

# Essential to find balance between trading and environmental needs

**“Free and fair trade is not free from regulation,” it was underlined to the BIR E-Scrap Committee meeting in Singapore on May 20 by Adina Renee Adler.**

27.05.2019



The Senior Director for International Relations at the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) gave the example of industry efforts to exempt transboundary movements of electronics destined for reuse from prior notification procedures. However, this was not adopted at the Basel Convention because of concerns that disreputable traders would claim “reuse” when, in reality, they were dumping in other countries.

The meeting in Singapore was moderated by BIR E-Scrap Committee Chairman Dr Thomas Papageorgiou of Greece-based Anamet SA and assumed an open format, with questions and remarks from the auditorium floor and from a top-table panel of experts providing the basis for free-flowing discussions.

Several contributors acknowledged the need for regulation to protect against would-be illegal operators. Dr Steve Wong, Executive President of the China Scrap Plastics Association, argued that believers in free trade must accept the necessity of addressing wider issues, such as plastics polluting the world’s oceans. It is essential, he said, to keep open the channels of communication with governments to ensure “a balance” between trading and environmental needs.

Regulation is necessary because the e-scrap industry “is still plagued by people who don’t want to do the right thing”, argued Fons Krist of Aurubis. Having contended that operators who do not follow the regulations are generally able to offer better prices, he stated: “A lot of people are driven by profit and not by the environment.”

The e-scrap recycling industry is engaged in “a fight” on many sides – not only with regulators and irresponsible operators but also with manufacturers who have been slow to remove hazardous constituents from their products and to adopt design for recycling, observed Doug Kramer of Spectrum Alloys LLC in the USA. He went on to insist: “Quality, quality, quality – it’s all about quality. Quality is going to become the greatest differentiator in everything this industry handles. Period.”

Source: BIR