

EU waste plastics exports rise slightly to 3.1 million tonnes

(EU) – The European Union member states are exporting more waste plastic again. After a 7 per cent decline in 2015, EU exports to non-EU “third countries” picked up by 1.6 per cent last year. The most important destination market is the People’s Republic of China and its special administrative region of Hong Kong. However, exports to China decreased again in 2016. It was other Asian destination countries, first among them Vietnam and Malaysia, that were responsible for the increase in the total export volume.

According to preliminary figures from the EU statistics office Eurostat, the 28 EU member states exported a total of 3.1 million tonnes of “waste, parings and scrap of plastics” with a value of €819m to third countries in 2016 (prior year: 3.0 million tonnes, valued at €985m). Together accounting for 77 per cent of total shipments to third countries, China and Hong Kong received by far the largest share of EU exports. However, five years earlier in 2012, just less than 87 per cent of EU exports were destined for ports there. In absolute figures, the exports to China and Hong Kong have decreased by a half a million tonnes. In contrast, exports to Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia have increased sharply. Pakistan and Turkey area also importing increasing volumes of waste plastics from the EU.

Germany remains far and away the member state with the largest volume of waste plastics exports, with shipments of nearly 950,000 tonnes sent to third countries in 2016. A further 653,00 tonnes was exported by the UK, followed by Belgium (305,000 tonnes) and Spain (259,000 tonnes).

Divided by resin, the lion’s share of third country

EU Waste Plastics Exports*
in tonnes

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
China	1,887,421	1,591,252	1,731,471	1,640,976	1,623,878
Hong Kong	1,038,439	710,286	906,522	770,024	763,151
India	126,221	124,885	160,424	139,311	128,076
Indonesia	22,602	26,925	26,967	32,519	42,752
Malaysia	59,120	124,811	101,123	135,702	150,826
Pakistan	13,509	19,109	21,088	17,602	25,748
Switzerland	35,970	31,872	28,414	24,609	40,030
Taiwan	23,823	15,490	28,252	31,509	15,294
Turkey	19,185	29,870	29,605	19,131	33,709
Ukraine	3,245	3,169	3,680	7,643	14,711
USA	40,804	46,476	39,400	33,552	33,849
Vietnam	9,387	25,327	88,249	88,176	131,927
Other countries	81,484	88,898	108,541	108,775	94,474
Total	3,361,211	2,838,369	3,273,738	3,049,529	3,098,426

* Exports from EU member states to non-member states (third countries); excludes intra-EU trade.

Source: Eurostat; EUWID calculations

exports were again polyethylene (PE), at 1.83 million tonnes and a value of €509m (2015: 1.79 million tonnes, value €606m). EU exports of polypropylene (PP) scrap to non-EU destinations stood at 142,000 tonnes and their value at €28m (prior year: 127,000 tonnes, value €38m). For €21.1m, around 86,000 tonnes of polystyrene (PS) waste was exported from the EU (2015: 72,000 tonnes, €21.2m).

The Eurostat figures reveal that the amount of polyvinylchloride (PVC) waste exported from the European Union has again dropped substantially, having landed in 2016 at 45,000 tonnes and a value of €11.9m from 51,000 tonnes and a value of €14.3m a year earlier. The EU exports also included just under 1.00 million tonnes (2015: 1.01 million tonnes) of other waste plastics, including polyeth-

ylene terephthalate (PET) among other resins.

Imports of waste plastics to the EU sank by 9.4 per cent last year to 373,000 tonnes (value: €83m). As usual, the majority of imports came from the EFTA countries Norway (186,000 tonnes) and Switzerland (96,000 tonnes). The EU destinations for this material were Sweden (128,000 tonnes) and Germany (88,000 tonnes). □

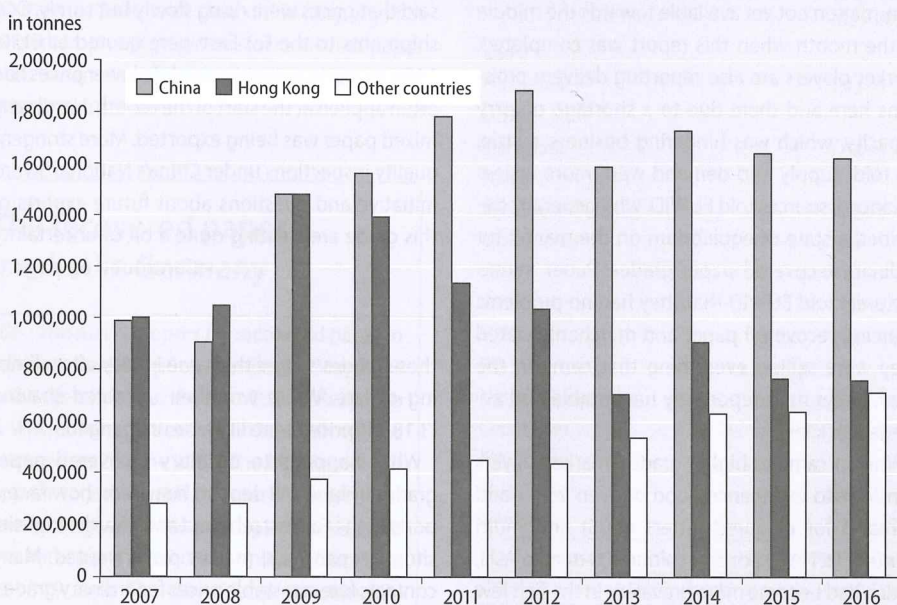
BIR names new general director

(WW) – The industry association BIR (Bureau of International Recycling) will have a new general director as of 1 June. Arnaud Brunet joins the BIR from Sony Europe, where head headed up the concern’s Brussels office and was responsible for maintaining relationships with the European institutions and with other European trade associations. His previous experience includes stints at Sony France, IBM and Esso. Mr Brunet holds a degree in Tax and Business Law from the university Paris II (Assas). The position of general director has been vacant since the departure of Alexandre Delacoux on 1 July of last year.

Since 2015, Ranjit Singh Baxi from the British recovered paper company J&H Sales International Limited has served as the president of the recycling industry association. Mr Baxi was re-elected for a second two-year term at the BIR annual general meeting which took place last week during the organisation’s spring convention in Hong Kong.

BIR is headquartered in Brussels and is an umbrella organisation representing about 800 members from around 70 countries on five continents. Besides individual companies, they include 36 national recycling organisations. The share of members from countries outside Europe is more than 40 per cent. □

EU Waste Plastics Exports 2007–2016



Source: Eurostat; EUWID graphics