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**GLOBAL RECYCLING INDUSTRY IN THE DOLDRUMS WITH CHINA BANNING RECYCLABLE TRASH**

For years China was the world's top destination for recyclable trash, but a ban on certain imports has left the world speeding up the process to find new dumping grounds for growing piles of garbage. The decision was announced in July and came into force on January 1. This gives companies from abroad just six months to look for options. In China, some recycling companies have had to lay off staff or shut down due to the lost business.

The ban stops imports of 24 categories of solid waste, including certain types of plastics, paper and textiles. The environment ministry said to the World Trade Organization, "Large amounts of dirty... or even hazardous wastes are mixed in the solid waste that can be used as raw materials. This polluted China's environment seriously."

Latest government figures record that in 2015 alone, China bought 49.6 million tonnes of rubbish. The EU exports half of its collected and sorted plastics, 85 per cent of which goes to China. Ireland alone exported 95 per cent of its plastic waste to China in 2016. The same year, the US shipped over 16 million tonnes of scrap to China valued at over \$5.2 billion.

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Arnaud Brunet, head of the Bureau of International Recycling is despondent, the ban has been like an "earthquake" for countries dependent on China. "It has put our industry under stress since China is simply the largest market in the world" for recycled materials, noting that he expected exports of certain materials to drop by around 40 per cent. Brunet estimates global plastic exports to China could drop from 7.4 million tonnes in 2016 to 1.5 million tonnes in 2018, while paper exports is expected to fall nearly a quarter. Some are now looking at emerging markets elsewhere such as India, Pakistan or Southeast Asia but it could be more expensive than shipping waste to China.