

#PrintAhead



Why print still matters: introducing the #PrintAhead campaign

Print is often thought of alongside digital communication, yet its role in society remains foundational. Beyond being a way to share information, printed communication supports inclusion, learning, participation, and trust in daily life. Intergraf's #PrintAhead initiative aims to highlight this continued relevance of print across Europe.

The #PrintAhead campaign focuses on how printed information contributes to education, accessibility, democratic engagement, cultural participation, and personal security—all areas where print remains a reliable and familiar medium. In a rapidly digitalising environment, not everyone has equal access to digital tools or the skills to use them; print helps bridge this digital divide and ensure information is available to all.

Research consistently shows that reading on paper can support deeper comprehension, stronger concentration, and better retention compared with screen reading, particularly for complex or informational texts. These qualities make print especially valuable in educational settings and lifelong learning.

The #PrintAhead campaign promotes a balanced view of communication in which print and digital work together.

Rather than seeing one as replacing the other, the campaign highlights how each medium brings strengths that benefit individuals, organisations, and society as a whole. Print remains deeply embedded in everyday life: supporting literacy, informing people, enabling participation in civic life, and underpinning essential services like secure documents and essential notices.

Follow #PrintAhead as Intergraf shares insights, research, and examples illustrating why printed communication continues to matter in today's world, and why it remains an important part of Europe's future.

Check out the #PrintAhead webpage on Intergraf website [here](#).



Shaping the Future with Books 2026 brings Europe's book value chain together in Brussels

On 19 February 2026, Intergraf, in partnership with Smithers, successfully hosted Shaping the Future with Books conference in Brussels. The flagship conference gathered more than 100 leaders from across the European book printing and publishing value chain, representing 22 countries, for a full day of discussion on the trends, challenges and innovations shaping the sector's future.

Bringing together publishers, printers, paper producers, suppliers, academics, policymakers and digital influencers, the conference provided a comprehensive perspective on the European book ecosystem at a time of significant structural transformation. Discussions explored evolving reading habits, the growth of digital printing and print-on-demand, sustainability requirements, digital engagement, and supply-chain resilience.

A key highlight of the programme was the presentation of the latest European book market data, offering a data-driven outlook on future developments. The European book printing market is valued at €7.8 billion in 2025, with digital printing forecast to grow steadily in the coming years, while analogue volumes are expected to decline. These figures underscore the ongoing transition within the sector and the need for strategic adaptation across the value chain.

Several sessions focused on the evolving relationship between readers and books. Speakers examined how social media trends such as BookTok are reshaping reader engagement and influencing publishing strategies. At the same time, research into reading behaviours in academic contexts highlighted the cognitive and educational value of printed materials, reinforcing the continued importance of physical books in learning and cultural development.

The conference also addressed the emotional and cognitive dimensions of reading and writing by hand, underlining the enduring relevance of print in an increasingly digital environment.



Sustainability emerged as a central theme throughout the day. Industry representatives shared practical approaches to setting science-based emission targets, engaging suppliers, and embedding measurable sustainability practices into core business strategies. Technological innovation was equally prominent, with presentations on software solutions to improve data communication along the production chain, delocalised printing models to reduce transport and warehousing costs, and the Digital Product Passport for Books as a tool to enhance transparency and efficiency.

One of the highlights of the conference was the panel discussion on value-chain cooperation and supply-chain resilience. Industry leaders from publishing, paper production and printing examined how strengthened collaboration, transparency and innovation can help the European book sector navigate market pressures and build more sustainable supply models.

Across all sessions, speakers emphasised the strategic importance of printed books in education, culture and the development of critical thinking. The discussions made clear that a resilient, innovative and sustainable European book value chain is essential to maintaining Europe's cultural foundations.

All participants will receive the exclusive European Book Market Report, prepared by Smithers and Intergraf, providing comprehensive analysis of market data and key trends affecting the books segment of the printing industry.

The event concluded with extensive networking opportunities and a conference dinner in Brussels, strengthening connections across the industry and fostering continued dialogue.





25 years of leadership: celebrating Beatrice Klose's contribution to Intergraf

This year, Intergraf marks an important milestone: 25 years of dedicated service by our Secretary General, Beatrice Klose. Beyond a professional anniversary, this moment offers an opportunity to reflect on the lasting contribution she has made to the European printing industry and to the Intergraf community.

Beatrice began working for Intergraf in Brussels in 2001 and assumed the role of Secretary General in 2003. In this position, she has ensured that the voice of the graphic industry is heard at European level while guiding the organisation through evolving policy, regulatory, and technological landscapes. Alongside leading Intergraf, she also serves as Secretary General of the World Print & Communication Forum, coordinating cooperation between printing associations worldwide and supporting global dialogue across the sector.

Her work spans EU advocacy, the development of ISO standards, the organisation of major international conferences and exhibitions, particularly in the field of security printing, and the management of certification schemes for security printers and their suppliers. Through these activities, Beatrice has played a central role in strengthening both the credibility and the future readiness of the industry.

Originally from Germany, Beatrice studied Business Administration, European Studies, and International Management in Germany and France. She has lived and worked in several countries, including France, the United States, Belgium, and her native Germany - an international background that has shaped her collaborative and outward-looking leadership style.

For a quarter of a century, Beatrice has been a steady and trusted presence within Intergraf, combining deep expertise with thoughtful leadership and a strong commitment to the people behind the industry. Under her guidance, Intergraf has grown not only as a representative voice for print in Europe, but also as a community built on trust, cooperation, and shared purpose.

Beatrice, thank you for 25 years of dedication, integrity, and commitment. Intergraf today reflects your vision and leadership, and we are grateful to continue this journey together.



European Parliament's IMCO vote raises concerns for consumer access to paper instructions

On 27 January 2026, the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee voted on Omnibus 4, focusing on the Directive on digitalisation and common specifications. The outcome has significant implications for how instructions for everyday consumer products such as hair dryers, coffee machines, mobile phones, and Bluetooth devices will be provided across Europe.

While digital instructions can function effectively in business-to-business environments, the committee's position has raised concerns regarding consumer safety, accessibility, and inclusion. For many Europeans, paper instructions are not merely a preference but a necessity that ensures safe and correct product use, immediate access to essential information, and equal access for those with limited digital skills or unreliable connectivity.

Although the proposal formally allows consumers to request paper instructions, this safeguard may prove weak in practice. Consumers may not know in advance whether printed instructions are included in the packaging, requests could depend on online-only procedures, and administrative barriers may discourage people from exercising this right. As a result, those who rely most on clear, offline information risk being disproportionately affected.

The vote also highlights a broader concern: a single digital-first approach does not suit all products or users. While digital-only instructions may be appropriate for certain professional applications, consumer products used in everyday home settings require stronger guarantees of safety, usability, and accessibility.

Following the IMCO vote, stakeholders continue to call for amendments that would preserve the availability of paper instructions for consumer products and ensure a truly people-centred digital transition—one that embraces digital solutions where they are effective while retaining print where it remains essential.



ECB emphasises a dual future: cash and digital euro side by side

In her recent address to the European Parliament during the plenary debate on the European Central Bank's Annual Report, ECB President Christine Lagarde reiterated that the future of European money is not a choice between cash and digital payments, but a balanced coexistence of both.

Lagarde began by recalling the ECB's core mandate on price stability as the essential anchor for sustainable growth, competitiveness and investment. Following the inflation surge triggered by the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, inflation has declined to 1.7% in January, with projections indicating a sustainable return to the ECB's 2% medium-term target in the coming years. Despite continued global volatility, the euro area economy has shown resilience, allowing policymakers to focus on longer-term structural priorities, including the future of money.

Lagarde strongly reaffirmed the continued importance of physical cash. She emphasised the ECB's support for legislation to ensure that euro banknotes and coins remain widely available, accessible and usable across the euro area. Cash, she stressed, is more than a payment instrument: it is a public good that guarantees inclusion, privacy and universal acceptance.

For many citizens, and particularly vulnerable groups, cash remains essential for participating fully in economic life. Preserving its role is therefore a matter of social cohesion, trust and democratic accessibility, not merely convenience. The planned introduction of a new series of euro banknotes further underlines the ECB's long-term commitment to physical currency.

At the same time, Lagarde acknowledged that without a public digital counterpart, Europe risks greater dependence on non-European private payment providers, raising concerns about sovereignty and strategic autonomy.

The proposed digital euro is designed to complement cash by ensuring universal acceptance for digital payments, maintaining high standards of privacy, and offering offline functionality to provide cash-like resilience. Built on European infrastructure, it would strengthen competition and reinforce Europe's autonomy in the payments landscape.

In Lagarde's vision, Europe's monetary future lies not in replacing cash, but in ensuring that cash and a digital euro coexist and reinforce one another, combining inclusion and tangible trust with innovation and sovereignty in a rapidly evolving economic environment.



Online Print Summit 2026 to debut new formats in Munich

The Online Print Summit (OPS) 2026 will take place on 12–13 March 2026 at the Alte Kongresshalle in Munich, introducing a refreshed concept aimed at strengthening strategic dialogue and practical exchange across the online print sector.

Under the theme “Re:Inventing Print for the On-Demand Era,” the event will explore innovation, automation, mass customisation and the future of digital print production through an expanded programme and several new interactive formats.

Among the key additions are Executive Briefings—small, solution-oriented sessions designed to provide in-depth insights and hands-on discussion—as well as C-Level Classrooms focused on strategic challenges and emerging technologies for industry leaders. A new Mind on Tap Stage will also create space for informal conversations, contextualising daily themes and encouraging participant engagement alongside the main conference agenda.

Intergraf will contribute to the programme through an intervention by Beatrice Klose, who will speak in the C-Level Classroom session “Navigating EU policies impacting the printing industry,” bringing a European policy perspective to the strategic discussions shaping the sector's future.

Bringing together decision-makers, technology providers and industry experts, OPS 2026 aims to serve once again as a central meeting point for collaboration, forward-looking debate and practical innovation within the rapidly evolving online print landscape.

Organised by zipcon consulting and Verband Druck und Medien Beratung, the summit continues to position itself as a leading European platform for shaping the future of online print.





Robotics in production print: share your experience and help shape the industry's next step

Robotics is rapidly moving from concept to reality in production print. Once seen as technology reserved for automotive assembly lines, robotic systems are now appearing in modern print environments by lifting rigid boards, stacking finished books, palletising cartons, and transferring materials between production stages.

According to Mark Boyt and David Sweetnam of Keypoint Intelligence, growing labour shortages and increasing productivity pressures are accelerating adoption. As presses become faster, the bottlenecks often occur around loading, unloading, stacking and inspection. Robotics helps reduce these touchpoints, stabilise workflows and allow skilled staff to focus on higher-value tasks. Early adopters report smoother production, improved consistency, reduced strain on employees, and in some cases, measurable gains in uptime and output.

Quality control is also benefiting. Vision-guided systems and AI-assisted inspection can improve positioning accuracy and detect defects earlier, supporting more reliable results, even in short-run and mixed-job environments where flexibility is essential.

While investment costs, integration concerns and team adaptation remain key considerations, many print businesses are finding that the return on investment can be faster than expected once systems are properly integrated.

To better understand how robotics is reshaping production print, Keypoint Intelligence is launching a new global study exploring adoption levels, investment timelines, challenges and real-world experiences. Print providers at all stages of their automation journey are encouraged to contribute their insights.

Take part in the survey [here](#) and help shape the industry outlook.



Winner of the 10th European Paper Recycling Awards announced in Brussels

The winner of the 10th edition of the European Paper Recycling Awards were [revealed](#) during a ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels, hosted by Member of the European Parliament Jeannette Baljeu. The biennial awards, organised by the European Paper Recycling Council (EPRC), recognise European projects and innovations that are transforming how paper is recycled and supporting society, industry, and public authorities in achieving higher recycling performance.

The latest EPRC data confirms that Europe's paper value chain remains firmly on track to reach a 76% recycling rate by 2030. Paper products in Europe already achieve an overall recycling rate of 75.1%, while paper-based packaging reaches 87%, outperforming other materials and setting a global benchmark. This success reflects decades of investment across collection, sorting, and recycling infrastructure—most of which now takes place locally within Europe—creating strong environmental, economic, and industrial benefits.

This year's award was presented to Mondi for its work in developing functional paper packaging with specific barrier properties that remain easy to process for recyclers. The innovation demonstrates how recyclability can be integrated at the design stage while maintaining practical industrial performance. Prototypes were tested in Mondi's recycling laboratory using the Capi testing method for conventional recycling mills, a recognised industry standard.

During the ceremony, speakers highlighted the importance of maintaining effective circular-economy policies and continued collaboration across the value chain. Jeannette Baljeu stressed that European legislation should strengthen circularity without disrupting systems that already deliver strong results. EPRC Chair

Valeria Salvadori underlined that Europe's successful recycling performance is the outcome of long-term cooperation between manufacturers, recyclers, collectors, municipalities, and brand owners, supported by the right policy framework. Accepting the award on behalf of Mondi, Elisabeth Schwaiger emphasised the role of science-based innovation in delivering packaging solutions that are sustainable by design.

Established in 2000, the European Paper Recycling Council brings together stakeholders from across the paper recycling value chain to monitor progress toward voluntary recycling targets and advance work on waste prevention, ecodesign, and research and development. Through initiatives such as the European Paper Recycling Awards, the EPRC continues to showcase innovation and reinforce Europe's global leadership in paper recycling.



Intergraf welcomes Fernando de Groot to the team

Intergraf is delighted to welcome Dilok Fernando de Groot as Event Officer & Membership Assistant, further strengthening the team's capacity across events and membership activities.

Dutch by nationality and born and raised in Phuket, Thailand, Fernando brings an international outlook shaped by both Asian and European experiences. He moved to the Netherlands in 2016 to pursue his studies and later relocated to Brussels in 2020 to complete his final internship, where he began his professional career at a global event agency. Over the past five years, he has worked in Brussels as an Event Coordinator, gaining valuable hands-on experience in organising international events and supporting diverse stakeholders.

At Intergraf, Fernando will support event teams, while also contributing to economic reports and the Economic Newsletter on the membership side. He is fluent in English and Thai and has a basic knowledge of Dutch.

We warmly welcome Fernando to the Intergraf community and look forward to his contribution in the years ahead.

EVENTS

- Print Matters 2026 conference, 5 June 2026, Budapest, Hungary. Intergraf's upcoming events are [here](#).
- The 10th [edition](#) of All in Print China is scheduled to take place from 12 to 16 October 2026 at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre. The exhibition is expected to gather more than 1,200 exhibitors and 120,000 visitors, providing an overview of developments across the printing supply chain, including digital printing, packaging technologies, materials, and related innovations. The event also offers opportunities for professional exchange, networking, and insights into trends shaping the Asian printing market.

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