

Global ferrous scrap use on the decline in first half of 2012

(WW) – After setting a new record in 2011, the world-wide consumption of ferrous scrap will probably not reach the same level in the year 2012. In the first half of this year, scrap use in all the main steel producing countries and regions fell short of the volumes recorded one year before, reported Rolf Willeke, statistics advisor of the Bureau of International Recycling's ferrous division. Speaking at the industry organisation's autumn meeting in Barcelona at the end of October, Mr Willeke pointed in particular to China, where steel scrap consumption declined 17 per cent to 41.3 million tonnes.

In the EU, too, steel scrap use was 3 per cent lower at 51.4 million tonnes in the first half, while crude steel production decreased 4.5 per cent to just under 89 million tonnes. Mr Willeke added that it was worth noting that the EU's three main scrap consumers – Italy, Germany and Spain – all recorded negative growth. In Italy, the amount of scrap used stood at 11.2 million tonnes (-4.3 per cent), in Germany at 9.8 million tonnes (-3.3 per cent) and in Spain at just under 7 million tonnes (-5.5 per cent). Scrap consumption was also on the decline in Japan and Russia, falling 3 per cent to 18.6 million tonnes in Japan and 2 per cent to 9.5 million tonnes in Russia.

The only positive developments were observed in Turkey, where scrap use rose 11 per cent to 16.4 million tonnes, and in the USA, which recorded 3 per cent growth to 28.6 million tonnes. At the same time, scrap exports from the USA declined almost 8 per cent to 11.3 million tonnes. The country still remained the world's largest steel scrap exporter, followed by the EU, which recorded almost 13 per cent growth in exports to 9.1 million tonnes. Japan ranked third, with its export volume jumping nearly 70 per cent compared to the first half of last year to 2.418 million tonnes. All the main exporters were net exporters.

On the buyers' side, Turkey strengthened its position as the world's foremost importer. The country's imports stood at 11.3 million tonnes in the first six months of 2012, which represents 13 per cent growth in annual comparison. Of this total, 5.5 million tonnes (+12 per cent) were imported from the EU, 3.3 million tonnes (+23 per cent) from the USA. Further interesting developments highlighted by Mr Willeke included growth in Korea's imports by 22 per cent to 5.2 million tonnes and an increase in China's imports by 0.8 per cent to 2.8 million tonnes.

While Turkey was the main destination for EU ferrous scrap exports, India ranked second with just under 1.5 million tonnes (+62 per cent), followed by Egypt with 0.869 million tonnes (+29 per cent). For the USA, Turkey was also the main purchaser, followed by Korea, Taiwan and China.