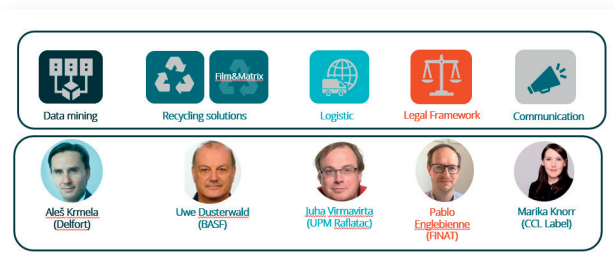


## CELAB-Europe Annual Report

# THE JOURNEY TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR LABELS CONTINUES

CELAB-Europe was set up in March 2020 as a joint industry initiative with the aim to build a circular economy for self-adhesive label materials in Europe. It is a collaboration of the whole label value chain to allow stakeholders to collect and recycle their used release liner and matrix material. The goal of the initiative is to have more than 75% of the used release liner and matrix to follow a circular business model by 2025. As the legal entity hosting the consortium, FINAT and FINAT members are actively engaged in the various workstreams of CELAB-Europe. Two years after its foundation, a lot has been achieved, while other programmes are well in progress.

The consortium meanwhile counts six workstreams covering a range of different aspects contributing to its ambitious end goal: the collection and analysis of relevant data; the identification and classification of recycling solutions; the establishment of a logistics network; the understanding and influencing of the legal and regulatory framework governing the liner and matrix landscape, and, finally, informing and educating target audiences about the outcomes of the work done within CELAB, and the availability of recycling solutions.



value chain, but work still needs to be done at the end of the value chain, but most importantly, about the growing availability of recycling solutions. The launch of the interactive map on the CELAB homepage this spring was a promising start (see below).

## GROWING AWARENESS, BUT STILL WORK TO DO TOWARDS THE END OF THE VALUE CHAIN

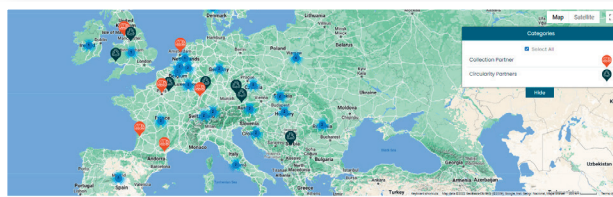
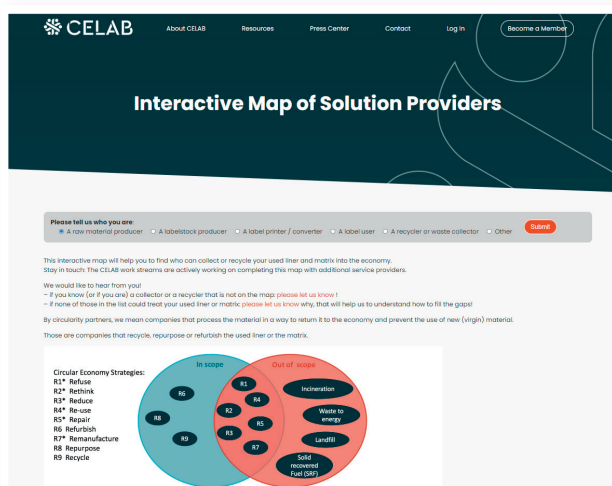
The consortium is led by a Steering Group currently consisting of representatives from the 5 founding members (Avery Dennison, UPM Raflatac, Fedrigoni Self-adhesives, Herma and FINAT), and of which the chairmanship rotates on a 6-monthly basis. This spring, Fedrigoni's Fernando Girón took over this role from UPM Raflatac's Juha Virmavirta, and next in line will be Ralf Drache of Herma, who will take over the baton in the autumn. At the latest online General Assembly held in June, the various workstreams gave an update. At the European Label Forum a few weeks earlier, project leader **Ophélie Gourdou** presented an update during the Design for Recycling session, attracting some 80 participants of the event. The key takeaways are that there is a good level of awareness of CELAB and recognition of its added value within the label

## THE MINING OF VALUABLE DATA - TRACKING PROGRESS

In this workstream, **Ales Krmela** (Delfort Group) succeeded **Willi Munninger** (Mondi) as the workstream leader. Having developed 'heatmaps' indicating the hotspots for paper and filmic liner material consumption around Europe in previous years, the Data Mining workstream has launched a new survey with the nine paper liner recyclers identified by CELAB-Europe, to measure the volume of the recycled liner with the objective to follow the progress year to year, starting in 2020. The figures will be reported as aggregated volume per quarter. Additional questions will be asked to guide the workstreams in their future work. On the initiative, also questions about the promotion and adoption of recycling solutions were included in the FINAT RADAR surveys held among the European label converters and label users.

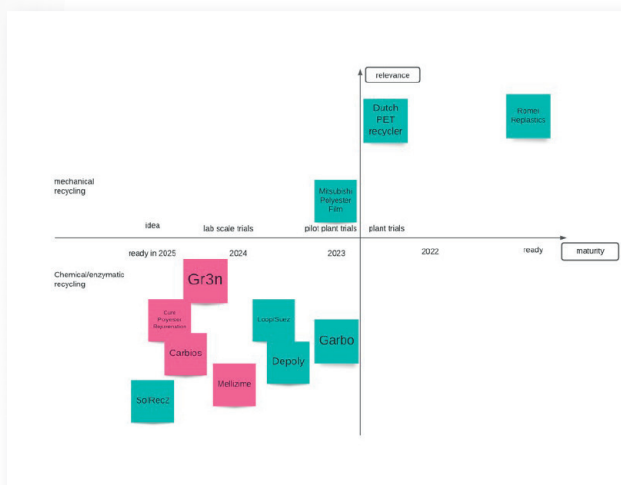
## RECYCLING SOLUTIONS

On 6 April, CELAB-Europe launched an interactive map to enable visitors to select recycling solutions in their respective region. With the support of internal and external industry professionals, and under the leadership of workstream chairmen **Uwe Düsterwald** (BASF) and **Juha Virmavirta** (UPM Raflatac), CELAB-Europe validated 13 first solutions providers for the collection and/or recycling of used release liner and matrix materials in Europe. Soon after the launch, in May, six additional solutions were added to the map, reflecting the continuous work of the Recycling Solutions and Logistic workstreams to identify and develop new CELAB partners. The map can be filtered by country, type of service and type of material. It is publicly accessible on the CELAB website ([www.celab-europe.org](http://www.celab-europe.org)) and will be updated on a regular basis.



## PET LINER SOLUTIONS BEING TESTED

Regarding the recycling of used PET liner materials, some options are already being investigated and tested. Mechanical recycling does not deliver a complete closed loop (back to liner) but can produce PET pellets to replace virgin resin in some applications, e.g. PET strips (Romei) or PET bottles for non-food applications (Dutch PET recycler). Chemical recycling could provide a product-to-product solution, but this technology is not totally ready yet. Some of them, like Cure and Gr3n, claim to have a reduced carbon footprint and need less energy. The TRL (Technology Readiness Level) of the



respective technologies varies greatly. They all need more time to be operational with an industrial line ready.



A partnership with Petcore, the association for the PET bottle industry in Europe, will support the identification of additional options.

## PROMISING MATRIX SOLUTIONS

Last year, PA Consulting provided a list of 47 technologies to enable the recycling of the matrix. From this list, the 16 most promising options that could be used in Europe have been listed for further investigation. Some of them are mechanical recycling or reprocessing of the different materials but most of them are chemical recycling, sometimes used in combination with an enzymatic or purification treatment. Most of them can treat polyolefin material (pure or mixed streams of PE and PP), and only a few of them in combination with paper. Several trials have started with some of the partners. The workstream will continue the investigations and trials in the coming months to validate more options.

## IDENTIFYING THE COLLECTORS OF USED LINERS AND MATRIX

Once the sources and destinations of used liner and matrix materials are located, it is time to make sure there are also logistics providers who are able to carry the materials from the former to the latter. The Logistics workstream has identified seven, quite diverse collectors of used liner and matrix, either specialised in the type of waste (e.g. Rafcycle, AD Circular or Cycle4green), or dealing with general waste. The latter includes big international waste collectors like Paprec or Stena, but also smaller local companies like Les Recyclades or Zelpa. The goal is to expand this network: six additional companies are currently being considered or reconsidered.



The Logistics workstream (led by **Juha Virravirta** of UPM Raflatac) is working on a better understanding of how the used liner is treated when it is discarded with the mixed paper stream. This could represent a significant amount of used liner but there are still many questions to answer to validate if the paper liner is recycled that way and under which conditions. Work is also being done to evaluate if digital platforms on a waste exchange could be used to ease the logistics of the self-adhesive label waste material. The results were not conclusive with one platform tested last year, but this topic will be reconsidered as the area of digital platforms is developing quite fast.

## MONITORING AND INFLUENCING REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION

The impact assessment of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive's draft revision did not pass the EU Commission's Regulatory Scrutiny Board. The announcement of a draft legal text is now postponed to December 2022. It is likely to be changed from a Directive to a Regulation that will lead to better harmonization across the member states. A harmonization of sorting instructions is being prepared, based on the Danish system, including pictograms and a colour code for each type of waste.

The PPWD is proposing to create a negative list of packaging characteristics that should not be incorporated in packaging because of their impact on the sorting and recycling of these materials. The aim is to ban these packaging components and put them on a 'negative list' by 2030. Silicone coating of paper is part of this list. This list is controversial and FINAT has already responded to this. The Commission heard the complaints but is likely to move forward with the negative list, although more time will be taken to ensure careful implementation. The workstream, supported by FINAT's Regulatory Affairs workforce, will keep on monitoring the progress.

All the learnings from the Regulatory Affairs workstream on the regulations and legislation related to the used liner and its transport are being consolidated in a reference document

which is still a work in progress. The plan is to release the final document by the end of 2022. The workstream is led by FINAT's Regulatory Affairs Manager Pablo Englebienne.

## COMMUNICATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF CELAB-EUROPE

The Communications workstream (led by FINAT Board member **Marika Knorr** of CCL Label) was installed in June 2021 after all previous workstreams had started to produce results worth sharing with a wider audience. The workstream now manages CELAB-Europe's Linked-in account to raise external awareness of CELAB. The launch of the interactive map (see page 53) has contributed to creating more awareness. The workstream is currently working on two



videos: one based on the already existing FINAT animation video to explain the collection and recycling of liner materials, and the other one ("From paper liner to paper pulp") to explain the recycling process of used paper liner materials.

CELAB-Europe also wants to be more visible to label users. Apart from the consortium's increased presence on social media, it is being represented at a growing number of industry events and exhibitions, such as the Fachpack, Drinktech (beverages, Germany), SIAL (food industry, France), etc... The workstream also started to engage with associations of brand owners in the main sectors using self-adhesive labels. CELAB-Europe is open to receiving more leads for presentations at exhibitions and downstream user association meetings.

## IN CONCLUSION

As part of the global CELAB movement (there is also a CELAB consortium in North America and further consortia are in preparation in China and Latin America) the consortium is gaining momentum with the key industry players. Going forward, CELAB-Europe is making good progress towards achieving its goals of collecting and recycling >75% by 2025. This is thanks to the work being done by the members in the workstreams. A big thank you!



# CELAB-EUROPE WINS EUROPEAN PAPER RECYCLING AWARD



*Photo: The FINAT and CELAB Europe delegation accepting the European Paper Recycling Award. From left to right: Jacques van Leeuwen (FINAT Recycling Consultant), Annick Carpentier (EPRC chair), Graham Houlder (CELAB Europe), Flor Peña Herron (CELAB Europe workstream member, Avery Dennison) and Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou (Member of the European Parliament, EPP, GR).*

On the occasion of the Paper Packaging Day event, held on 29 June in the Renaissance Hotel in Brussels, CELAB-Europe had the pleasure to receive the 2022 European Paper Recycling Award in the Information and Education category. The award competition is organized by the European Paper Recycling Council (EPRC) which was set up as an industry self-initiative in November 2000 to monitor progress towards meeting

higher paper recycling targets. These are set out in the European Declaration on Paper Recycling first published in 2000 and renewed every five years since. The current target for the declaration is set to be 76% paper recycling by 2030. FINAT, the association hosting CELAB-Europe, is also a supporter of the Declaration.

The European Paper Recycling Award was created specifically for projects and initiatives that raise awareness on paper recycling and the winner is chosen based on four key criteria: relevance and originality, achievements, possibility to reproduce the project and cost-effectiveness. The competition is open to all entities based in Europe including schools, universities, NGOs, national and regional authorities, companies and associations.