

# **BIR Roundtable Sessions: Electronics recyclers seek clarity**

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Confusion continues over transboundary movement rules.

[RTGE Staff](#) November 23, 2014

In providing an update on the different rules imposed for transboundary movements of electronic scrap, the [Bureau of International Recycling \(BIR\)](#) Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley confirmed that his organization continues to receive numerous inquiries on this subject because of a lack of clarity.

“It is unclear when a waste is not listed how it is controlled. For example, in a number of countries notification is required,” he told delegates attending the BIR E-Scrap Committee meeting in Paris on Oct. 27.

As for transboundary movement of a pre-owned item for reuse, he said, “There needs to be sufficient certainty that it will actually be reused, because if it is not its disposal may pose a threat to human health and the environment.”

Maria Banti, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Policy Officer at the European Commission’s DG Environment, outlined current issues, focusing on a new proposal for a delegated regulation on equivalent conditions for the treatment of WEEE outside the EU. Banti said she was keen to receive BIR input on the regulation.

In order to count toward targets enshrined in the EU’s new WEEE Directive, treatment beyond the EU’s borders would have to take place in facilities offering the equivalent of what was available within the EU. Proof that the treatment conditions were indeed equivalent would also be required, she explained.

According to Banti, standards played an official role in supporting EU legislation and policy. In this context, Emmanuel Katrakis, secretary general of the newly formed European Recycling Industries’ Confederation (EuRIC), focused on the elaboration of WEEE standards through CENELEC, the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization. While [Eurometrec](#) believed such standards were useful, it was also urging that close attention should be paid to their practical implications, including costs.

Katrakis said when compared to manufacturers, the recycling sector was relatively under-represented on the national standardization committees. This was “a source of concern” that needed to be addressed, he said, given that recyclers were regularly outvoted both at national and CENELEC levels.

More than 53 million metric tons of electronic scrap was being generated annually, according to BIR E-Scrap Committee Chairman Thomas Papageorgiou of [Anamet Recycling Industry](#), based in Greece. This volume included around 60 percent metals, 15 percent plastics and 12 percent CRT/LCD screens. The quantities of precious metals available for recovery from this e-scrap were “very significant” for a number of high-margin applications, he added.