

# GORIČANE



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## Annual meeting of company shareholders in 2023

Text: **Tea Rezelj**

The Annual General Meeting of Goričane, d.d. was held on August 24, 2023.

The meeting was attended by 97.53 percent of all shareholders with voting rights.

The shareholders present took note of the annual report for 2022, the auditor's opinion and the report of the Supervisory Board. The AGM re-elected Mr. Andrej Pagon and took note of the appointment of Mr. Klemen Bugar as Works Council representative to the Supervisory Board.

All resolutions proposed by the Management Board were accepted. The Company closed the financial year 2022 with a profit.



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# Another successful year is behind us



Text: **Andraž Stegu**

**The favourable business results of this year have explicitly and entirely confirmed that the decision Papermill Goričane made years ago - to focus our strategy on the production of small-scale speciality papers, was correct. With successful development, our company proves that flexibility is our main advantage.**

In the first 10 months of 2023, 66,859 tons of paper were produced on the slitter, of which 61,214 tons were sold into 38 countries from all over the globe. This year, Turkey remains our biggest market. Our sales revenue in these 10 months was 83,025 thousand EUR.

Energy products remain an important element that has a major effect on our business, especially on the timely lease of natural gas and electricity. Energy expenses, namely, still represent 18.2% of our operational costs.

In our purchasing sector, the operation in 2023 was mostly affected by a lower price of our main raw material - pulp. This drop in prices was mostly caused by the high inventories held by our suppliers, resulting from several papermills in Europe and Asia having had permanently or temporarily shut down.

The main development-focused project this year was the implementation of the ISO 22000 standard for a food safety management system. With this system, we should be able to get new opportunities for progress in the packaging paper segment. It is vital to be aware of the importance of standards and the advantages they bring to Papermill Goričane.

Our production operated very successfully as well, and we are currently preparing some future investment projects. Read more about that in articles written by my colleagues.

In the first ten months of the year, the company has therefore exceeded its business plan, and is expected to end this business year with a profit.

With the year coming to its end, I would like to thank all of you, my colleagues, for the commitment and the work well done. I expect the same in the future. Our shared goal should be a successful, development-oriented company where everyone is working for the common good.

I would also like to thank our business partners for their cooperation, professional support and understanding.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Enjoy your holidays, I wish you a lot of success in the upcoming year.





# Despite low demand our goals were accomplished

"From one extreme into another" is a statement I would like to use to start this article. A complete opposite to the year 2022 when I wrote about the high prices of raw materials, transport, other services and sales prices. In January 2023, the paper industry started to experience a huge drop in demand. We saw Asia return to the market with extremely low prices, which was the main reason the customers became much more careful with their paper orders. Then came the pressure to lower our prices, and that was despite the high prices of energy products which most of the papermills already partially bought out in advance at the end of 2022, and stable prices of raw materials that had not started to drop yet.





From the perspective of acquiring orders and finding new potential customers, this year in sales was therefore much more difficult than 2022. The decreasing number of orders in the markets of Germany, Austria, Switzerland (and others) almost entirely cancelled the sales plan we had established before because it considerably changed our production range. In the first six months of the year, the orders of SORA matt and SORA silico paper dropped by almost a half. Due to the lack of demand, high stocks of paper owned by our customers and the concern about the prices dropping even more the next month, everyone ordered only the most urgently needed amounts of paper. However, in 2022 we offered our products to new customers as well despite the huge demand, and having these new customers proved to be very useful this year. We were very successful in the market of Ukraine, which is one of the few countries where the quantities sold have drastically increased. In addition, we efficiently fought off the competition with pharmaceutical papers and, especially with our high level of quality and customer service, managed to keep all of our buyers. The sales of grease-resistant paper have increased as well, and we also started shipping off

new products introduced at the agents meeting, which we were finally able to organise live this September after four years.

We also managed to expand our product lines into new countries so that from next year onwards, our brand will be recognised in the markets of Finland, Latvia, Jordan, Colombia, Kazakhstan and Vietnam. A similar strategy is planned for next year, when we plan to step further into northern Europe and Latin America.

Our goals for the next year are optimistic and we have enough potential to reach them. The sales strategy is adjusted to the current situation on the market and I believe this is the right approach which will lead us to success in the future as well. Regardless of the challenges that may appear on any of these paths, our existing product lines and our talented team guarantee enough potential to open up new directions.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank you for your commitment and excellent teamwork, and wish you all a healthy and successful year 2024.

# A prime number year?

Is 2023 a prime number? The definition of prime number is: it can only be divided by itself and by one. To me, the year 2023 is just like that - special. Very unique and unpredictable in every possible aspect.

We entered it with a huge burden and second thoughts about the prices of energy products, worried about the uncertain prices of raw materials and services. Due to the government measures that capped the maximum price of energy products for households in the first half of 2023, regular consumers have hardly felt the price stampede on the energy market and mostly failed to acknowledge or understand what this meant for the Slovenian economy.

In 2022, businesses spent many months trying to address and persuade the government that it should react quickly and somehow protect its own economy, just like other European countries had done for themselves. Solidarity and unity within the EU in those months were (and still are) just a political platitude.

Right before the end of the year, in December 2022, the government finally adopted some measures to mitigate the effect of high energy prices, but these measures were too ill-considered. Initially, it looked like the private sector would get a relatively big bag of support as well. There was pompous talk of several hundred millions of euros, but as the weeks went on, this number became smaller and smaller, with the conditions of applying for any kind of assistance being so rigorous that they deterred many companies from even applying for the support scheme.

## We had to survive the first quarter

As the year 2023 went on, the prices on energy markets have slowly started to stabilise. Even though they have been and still are many times higher than before the crisis, at least the extreme short-term fluctuations for 10 or more euros per MWh were gone. Unfortunately, this "relief" only applied to those companies that had previously not bought out expensive amounts of energy in advance. The energy prices have slightly settled down but given that the storages of natural gas are full and that the weather conditions are favourable for electricity production, they are still much too high. With a huge added bonus for fear of shortage. We could say that the appetite grows in fear.

Most of the energy intensive companies already started looking for alternatives to natural gas last year. We did too. To secure our operation even if the supply of natural gas is suddenly disrupted, we purchased a 30-ton steam boiler with combined burners. This boiler has a larger capacity than the existing block boiler, so it also serves as a replacement if the existing boiler fails, securing steam supply even when the steam consumption increases.

To proceed with investments, we also upgraded the ground transport of parent rolls, which improves the operation reliability and safety. A new high-speed cutter was urgently needed to facilitate the cutting of cardboard protection, and in addition it allows for the commercial cutting of our papers. We upgraded sheet cutter number 2. The old pinotan storage halls were transformed into a carpentry workshop for preparing pallets and sheet paper protection covers. In addition, we upgraded the biological part of the wastewater treatment plant, the software and hardware of major production processing systems, and partially implemented a new quality control system. We also expanded the parking space for personal and transport vehicles. In the framework



of environmental protection and adopting certain standards, we upgraded or installed several oil separators and high-speed doors between departments. Quite a few organisational and technical improvements were also made as part of the ISO 22000 standard adoption project. For property protection, we expanded the fire protection system and, in cooperation with most of the local volunteer fire brigades, completed a very successful fire safety drill.

Maintenance work was conducted within the framework of previously defined guidelines but it has to be pointed out that because of the age and condition of some of the machinery and equipment, the number of unplanned mechanical failures and shutdowns was higher than before. Likewise, the condition of some of the buildings and infrastructure in general required all sorts of unplanned interventions. Lately, the press section has been particularly problematic, both from the constructional as well as the functional point of view. Since any type of reconstruction requires a longer production shutdown, it is scheduled for spring 2024. The water supply system needed far too many interventions as well, and will have to be more reliable in the future.

As far as maintenance and renovation are concerned, we have definitely prioritised the repair of damages caused by the severe weather events this summer and autumn. Even though these natural disasters did not cause any direct damage or shutdowns in production, all the buildings next to the river Sora were flooded. Just before the

flooding, our colleagues managed to remove everything they could from these buildings, but due to the extremely high flooding waters, the building protection unfortunately failed to prevent the intrusion of water. After the floods, all of our colleagues showed their admirable selflessness and commitment; in a very short time, they managed to clean and restore the damaged buildings, the area around the buildings, and the machinery. We also received a lot of help in repairing the damages from neighbouring companies and other business partners.

To avoid similar disaster scenarios in the future, we moved the carpentry workshop into the old pinotan storage hall, and built a new protection wall on the island. Obviously we cannot move the wastewater treatment plant but we are considering at least adopting some protection measures for the event of minimum flooding of the river Sora. Some floodland area upstream along Sora should already help.

Despite all the stress, shock, disasters and other good-for-nothings, we are ending this year (2023 is not a prime number) with success and major plans for short-term and middle-term future, focusing on improved efficiency, a better yield and a lower specific energy consumption of our machines. And last but not least, special attention will be given to our carbon footprint.



# On average, all is good

**Last year was a year of draught and storms. We have a large rainwater collector at my house, and this was the first time in 10 years that it was empty. We decided to remove all the grass on the south side of the house because watering grass with water from the municipal system just seems environmentally unethical at times when others lack drinking water.**

This year, however, is a year of heavy rainfalls on one hand, and draughts on the other. Our collector kept filling itself up too, and we had more than enough water. From the perspective of a 2-year average, then, all is good. But we do not have the grass anymore. It dried up last year and got removed, so in theory we should not care whether we have draughts or floods because now, the area around our house has been rearranged to withstand both the dry spells and the heavier rainfalls.

So why should we look at averages at all? Why do we refer to them all the time, hang on to them, present them in diagrams, use them to make decisions about investments and renovations, technological regulations, internal standards and technical rules? A quick internet search tells us that the average, or the average value, is the most important statistical parameter. And I agree, sometimes it is really needed.

But then on the other hand, we keep reading about how we need to "step out of the average". Hamo, a popular Slovenian singer, has a song about "a little higher, a little further, stepping in front of everyone else ...".

So who wants the average anyway? It is almost an insult.

We want exceptional children, not average ones.

We want exceptional cars and vacations, not average ones.

We want exceptional grades, not average ones.

Well, this obviously means that the average is not something to be followed blindly and be content with after all. And also, the average often swallows up and

hides many situations, events and periods that were either exceptional or a complete disaster.

I will use the concept of average to describe two of the biggest risks that happen every year and are treated as critical in production.

Let us look at the annual average of working hours. On average, we work for 174 hours per month. This number is the basis for calculation employee salaries.

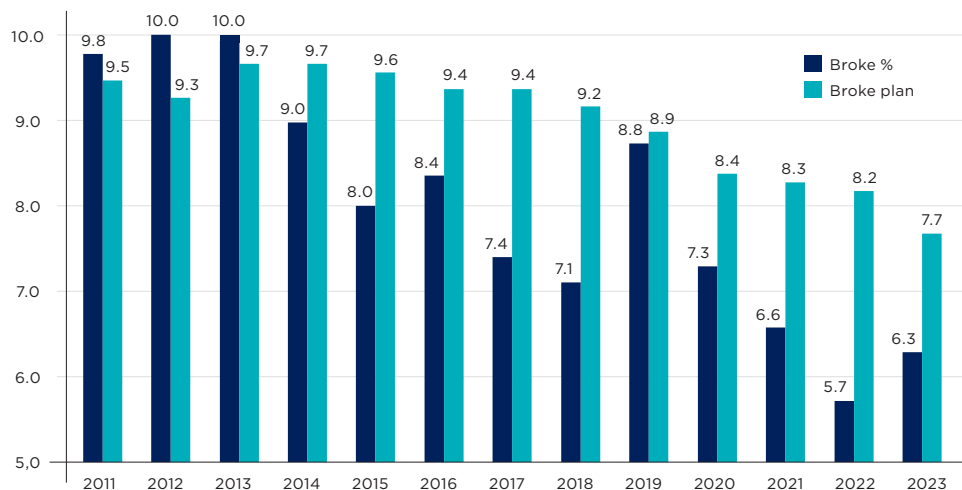
Working hours vary from month to month, with 160 being the minimum and 184 the maximum. So on an annual level, we all do 2,088 hours on average because we are all included in the end-of-year reference period.

If, however, we take a closer look at the annual working hours in production, especially on the paper machine, we can quickly see how unevenly these hours are distributed. Long-term sick leaves and a worrying shortage of staff often require an immense effort from everyone else so that we can make sure the work is done 24/7 throughout the year and that at the same time our workers can have a relatively normal life. On average, however, we all work 2,088 hours. And not only that, the average will also show that the overtime has not increased by much because we deployed our multitasking employees to cover and unburden many of our workplaces. So on average, all is good.

While we are proud of that, we often ask ourselves if the average really shows an honest picture of the actual situation?



Broke by years



Let us see another example. In December 2022, we launched an investment into a new breast roll, which was completed at the end of January 2023. On average, the foundations of the breast roll had to be fixed only twice. The shaker device also broke only twice. On average, that is very little. In terms of shutdown time, these are also not segments that would particularly stand out. So on average, all is good.

However, it was us that recognised the need for replacing the roll because otherwise there could be long-term consequences for the production. Neither the statistics nor the average have not said much about this urgent need. The decision was quick and deliberate. The new breast roll is working well and all the fear is now forgotten.

But we have several more areas like this on the paper machine and across the board, areas that urgently need quick decisions and action. Some of them are hidden in averages, while others may even be completely overlooked by statistics.

All the departments and their heads have to be aware of the responsibility, and everyone has to be clear about the priorities for the machine to operate well long into the future. Those priorities need to be followed and realised. To prevent the worst.

Let us look at another example - the share of broke, which is an important indicator in any production.

From 2011 to 2013, we worked on increasing the planned share of broke and were at the same time losing ourselves in inefficiency because our targets, as dictated by the average, were too loose.

Finally, in 2014, we kept the target as it was without changing it, and we met it for the first time. The planned broke is now already 2% lower, but in reality it is by 3.7% lower compared to 2013, meaning that the targets have become more demanding, thus forcing us to be more efficient. In other words - because we took the right steps, we sold 20,000 tons of paper more on the market in the past 10 years while maintaining the same level of consumption of raw materials and same costs of energy.

But this is just one parameter proving how misleading it can be to follow the average.

To sum up: we should not cling to averages but look for solutions for all the extremes, set new targets and reach them, maybe even exceed them, thus modifying the average and not get lost in targets that might be too loose.

So what do we want in production, maybe wider? To be exceptional or average?

Everyone should look for their own answer.

Personally, I wish that even when the situation is difficult, when we despair, when injustice happens and facts surprise us, we do not lose our motivation.

Let us continue with striving to be exceptional, something we have been working for in the past ten years.

Success will not fail to come.

Happy 2024!

# Better working conditions on dr. Roller

**Our substitute slitter or - as we call it - dr. Roller is a machine of enviable age that is still in excellent condition.**

It is used for cutting rolls of paper with mechanical defects, from inventories, for quick customer-required interventions, for samples and cutting small quantities or paper of small dimensions.

On a monthly average, it cuts from 250 to 300 tons of paper. The machine usually operates in three shifts but right now we only have two because our long-term colleague and machine operator, Slavko Čurguz, retired this summer.

Dr. Roller is located in the eastern part of the paper machine hall and the working conditions are not easy. Both on the paper machine and on dr. Roller, workers have to deal with noise, high temperatures and high humidity.

This year, an operator cabin was purchased to improve the working conditions on dr. Roller.

The air-conditioned cabin will contain a computer, all the necessary documentation and some cabinets for the operators to provide them with a place for short retreats into a more pleasant environment. The cabin is placed right next to the machine so the machine can be supervised at all times. Furthermore, we tidied up the machine's immediate surroundings, resurfaced the floor and drew markings, installed a new tender for waste paper, and set up a washing sink.

Better working conditions have a positive effect on the occupational satisfaction of employees, which has proven to be true in our case as well.

Hopefully, the new cabin will serve us well for a long time.





Text: Maja Mrgole

## Slalom section upgrade completed

**Since 2017, when we completed the first upgrade in the slalom section, we somehow hesitated to take the necessary last step. We had second thoughts, especially because of the length of the wire, and the small difference between the minimum and the maximum length.**

During the shutdown in November, however, we made the decision and shifted one of the guide rolls, removed the drying chamber, and installed the drying wire without any issues.

Now all the rolls are within the drying wire in this section too, which prevents depositing on the rolls and incidentally, the contamination of paper with impurities. The wire runs smoothly.

We have now completed the project for upgrading the pre-dryer section with the goal of having all the rolls within the drying wires, which is a typical feature of a modern paper machine. The rolls cannot get contaminated anymore.

With this upgrade, the wires have been shortened a little. We are noticing, however, that the useful lives remain the same for the upper drying wires, but are extended by 80% for the drying wires installed into the bottom sections.

Visible changes were achieved in maintenance as well. Many rolls were removed from the pre-dryer section, resulting in lower maintenance costs. The number of rolls, on the other hand, calls for a better quality of the rolls installed, which is a project we plan to tackle in the upcoming years.

In any upgrade, it is extremely important for all the rolls within a section to be in parallel, which is something we have managed to achieve really well lately.

The measurements of the drying sections, conducted for us by the suppliers of drying wires, repeatedly confirm a very efficient suctioning or ventilation in pockets, which is the key for reaching the optimum speeds.

## Slitter cabin overhaul

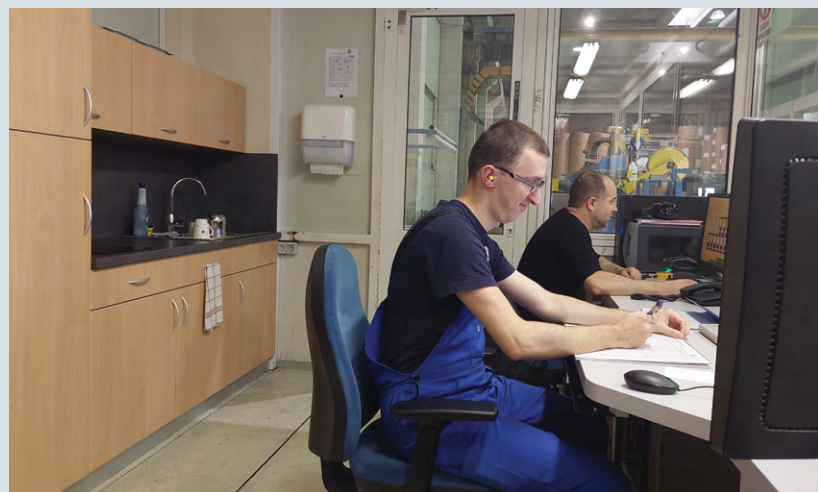
**The slitter has been in operation since 2002. It is the only machine that cuts the reels made on the paper machine into rolls, which is why it represents an important link in the pulp-to-roll chain. It is two times faster than the paper machine, and is able to achieve a speed of 2000 m/min in optimal conditions.**

The machine is operated by two operators. The main slitter operator is responsible for quality winding, removal of holes, breaks and ridges in the paper web, and ensuring accurate dimensions. Of course, he also makes the decisions about the quality and suitability of the rolls produced. The main operator's assistant, on the other hand, oversees the accuracy of cardboard tubes, creates labels for further packaging, sorts the rolls into packages, conducts sampling and self-checking of paper.

After last year's expansion of the cabin, this year we equipped it with a small kitchen area for three workers - the main slitter operator, his assistant and the packaging line operator.

Hopefully, the kitchen will enable our colleagues to prepare meals for themselves whenever our canteen is closed.

As part of the cabin overhaul, we also replaced the worn out worktable, and will move the table for paper self-checks and storing of samples to the quality control department. As a result, the area outside the cabin now looks much better as well.



# The end of extreme cycles?

**In the first nine months of 2023, the global economy has been relatively stable but due to the ongoing geopolitical tensions, the economic growth remained noticeably below its long-term average. The indicators available for the euro area are not pointing to any obvious recovery of economic activities in the last quarter of 2023. Activities in the converting industry and production have continued to decrease, partly because of smaller global demand and stricter financing conditions in the euro area. On the national levels in the European Union, inflation has gradually decreased in the recent period, but because of the policy of the European Central Bank and the anticipated further increase of interest rates, the economy is being held back by inhibitory factors, represented mostly by the hugely increased financing costs.**

The bottlenecks in global supply chains have been gradually improving, and the trends in the last three months show that the European industry has at least partially recovered from the disruptions of the previous years. The risks for growth reduction include the ongoing war of Russia against Ukraine, the new war between Israel and Palestine, and the strengthening of wider geopolitical tensions, which could potentially fragment the global trade and place a considerable burden on the euro area economy.

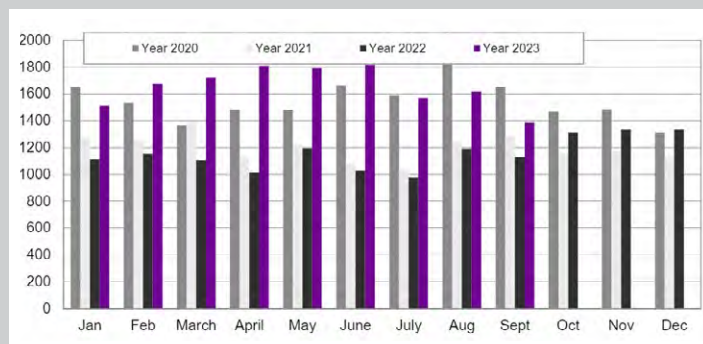
The prices of pulp as the key raw material for paper production have been decreasing in the first half of the year, and again increasing since September. The inventories of pulp in European ports have been growing until the middle of 2023, and decreasing again towards the end of the year.

Due to the many shutdowns in European papermills throughout the year and the resulting decrease in consumption, other raw materials have dropped their prices as well. The price of starch started to fall in the third quarter, and is 11% lower compared to the first half of the year. A similar trend can be noticed with latex where the drop of prices compared to the year before amounts to 10%. The biggest drop of prices, 50% in one year, was seen in optical brighteners. The packaging that does not include a large weight in its price, has been 20% cheaper and depends

on the type of packaging. The price of wood for pallets has dropped by 30%.

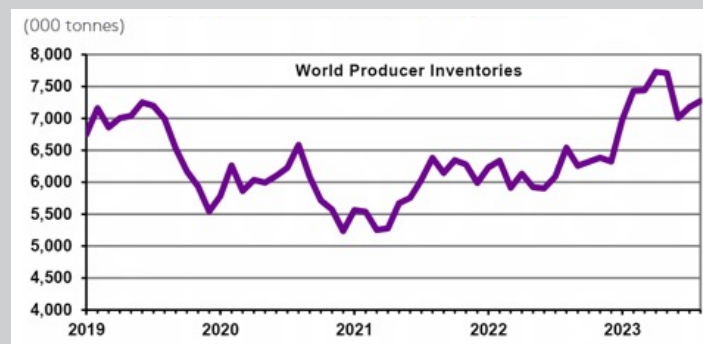
Compared to last year, we have not experienced any major issues in the supply chain. The stock of material needed for paper production was on the same quantity levels as in the "normal" years. More fluctuation was noticed in the market of spare parts but the delivery times there are also getting shorter compared to last year. Some European countries are anticipating higher prices of transport as a result of more expensive road tolls.

A higher need for pulp in China on one hand, and the delays of some bigger pulp producers on the other may once again shake the market but in my opinion, the year 2024 will be without extreme cycles if only there are no new major geopolitical tensions.



Pulp stock quantities in European ports

Source: Europulp



Pulp stock quantities by global pulp producers

Source: Pulp and paper products (PIX)



# Packaging labelling and analysing the amount of packaging used

**Labelling the packaging materials helps us facilitate the collection, categorisation, recycling and reuse of waste packaging. The labels are mostly intended for collectors, recyclers and removers of waste packaging.**

The requirement for packaging labelling is set by the EU Directive 2018/852 on packaging and packaging waste. As per the Decree on Packaging and Packaging Waste (Official Gazette of RS, no. 54/21), packaging labelling was mandatory for the Slovenian market as well, but since the adoption of the Decree on the Amendment of the Decree on Packaging and Packaging Waste (Official Gazette of RS, no. 208/21), the packaging labelling became an optional choice to be made by companies at their own discretion.

Given the business market we operate on, our papermill's leadership has decided to establish a system of labelling our packaging with product labels. For packaging labelling, we applied the system of packaging material identification from the Decision 97/129/EC. The Decision defines the numbering and abbreviations on which the identification system is based, indicating the nature of the packaging material used and specifying which material shall be subject to the identification system. The system uses numbers 1 to 19 for plastics, 20 to 39 for paper and paper board, 40 to 49 for metals, 50 to 59 for wood materials, 60 to 69 for textile materials, 70 to 79 for glass, and 80 to 99 for composites.

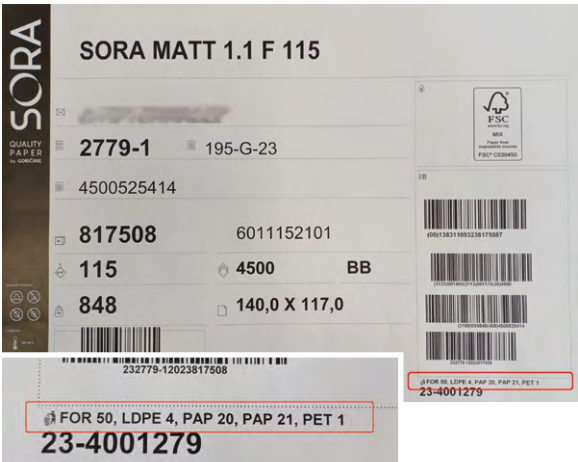


TABLE 1: Part of the packaging material numbering and abbreviation system

Material	Abbreviation	Numbering
Polyethylene terephthalate	PET	1
High-density polyethylene	HDPE	2
Polyvinyl chloride	PVC	3
Low-density polyethylene	LDPE	4
Polypropylene	PP	5
Polystyrene	PS	6
Corrugated cardboard	PAP	20
Non-corrugated cardboard	PAP	21
Paper	PAP	22
Steel	FE	40
Aluminium	ALU	41
Wood	FOR	50
...		

Source: COMMISSION DECISION of 28 January 1997 establishing the identification system for packaging materials pursuant to European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste.

For our market, we identified packaging materials from paper and paper board (base cardboard, cardboard tubes and edge protectors), wood (pallets), plastics (plugs, PET tapes and foil), and composites (natron paper and front caps).

We implemented a new application for tracking the type and amount of packaging used per type of product packaging. Based on the type of packaging, the product dimension and the formula set to calculate the weight of each specific packaging material, the application provides us with the amounts of packaging used per product.

The purpose of the application is to make sure the markings on the product label inform the customer about the type of packaging used. If required by the customer, the delivery form can also specify the weight per type of packaging used for a certain product.

In addition, the application helps us calculate the amount of packaging put on the Slovenian market, which can be used for quarterly reporting.



# Implementing the certificate for food safety management systems in packaging production

**In 2023, Papermill Goričane certified the management system for food safety for speciality and printing papers in rolls and sheets, used in food and pharmaceutical industries pursuant to the ISO 22000:2018 standard.**

The general requirements for the safety of materials in contact with foodstuffs are defined in various European Council directives. So far, we have implemented the requirements for materials and products intended to come into contact with food (Regulation 1935/2004/EC) and the requirements for good manufacturing practice (Regulation 2023/2006/EC), so now we decided to add the certificate for the ISO 22000:2018 standard in order to further improve the level of requirements for providing safety.

The products for packaging in the food industry and products for the pharmaceutical industry have a certificate of compliance for contact with food and are, depending on their composition, intended for direct contact with dry, greasy or wet food. We also redefined the climate conditions for the transport, storage and application of our paper.

The existing valid certificates for compliance in contact with food as per German national regulation BfR XXXVI (German: *Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung*) and the US FDA regulations (*Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act*) as well as the climate conditions are available on our website, [www.goricane.si](http://www.goricane.si).

Furthermore, we established the prerequisite programmes as the fundamental condition for ensuring basic hygiene and maintaining hygiene safety of products. The prerequisite programmes include activities covering the areas of cleaning, maintaining papermill infrastructure (buildings and machinery), pest control and prevention of physical and chemical pollution.

The implementation and progress of prerequisite programmes is supervised by means of regular internal inspections, the so-called verifications. In case of deviations, we take care of the corrections and corrective actions to rectify the situation right away.



In areas of direct contact between employees and paper, we established three medium-risk zones. Employees working in one of these zones are permitted to enter any time and therefore have to follow stricter rules regarding their personal hygiene.

In addition, we formed a multidisciplinary group for food safety that is in charge of overseeing the whole production process (from the characteristics of input raw materials to the application of our end products). We also reviewed any potential hygiene risk that could affect the health of the end consumer. When identifying medium and high hygiene risks, control measures and a critical control point were established to help us manage and reduce these risks.

Furthermore, a recall system was implemented for the event of potential hygiene non-compliant products. The recall system is based on a process of traceability from the end product to each single raw material used.

Excellent teamwork of all employees and the support of our company's management really helped us raise the level of maintaining the hygiene safety of our products and successfully certifying the system of food safety management for the production of packaging pursuant to the ISO 22000 standard.



### The main tasks in establishing prerequisite programmes:

- To improve the basic hygiene and cleaning organisation, we prepared the floor plans to help with cleaning individual locations, and clearly defined the standards of cleanliness. Our employees are using this plan to schedule, track and carry out the cleaning duties. The standards of cleanliness are checked in inspection controls.
- In outdoor areas, we redrew the markings on the ground, and inside the production and storage halls, we refreshed the existing ground markings and used the floor plan to draw new ones.
- In addition, we repaired the floors and walls in production and storage halls, and installed wall bumpers.
- The pest control system was upgraded with electric insect catchers, and nets were installed on windows with handles.



# SORA PACK

## packaging papers

**As a speciality paper producer, Papermill Goričane uses a part of its production capacities for packaging papers. In this segment, it offers paper for paper bags and wrapping paper.**

### Paper bags

With the growing limitations on the use of plastic bags, paper bags are increasingly present in retail. While they are most often made of kraft paper, the segment of luxury paper bags actually uses coated papers. Even though we usually do not carry heavy items in luxury bags, their carrying capacity is still a very important parameter. To determine the carrying capacity of a bag, we have to know the mechanical properties of paper and the interaction of an adhesive with the individual parts of the bag and the handle. Our customers and users also pay attention to the bags having interesting and attractive prints. Paper for bags is printed in offset and flexo printing techniques.

Bags made of printed paper can be produced either from rolls or from sheet paper. The foldability of paper during the process and the adhesive absorption are of key importance here. The adhesive is in contact with the lower part of the bag where the bottom connects with the side of the bag. The interaction of adhesive during the process of connecting a handle with the interior of a bag is also important. Hot-melt and water-based adhesives are used for making bags. However, the decision on which type of adhesive to use in each phase of adhesive bonding depends on the bag manufacturing device. The weight of paper for bag manufacture depends on the requirements of the customer, and is affected by the purpose of the bag and the required carrying capacity.

The challenge in paper production is to create a paper that is suitable for both offset and flexo printing. It has to enable good contact with the adhesive. The mechanical properties of paper are important for the bag manufacture itself, and later for the application.





## Wrapping

Products wrapped in printed paper are something we encounter on a daily basis. An example we all know well is gift wrapping. When we are choosing paper to wrap a gift, the print is usually the first thing we notice, which is why it is important for the paper to have excellent printability. The next important quality is the way paper behaves when folded during wrapping - it has to have suitable mechanical properties that enable good foldability.

Wrapping is also encountered on the industrial level, where the printing runnability and quality are just as important. In industrial wrapping, the mechanical properties are especially relevant; they have to enable efficient runnability of the wrapping machines. Also, we often encounter industrial wrapping, note that paper products (e.g. packet of A4 printing paper) are wrapped this way.

Industrial wrapping has stricter requirements, which is why the weights of paper are higher than for example for gift wrapping paper.

## SORA pack

Our range of products for the manufacture of paper bags and wrapping is called SORA pack. SORA pack is a woodfree, one-side coated paper. The coated side of the paper helps with proper absorption of ink in offset and flexo printing. The other side of the paper, on the other hand, facilitates good interaction both with hot-melt adhesives and with water-based adhesives. The product has good mechanical properties and good foldability and wrapping ability.

# Internal inspection of the Bosch steam boiler

This year's overhaul in the energy sector, which took place in the beginning of November, was also used for a regular internal inspection of the Bosch steam boiler. Prior to the visit of the energy inspector, we cleaned the smoke side, dried the water side, and checked the lining of walls. During the inspection, the energy inspector specifically checked the condition of the steam boiler's burner surfaces and pipe. According to him, the boiler is properly used and well maintained.

This year, the inspections also included checking the interior of the compressed air tanks and the exterior of the condensate separators on the paper machine. I particularly want to mention the chimney sweep cleaning of the boiler, which was done very quickly and efficiently. In the meantime, our colleagues from the energy sector inspected the functioning of low-voltage protectors and high-voltage switches, cleaned the transformer cells, and arranged the 1C05 distributor. Because the inspection of pressure equipment involved such a wide range of tasks, it was relatively difficult to schedule and had to be extended to two days. The energy sector was restarted with no issues.



Compressed air dryer



# Environmental Report





## Introduction

In 2022 and the first six months of 2023, Papermill Goričane met all the legislative requirements concerning emissions to the environment as required by the environmental permit for waste water, emissions to air and emissions of noise into the environment.

A major achievement in 2023 is the implementation of new software for tracking the type and amount of packaging used per type of product packaging. Based on the type of packaging, the product dimension (roll or pallet) and the formula set to calculate the weight of each specific packaging material, the software then provides us with the amounts of packaging used per product. The goal is to make sure the markings on the product label inform the customer about the type of packaging used. If required by the customer, the delivery form can also specify the weight per type of packaging used for a certain product.

As an operator of an IED device that may potentially cause environmental pollution of major extent, Papermill Goričane has owned a valid environmental permit since 2007. Due to amended environmental legislation, the permit has been under revision since 2018. In 2023, the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy visited the papermill and combined it with oral proceedings pertaining to the explanation and supplementation of our responses to the requests from 2022. The status of the initial report on the situation of soil and groundwater pollution, as submitted in 2018, is still in progress, so the document needs to be updated in line with the new Environmental Protection Act (ZVO-2).

## Use of natural resources

Natural resources used for paper production include pulp, fillers and pigments (kaolin, chalk), well water and natural gas.

The rational consumption of natural resources is measured with the index of material loss from the production process. Material loss calculated on the wastewater treatment plant is based on the amount of absolutely dry sludge at the entrance to the wastewater treatment plant. The trend of low material loss from the production process continues in 2023. The 0.7% target was met; in the first half of 2023, the material loss amounted to 0.5%.

The second important natural resource is groundwater. Our papermill has four groundwater pumping wells, and two wells being used as observation bore holes.

Well water is used in paper production and for cooling purposes. The consumption of well water depends on the production programme on the paper machine, and the operating time of the Bosch and Wagner boilers, which use different amounts of cooling water for their operation. Table 2 shows the amount of well water pumped for paper and steam/power production. We have two boilers at the papermill - the Bosch boiler produces only steam, whereas the Wagner boiler produces steam and uses cogeneration to provide electricity. Water used for cooling purposes by the Bosch steam boiler is treated as waste process water in the production process, whereas in cogeneration and electricity production, cooling water is treated as process water in thermal power plants.

TABLE 1: average material loss from production process

	Indicator	Target	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
<b>MATERIAL LOSS</b>	% (calculated per gross production)	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>0.50</b>

Table 2 shows compliance with the requirements of the environmental permit regarding the amount of wastewater from the production process, or the cooling waste water. The environmental permit defines the maximum annual amount of water that we are allowed to discharge into the river Sora as industrial wastewater and as cooling wastewater.

For optimum consumption of well water in the production process, we established an efficient water management approach that allows us to track the consumption of fresh water by paper grade and by period (day, month, year). That way,

data on the daily amounts of fresh water, type of paper and water quality within the water loop allows us to adjust the amount of fresh water as needed.

Because of our production programme involving speciality papers, and due to the large number of production programme changes, Papermill Goričane is categorised as a speciality paper mill with the BAT-defined maximum specific water consumption of 20 m<sup>3</sup>/ton of net production. Table 2 shows the specific consumption of water in paper production having exceeded 15 m<sup>3</sup>/net production in the recent years.

The third natural resource is natural gas for process steam/electricity production. The consumption of

TABLE 2: Consumption of energy products

WATER CONSUMPTION	Indicator	OVD/BAT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
	Fresh water (wells) 1.000 m <sup>3</sup>		1,982	1,606	2,033	1,938	981
	Fresh water (cooling in energy sector) 1.000 m <sup>3</sup>		506 (cooling as thermal power plant) 1,429 (cooling as technological purposes)	0 (cooling as thermal power plant) 1,562 (cooling as technological purposes)	565 (cooling as thermal power plant) 1,461 (cooling as technological purposes)	0 (cooling as thermal power plant) 1,932 (cooling as technological purposes)	0 (cooling as thermal power plant) 981 (cooling as technological purposes)
	Fresh water (technological purpose paper production) 1.000 m <sup>3</sup>		1,278	1,255	1,417	1,325	647
	Specific consumption of process water m <sup>3</sup> /ton net	15 (BAT 20)	16.2	15.4	17.3	16.6	16.8
ENERGY CONSUMPTION	Indicator	OVD/BAT	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
	Natural gas 1.000 Sm <sup>3</sup>		11,386	10,632	12,169	10,292	5,185
	Electricity purchased MWh		48,820	52,628	48,234	50,769	24,892
	Net consumption of electricity MWh/ton	0.7 to 0.9	0.671	0.646	0.652	0.637	0.650
	Net consumption of thermal energy GJ/ton	7 to 8	3.525	3.686	3.696	3.727	3.867



natural gas depends on the production programme and on whether we buy electricity on the market or produce it ourselves through cogeneration. In 2023, the energy efficiency of our production process remains on a high level, resulting in low specific consumption of electricity and heat in comparison with the BAT techniques.

Emissions

AIR

Emissions to air are generated during steam production and during paper drying and cutting. The monitoring of emissions to air is stipulated by the environmental permit and has to be conducted by an accredited external institution every third year for boiler devices and every fifth year for dust collectors. We have two medium-sized combustion plants with separate emissions to air - the Bosch steam boiler (metal chimney) and the Wagner steam boiler with electricity

cogeneration (concrete chimney). With the new Decree on the Emission of Substances Into the Atmosphere from Medium-sized Combustion Plants, Gas Turbines and Stationary Engines (OG RS 17/18), a target NO<sub>x</sub>/m<sup>3</sup> value of 200 mg and an annual monitoring apply to any device older than 27 years. The Bosch steam boiler is a newer combustion plant that needs to meet the required target values of below 110 mg NO<sub>x</sub>/m<sup>3</sup> of air, and a mandatory monitoring conducted once every three years.

Monitoring of total dust emissions to air was completed in 2023, confirming our compliance with the legislative targets. No other additional monitoring is needed - only the Bosch boiler was in operation, which is scheduled for a monitoring of emissions to air next year.

TABLE 3: Emissions to air

	Indicator	Environ- mental permit	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
Emissions to air (Bosch boiler)	NO <sub>x</sub> mg/m <sup>3</sup>	110	68*	68*	65**	65**	65**
Emissions to air (Wagner boiler)	NO <sub>x</sub> mg/m <sup>3</sup>	200	156*	Not in operation	169**	Not in operation	Not in operation
All emissions	Prah mg/m <sup>3</sup>	150	8*	8*	8*	8*	3***

\*monitoring 2018 \*\*monitoring 2021 \*\*\*monitoring 2023



## WATER

At Goričane, the industrial wastewater is treated on our own industrial wastewater treatment plant. Industrial wastewater treatment is based on the process of chemical-mechanical wastewater treatment (primary level) and biological treatment (secondary level). The control of industrial wastewater is conducted with continuous measurements and monitoring done by an accredited external institution, which as per environmental permit has to be carried out 12 times a year.

Table 4 shows the quality parameters of monitoring performed by an accredited external institution. The 2023 monitoring confirms that the discharges into the water loop do not exceed target values, and we are therefore in compliance with the environmental permit.

## Noise

In accordance with the environmental permit, noise monitoring is conducted every third year by an accredited external institution. No additional noise measurements were scheduled in 2023 because monitoring was done in 2022. However, due to one measuring point exceeding the target value, the

monitoring was repeated in 2023 after the silencer had been fixed. The repeated monitoring showed that the noise parameters and the conical levels of noise remain below the target values, and that the company is therefore not causing any excessive noise pollution in this area.

The next monitoring is scheduled for 2025.

## Waste

Our company has an established plan of waste management, which was adjusted in 2022 to comply with the Decree on Waste (OG RS, no. 77/22). Each piece of waste has its own designated source, collection point and collector. Waste from production is handed over to authorised collectors who have the required permits for waste collection, transport and processing. To make sure waste is separated at its source, smaller containers labelled with the identification number of the waste are located anywhere where waste is generated. Our employees are regularly disposing of waste from these containers by taking them to waste disposal units and designated storages. The

TABLE 4: Emissions to water

Emissions to water	Indicator	Environmental permit (targets after 1. 1. 2013)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
Suspended solids	mg/l		12.5	8.5	7.5	5.6	8.90
	kg/t	0.4	0.17	0.11	0.12	0.09	0.10
COD	mg/l		76.7	60.5	43.3	44	69
	kg/t	4**	1.04	0.79	0.70	0.70	0.86
BOD <sub>5</sub>	mg/l	25**	13.1	8.2	6.3	6.6	7.7
	kg/t	0.5	0.18	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.10
N tot	mg/l		4.7	3.9	3.03	2.85	2.72
	kg/t	0.2	0.06	0.054	0.05	0.04	0.03
P tot	mg/l		0.034	0.11	0.245	0.254	0.226
	kg/t	0.01	0.005	0.0015	0.0039	0.0042	0.0025
AOX	mg/l		0.13	0.09	0.07	0.11	0.12
	kg/t	0.005	0.0017	0.0013	0.0011	0.0017	0.000

\*\* the target is set for production with more than one programme change per day



TABLE 5: Waste generated on the premises of Goričane, d.d.

	Indicator	Waste management plan	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1st half-year
Paper sludge	ton	1,600	2,058	1,934	1,894	753	370
Municipal waste	ton	50	30	32.5	44.5	37.2	17.7
Paper packaging	ton	1000	702	982	997	1.033	494
Metal packaging	ton	140	134	141	139	135	55
Plastic packaging	ton	15	19.5	14.8	12.8	17.1	7.2
Composite packaging	ton			18.8	15.9	57	14.1
Wood packaging	ton	60	37	67	58	55	29

waste disposal units include containers and boxes that are properly labelled with the name and the classification number of each specific type of waste. All the waste is being tracked on a monthly basis and we make sure that regular orders are being submitted for the waste to be collected and taken away by authorised collectors.

Our products, sent to the Slovenian market, have a well-established system of waste management, which has been contractually taken care of by Dinos d.o.o. in 2023.

In the last several years, we took some major steps towards reducing the accumulation of paper sludge, especially by investing in a new method of sludge extraction, which increases sludge concentration. Furthermore, by maintaining the disc filter well, we improved the water loop treatment on the paper machine, which resulted in a smaller index of material loss.

### Hazardous substance management

In hazardous substance management, our well-kept and regularly maintained storage tanks and pumpings enable us to retain a low risk rate. We have an established plan of hazardous chemicals management, outlining all the activities that are necessary in order to make sure our operations are

compliant with the legislation. Our employees are being regularly trained for hazardous substance management and the course of conduct in cases of accidental spillage of hazardous substances.

As part of obtaining the environmental permit, another assessment of applicable hazardous substances was completed in 2023, and we updated the list of hazardous substances and hazardous substances in question because we need it in order to adapt the initial report.

### Exceptional events

In 2023, there were no exceptional events with a negative impact on the environment.

### Environmental goals and projects

The company management regularly revises the environmental aspects and potential risks, and implements projects to achieve the environmental goals.

The first measurements of wastewater were completed at the beginning of 2023, and confirmed solid operation of the biological wastewater treatment plant. During the measurements, the values of parameters measured in wastewater on the discharge from the plant were in compliance with the prescribed target values, which proves the efficient operation of the biological wastewater treatment plant.

Text: Tea Rezelj

# 2023 Sales agents meeting

After four years, we were finally able to once again organise a meeting of our sales agents. It took place in September, and was held on an idyllic location in the Slovenian region of Prekmurje. The meeting was attended by 25 agents from 18 countries.

The sales team was joined by four new agents, who introduced themselves in person at the meeting. In the last few years, we engaged new agents to cover Russia and the Baltic states, the Middle East, Egypt and Greece.

Our colleagues from the sales department attended the meeting as well, and prepared presentations of our new products.

The main event was an interactive workshop where we exchanged experience from the field, views of the current market situation, trends and forecasts for next year.

To up our game in marketing, we printed two new catalogues this year. The first one, Pale Yellow, presents the range of our coloured papers, whereas Back Pocket focuses on speciality papers. These catalogues are the continuation of the one we printed last year, One Blink, where we presented our lightweight papers.





For next year, we are planning to publish the last one from the series of new catalogues, and this one will be about graphic papers.





# Operational fire drill at Papermill Goričane

**During last year's visit of the representatives from local voluntary firefighting brigades (PGD) and the Medvode Firefighters Association (GZM), a plan was discussed to organise an operational fire drill on the location of our papermill.**

The Medvode Firefighters Association includes six voluntary firefighting brigades in charge of their fire districts and the whole municipality of Medvode, depending on the extent of the event - fires, high floods, storms etc.

The operational fire drill was prepared by Mr. Branko Zidar, an authorised person for fire safety and measures in the event of an accident at the papermill, and the author of this article as the deputy chief of GZM, in charge of the firefighting part of the drill. To make the drill look as real as possible, we added a touch of authenticity by using a smoke generator to fill spaces with smoke, and a manikin that represented an injured person.

The scenario set up for the drill was that on May 15, 2023 at 4.30 PM, an unknown factor caused a fire in the finishing department by the Reker pallet line. Smoke detectors were activated, and the intradepartmental fire alarm from the fire detection system switched itself on. The department team evacuated itself to a previously defined meeting point. The team/department lead informed the shift supervisor about the "fire", and - as per the established reaction plan - the shift supervisor called 112, the number of the regional information centre, and told them there was a "fire" on the location of Papermill Goričane. Then, he walked towards the finishing department and the employees in that department to gather the important information: how big is the fire and where exactly it is located, if everyone in the team is at the meeting point, and so on. This information was then shared with the chief of the fire brigades to help with the intervention.

Once they received the call, the regional information centre activated three voluntary firefighting brigades pursuant to GZM's rules for first responders in industrial buildings. The regional information centre activates firefighters by calling the pagers of voluntary firefighting brigades. At the same time, operational firefighters receive a notification through the FireApp application on their mobile phones about the pagers being activated for their brigade. At 4.35 PM, the first firefighting units already reached the papermill and entered the courtyard, where the whole operation was taken over by the chief of the operational brigade authorised for the fire district that also includes our papermill. The operational firefighting units launched three attacks into the buildings - through the staff entrance to the packaging line, through the end product storage hall to the packaging line, and through the southern entrance and the storage hall to the end of the sheet cutter line. All firefighters involved in this action were equipped with a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). In addition to the actual "putting out the fire", we also had to find the "worker" (manikin) who was injured in the fire and stayed behind in the department, so she had to be carried outside.

In the meantime, the chief of GZM arrived on the location of the papermill as well and took charge of the "intervention". Through the regional information centre, he activated the other three brigades in GZM, requiring both human help (firefighters) and all the available equipment.

During the whole drill, the shift supervisor remained on the command post and made sure to provide the chief of the intervention with all the necessary information on the current situation, the location of the fire and any potential dangers. The chief of the intervention asked the shift supervisor to conduct a list of preventive tasks, e.g. shut the power off, open the fire domes etc.



After about 20 minutes of working on operational firefighting tasks, it was established that the assignments as listed in the drill scenario were completed, and the drill ended. This was followed by a quick inspection of the "fire" location, attended by the chiefs of operational units and the company's leadership.

Once the equipment was put away, all the participating firefighters lined up on the courtyard of the papermill and were presented with a short summary of the drill, followed by the company management sharing some important information about the papermill, which can be essential for firefighters in the event of an actual fire or other accident. They also thanked the firefighters for participating in the drill.

The drill involved 32 operational firefighters from PGD Sora, PGD Preska - Medvode, PGD Zgornje Pirniče, PGD Smlednik, PGD Zbilje, PGD Spodnje Pirniče - Vikrče - Zavrh and GZ Medvode (senior command).

As a member of the GZM senior command, I would like to thank, on behalf of all firefighters involved, the company management for organising an operational firefighting drill on the location of the papermill. These drills are the only way to help us prepare and train the operational firefighters for the event of an actual fire or other accident at the papermill.



# River Sora flooded the carpentry workshop in August

On the night of August 4th, the skies literally opened over the Škofja Loka Hills and in the northern part of Slovenia. A combination of eastern winds and low air pressure caused a huge amount of rainfall in a relatively short period of time. Our papermill is located right next to a calm river Sora, which for years has been providing us with the very much needed energy and water as raw material in the paper production process. However, it is also the destination of many mountain torrents that run down the hills and into Sora, which is why Sora itself is also classified as a torrential river, and what we quietly feared the most has now happened.

The river started to rise rapidly and reached unusually high flow rates. Around 6.30 in the morning, when we started coming to work, it

already threatened to overflow its banks. We started removing the repro material from the buildings that are closer to the river. Repro material is a type of packaging used in paper packaging - chipboard covers placed on pallets to protect paper sheets during storage.

In the next half hour, the river went completely wild so all we could do was move the forklifts and the people to safety, wait and watch helplessly, dumbfounded by the enormous power of the rising river.

There was nothing else we could have done; we could just hope that the damage would be as small as possible. The carpentry workshop was completely flooded, with water as high as 2.9 metres. Our building had been flooded before, but the water was never this high. As a result, all the machines in the workshop were flooded as

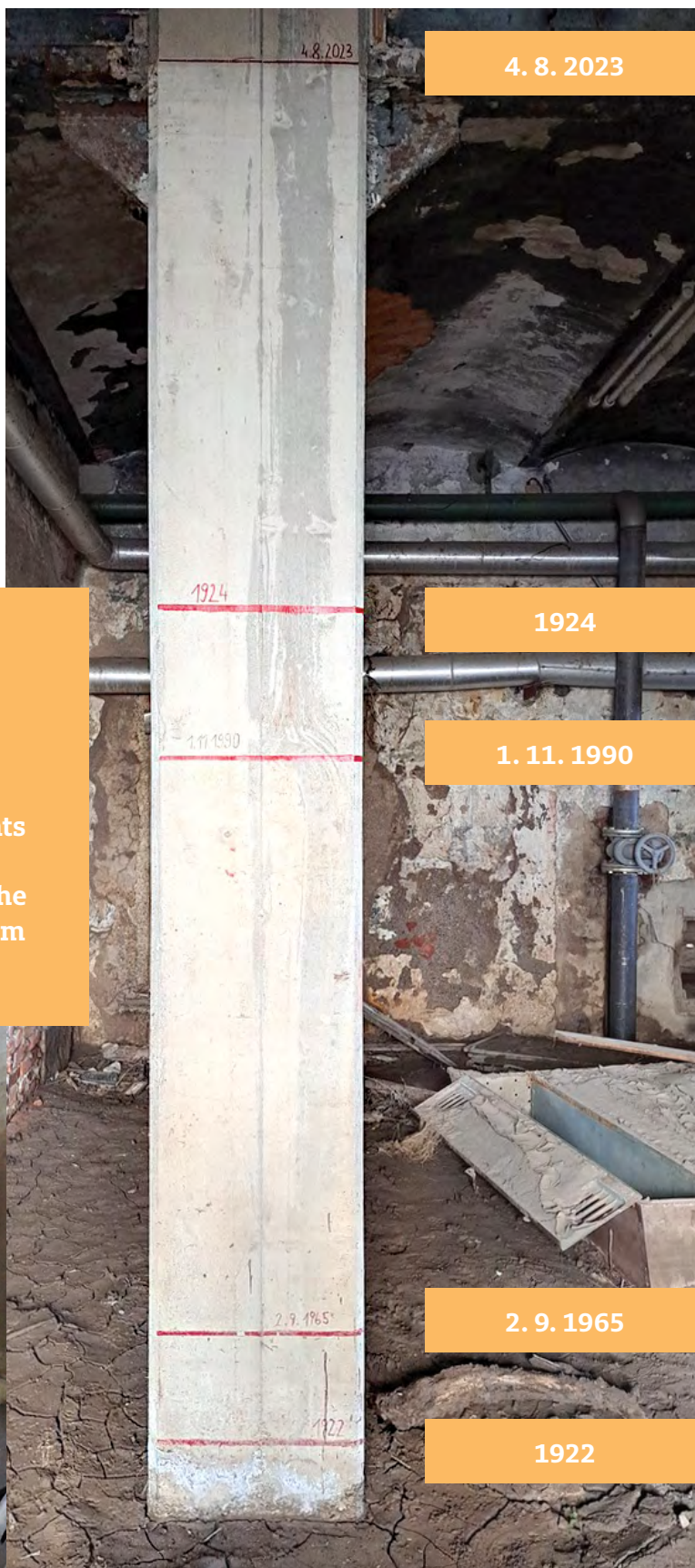
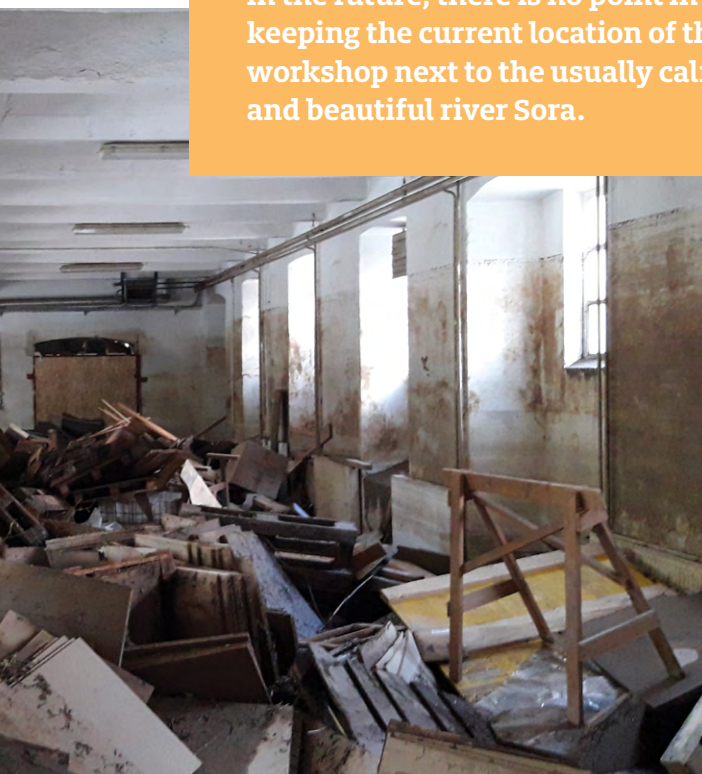




well. The flash floods prevented us from saving almost anything, except for a few packages of chipboard. Everything that was not fixed, like carpentry machines, was either taken away by the river or covered with sludge and mud.

As soon as the devastating rampage of water was over, right the next day, we tackled the aftereffects of the floods. Our employees started removing the debris and cleaned the machines and devices that had not been flooded away. We quickly found and set up a space where we could start preparing the material and eventually make sure that the cutting and packaging of paper continued without disruptions.

A decision was made to immediately begin establishing a new location for the carpentry workshop. Given the climate changes and the high possibility of similar extreme weather events in the future, there is no point in keeping the current location of the workshop next to the usually calm and beautiful river Sora.





# Floods and solidarity day

**The devastating floods that happened in the beginning of August 2023 were the biggest natural disaster in independent Slovenia so far.**

While flooding did happen before during extreme rainfall, this is the first time it occurred in almost two thirds of Slovenian territory at the same time.

Catastrophic flooding partially affected our company as well.

As a team, we efficiently responded to all the challenges the raging river Sora threw to us, and we quickly and properly reacted to make sure the work process continued without interruptions.

In addition to some lucky circumstances, the self-initiative and commitment of everyone at the company played a huge role as well.

Once the waters receded, we took on the cleaning, and used the national solidarity day to organise a community work action, which involved many of our employees as well as our colleagues from the neighbour company.

Again, a big thank you to everyone who has in any way helped those affected by the floods.





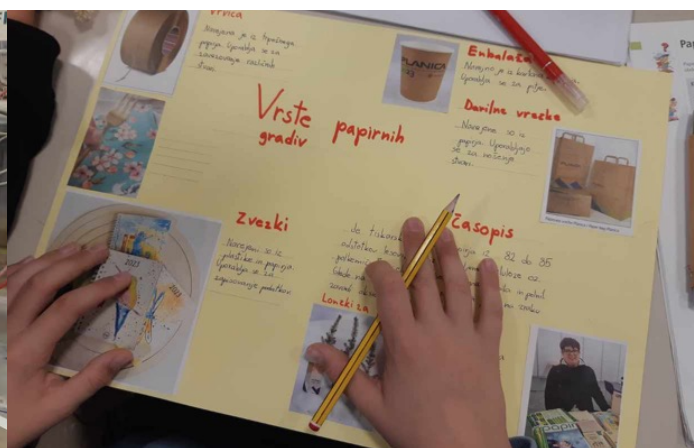
# Technical day at papermill Goričane

Paper, being such a simple and ordinary item, is usually not something children pay much attention to. Even though we encounter it all the time, we do not know enough about it, and we absolutely do not appreciate it enough.

## WHAT IS PAPER?

- What is it made of and how is it made?
- What types of paper do we know?
- What do we use paper for?
- What is the basic raw material for papermaking?
- Why is it important to collect waste paper?

All this and more is studied by Slovenian 6th grade pupils in their Science and Technology class. To be able to see the papermaking process first-hand, our papermill has been offering primary school tours of the production hall for several years now. The children are always thrilled about the visit, and usually create various posters on the subject when they return to school.



## DO YOU KNOW?

- Paper is one of the materials that is the easiest to recycle and reuse.
- Some types of paper can be recycled up to seven times.
- One ton of recycled paper saves 17 smaller or two larger trees.
- An average Slovenian uses 185 kg of paper per year.
- The production of recycled paper can reduce air pollution by 95%.
- To produce one ton of paper, we need 24 trees.

Text: Andreja Kalan

# Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere

*(Chinese proverb)*

In any company, investing in employees is the key to success. It is extremely important to recognise one's enthusiasm and desire to further expand the knowledge of papermaking, even if our industry unfortunately does not have the possibility of formal education. Despite the difficult economic situation, our papermill continues to favour any activity focused on learning that will motivate our employees to excel at their job, and help them achieve their personal and career goals. Many of our long-term colleagues, who have been with the company for thirty or forty years, some of them even longer, have recently retired, so it is very important to us to foster intergenerational cooperation and transfer of knowledge to our younger staff.

This year, we attended several international conferences and trade fairs focused on the production of paper and paper products, both in Slovenia and abroad. In addition, we promote learning about new technologies, and make sure our maintenance departments are involved in that.

In May 2023, training was successfully completed by the seventh generation of papermaking school graduates, including six candidates from our departments of finishing, development and paper production. A comprehensive knowledge of the paper technology is most certainly a big asset in tackling the daily challenges faced by our employees in their workplaces.

Also, as some of our colleagues were unable to attend the first trip we did to Luka Koper back in November 2022, we organised another one. Just like the first group, the second one was really impressed by how imposing the port is, and loved all the interesting details shared by their guide. And just like the first time, we finished our trip with a tasty lunch in the village of Marezige.







## INTERVIEW:

# Jan Janžovnik

*- I like being a papermaker*

**Short introduction: name, title, education, where do you work, previous work experience**

My name is Jan Janžovnik. I have a family, I am married, a father to a girl and a boy. We also have a pet, a feline little rascal of the Maine Coon breed. I have a high school degree in business and economics. Not being a fan of routine, I enrolled into a part-time study programme for an associate degree in information engineering, to be completed next year. I work as a first assistant on the paper machine, in charge of paper drying and coating. Before I started working at Goričane in 2016 as a second assistant on the paper machine, I had worked at a copy and printing shop for 5 years

**How did you end up in the paper industry? When was your first encounter with papermaking?**

I first heard of Goričane when an acquaintance of mine told me a few things about the papermill and how it operates. I sent out an application out of curiosity and got the job. When I first stepped into the production hall, I thought I was on a spaceship. As far as the paper business itself is concerned though, my first contact with it was when I was 5. My father was a driver for Dnevnik and often took me on a tour of the printing hall and the dispatching sector.

**What do you like about the paper industry?**

I enjoy the diversity and dynamic nature of the work itself, as well as the creative problem solving. We are often faced with challenges that we have to resolve as soon as possible. Of course, there are also



other skills and competences that I plan to acquire in my future years here in production. Besides, something new always comes up with the machine reconstruction.

**What would you say is the biggest disadvantage of our industry?**

I would say working in four shifts and coordinating employee schedules. Because of the four-shift work schedule, an employee has to constantly adjust their family obligations, which can be a big challenge.

**Where do you see yourself in the future?**

In the paper industry, I see myself as a paper machine operator in stock preparation, and eventually as a shift supervisor. I like to combine different areas of knowledge, so I also see myself helping with improving the computerised aspect of production.

**funny anecdote from the life of papermakers**

When I experienced my first major shutdown, I did not know yet how to work to avoid overexertion. And of course, I was completely soaked. When I came into the control room, the supervisor looked at me and said: "Do you know why you're so sweaty?" I told him it was because I worked so hard. "No!" he yelled back. "You're sweaty because for 10 years, you didn't work at all!" Half an hour later, I drenched us both with a large splash of water, and so we were both soaked.

**INTERVIEW:**

# Marko Cvrtila

**In short, what would you tell us about yourself?**

My name is Marko Cvrtila, I am 40 years old and I come from Kamnik. By occupation, I am an engineer of informatics. I am a positive and creative person, open for new discoveries and experiences. Life for me is an immense palette of knowledge and I use hobbies to learn. My guides are determination, independence, creativity and attention to detail. It is very important to me to have a good relationship with my colleagues because in my opinion, we have to walk through life together, helping and encouraging each other.

**When did you get a job at Goričane, which work position do you hold and what are your responsibilities?**

I started my job as an IT specialist at Goričane in the beginning of October 2023. My responsibilities include setting up new work stations (computers) and printers, doing administration work with emails, installing Windows and Office, as well as making sure that all computer devices and software applications are working correctly.

**In your opinion, what is our paper mill known for?**

Definitely for the beginnings of papermaking in Slovenia, which goes back to the 18th century, and currently for the small-scale production of woodfree lightweight papers.

**What motivates you at work?**

Since I was a child, I liked being in contact with technical devices. I want to understand their functionalities, communication protocols between the servers and the work stations. More than anything, however, I am motivated by my desire to have a dynamic work environment. I haven't had any experience with production before because I used to work in the construction-sales industry, so I decided to try this new area as well.



### Do you have any favourite hobbies, what do you do in your free time?

My free time is mostly spent with my family - I am married and have two sons. If possible, I also like to go on bike rides - I do both road and mountain cycling. One of my hobbies is 3D printing, and I also like to go to the theatres in Ljubljana for some "cultural food".

### What is your ideal work environment?

"Ideal work environment" ... that is quite a topic for discussion. In general, I think the basis is for every one of us to really get acquainted with the company's work processes. Once you have that knowledge, you can create a work environment where you feel comfortable, where you enjoy your work, have a respectful relationship with your colleagues, and love coming to work every day.

### What are your biggest strengths?

My main principle is that if we agree on something, I will keep my end of the bargain. I am persistent. If I stumble upon a certain issue, I see it as a challenge and do my best to solve it.

### Favourite book?

I am not really one to follow in this area because I mostly consume digital content and information found online. I did however recently finish *The Bolivian Diary* by Che Guevara.

### Favourite website?

I often visit [www.bolha.com](http://www.bolha.com), both as a seller and a buyer.

Text: Andreja Kalan



### RETIREMENTS IN 2023

Four long-time colleagues retired this year so far:

*Marjanca Trampuš, Anton Košenina, Alojzij Jeraj, Slavko Čurguz.*

### ANNIVERSARIES IN 2023

Just like before, long-time service awards for loyalty to the company were presented to some of our colleagues.

For **40 years** of employment:

***Sakib Čelić and Marjan Plestenjak.***

For **20 years** of employment:

*Mojca Podjed, Gregor Ljubec, Petra Hunjadi.*

For **10 years** of employment:

*Nataša Burgar, Vanda Stenovec, Ambrož Kovač, Robert Štifter, Jože Malej, Jure Zor.*

To all, a sincere thank you!

### OUR LITTLE PAPERMAKERS

This year, new family members were welcomed by four of our employees:

*Ken and Nina Stegu Bobnar (son Nik), Izet Alešević (daughter Dalija), Jure Zor (daughter Vita).*

Congratulations!



**GORIČANE**

Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year 2024

[www.goricane.si](http://www.goricane.si)