

Press release

European tube market also resilient in second year of pandemic

The European tube market continues to be robust in the second year of the pandemic. The European tube manufacturers association (etma) reports stable deliveries of tubes in 2021, exceeding the previous year's level by just under 1 percent and reaching a total volume of just over 11.6 billion units.

However, the main end-user markets developed differently. While deliveries to the pharmaceutical and household product markets declined by around 6 percent and 8 percent, respectively, in 2021, shipments to the cosmetics market and the food sector each increased by around 4 percent. Deliveries to the dental care market remained stable.

Pharmaceutical market weaker, demand for cosmetics picks up again

The decline in pharmaceutical tubes was mainly due to reduced visits to doctors during the pandemic meaning that the number of prescription medicines such as ointments, which are packaged in tubes, was down. On the other hand, the upturn in the cosmetics market, which dominates volumes, was encouraging, with a significant year-on-year recovery despite ongoing mobility restrictions and reduced leisure activities during the pandemic. The food sector benefited in particular from the fact that many households increasingly prepared their meals at home due to the pandemic. The dental care market, which is generally not very sensitive to economic cycles, remained very resilient in the second year of the pandemic and once again matched its impressive prior-year level.

Laminate tubes continue to occupy the top position in the deliveries of etma members with a share of 37 percent, closely followed by aluminum tubes with 35 percent. The share of plastic tubes is 28 percent.

Drastic cost increases in the energy sector

The European tube industry continues to struggle with sometimes exorbitant cost increases for raw materials, starting materials and transport services. "Prices for energy, truck and container freights in particular have literally exploded in recent months and are causing the industry great concern. Only through far-sighted inventory and production planning by tube manufacturers has it been possible to maintain security of supply in the value chain and avoid out-of-stock situations for customers and retailers," etma President Mark Aegler knows.

In view of a currently satisfactory order intake situation, European tube manufacturers are looking ahead to the coming months with optimism, despite all the uncertainties in pandemic times. "The tube as a packaging material remains extremely popular with consumers due to its ease of handling, its lightness and unbreakability, and its convincing resource efficiency which make it a real classic," sums up Aegler.

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