

BIR record-breaker by the Bosphorus

At last year's Spring Convention of the BIR world recycling organisation, the key word stalking every meeting room in Dubai was 'recession'. One year on and prospects have generally brightened such that 'market volatility' was perhaps the most heard phrase at the latest BIR gathering. In this series of articles, Recycling International reviews events and debate at the 2010 Spring Convention held in Istanbul during late May and early June.



This is the most successful BIR Convention ever,' proclaimed BIR World President Dominique Maguin of France-based La Compagnie des Matières Premières in his address to the world organisation's General Assembly in Istanbul.

He was basing this assertion on the fact that the event had attracted almost 1600 participants from a total of 59 countries. But the latest BIR Spring Convention reflected success in many other ways, not least the recycling industry's rebound from the deepest crisis it has ever known. 'Should we be surprised?' he asked. 'Certainly not, as flexibility and a capacity to adapt are two of the main characteristics of our profession.'

Many of the commodity-specific meetings held at the Swissôtel The Bosphorus produced evidence of an upturn in prices and demand. 'Some signs of improvement in the world economy can be detected ... but it is far too early to celebrate,' warned Mr Maguin. 'We must remain very alert and learn from what we have experienced in difficult times in order to seize all the opportunities offered by renewed growth.'

One very good cause for celebration, however, surrounds BIR's membership which, despite the recession, has climbed to 770 - with many others waiting to have their applications assessed or ratified.

Looking to future missions

Helped by the revenues derived from its membership and Convention successes, BIR has the funds available to 'look fearlessly to future missions', Mr Maguin noted in Istanbul. He added that recent achievements by the world body include: the publication of an initial study revealing the CO2 emission savings resulting from the recycling industry's activities; the compilation of the first global statistics relating to recycling markets; and the creation of the International Trade Council (ITC) which had already proved its worth and relevance throughout 'the difficult months of 2008 and 2009' (see below).

Mr Maguin also suggested that the recycling industry has become 'completely indispensable to the life of our planet' without always realising the importance of its 'mission'. He added: 'We must ensure that our contribution is understood by the international community so that it can gauge our importance and, in return, respect the interests of our companies. We must therefore communicate more and better.'



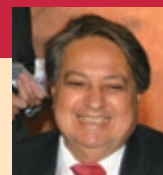
Glowing tribute

The keynote speaker at the General Assembly in Istanbul predicted that the industry would enjoy even greater rewards and recognition in the longer term. Hamish McRae, who is the Associate Editor and principal economic commentator of leading UK daily newspaper 'The Independent', paid a glowing tribute to the recycling industry for 'enabling growth to go on without increasing the footprint on the world's resources'. As the business world increasingly recognised the value of developing a 'green' reputation, this would bring 'a huge benefit to your industry'.

Governments of the world will be forced to

Ikbal Nathani's BIR joke

Cheek to cheek



A married couple is in a terrible accident and the man's face is badly burned. The doctor tells the husband that he cannot graft skin from any part of his body because he is too skinny so the wife offers to donate some of her own. However, the only skin on her body which the doctor deems to be suitable is that on her buttocks.

The husband and wife agree that they should tell no-one about where the skin comes from and they ask the doctor also to respect their secret. After all, this is a very delicate matter. After the surgery is completed, everyone is astounded by the man's 'new' face: he looks more handsome than ever before! All his friends and relatives just go on and on about his new-found youthful good looks.

Alone with his wife one day, he is overcome with emotion at her sacrifice. He says: 'Dear, I just want to thank you for everything you did for me. How can I possibly repay you?' 'My darling,' she replies. 'I get all the thanks I need every time I see your mother kiss you on the cheek.'

Recycling International makes its own headlines

Over the years, this magazine has reported on success and recognition for a huge number of businesses in the recycling industry. But at the latest BIR Spring Convention, it was the turn of Recycling International's Publisher and Editor Manfred Beck to pick up an award.

Twelve years after launching the magazine at the 1998 BIR Convention in Paris, Manfred was named as the latest winner of the BIR Paper Division's Papyrus prize in recognition of his services to heralding the views, achievements and environmental contribution of paper recyclers around the globe. Today, the magazine is read by around 33 000 people in more than 120 countries.

Manfred took the idea of a global recycling magazine from first thought all the way through to full realisation - 'so he is not only a great lover of recycling but also a great entrepreneur himself', explained divisional President Ranjit Baxi. In accepting the award, Manfred described himself as 'very, very honoured'.



Recycling International's Publisher and Editor Manfred Beck (middle) was named as the latest winner of the BIR Paper Division's Papyrus prize. The award was presented by BIR President Dominique Maguin (left) and Paper Division President Ranjit Baxi.



Dancing dervishes were one of the attractions of the BIR Welcome Evening in the gardens of the Ciragan Palace.

ITC successes and challenges

China, India, Turkey, South Africa, Russia, Kenya and Tanzania - these are just some of the countries where free movement of secondary raw materials is perceived to have come under threat and therefore where the BIR has looked to bring influence to bear through the ITC.

As reported by Chairman Robert Voss of UK-based Voss International to the council's meeting in Istanbul, the ITC can claim some credit for halting a South African ban on aluminium scrap exports. At the same gathering, BIR's Ambassador for the Indian Sub-continent Ikbāl Nathani of the Nathani Group of Companies highlighted the key role of the ITC, BIR, the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries and the Metal Recycling Association of India in convincing the Indian government to change its classification of ferrous and non-ferrous scrap from 'hazardous' to 'non-hazardous'.

But there are still issues to be resolved in India, according to Mr Nathani. For example, he called on government officials to resolve the duplication of paperwork demanded of the country's scrap importers. And he also recommended the compulsory installation of radiation monitors at India's steel mills and by the country's non-ferrous metals consumers.

Ms Shubhra, Joint Director General of Foreign Trade in India, also attended the meeting in



Roger Burri and Jeanette Duttlinger of ICM, the Switzerland-based recycling congress organiser.



Old friends - Rolf Willeke of Germany (left) and Peter Mathews of the UK.



Lothar Vandeberg (left) and Frank Hoof of German shredder manufacturer Albert Hoffman.

'rethink everything' and 'do more with less', thereby presenting the recycling industry with 'a wonderful opportunity'. While he expected fossil fuels to be a major factor in the energy balance for at least another generation, the guest speaker added: 'Energy will be uncertain for the rest of our days - and that plays to your strengths as an industry.'

The world has arrived at 'an historic moment where power is tipping', according to Mr McRae. China is already the second largest economy on the planet and is on course to overtake the USA in first place within the next two decades, by which stage India is likely to have climbed into third position. This constituted 'the greatest shift of economic power for 200 years', he maintained.

Another of the guest speakers at the General Assembly was also full of praise for the recycling industry. Doug Woodring, the Co-founder and Director of Project Kaisei, heaped credit on BIR for supporting the initiative to 'remove and remediate' massive volumes of debris found in the world's oceans, including the substantial proportion of plastics. The footprint left by plastics is larger than that of carbon dioxide and its impact on ecology is immediate, he pointed out.



BIR Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley.



Hamish McRae, Associate Editor and principal economic commentator of leading UK daily newspaper 'The Independent', was keynote speaker at the BIR General Assembly.



Phillip Pownall of JMC Recycling Machinery of Nottingham in the UK - home of the Robin Hood legend.



From left to right: Robert Voss, Chairman of the BIR International Trade Council; Ms Shubhra, Joint Director General of Foreign Trade in India; Robin Wiener, President of the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries; and BIR Ambassador for India Ikbal Nathani.



Philipp Brunner and Ute Graff of Germany-headquartered material handler manufacturer Terex Fuchs.

Istanbul and praised the 'dedicated people' working in the scrap industry. She promised to expedite the approval of those pre-shipment inspection agencies found to comply with the necessary criteria.

Notice 21 update

The ITC meeting in Istanbul was held on the very day that China implemented its Notice 21 control designed to eliminate under-declaration of consignment values by demanding the individual packaging of each item contained in a mixed load. According to BIR's Ambassador for China David Chiao of the Uni-All Group, there had been indications that the authorities would regard Zorba as a single item so long as the proportion of other materials did not exceed 2% by weight. For mixed irony aluminium, meanwhile, a detailed analysis of the contents appeared likely to be required.

Since the timing of the meeting in Istanbul meant that Notice 21 enforcement practices in China had yet to become apparent, Mr Voss confirmed that updates would be conveyed to BIR members via the world body's website.

Mr Chiao also explained that China would begin the renewals process on July 1 this year for overseas suppliers of recyclables whose Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) licences were scheduled to expire on December 31 2010. Certification to ISO 9001, RIOS or an equivalent



With almost 1600 participants from a total of 59 countries, BIR's latest convention in Istanbul was the organisation's most successful ever.

standard would be required for first-time applicants, it was emphasised.

In another current issue, it was explained by Mr Voss that Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Trade had introduced new provisions on May 21 this year for exports of copper scrap, including requirements to prove an overseas sales connection and to obtain written confirmation from three consumers in Turkey that the material for export was not suitable for their needs. This 'very restrictive procedure' was being taken up with the EU and the Turkish government, delegates learned.

Promise of improvement

While some regulatory developments threaten to put obstacles in the way of established trading practices, others offer the promise of an improvement in operating conditions for the recycling industry. A case in point is the process taking place within the EU to develop criteria to establish when a waste ceases to be a waste. Speaking at the International Environment Council (IEC) meeting in Istanbul, BIR Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley suggested that this is very much needed and that the world recycling body 'will go right to the end of the process' to ensure maximum benefit and relief for its members and for the industry as a whole.

BIR's Director General Francis Veys hoped that all EU member states would fully support what emerges from these end-of-waste deliberations in order to minimise differences in interpretation and implementation. And he added optimistically: 'I see no reason why we won't get this better regulation.' In a few years from now, movement of materials falling short of these end-of-waste criteria would prove to be 'very difficult', he predicted. 'That is the way things are going.' The IEC meeting in Istanbul also featured a review of extended producer responsibility schemes which will be covered in the next issue of Recycling International. □

Duo of Certificates of Merit

At the BIR Convention in Istanbul, two of the most familiar faces in the world recycling industry were recognised for their huge career contributions. Rolf Willeke, who stepped down in Istanbul after many years as the Ferrous Division's General Delegate, was presented with the BIR's Certificate of Merit in acknowledgement of what Honorary President Tony Bird described as his reliability, efficiency and 'excellent organisational abilities'.

And at the General Assembly in Istanbul, a Certificate of Merit was also awarded to Bob Garino, who will be retiring at the end of the year from his post as Commodities Director of the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries. BIR World President Dominique Maguin hailed him for his 'tremendous knowledge and expertise', his 'wonderful sense of humour' and his 'human warmth'.



Rolf Willeke (left) was awarded BIR's Certificate of Merit. Also pictured are the Ferrous Division's Honorary President Tony Bird (middle) and its current President Christian Rubach.



A Certificate of Merit was presented by BIR World President Dominique Maguin (left) to Bob Garino, Commodities Director of the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries.