

# Questionnaire a disadvantage for Europe's exporters, says Borad

**Plastics & Tyres**

In scrap terms, the EU's regulatory approach is putting Europe at a trading disadvantage to its key competitors, it was argued in Paris by BIR Plastics Committee chairman Surendra Borad Patawari of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation NV.

**W**hile the USA shipped scrap to 160 countries last year, EU exporters were limited to 74 potential outlets - not least because of the questionnaire sent by the European Commission's DG Trade to non-OECD countries in which governments were asked what 'wastes' they would be prepared to import from the EU.

Faced with such a question, officials in many of these countries instantly responded that they wanted 'no waste from Europe' because their country 'was not a dumping ground'. In addition to

such 'misunderstanding' in some quarters, officials elsewhere gave vague answers or failed to respond at all. As a result, said the committee chairman, this exercise was 'depriving Europeans of access to markets in over 120 countries'. Reviewing the US market, Borad spoke of a 'bullish' mood and of a substantial scarcity of raw material owing to higher domestic recycling.

Regarding India, the same speaker pointed to the new government's determination to relax administrative burdens which, for some time, had meant

the issuing of scrap import licences to only a limited number of recyclers. Policies and regulations were also a focus of the market report from Steve Wong of the China Scrap Plastics Association. In particular, he noted that China's Customs Office was proposing to abolish the zero-tariff preferential treatment for those scrap plastics being imported, recycled into raw materials and eventually turned into products for export.

The market in China was slowing owing to reduced domestic demand, he added. Plastics recyclers were under pressure from labour shortages and also from high wages relative to the rest of South East Asia. The future would therefore be 'a challenge' and plastics recyclers in China would need to be efficient to survive, according to Wong. Of the European market, meanwhile,

France-based Gregory Cardot of Veolia Propreté reported that, since October, 'demand for scrap is dropping and converters are buying just in time'.

## Landfilling leads the way

Landfilling remains the leading treatment option for post-consumer plastics in Europe, accounting for almost 10 million tonnes in 2012, whereas material recycling amounted to 6.6 million tonnes and energy recovery for 8.9 million tonnes, according to figures provided by guest speaker Michel Loubry of the PlasticsEurope manufacturers association. He went on to argue that a sustainable and profitable recycling business in the future depended on driving a quality focus in collection, sorting and processing.

Some of the latest technologies in the plastics recycling arena were reviewed in Paris by fellow guest speaker Naemi Denz of VDMA in Germany. A 'big development', she said, was self-cleaning of sensors used in plastics sorting such that 'maintenance is much easier than before'.

She also highlighted hydrodynamic friction as a potentially attractive alternative to conventional high-temperature washing, particularly in places where energy costs were high. □

## Tyres: the end of an 18-year era

Having become chairman of the BIR Tyres & Rubber Committee as far back as 1996, the meeting in Paris was the last to be headed by Barend Ten Bruggencate of VACO in the Netherlands. BIR world president Björn Grufman hailed him as a 'great servant' both to the global recycling organisation and to tyre recycling. His successor as committee chair-

man, Ruud Bulet of Rubber Resources in the Netherlands, began his tenure with a presentation on his own company, which had started out as an initiative by Dutch tyre producer Vredestein to use recycled material in its compounds. Now totally independent, the company is scheduled to unveil its third production line using New Technology

for end-of-life tyres (ELTs) in Europe was again underlined at a BIR meeting, this time by Jean-Pierre Taverne of the European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers' Association. Such a move would eliminate the negative connotations surrounding 'waste' while improving recycled material's competitive position, he argued.

On the issue of producer responsibility, Taverne said many of Europe's ELT schemes continued to suffer problems with 'free riders'. The situation required 'intervention from EU member states' and strengthened enforcement. Already, he added, countries such as France and Italy were imposing limited administrative penalties on 'those who put tyres on the market but don't want to play by the rules'.

Extrusion (NTE) in 2015. This technology was "scalable" in steps of 2500 tonnes and could be transferred to tyre recycling plants for faster growth and valorisation of know-how, he pointed out.

The imperative of pursuing end-of-waste status



Barend ten Bruggencate stepped down as chairman of the BIR Tyres & Rubber Committee.



Ruud Bulet of Rubber Resources in the Netherlands was elected as the new chairman.



Surendra Borad Patawari: Europeans are being deprived of access to markets in over 120 countries.