

## **BIR advocates test for recycling certificates**

(WW) – The Bureau of International Recycling (BIR) is fundamentally open to the idea of promoting recycling via tradable certificate systems. These should be addressed to recyclable materials with poorly functioning markets and take into account lessons learnt in the past. Ross Bartley, BIR's Environmental and Technical Director, said in a presentation prepared for a conference in mid-July. The event was organised by the Commission in Brussels to mark the launch of the consultation on the EU thematic strategy on recycling.

Mr Bartley pointed out that as a rule, one should work with the market and not against it. Existing well functioning markets for recyclable materials should not be obstructed and, where possible, further developed, the BIR director noted. He cited metal scrap and recovered paper as two examples of recyclable materials for which a market existed. In the case of poorly functioning markets, instruments must be employed to initiate, support and improve them, the BIR representative stated.

As regards tradable certificates as an instrument, Mr Bartley pointed out that there had been little experience with their use, apart from the British PRN system to implement the EU Packaging Directive. The system's critics believed that it was not suited to achieving defined environmental targets or high recycling quotas. Furthermore, the scheme required a well functioning market, entailed waiving the internalisation of disposal costs and prevented progress in strategic development when placed under fierce pricing pressure, Mr Bartley said, citing claims made by critics of the PRN system.

The BIR Environmental and Technical Director proposed testing such a certificate system in the waste textiles sector. The falling share of reusable textiles in collected stock meant that the costs of cleaning, processing or disposing of residual fractions, such as wiping and cleaning cloths, recycled fibres and textile waste could no longer be covered. Textile recyclers have said that this situation is endangering the sector's future. Mr Bartley raised the question whether setting recycling targets would rectify the structural and market problems currently faced by textile recyclers.

On the issue of the data collection to calculate recycling rates, the BIR Environmental and Technical Director suggested that this should be measured "at the point where secondary raw materials substitute primary infeed," for instance prior to melting, pulping or other production processes.

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