

Comieco – Profile and major achievements

Comieco is the National Consortium for the Recovery and Recycling of Paper and Board Packaging, established in 1985 upon the initiative of a group of companies in the paper sector wishing to promote the concept of “ecological packaging,” Comieco was incorporated as a Consortium on October 24, 1997 – in accordance with the provisions of art. 40 of Legislative Decree No. 22/97 (also known as “Ronchi Decree”).

The main purpose of the Consortium is to achieve the paper and board packaging recycling target set by the European rules (directive 94/62/EC as amended and integrated with directive 2004/12/EC) through a strong policy for prevention (weight reduction, packaging design) and development of separate collection. Such rules provided for recycling of at least 60% of the paper and board packaging available for consumption by 2008.

From 1998 to 2014 the recycling rate grew from 37% to 80% in Italy, and today 10 tons of paper are recycled every minute.

Upon agreement with CONAI (the National Packaging Consortium), Comieco operates the collection, recycling, and recovery of paper and board packaging and of the paper and board collected separately at municipal level. Comieco enters into separate collection agreements with the Municipal Administrations and ensures the actual collection and recycling of the collected paper and board packaging through the member paper mills. Moreover, the Consortium identified a network of sorting plants capable to collect secondary and tertiary packaging from private users.

The approximately **3,300 member companies** of Comieco represent the entire paper and board packaging supply chain – **from producers** (paper mills and packaging paper and board importers) **to processors** (paper industries, manufacturers, processors, and importers of empty cellulose-based packaging) **through recoverers** that sort the paper and board obtained through separate collection at their own plants.

Separate paper and board collection ensures multiple benefits: for example, considerations for an amount of 94.66 million EUR were transferred to the Cities involved in the agreements in 2004 alone. Moreover, if paper and board collection in all circuits (municipal and private) is considered, emissions up to 10 million tons of CO₂ equivalent can be avoided in one year on average, thus contributing to fulfil the duties of Italy under the Kyoto protocol.