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Strong demand for flexible packaging industry in Europe

Flexible packaging consumption in Europe grew by 2% to around €14bn in 2017, with about the same growth rates in both Western and Eastern Europe, according to research by PCI Wood Mackenzie. Total annual production exceeded €15bn, of which 75% was accounted for from Western Europe and the remaining 25% from Eastern Europe. This region remains the most significant exporter with approximately 10% of its production consumed outside Europe. Forecasts expect growth to continue, with sales achieving nearly €16bn in Europe and global consumption reaching US\$107bn by 2022.

Healthy growth for most of the end user markets, such as coffee, pet food and fresh foods has driven production higher, according to Flexible Packaging Europe (FPE). Smaller households need more single serve options and there is continuing demand for more product varieties from consumers. This supports the general trend from rigid to flexible packaging, which offer greater convenience and fits better into today's lifestyle needs.

This trend is confirmed by further data measured in units from Euromonitor International. However, this research indicates a stagnation of consumption in confectionery while growth continues in the categories of savoury snacks, cheese, coffee, dry products and pet food.

FPE Chairman, Gérard Blatrix, commenting on the market research said, "These figures reveal a strength in depth for European flexible packaging demand and a resilience in core markets. The trend for more convenience and greater variety of formats is clearly being met by innovative flexible packaging styles. FPE and its members are committed to ensuring flexible packaging continues to be at the forefront of modern packaging solutions with a strong environmental message. The main rationale for flexible packaging is to minimize raw material use, generally making it the most resource efficient packaging solution available."

FPE is very active in sustainability projects within the framework of the EU's Circular Economy strategy. The flexible packaging industry supports the separate collection of all packaging to ensure that these materials are efficiently treated for recovery. FPE is a founding and leading member of the CEFLEX initiative which is committed to all types of flexible packaging in a circular economy. This supports the development of improved sorting and recycling solutions across Europe.

Further information:

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Flexible Packaging Europe's (FPE) members manufacture all types of flexible packaging. FPE comprises more than 70 small and medium sized companies as well as the major European producers of flexible packaging for all materials. These companies cover more than 80% of the European flexible packaging turnover. Also, six national flexible packaging associations are members of FPE ensuring consistency between national and European activities and lobbying. www.flexpack-europe.org

PCI Wood Mackenzie are leading consultants to the petrochemicals industry. The company's films and flexibles consulting business unit, formerly PCI Films Consulting Ltd, was acquired by Wood Mackenzie in 2015. Today, as part of the company's Chemicals Research team, the films and flexibles business unit continues to supply market and business-related consulting services to anyone involved or interested in the production and use of speciality and oriented plastic films, special papers, aluminium foils, and associated flexible packaging. www.pciwoodmac.com