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Magazine for digital printing technologies, screen and pad printing

Issue No.4 | October 2026



TECHNOLOGY

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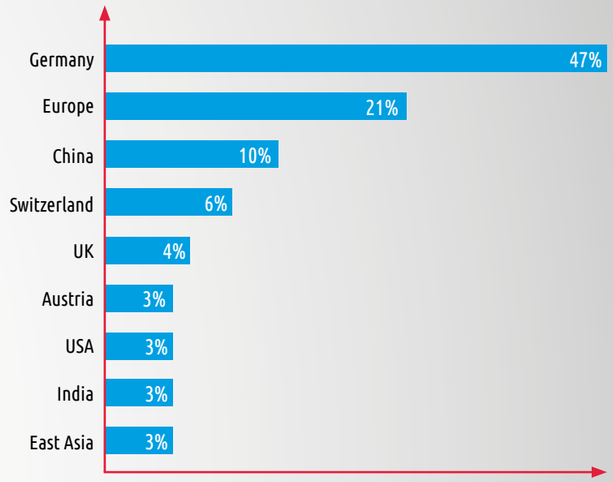
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EditoriaL



2027: MEGATRENDS IN GLOBAL CHANGE

It starts off innocently enough: the head of department prefers to compile Excel spreadsheets, whilst AI is allowed to draft a few work instructions. Then there's a meeting where nobody knows how to broach the subject of the production bottleneck. So AI is called upon again, this time with a boost of empathy, and sooner than you might think, AI is sitting in the boss's chair. Equipped with Wi-Fi and a constant hunger for updates, it maintains spreadsheets, drafts emails, analyses, reports, performance targets and, presumably, even letters of dismissal. Will algorithms turn all sectors of the economy on their head, leading to a mass redundancy wave in the labour market? This is a question that the printing industry may well have to ask itself, as it faces the prospect of a profound transformation by 2027.

One major trend is likely to be the ongoing development of autonomous quality assurance, as artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated with printing presses. Before the human eye can even perceive anything, AI control systems analyse printed sheets at maximum speed and correct registration errors or colour variations. In addition, machine manufacturers are driving forward the development of software-based systems capable of predicting the wear and tear of machine parts in order to minimise unforeseeable downtime.

Printed electronics will also continue to make inroads into the market in 2027. This is a technology of the future that enables sensors and circuits to be printed directly onto textiles, films or curved surfaces. Key areas include RFID chips, smart packaging, single-use sensors in medical technology, adhesive solar cells, and sensors in the automotive industry for interior and surveillance systems.

> *"Manufacturers will drive forward the development of software-based systems to enable the prediction of machine wear and tear."*

3D printing, or additive manufacturing, has evolved from prototype production to become a cornerstone of industrial mass production. 3D printers allow different materials and colours to be printed simultaneously in a single pass. One example of its application in the consumer goods sector is a 3D-printed trainer from Adidas, due to be launched in 2027.

In the textile printing sector, the Digital Product Passport (DPP) will be phased in from 2027 under an EU Ecodesign Regulation. Under this regulation, it will no longer be sufficient to label textiles solely with information on the raw materials (for example, 100 per cent cotton); instead, textile printers and fashion brands will be required to record the dyes and inks used and make this information available digitally. The primary responsibility for creating the product passport lies with the distributors, brands or manufacturers of the textiles. The passport is to be attached directly to the product via a QR code or NFC chip. On-demand microfactories are becoming increasingly important, as they enable flexible, on-demand production and can reduce overproduction in the fashion industry.

Against this backdrop, manufacturers will make targeted use of 2027 to showcase new products at specialised trade fairs such as the FESPA Global Print Expo in Munich, PSI in Cologne or Additive Manufacturing Strategies in New York.

Yours faithfully,

Udo Schulz

Udo W. Schulz

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Publisher / Graphic Design & Layout:
ISSN 2942-8831
büro oeding, Husumer Straße 68, 24941 Flensburg
Tel. 0461 - 318 51 75, kontakt@printmarket.online
www.buerooeding.de | www.printmarket.online

Subscriptions / Advertisements:
Gabi Rasch
National
Tel. +49 4521 - 797 410 30
gr@hoelter-media.de

Editorial Staff:
Udo W. Schulz
Tel. +49 - 176 993 999 64
udo.schulz@printmarket.online

Nonwovens and Cleaning Cloths
delivering maximum performance

Vliesstoffe Kasper GmbH has been supplying and manufacturing high-quality cleaning solutions for industry, trade and households for over 40 years. Its wide range extends from cellulose and microfibre cloths to specialised non-woven rolls for automated processes in the printing and electronics sectors.

Guided by the principle that "optimal cleaning is a question of the right cloth", Vliesstoff Kasper sees itself as a service provider offering personalised and individual advice. It operates to the highest ethical standards regarding integrity, fairness, sustainability and partnership, whilst complying with applicable laws.

Vliesstoff Kasper

Founded in 1984, Vliesstoff Kasper GmbH has been distributing and converting high-quality cleaning nonwovens for over 40 years. Since 2008, the Mönchengladbach-based company has also been represented in the USA by Kasper Consumables Inc. The product range includes both wet and dry wipes – from fine cellulose and microfiber to specialized nonwoven rolls for automated cleaning processes in the printing and electronics industries

The Mönchengladbach-based company manufactures exclusively certified non-woven fabrics, taking into account health, the environment and quality assurance, and also produces custom sizes upon customer request. The internal management system continuously monitors all processes from goods receipt to dispatch.

We use high-quality raw materials and products from certified suppliers, which are also subject to internal quality controls upon receipt of goods, as well as testing and inspection procedures at various stages of production, right through to the packaging and dispatch of the finished goods. In this way, the raw materials are subjected to a seamless series of quality checks throughout the manufacturing process, right up to the finished product. Vliesstoff Kasper is an ISO 9001:2015 certified company.



New THIEME 6000 PE roll-to-roll screen printing line

for printed electronics

Thieme is expanding its portfolio in industrial screen printing – particularly in the field of printed electronics – with the new THIEME 6000 PE flat-bed roll-to-roll line for functional coatings.

The machine combines the patented THIEME printing and squeegee unit with selected automation, web guidance and drying components from leading manufacturers – all integrated into a modular platform.

PROCESS RELIABILITY

The THIEME 6000 PE is designed for high-precision applications such as printed electronics, photovoltaics, RFID and seal printing. A camera-based vision alignment system is combined with stable web guidance and a highly efficient continuous dryer. The modular design allows for a scalable combination of printing, drying and in-line process modules. Technical highlights include a transport speed of up to 15 m/min, optionally integrable in-line steps and extendable line lengths, various integrable and scalable drying technologies, and the patented THIEME printing and doctor blade unit.

"We didn't want just another off-the-shelf line, but a tool that combines precision and throughput in practice," says Oliver Beck, Head of Sales at Thieme. "The 6000 PE delivers reproducible quality across multiple print layers – and remains consistently adaptable thanks to its modular architecture."

"Layer-to-layer registration determines whether a line is production-ready," adds Stefan Holzer, Technical Director. "With high repeatability, a transport speed of up to 15 m/min and optional in-line steps, we are laying the foundations for the reliable processing of complex, multi-layer structures."

Orders can be placed with immediate effect; a line will be available for live demonstrations at the THIEME Technology Centre in Teningen from Q4 2026.



THIEME is expanding its industrial screen printing portfolio with the new THIEME 6000 PE flatbed roll-to-roll line for functional coatings, particularly in printed electronics.

Thieme GmbH

As a family-run business, Thieme has been operating successfully in the international market for over five decades and is regarded as a technological leader in the polyurethane and printing systems sectors. The company focuses on production machines and innovative specialised machines for screen and digital printing, printed electronics, solar cells and RFID. Over 350 employees support production across four sites.

EyeC-America receives

ISO 9001:2015 certification

EyeC-America, LLC, the US partner of EyeC GmbH, has completed its ISO 9001:2015 certification. This step underlines the company's commitment to continuous improvement and follows the example of its German headquarters, whose quality management system has been certified to the internationally recognised standard since 2011.

With this certification, EyeC-America confirms the systematic focus of its business processes on quality, efficiency and continuous improvement. The certification process was used as an opportunity to review and improve the company's own processes and to create a reliable foundation for sustainable business development.

"For us, right from the start, it was not just about the certificate itself, but about being able to continue growing on a solid foundation. What is now laid down in our quality management system reflects how we actually work. That is precisely what makes the certification so valuable to us: it not only confirms a standard, but has also helped EyeC-America to become a better company," says Jürgen Klicker, President of EyeC-America.

The successful certification underlines EyeC's commitment to quality and lays the groundwork for the company's further international development.



EyeC-America, the US partner of EyeC GmbH, has been awarded ISO 9001:2015 certification.

EyeC

EyeC GmbH, based in Hamburg, Germany, has been supplying fast, accurate and user-friendly artwork verification and print inspection systems worldwide since 2002. According to the company, EyeC is the only provider on the market that ensures product quality throughout the entire manufacturing process, from the initial artwork file right through to the finished printed product. More than 3,800 EyeC inspection systems are now in use worldwide by pharmaceutical companies, printing houses and branded goods manufacturers. The company currently employs over 65 staff in Hamburg and has international sales partners in more than 100 countries.



Sun Chemical & Archipelago Technology:

Fibre-based packaging solutions

Sun Chemical has announced that it is entering into a partnership with the Archipelago Technology Group to promote the growing adoption of paper-based packaging solutions. The agreement is intended to help improve sustainability through the development and provision of coating solutions.



The agreement between Sun Chemical and the Archipelago Technology Group is designed to support packaging manufacturers and consumer brands.

By combining Archipelago's 'Powerdrop' coating system with Sun Chemical's liquid barrier coatings, the partnership is bringing high-performance liquid coatings for paper-based packaging to the market. Applications include 2D substrates and 3D moulded fibre containers, which offer durable alternatives to plastic and composite designs.

"Moulded fibre packaging combines strong sustainability credentials with the potential for a smaller carbon footprint than many conventional packaging formats," says Pete Saunders, Global Director, Digital Businesses, at Sun Chemical. "However, untreated cellulose does not possess the necessary barrier properties to resist oil, water and gases. Conventional alternative paper-based packaging, on the other hand, relies on the addition of plastic layers – whether through lamination or extrusion – which makes the resulting composite material more difficult to recycle. Archipelago's Powerdrop technology solves this problem by applying a highly efficient, ultra-thin functional coating at high throughput and with very little waste."

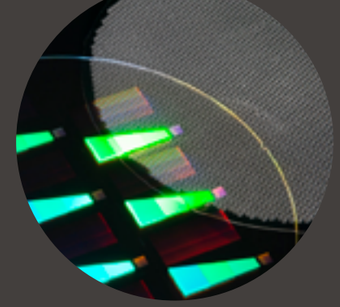
The collaboration comes at an opportune time, as the European Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) has been in force since August 2026 and sets out legally binding requirements to ensure recyclability across all EU Member States.

"For years, Archipelago has maintained that barrier coatings must be integrated into the structure of moulded fibre packaging from the outset, rather than being applied retrospectively," said Guy Newcombe, CEO of Archipelago Technology. "With the PPWR coming into force in August this year, the window of opportunity for makeshift, heavily laminated packaging is rapidly closing. Our agreement with Sun Chemical enables us to offer a comprehensive, proven platform."

Sun Chemical

Sun Chemical, a member of the DIC Group, is recognised as a leading manufacturer of packaging and graphic solutions, colour and display technologies, functional products, electronic materials and products for the automotive and healthcare industries. Together with DIC, Sun Chemical is working to develop sustainable solutions, and with over 21,000 employees worldwide, the companies within the DIC Group support a wide range of global customers.

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Düsseldorf-Neuss
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Industrial Print Integration (IPI) is organised by ESMA, the European Specialist Printing Manufacturers Association

Functional printing at IPI:
Applications of inkjet printing

The technical programme for Industrial Print Integration (IPI) 2026 reflects an industry in transition. New markets are increasingly emerging for inkjet printing, ranging from connection structures in the micrometre range to structural electronics on 3D surfaces, whilst screen printing remains the dominant process for printed electronics.

Inkjet is regarded as a manufacturing platform and not merely a laboratory process, as evidenced by the materials, structural dimensions and expertise involved, as demonstrated by the projects presented by the following speakers, accompanied by a specialist exhibition.

FROM STRUCTURING TOOL TO MANUFACTURING PLATFORM

Quantica's process for high-viscosity inks pushes the boundaries of conventional printheads, which operate in the range of 10 to 50 mPa·s. According to Quantica, mastering these fluids requires collaboration between printhead manufacturers, material developers and end-users, as well as 'flexibility at the system level' to compensate for fluctuations.

The Fraunhofer IPA's non-Newtonian, water- and bio-based binder system demonstrates that it is possible to develop functional fluids with a focus on sustainability.

At the other end of the spectrum, XTPL presents 'Ultra-Precise Dispensing', which enables the creation of conductive structures down to 1 µm – a range between standard inkjet printing and photolithography. The deposition of highly concentrated inks onto complex 3D topographies closes a gap in the field of 'Advanced Packaging'.

Further articles focus on the crucial aspect of the transition from the laboratory to production. Inkatronic concentrates on fluid behaviour, the integration of print heads, ink supply and long-term stability. SAT Electronic utilises inkjet processes on printed circuit boards for etching and electroplating resists, solder mask coatings, labelling and conductive inks, which offer advantages in terms of time, energy consumption and space requirements. The EV Group combines inkjet technology with UV nanoimprint lithography for applications in the fields of AR/VR and co-packaged optics.

SENSORS AND FUNCTIONAL SURFACES

In the 'Print-Light-Synthesis' process developed by ETH Zurich, dissolved metal precursors – rather than nanoparticle dispersions – are applied using digital inkjet printing and subsequently converted by intense flash light, which prevents nozzle clogging and eliminates the cost of pre-synthesised nanoparticles. The process is suitable for roll-to-roll manufacturing, as the conversion takes place within seconds.

IEMN Lille uses paper substrates for inkjet printing in RF applications. They have produced CPW lines with 50 µm-wide conductors and a 9 µm spacing, a band-pass filter for 25 GHz, and an attenuation of 0.5 dB/mm at 10 GHz. A key factor here is the relationship between filter performance and the printing and temperature conditions.

FLAT SUBSTRATES

Inkjet processes are not the only way to create 3D surfaces. The 'Structural Electronics' division of the CRM Group focuses on large-area components on metal substrates for harsh operating environments, comparing the adaptation of electronics for flexible substrates to moulded surfaces with additive printing on 3D geometries. This methodological approach takes into account that it is not the material properties, but rather process adaptation and design, that determine feasibility.

The SelfiPBF project combines the polymer powder bed fusion process with the inkjet deposition of water-based CNT inks to integrate spatially defined conductivity into structural components.

The 'Spray-on-Screen' process developed at Hasselt University combines spray coating with the process control provided by screen meshes. Layers with a thickness of less than 20 nm can be produced, which are suitable for large-area roll-to-roll processes. A second paper compares patterning methods for gallium-based liquid metals. The spray method is suitable for large areas but suffers from losses due to spray mist, whilst the direct-writing method operates without waste but is more difficult to stabilise.

SCREEN PRINTING

For most applications in printed electronics – such as sensors, heating elements, membrane keyboards, photovoltaic cells or conductor tracks on substrates – screen printing remains the standard process. This is due to its high throughput, flexibility in ink selection, the ability to produce thick layers, and low capital costs. IPI 2026 presents a portfolio in which screen printing dominates high-volume applications, whilst digital and hybrid processes are tapping into market segments where customisation, fine structures, 3D geometries or material efficiency justify the use of these technologies.

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Stability when printing particle-filled and highly viscous fluids, the integration of liquid metal structures, dimensional accuracy in systems comprising binders and powders, and the reproducibility of printed HF structures remain challenges. These are topics that the IPI addresses in the context of industrial platforms, supply chains and production.

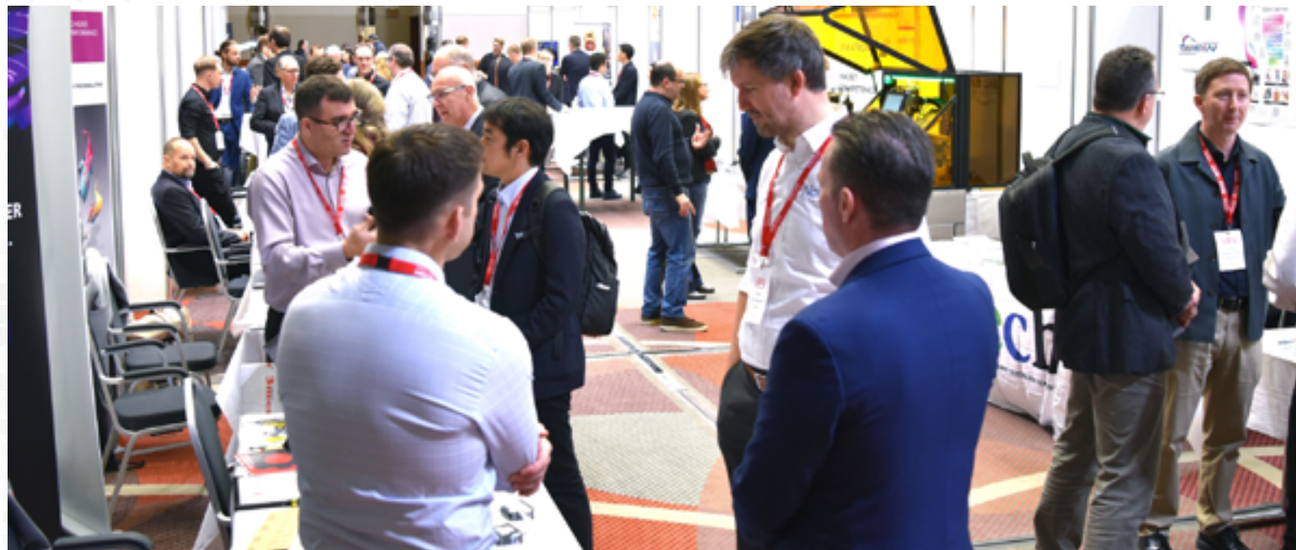


For most applications in the field of printed electronics, such as membrane keyboards, screen printing remains the standard process.

ESMA

ESMA has been active in the industrial printing sector since 1990 and, as the European association for screen and digital printing manufacturers, has evolved into an organisation representing industrial, functional and specialist printing. Over the years, ESMA has developed the 'Knowledge Hub' concept, which today provides cross-technology expertise to nearly 70 European manufacturer members and technology partners.

The 'Industrial Print Integration Conference' on 24 and 25 November 2026 highlights the importance of inkjet, spray, screen and hybrid processes in the field of printed electronics.



Industrial Print Integration:
New Areas of Industrial Printing

Maciej Bochajczuk from ESMA provides insights into the next generation of industrial printing applications.

What criteria were used to select this year's key topics for the IPI conference?

The starting point for every IPI programme is real industrial print in market applications — showing the successful way from lab to fab. For the 2026 edition, that lens led us to three key trends: the rise of functional printing for electronics and smart surfaces, advances in high-viscosity jetting that enable thicker and more functional inks, and the growing convergence of industrial printing and additive manufacturing.

Six keynote presentations will explore these developments from a range of perspectives. Bernd Zipper (Zipcon) will examine how AI is transforming print procurement and supply chain management. A joint presentation by Axalta, Dürr Systems and Xaar will showcase a robotic vehicle-painting system that combines digital print technology with advanced coatings. Jon Harper Smith (Smithers) will provide strategic market analysis, while Jan Schrooten (Antleron) will demonstrate multimaterial 3D printing platforms for patient-centric biomedical solutions — a striking example of printing and additive manufacturing converging. Witold Nawrot (XTPL) will showcase ultra-precise dispensing technology capable of producing 1 µm interconnections, and Johanna Rimböck (EV Group) will present inkjet solutions for next-generation AR/VR optics.

What developments are you currently observing in screen and digital printing, and how does the conference programme reflect these?

IPI focuses on digital inkjet, and what we are seeing is a steady expansion of the technology into functional applications — increasingly in combination with other processes, including screen printing and additive manufacturing techniques. The programme reflects exactly this: hybrid process chains rather than isolated technologies. Energy efficiency is also firmly in focus, from UV-LED curing and IR drying through to process optimisation across the whole production line.



Maciej Bochajczuk plans and designs marketing and communications at ESMA to promote screen printing, digital imaging, pad printing and other processes.

How can screen and digital printing businesses respond to the EU's increasingly stringent bans on chemicals?

Three things, in my view: optimisation, customisation, and collaboration. Businesses need to optimise their processes and ink usage, customise formulations to compliant chemistries, and — where applicable — collaborate across the supply chain on hybrid solutions. No single company can solve regulatory compliance alone.

At ESMA, members don't have to face this challenge alone either. Our Health, Safety & Environmental Protection (HSEP) Committee follows and guides members through all EU regulations on chemicals, sustainability and other legislative topics affecting our industry. Recent topics have included the CLP Regulation and PFAS restrictions. Beyond that, events like IPI bring formulators, printhead manufacturers, integrators and end users around one table — because compliance is a shared task for the whole supply chain.

How can the shortage of skilled workers be mitigated through the use of AI and robotics in screen and digital printing technology?

It is probably too early to pass final judgement on AI's role in our industry, but robotics is already here and increasingly integrated into production environments. That said, technology alone will not close the skills gap. We still need to invest in personnel training in Europe — and in matchmaking between educational institutions and employers — covering both entry-level and highly skilled workforce.

This is why we run our ESMA Academy courses for those who want to discover the potential of printing for industrial and functional applications. And we are launching a new feature in 2027: Career Connect, a dedicated platform at ESMA events — particularly SPI and IPI-X — where schools and students can present themselves and their competences on one side, while the industry showcases its career opportunities on the other. While showcasing the latest research is important, it is equally valuable to create a platform where future employees can connect with potential employers.

Which new topics might come more into focus in the future?

At IPI we can expect a further expansion of the inkjet application field, especially into biomedical applications. Bioprinting, functional printing and additive manufacturing are driving a paradigm shift in the biomedical and healthcare industries, offering solutions to long-standing medical challenges. These technologies enable the precise fabrication of living tissues, smart wearables, personalised pharmaceuticals and advanced prosthetics — transforming diagnostics, treatment and patient care.

What is ESMA's main objective, and what message would you like to convey to the industry?

For over 35 years, our slogan has remained "Driving Print Excellence". Over that period we have built a genuine knowledge hub, which we use to ensure education, best practice and competition towards innovation within our industry — all within a healthy and professional framework of collaboration, community and direct exchange. In short: we bring the innovators and the real industry leaders together.

And finally — what are your plans for the future?

2027 will be a busy year. Screen Print Innovations (SPI) returns in June 2027, followed by the premiere edition of Inkjet Print Innovations eXpo (IPI-X) in November. Both take place at Messe Essen and are designed to attract a much broader scope of print technology professionals, end users and brand owners than our technical conferences. At SPI and IPI-X, you will see the latest technology in action. At the end of November 2027, the GlassPrint conference returns for its 10th edition. And ESMA Academy launches a new course on functional inkjet printing, in collaboration with Fraunhofer IPA and Hahn-Schickard, in Stuttgart.

Industrial Print Integration demonstrates the versatility of a range of printing processes, from ultra-precision to high-speed, and from mass production to customisation.





Formnext showcases the latest developments in additive manufacturing. Copyright Formnext / Mesago Messe Frankfurt GmbH, photo: Marc Jacquemin

Formnext 2026 in Frankfurt:

Industrial Manufacturing

The debate on industrial developments is often shaped by economic challenges. Numerous examples demonstrate how the use of additive manufacturing can open up new growth markets. From 17 to 20 November, Formnext will offer insights into specific applications across the value chain.

The current market environment highlights resilient supply chains, flexible production processes and technological innovations. Additive manufacturing helps companies respond more quickly to changes in the aerospace, defence, energy, medical and semiconductor sectors. Formnext is regarded as the central platform for manufacturing technologies, and with around 800 exhibitors expected, relevant companies from across the entire AM ecosystem will be represented. Throughout the four days of the exhibition, the focus will be on face-to-face meetings, expert dialogue and concrete inspiration for applications within the industry.

"The current market phase in particular highlights just how important exchange, guidance and access to innovation are," explains Sascha F. Wenzler, Vice President of Formnext at the organiser, Mesago Messe Frankfurt GmbH.

"Formnext brings together the key players and creates the framework in which new ideas for the industrial application of additive manufacturing can emerge."

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

The conference programme on the Industry & Application Stage features cross-sector topics and specific application examples, complemented by the Technology Stage, where technological innovations are showcased.

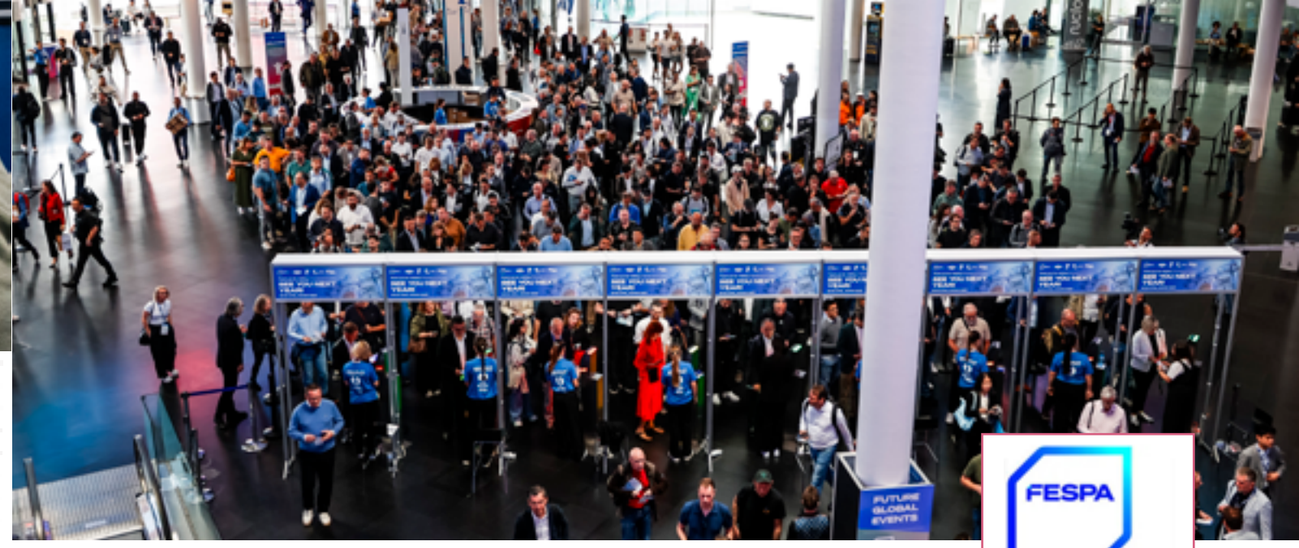
The Formnext Defence Summit sets a new agenda, highlighting current developments and requirements in the security and defence sectors. In addition, a special exhibition is dedicated to the topic of post-processing.

The Formnext Awards recognise innovations and developments, whilst the Discover3DPrinting seminars offer newcomers an introduction to additive manufacturing, complemented by the Start-up Area and the Pitchnext event, which promote interaction with investors and partners.

> *Although additive manufacturing is already an integral part of production in many industries, the technologies remain complex and require the development of expertise and, above all, the identification of relevant business models and potential,"*
> **Christoph Stüker, Vice President Formnext.**

Mesago

Formnext was launched in 1982 as the leading international trade fair for additive manufacturing and industrial 3D printing. As part of the Messe Frankfurt Group, Mesago showcases future-oriented solutions in automation, power electronics, additive manufacturing and electromagnetic compatibility to an international community. The company employs around 170 staff at its Stuttgart site.



Europe's leading trade fair for screen printing, digital and large-format printing, textile printing and signage, the FESPA Global Print Expo, will take place in Munich again in 2027

FESPA Global Print Expo

returns to Munich in 2027

FESPA has announced that the annual FESPA Global Print Expo, along with its concurrent events (European Sign Expo, Personalisation Experience, WrapFest and Textile), will take place from 6 to 9 April 2027 at Messe München. Next year's events will also feature the FESPA Awards, the World Wrap Masters and Club FESPA.

Michael Ryan, Head of the FESPA Global Print Expo, explains: "Following the show in Barcelona, I am delighted to confirm that the FESPA Global Print Expo and its co-located events will return to Munich in 2027. We are looking forward to being back in Germany to strengthen our links with regional markets and reconnect with our German community. It is always a pleasure to present our flagship event to the public, and I look forward to further expanding the FESPA network."

He continues: "I am confident that Munich will offer a wealth of opportunities in the fields of printing, signage, vehicle graphics, textiles and much more. We look forward to welcoming you there."

The FESPA Global Print Expo was last held at Messe München in 2023. As one of Europe's leading exhibition venues, Munich offers first-class infrastructure and is easily accessible via international and local transport links. The venue has a long and successful history of hosting FESPA events and provides both exhibitors and visitors with a well-established and effective platform.

Profit for Purpose

Profit for Purpose is FESPA's international reinvestment programme, which uses revenue from FESPA events to support the global specialist printing community in education, inspiration, expansion and networking. It offers high-quality products and services for print businesses, including market research, seminars, summits, conferences, educational guides and special features.

FESPA

FESPA is an association of trade organisations founded in 1962 that organises exhibitions and conferences for the screen and digital printing industries. FESPA's objectives are to promote screen printing and digital imaging, and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on screen and digital printing amongst its members worldwide, in order to support the expansion of their businesses and keep them informed about the latest developments in these rapidly growing sectors.



For 60 years, PSI has been regarded as the premier event for the promotional products industry. The leading European trade fair has chosen Cologne as its new home for 2027

PSI to relocate in 2027

from Düsseldorf to Cologne

After six fruitful decades in Düsseldorf, PSI – Europe's leading trade fair for the promotional products industry – will take place in Cologne from 2027 onwards, opening its doors for the first time from 12 to 14 January at the Koelnmesse exhibition centre.

PSI is regarded as the leading trade fair and the home of the European promotional products industry. As a central marketplace, PSI brings together manufacturers, suppliers, importers, retailers, agencies and marketing professionals from across Europe. At its Cologne venue, PSI is a key hub for innovation, networking and business development. With its combination of products, brands, expertise and industry insights, it provides valuable impetus for promotional products, incentives, merchandising and brand communication. Visitors can discover product innovations, sustainable solutions, finishing technologies and the latest market trends, whilst establishing contacts with decision-makers. More than 10,000 trade visitors and over 600 exhibitors are expected.

"This move is a clear commitment to the further development of PSI. We look forward to the new opportunities that the move to Cologne will offer everyone involved," says Michael Köhler, Managing Director of RX Deutschland GmbH.

Alongside new trends, tried-and-tested themes feature on the agenda for PSI 2027. Visitors will be able to explore the Textile Village, which focuses on textile promotional items ranging from promotional textiles to sustainable collections. Finishing techniques will be brought to life through solutions for printing, engraving, personalisation and on-demand services. In addition, a new, multimedia content format is set to expand the PSI 2027 programme. The focus will be on discussions with experts, as well as brand and industry specialists, on key future topics. The topics range from tactile advertising and sustainable supply chains to the interplay between analogue and digital customer experiences.

> *"PSI 2027 in Cologne marks the start of the year for the industry and is also the most important guide for the entire promotional products year – for everyone who wants to bring brands to life and ensure sales success through promotional products, incentives and merchandising."*
> **Petra Lassahn, Director PSI.**

RX

RX is a global events and exhibitions company that uses industry expertise, data and technology to build businesses for individuals, communities and organisations. With a presence in 25 countries and across 40 sectors, RX organises around 350 events annually and supports businesses with data-driven insights and digital solutions.

Introduction of the GRTS:

A new standard for textile processing

Global Standards gemeinnützige GmbH, a German non-profit organisation based in Stuttgart, has introduced the Global Responsible Textile Standard (GRTS), a standard for the textile processing of products made from fibres. Its scope covers plant-based, animal-based and synthetic fibres, as well as cellulose-based man-made fibres and recycled fibres.

The GRTS is based on the system developed for GOTS. According to Global Standards, GOTS is a voluntary sustainability standard for the textile value chain (post-harvest) for certified organic fibres and covers environmental criteria, human rights and social criteria. For the GRTS, fibres must be certified to third-party standards recognised by the GRTS and must meet environmental and traceability criteria. These include, amongst other things, a ban on highly hazardous chemicals and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), seamless traceability whilst maintaining identity, and compliance with social standards in fibre production.

GRTS certification is carried out by accredited, independent bodies and is required at every stage of processing and trade. Requirements relating to traceability, transaction certificates and volume reconciliation are intended to support the verification of the proportion of certified fibres throughout the supply chain. To be eligible for GRTS certification, goods must consist of at least 90 per cent fibres certified in accordance with fibre standards recognised by GRTS. According to Global Standards, companies that are already certified to GOTS may, under certain circumstances, be able to draw on existing systems and procedures when applying for GRTS certification. The standard is fully operational; 27 independent certification bodies are accredited to certify to GRTS.

Global Standards GmbH

Global Standards gGmbH develops, implements and promotes voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) for the textile industry. Its work is overseen by the Global Standards Foundation, which ensures the independent governance of the standards. Global Standards gGmbH is a non-profit organisation that develops and administers voluntary sustainability standards for the textile industry.

The new GRTS standard aims to promote greater sustainability



Digital Product Pass Registration:

Supply Chain Transparency

The European Commission has launched the Digital Product Pass Register, together with a test environment, to make the Digital Product Pass (DPP) a practical reality for businesses placing products on the EU market.

The Digital Product Passport contains product information designed to enhance supply chain transparency, support consumer decision-making and facilitate regulatory compliance within the single market. Whilst product data is stored decentrally, Digital Product Passports must be registered in a register, which is required for the registration of product identifiers and metadata. Specific obligations will come into force from February 2027 and are set to be gradually extended to further product groups by 2030. However, printed products and printed matter are not included among the priority product groups – such as batteries or textiles – in the EU's phased plan, but are expected to be covered by the regulation on raw materials and packaging.

According to the Implementing Regulation, there are rules governing access management and user verification, requirements for the registration and storage of necessary data, and the architecture of the register. In response to feedback from EU countries and stakeholders, the register has been designed with a focus on user-friendliness, common standards and trust. This is intended to facilitate data management and reduce the administrative burden. The register includes a verification framework and a logging system designed to strengthen security, accountability and access management.

SUPPORT RESOURCES

The Commission is supporting implementation to ensure that the register is accessible, secure and effective. The current testing phase is intended to help ensure a smooth roll-out ahead of the first implementation deadline on 18 February 2027 for certain large batteries.

Industry stakeholders can access the test environment, technical documentation, implementation guidelines, webinars and the latest information via the DPP website.

REPRESENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION IN GERMANY

It acts as a liaison with the European Commission in Brussels and supports political dialogue with national, regional and local authorities, parliaments, social partners, universities, civil society and other stakeholders. The Representation reports to the President of the European Commission and produces country-specific reports, analyses and recommendations on political, economic and social developments in Germany.



A dedicated helpdesk is available to assist businesses during the registration process.

Digital Product Passport (DPP)

must not be overburdened

The Digital Product Passport is intended to promote transparency and the circular economy. The VDMA (German Engineering Federation) fears that expanding the requirements too rapidly could overwhelm companies and jeopardise acceptance.

The Digital Product Passport (DPP) is one of the key initiatives of European sustainability policy. It is intended to create transparency, promote the circular economy and support sustainable products. However, the DPP is now at risk of being overburdened with additional requirements and use cases whilst still in an early stage of development. It would be better to launch it with fewer requirements and gather experience so as not to overburden companies, argued Holger Kunze, Head of the VDMA European Office in Brussels.



The Digital Product Passport (DPP) is a digital record that brings together all key information on a product's composition, origin and life cycle, and is designed to promote the circular economy

The VDMA supports the fundamental aim of the DPP. The European Commission's original approach was to introduce the Digital Product Passport initially in clearly defined areas, in particular within the framework of the Ecodesign Regulation (ESPR) and the Battery Regulation. However, this approach is coming under increasing pressure. Considerations to enshrine the DPP in legislation at an early stage as a horizontal instrument are premature, explained Kunze.

Companies must set up data management systems, create interfaces along the supply chain, adapt processes and establish new responsibilities. At the same time, fundamental elements such as harmonised standards, technical infrastructure and tried-and-tested procedures for data exchange and interoperability are still lacking in many areas. According to a VDMA analysis, this means that the widespread introduction of the Digital Product Passport in the German mechanical and plant engineering sector could require investment of around 4 billion euros. On average, companies would have to spend around 3.2 per cent of their annual turnover on implementation.

At the same time, the VDMA emphasises the long-term potential of the Digital Product Passport. The DPP could improve transparency and support repair and recycling. To ensure this potential is realised, Europe must allow the system sufficient time to develop.

VDMA

With 3,500 members and its headquarters in Frankfurt, the VDMA is the largest network organisation and voice of the mechanical engineering sector in Germany and Europe. For more than 130 years, the VDMA has served as an adviser, advocate, networking platform, sparring partner and voice of the mechanical and plant engineering sector. The association represents the common economic, technical and scientific interests of this industry.

BVDM Economic Bulletin, September 2026:

Business climate deteriorates

The business climate index for the German printing and media industry deteriorated in September 2026. The seasonally adjusted business climate index, compiled by the Federal Association of Printing and Media (BVDM), showed a decline of 5.7 per cent compared with the previous month. The current business situation eased slightly, whilst expectations for the coming six months deteriorated significantly.

In September 2026, the decision-makers surveyed by the ifo Institute rated their current business situation slightly worse than in the previous month, and their assessments for the next six months are pessimistic. The seasonally and calendar-adjusted business situation index fell by two per cent in September 2026 compared with the previous month. Of the companies surveyed, three per cent rated their current business situation as good, 75 per cent as satisfactory and 22 per cent as poor.

The order book was also viewed unfavourably in September: four per cent of companies rated it as good, 59 per cent as satisfactory and 37 per cent as poor. Three per cent of companies rated their current profitability as good, 57 per cent as satisfactory and 40 per cent as poor.

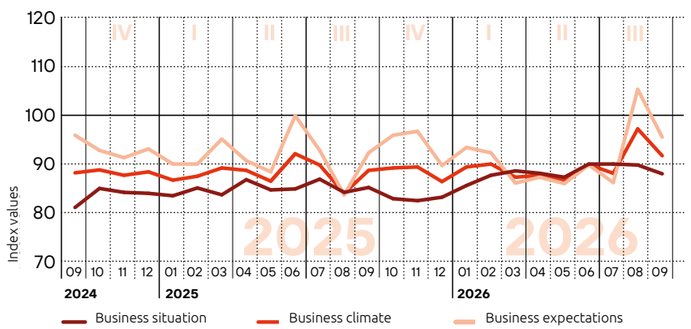
Companies' business expectations for the coming six months in September failed to match the previous month's results and have once again become more pessimistic. Eight per cent of companies expect business conditions to improve, whilst 22 per cent anticipate a downturn. 70 per cent of those surveyed expect business conditions to remain unchanged over the next six months.

BVDM

The Federal Association of Printing and Media (BVDM) is the umbrella organisation for the German printing industry. As an employers' organisation, a political trade association and a technical trade association, it represents the positions and objectives of the printing industry in dealings with politicians, public authorities, trade unions and the supply industry. The BVDM is supported by eight regional associations. Internationally, it is organised through its membership of Intergraf and FESPA. The printing industry currently comprises around 6,300 predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises with more than 99,000 employees subject to social security contributions.

Economic situation in the German printing industry 9/2026

Index values (2015=100), seasonally adjusted | Calculation/graph: bvdm, source: ifo Business Survey



Labels and flexible packaging:

Durst Group acquires MPS

The Durst Group, an international manufacturer of digital printing and production technologies, has announced that the Dutch company MPS Printing B.V. will become part of the Durst Group on 1 January 2027 and will operate under the name MPS – A Durst Group Company.



The strategic acquisition expands Durst's capabilities and creates opportunities for integration in automated label production.

For the Durst Group, the acquisition represents a strategic move towards a long-term commitment to the labels and flexible packaging sector. Durst has established a strong position in digital printing, software and automation, with OMET in hybrid production, whilst MPS strengthens the Group with flexographic technology and development expertise.

"Label production is becoming increasingly networked, automated and data-driven," says Christoph Gamper, CEO and co-owner of the Durst Group. "Our customers need production environments that enable them to manage different applications, print run volumes and business models with maximum efficiency and flexibility. Durst already possesses strong capabilities in digital printing, software and hybrid production. With MPS, we are expanding the Group to include additional flexographic expertise, technology and development capabilities. This provides us with further opportunities for integration and enables us to pursue complementary development paths in parallel."

MPS REMAINS A STRONG BRAND WITHIN THE DURST GROUP

The management team at MPS will remain in place and Michiel Borst will continue to lead the company. "What is changing is not who we are, but what we can achieve," says Michiel Borst, CEO of MPS Printing B.V. "MPS will retain its entrepreneurial approach, its customer focus and its commitment to flexographic innovation. At the same time, being part of the Durst Group gives us access to a broader technology platform, a global organisation and the long-term perspective of a family-run business."

PARTNERSHIP WITH OMET REMAINS IN PLACE

Durst's existing partnership with OMET remains in place and will continue independently of the MPS transaction. Durst and OMET manufacture and market the KJet and XJet hybrid platforms, which remain a key component of Durst's hybrid strategy.

Durst Group

The Durst Group is a global technology company with over 1,100 employees and locations in more than 40 countries. For over 90 years, Durst has been developing and marketing solutions for digital production, automation and smart manufacturing processes. The focus is on pioneering digital printing and production technologies.

National & international trade fairs

A selection on the topics of screen, digital, pad, large format and textile printing

As of October 2026. Due to the current situation, dates and information may be outdated or not up-to-date. Please contact the respective organizer for confirmation of dates. Further international trade fairs can be found on our website at:

printmarket.online/en/fairs-en/

National Trade Fair Dates 2026/27

Formnext
International trade fair for additive manufacturing
17 to 20 November 2026 in Frankfurt am Main

IPI Konferenz 2026
Conference on Industrial Print Integration
24 and 25 November 2026 in Düsseldorf-Neuss

PSI
Europe's leading trade fair for the promotional products industry
12 to 14 January 2027 in Cologne

Optical Document Security
International trade fair for document security
25 to 27 January 2027 in Berlin

all about automation
Trade fair for industrial automation, robotics and digitalisation
27 and 28 January in Berlin

GiveADays
Trade fair for promotional products and haptic advertising
Expected to take place in February 2027 in Stuttgart

TecStyle Visions
Leading trade fair for textile finishing and promotional products
3 to 5 February 2027 in Stuttgart

EMPACK
Trade fair for innovations in packaging technology
24 and 25 February 2027 in Dortmund

Additive Manufacturing Forum
Europe's leading conference and trade exhibition for additive manufacturing
2 and 3 March 2027 in Berlin

LOPEC
Trade fair for printed and flexible electronics
3 and 4 March 2027 in Munich

WETEC
Trade fair for advertising technology, digital printing and digital signage
3 to 5 March 2027 in Stuttgart

InPrint Munich
Trade fair for printing technology in industrial manufacturing
9 to 11 March 2027 in Munich

ICE Europe
Leading international trade fair for the finishing and processing of paper, film and foil
9 to 11 March 2027 in Munich

CCE International
Trade fair for the corrugated board and folding carton industry
9 to 11 March 2027 in Munich

AM Forum
Conference on industrial additive manufacturing
10 and 11 March 2027 in Berlin

FESPA Global Print Expo
Trade fair for screen, digital and large-format printing, as well as textile printing
6 to 9 April in Munich

European Sign Expo
Event for signage and visual communication
6 to 9 April in Munich

Personalisation Experience
Trade fair for personalisation and bespoke print solutions
6 to 9 April in Munich

Online Print Summit
Congress of the international online print industry
13 and 14 April 2027 in Munich

International trade fair dates for 2026/27

Isprint
Trade fair for printing, digital printing, graphics, signage, digital signage & publishing
3 and 4 November 2026 in Tel Aviv, Israel

Interdye Printing Eurasia
Trade fair for dyes, printing inks, pigments and technologies
25 to 27 November 2026 in Istanbul, Turkey

Gulf Print & Pack
Trade fair for printing technology and packaging solutions
12 to 14 January 2027 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

C!Print
Trade fair for printing, visual communication and personalisation
12 to 14 January 2027 in Madrid, Spain

PMG Promogift
Trade fair for promotional gifts and personalisation equipment
12 to 14 January 2027 in Madrid, Spain

Warsaw Remadays
Trade fair for advertising and printing, focusing on printing technologies and innovative solutions
26 to 28 January 2027 in Warsaw, Poland

EMBAX-Print
Trade fair for the packaging and printing industry
February 2027 in Brno, Czech Republic

Print & Sign
Trade fair for visual communication, signage, printing machinery and new materials
23–25 March 2027 in Gorinchem, Netherlands

marke[ding]
Trade fair for tactile advertising and visual communication
8 April 2027 in Vienna, Austria

EMPACK
Trade fair for innovations in packaging technology
14 and 15 April 2027 in 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands

Workwear Expo
Trade fair for retailers, promotional products, and embroidery and screen-printing companies
20 and 21 April 2027 in Houten, Netherlands

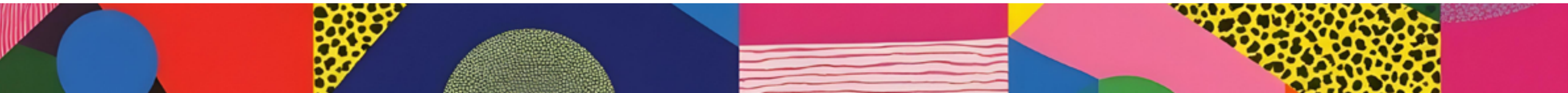
PRINT4ALL
Specialised trade fair for the printing and converting industry
25 to 28 May 2027 in Milan, Italy

Saudi Print & Pack 2027
Trade fair for innovations in the fields of paper and technology
26 to 29 April 2027 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

FESPA Middle East
Trade fair for specialised printing and signage
27 to 29 April 2027 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

IPP Interpackprint
International exhibition for packaging and printing
10 to 12 June 2027 in Sousse, Tunisia

Textiles Recycling Expo
Platform for textile recycling and sustainability
16 and 17 June 2027 in Brussels





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ISSN 2942-8831