The European Tissue Industry: A Cornerstone of Europe's Economy, Hygiene and Sustainability

New study reveals the sector's far-reaching socioeconomic impact across Europe

BRUSSELS, 13 November 2025 The European Tissue Industry is a vital contributor to Europe's economy, sustainability, and public health. A new independent Socioeconomic Impact Study, commissioned by the European Tissue Symposium (ETS) and conducted by Steward Redqueen, quantifies how this essential industry creates value, jobs, and hygiene for millions across the continent.

Covering 42 European countries and based on 2024 data, the study measures the industry's full economic footprint from sustainable fibre sourcing and local manufacturing to the hygiene and health benefits of its products.

"The study demonstrates how Europe's tissue industry is deeply embedded in our industrial fabric creating value all along its value chain, from rural forestry to the modern high street," said Carlos Reinoso, Director General of ETS. "The money our sector generates largely stays in Europe, driving growth across a network of interlinked industries and communities."

Delivering economic value and jobs

The European Tissue industry delivers €36.6 billion to Europe's annual GDP. It generates €16.4 billion in tax revenues and produces 8.2 million tonnes of tissue products each year including toilet tissue, kitchen roll, facial tissues, napkins and paper towels.

With annual sales representing €19.7 billion, the sector also delivers significant employment across Europe. 421,100 jobs are supported by the tissue industry - 48,400 directly and 372,700 indirectly throughout the value chain. Every job in the tissue industry supports 7 further jobs across the value chain.

Indeed, the sector's economic ripple effect can be felt up and down the value chain as it is a powerful growth multiplier, stimulating demand and employment in over forty other interconnected industries - from forestry, packaging and logistics through to finance, marketing and energy. It spends 13.5 billion on European suppliers and prides itself on some 90 % local sourcing.

Contributing to sustainability

Europe's tissue industry is also a pioneer of the circular bioeconomy, driving both climate progress and competitiveness. Its operations include: the sustainable sourcing of fibres; decarbonisation through the increasing use of renewables and an ambitious carbon-neutral by 2050 target; and waste minimisation including circular production and reuse of water and bioenergy.

Superior hygiene properties supporting a healthy economy

Tissue products are indispensable in our daily lives both at home and in the community. Safe, hygienic, absorbent and disposable, they uphold cleanliness and help to minimise the spread of microbes – something that was underlined during the Covid pandemic.

Now, the socioeconomic impact study has highlighted how tissue products also deliver measurable public health and economic benefits: they help to reduce infections, save healthcare costs, and improve workplace productivity. Drying hands with paper towels was found to reduce microbes by 51%, while using air dryers left roughly three times more microbes on the hands, potentially increasing the risk of infection. Switching all EU public bathrooms to paper towels could potentially prevent 9.8 million flu infections annually and increase EU GDP by €1.47 billion.

Please note that the initial results and data are exploratory. Further project work is underway, including preparations to publish the methodology and expanded findings.

A strategic, sustainable, socially valuable industry

The European tissue industry is a resilient, locally sourced sector anchoring both value and jobs. It offers innovation, sustainability and hygiene and contributes to a stronger, greener and competitive Europe.

Click here to view the key findings: https://europeantissue.com/exploratory-socio-economic-study/

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ABOUT ETS

ETS is the European Tissue Paper Industry Association. The members of ETS represent the majority of tissue paper producers throughout Europe and around 90% of the total European tissue production. ETS was founded in 1971 and is based in Brussels. For more information: **www.europeantissue.com**

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