

 BIR meets in Brussels

The twisting path towards 'end of waste'

The Atomium in Brussels is a monument built for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. It is 102-metres tall, with nine stainless steel spheres connected so that the whole forms the shape of a unit cell of an iron crystal magnified 165 billion times.

The latest BIR World Recycling Convention attracted more than 1100 participants - including over 900 delegates and 250 accompanying persons. In this series of articles, Recycling International reviews events and debate taking place at the recycling body's Autumn Round Table Sessions 2010 staged in the Belgian capital of Brussels during late October.

Latest information provided in Brussels underlined how far Europe has progressed towards defining 'end-of-waste' criteria for recyclables - and equally, those same updates demonstrated the successes and setbacks that are likely to accompany this process to its ultimate conclusion. To recap, the concept of developing these criteria for certain recyclable materials was incorporated into the revised Waste Framework Directive of 2008. The intention behind this process is to overcome legal uncertainty surrounding definitions and to increase both the quality and volume of recycling, it was explained by Andreas Versmann, Policy Officer for Sustainable Pro-

duction and Consumption at the European Commission's DG Environment.

To date, criteria proposals have been completed for iron scrap and aluminium scrap. However, having failed by a single vote to win a qualified majority in September, these proposals will now be submitted to the EU Council of Ministers and then, potentially, to the European Parliament. Therefore, a clearer picture of whether the proposals will gain acceptance is likely to emerge by the end of February next year, Mr Versmann told the BIR's latest International Environment Council (IEC) meeting in Brussels.

He also confirmed that end-of-waste criteria proposals for copper scrap and recovered paper are likely to be completed by the end of the current year. However, he added, no definitive decision has yet been taken as to whether end-of-waste criteria work will be conducted for plastics scrap.

IAEA safety guide

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is anticipating an early-2011 publication date for a safety guide devoted to radioactive material in scrap. As well as outlining responsibilities for governments and regulatory bodies, the document will urge the recycling and production industries to establish a radiation monitoring programme, appoint an on-site radiation safety person, provide relevant staff/employee training, develop an incident response plan, and notify the appropriate regulatory body of the discovery of radioactive material, explained Eric Reber, Radiation Safety Specialist from the agency's Division of Radiation, Waste & Transport Safety. He agreed that recycling companies should be entitled to report such discoveries 'without penalty'.

Approval for statutes and by-laws revision

It was a case of taking care of unfinished business at the BIR's latest General Assembly in Brussels late last month. At the previous General Assembly in Istanbul earlier this year, the attendance quorum required for approval of amendments to the world recycling body's statutes and by-laws was not met. But at the more recent gathering on October 25, the revisions were rubber-stamped without abstention or opposition, thus ending a review exercise designed to ensure that BIR's articles of association and internal regulations are aligned with best practice. Key changes are geared towards enhancing the role of the conciliation and arbitration service



Sales manager Alfred Endl in the booth of material handling specialist Sennebogen.



Ismail Bakici of Bakiclar Metal in Turkey (left) and Murat Bayram of Reukema Blocq & Maneschijn in the Netherlands.



Marc van de Wijdeven of Dutch metal analysis and recycling technology company MaTech of the Netherlands (left) and Phillip Pownall of UK-based JMC Recycling Systems.

within BIR, as well as towards bolstering the defence of members' collective interests. It was confirmed by Alain Costantini, Partner in law firm Bird & Bird LLP, that admission and suspension of members are to be decided by BIR's Executive Committee while expulsions are to be proposed by the same Committee but decided by the General Assembly.

The role, powers and functioning of BIR's commodity divisions, commodity committees, special committees and the Advisory Council have been harmonised and integrated into a single document 'for ease of reading', Mr Costantini also explained in Brussels. □



Andreas Versmann of the European Commission's DG Environment: 'To date, end-of-waste criteria proposals have been completed for iron scrap and aluminium scrap.'



BIR Director General Francis Veys (left) and the organisation's Environmental and technical Director Ross Bartley.



Peter Mathews and his daughter Anna of UK-company Black Country Metals.



Four leading lights from German recycling organisations. From left: Rolf Kuby of the Brussels bureau of the metals traders organisation VDM, Rainer Cosson of the steel recycling organisation BDSV, Ralph Schmitz of the VDM and Erich Rehbock of the secondary raw materials and waste management body BVSE.



Larry and Barbara Schipper of US-based International Alloys Inc.



Ikbal Nathani of India and Claudia Vinciotti of the BIR Secretariat.