: to translate policy into practice, provide clarity where rules are complex, and ensure that the voice of the printing industry is heard at both EU and international level through its campaigns like Keep Me Posted EU and #PrintAhead

As the industry enters this next phase, 2026 offers not only challenges, but also a renewed opportunity to demonstrate print's contribution to sustainability, security, culture and trusted communication in Europe.

## European Parliament adopts changes to the EUDR

As expected, the European Parliament has adopted today in Plenary the changes to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). The Council of the European Union is expected to formally adopt the text via written procedure. The final legislation will then be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Following the adoption, the European Commission organised an information meeting to present the changes to the Regulation and outline next steps for implementation.

The Commission confirmed that the existing FAQ and Guidance documents will require updates. These revised documents are expected to be published together with the anticipated Delegated Act. No detailed timetable was provided at this stage.

Clarifications and interpretations related to unamended legal provisions will remain unchanged. For all other aspects, the FAQ and Guidance will be adapted to reflect the amended Regulation. In this context, the Commission is inviting feedback from industry, with a deadline set for the end of January.

When questioned on the treatment of re-imports into the EU (for example, EU-produced board re-imported in the form of printed packaging), the Commission acknowledged that it does not yet have a precise position and explicitly requested suggestions from stakeholders.

The Commission also sent a clear signal that its focus will remain strictly on implementation, in order to avoid creating additional legal uncertainty for companies. It confirmed that it does not intend to amend the legal text during the review process scheduled to conclude by April 2026. Instead, the Commission plans to rely on supporting instruments such as FAQs, guidance documents, and a delegated act to clarify the new legal provisions.

In parallel, the Commission is seeking to improve the functioning of the EUDR Information System and is looking for companies willing to participate in a dedicated study.

The study targets importers of EUDR products, including printers importing paper from outside the EU. It will consist of a survey followed by a brief consultation and will focus on technical aspects related to the submission of Due Diligence Statements (DDS) in the Information System.

Companies interested in participating are invited to express their interest by 9 January 2026.

## EU institutions reach provisional agreement on EU Pharmaceutical package

Following the conclusion of the trilogue negotiations, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament reached a provisional political agreement on the EU Pharmaceutical package on 11 December.

While the final consolidated text is still undergoing technical and legal review, key elements of the agreement are already clear — notably regarding patient information leaflets (PILs).

The agreement endorses a complementary approach to patient information leaflets, preserving the discretion of Member States to choose between paper-based and electronic formats. This outcome aligns with the Council's general approach and ensures continued flexibility at national level.

Importantly, the agreed text introduces a number of safeguards. These include requirements for stakeholder consultation in cases where an electronic-only (ePI-only) system may be considered. In addition, the agreement clearly allocates financial responsibility to pharmaceutical companies for any print-on-demand solutions, ensuring that access to printed information remains available to patients who need it.

The provisional agreement must now be formally endorsed by both the Council and the European Parliament. This process is expected to take place at the beginning of 2026, following the completion of the legal-linguistic review.

# Preparations in full swing for Shaping the Future with Books 2026 in Brussels

Preparations are well underway for Shaping the Future with Books 2026 conference, a dynamic, full-day conference in Brussels on 19 February 2026. This event, part of Intergraf's Shaping the Future with Print series by Intergraf, organised in partnership with Smithers, will bring together leading publishers, printers, suppliers, researchers and policymakers to explore the evolving landscape of the European book ecosystem.

The book sector is experiencing profound transformation, driven by changing reading habits, the rise of print-on-demand services, emerging sustainability frameworks, and ongoing supply-chain pressures. Against this backdrop, Shaping the Future with Books will offer a comprehensive forum to analyse trends and opportunities across the value chain. Conference topics will include the current state of the European book market, shifting consumer behaviour, the strategic role of print in a digital age, EU policies affecting books and education, sustainable production practices, new distribution and localisation models, and innovation in book design and engagement.

The programme is shaping up to feature insights from Smithers, leading academics, online book influencers, major European publishers and printers, as well as representatives from the European Commission, ensuring a rich mix of market data, expert analysis and practical case studies. A welcome cocktail on 18 February and a networking dinner on 19 February will provide further opportunities for informal dialogue and collaboration among participants.

All attendees will receive the European Book Market Report, prepared by Smithers, offering a comprehensive analysis of the latest data and trends impacting the books segment of the printing industry. Early booking for accommodation is encouraged, as a block of rooms has been secured at the Cardo Brussels Hotel at a special rate for participants, with release dates scheduled ahead of the event.

This edition builds on the success of previous Shaping the Future events, such as the 2025 Shaping the Future with Packaging conference, which attracted participants from more than 20 countries and helped advance industry knowledge and collaboration. Shaping the Future with Books 2026 promises to continue that momentum, advancing understanding of key challenges and strategic opportunities facing the European book and print ecosystem.

Registration details and the full programme is available on Intergraf website [here](#). Sponsorship opportunities are available [here](#).

## REGISTER NOW

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## Intergraf opens applications for the 2026 Young Talent Award

Intergraf is pleased to announce that applications are now open for the Intergraf Young Talent Award 2026, an initiative designed to inspire and shape the future of the graphic industry. The Award invites young talent from across Europe to share fresh perspectives with industry leaders and compete for a €3,000 prize.

The challenge for the 2026 edition reflects the profound transformation of communication as it becomes increasingly personalised, automated and insight-driven. Against this backdrop, print is evolving alongside new expectations for relevance, experience and responsibility. Candidates are invited to reflect on the opportunities ahead for print and the strategic choices needed to seize them, whether through innovation, data-enabled print solutions, cross-media integration, customer experience, or the implications of privacy and ethics in a changing marketplace. Applicants are asked to respond to the guiding question: “What opportunities do you see for print in a hyper-personalised future?”

Since 2017, the Intergraf Young Talent Award has provided a platform for young print professionals to present their vision to industry leaders, gain visibility at national and European level, and contribute to making the print industry a welcoming and future-oriented space for emerging talent.

The Award is open to students, apprentices and professionals in the graphical industry aged 25 or under from Intergraf member countries. Submissions must consist of a 3–5 page entry written in English, with visual elements welcomed to support the ideas presented, and must

be accompanied by a brief CV of no more than two pages. To ensure fairness and encourage genuine reflection, the use of AI tools for core critical thinking and creative development is strongly discouraged. Submissions must reflect the applicant’s own original ideas and analysis, and the jury may disadvantage or exclude entries that appear generic or predominantly AI-generated.

The first-place winner will receive a €3,000 award and will be invited to present their work at Print Matters 2026, which will take place in Budapest on 5 June 2026. While attendance is highly encouraged, it is not required to receive the Award, and travel and accommodation expenses will be covered. In addition, the top three participants and their work will be promoted across the pan-European print industry and shared with key stakeholders.

Applications must be submitted by 8 March 2026 and sent in English to Sergejs Mikaeljans, Communications & Events Officer at Intergraf, either by email at [smikaeljans@intergraf.eu](mailto:smikaeljans@intergraf.eu) or by post to Avenue Louise 130A, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. Further details are available in the Award brochure, and information on past editions and previous winners can be found on Intergraf’s dedicated Young Talent Award [webpage](#).





## New study highlights the enduring value of print materiality in digital collections

A new academic [study](#) published in December 2025 challenges prevailing assumptions about the digitisation of print collections, arguing that current digital platforms often overlook the material and embodied qualities that make printed artefacts meaningful. The research was conducted by researchers from the Universities of Cambridge, St Andrews, Calgary and Edinburgh.

The study examines how mass digitisation has greatly improved access to books, archives and other printed cultural materials, particularly during periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic when physical access to libraries was restricted. However, the authors argue that most digital library interfaces treat printed artefacts primarily as carriers of textual content, downplaying or erasing their physical characteristics such as size, texture, typography, binding and visual composition. As a result, digital “copies” are often presented as interchangeable and static, despite the fact that print artefacts are fundamentally material, three-dimensional objects shaped by their historical, cultural and production contexts.

To explore alternative approaches, the researchers developed an experimental prototype called Digital Bricolage, which reimagines how digitised print collections might be explored online. Instead of relying on conventional grid-based thumbnail views and text-driven filters, the prototype allows users to browse collections through spatial layouts inspired by physical interaction, such as bookshelves and piles of books. Users can explore items by visual and material attributes including colour, size, texture and thickness and rearrange them freely, mimicking the exploratory and tactile practices of working with physical collections.

The prototype was presented to 23 creative professionals, librarians,

archivists and curators, who were invited to reflect on both existing digital collection platforms and the Digital Bricolage approach. Participants consistently reported that conventional interfaces encourage passive consumption and narrowly defined search behaviours, whereas Digital Bricolage fostered curiosity, serendipity and a stronger sense of agency. Many noted that the emphasis on physical scale, material detail and spatial organisation helped them better understand the objects as real, tangible artefacts rather than abstract digital records.

Importantly for the print sector, the study reinforces a core insight long recognised by printers, publishers and cultural institutions: content cannot be separated from format. The researchers emphasise that the physical qualities of print are not decorative or secondary, but integral to how meaning is created, interpreted and remembered. By foregrounding materiality, digital platforms can support richer forms of engagement, education and cultural understanding.

While the authors acknowledge that digital interfaces can never fully replicate the experience of handling printed objects, they argue that design choices can either obscure or highlight print’s distinctive qualities. The study calls for a shift away from “one-size-fits-all” digital displays towards more experimental, embodied and context-aware approaches that respect the uniqueness of printed materials.

# Join Two Sides in celebrating Love Paper Week 2026



Love Paper Week 2026 is approaching, and Intergraf invites its members and partners across the print and paper value chain to once again take part in this positive industry-wide initiative led by Two Sides. Taking place 2-6 February 2026, Love Paper Week shines a spotlight on the sustainable, renewable and versatile qualities of print, paper and paper-based packaging, while encouraging greater public appreciation for these materials.

Building on the foundations laid in previous editions, Love Paper Week continues to grow as a collective effort to reinforce a simple but powerful message: paper is effective, trusted and environmentally responsible. Whether you are active in direct mail, publishing, packaging, security print or any other segment of the industry, your participation helps amplify this message to customers, policymakers and consumers alike.

While Love Paper Week remains a relatively young initiative, the ambition is clear: to develop it into a globally recognised annual moment for celebrating paper and print. By engaging in the 2026 edition, participants contribute to strengthening its visibility and long-term impact across markets and regions.

To support companies and organisations in promoting Love Paper Week 2026, Two Sides has prepared a range of ready-to-use communication tools, including:

- Social media materials: graphics, short videos and profile frames
- Email footers: to reinforce the message in everyday communications
- Virtual backgrounds: for online meetings and events
- Love Paper Week branding: official logos and visual assets

All materials are available via the Love Paper Week landing page and can be easily adapted to your own channels.

Participants are encouraged to download the materials, share the message through their communication channels, and invite partners and colleagues to do the same.

More information and campaign resources are available [here](#).

## EVENTS

- Event Shaping the Future with Books conference by Intergraf, Brussel, Belgium, 19 February 2026 in Brussels, Belgium. More info [here](#).
- Print Matters 2026 conference, 5 June 2026, Budapest, Hungary.

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