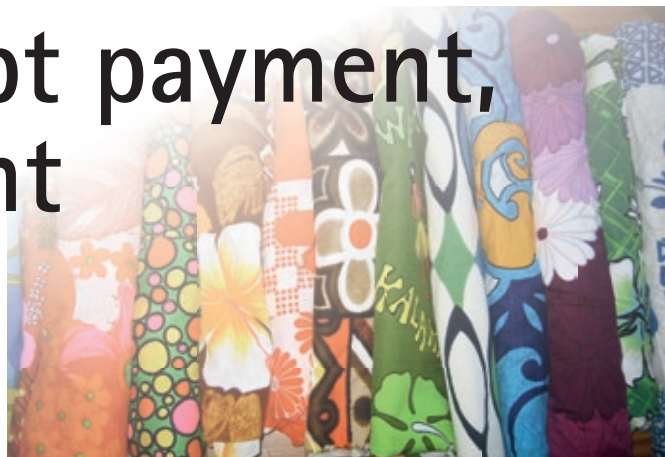


Textiles

Prioritise prompt payment, advises President

In 2010, collections have been undermined by the prolonged winter weather conditions earlier in the year – and in many instances, supply is still failing to meet demand, it was revealed at the BIR Textiles Division meeting in Istanbul. Concerns over profitability were also keenly expressed.



'Untenable' – that's how the textiles recycling industry's overwhelming dependence on used clothing sales was defined in Istanbul. The word was uttered by the BIR Textiles Division's Honorary President Klaus Löwer of Germany-based Hans Löwer Recycling GmbH in emphasising what he sees as the unsustainability of relying on just one component of the sector's activities to finance the remainder. Mr Löwer was not alone in adopting a cautionary tone at the division's latest meeting in Istanbul. Divisional President Olaf Rintsch of Textil Recycling K&A Wenkhaus GmbH, also of Germany, described the Euro-zone debt crisis as 'a worry' and warned the industry against becoming over-optimistic. 'Attention should be paid to prompt payment,' he said, 'because margins are not good.'

Capacity cuts for sorters

Turning to market specifics, Mr Rintsch noted an improvement in the feathers trade and said the shoes business was 'still good', whereas recycled materials were 'not at all profitable'. For his part, Mr Löwer pointed out that difficult weather conditions in Japan had played their part in reducing originals supply by around 20%, thereby forcing the country's sorters to cut their capacities. For the USA, meanwhile, the same speaker reported generally inadequate margins and insufficient price increases for, notably, wiping cloths. The year had also begun with a weath-

er-related shortage of originals in Italy, reported Sauro Ballerini from the company of the same name. 'This situation was prolonged until the spring months and the effects of street collections, typical of this period, have not been felt,' he said. 'This is despite the absence from the market of countries like Algeria, closed due to import restrictions.' Mr Ballerini identified greater interest in European goods from some other African countries in the wake of the strengthening of the US dollar in relation to the Euro. However, he also lamented on-going payment problems in Africa and the 'ridiculous' values to which second-hand feathers have sunk, partly as a result of imports of new feathers from China at 'very competitive' prices.

Levy update

According to Textiles Division Vice President Mehdi Zerroug of Framimex, there has been an increase in collection volumes in France since the 'long, hard winter', but the improvement has been insufficient to match demand. He went

on to identify 'signs of optimism' in the domestic wiper sector but added 'prices are very low'. In his customary update on the French scheme whereby a levy on new clothes and shoes is used to support sorting activities, Mr Zerroug reported that the first payments had been made last year on the basis of volumes sorted in 2007. The national report from Gerald Cemmell, President of the UK's Textile Recycling Association (TRA), summarised the findings of a study published earlier in the year focusing on strategies to increase domestic reuse and recycling rates. 'We are buying approximately 2 million tonnes of new clothing in a year,' he said. 'One million tonnes is being thrown away. Half a million tonnes is collected for reuse and recycling, and almost half a million tonnes is not accounted for.'

Conduit to recycling

Switching the focus to the end-of-waste criteria debate at EU level, BIR Textiles Division's General Delegate Alexander Gläser of Germany-based Fachverband

Textiel-Recycling eV argued that collection containers are a conduit to recycling. A member of the public placing clothes in such a container clearly intends these items to be worn by someone else – otherwise he or she would have consigned them to a refuse bin, he contended. A guest presentation from Carlo Longo, President of the Prato Chamber of Commerce in Italy, covered the Cardato Regenerated brand developed by his organisation to signify a product's CO2 neutrality. Significant interest in the brand has already been received from the fashion sector, delegates learned. Also at the meeting in Istanbul, Deepak Goel of Geetanjali Woollens Pvt Ltd asked for the help of BIR in convincing the United Nations to resume its purchases of blankets made from recycled wool. Two years ago, he explained, this high-profile organisation had switched from wool to polyester blankets, leaving suppliers of the former with huge stocks. Mr Goel also requested BIR's assistance in reopening India's free-zone areas to the recycling of textiles. □



Textiles Division President Olaf Rintsch of Textil Recycling K&A Wenkhaus GmbH of Germany.



BIR Textiles Division's Honorary President Klaus Löwer of Germany-based Hans Löwer Recycling.



Sauro Ballerini of textiles recycler Sauro Ballerini of Italy.



Managing Director Jan Vermoesen of the Belgian recycling federation Coberec (left) and Pol T'Jollyn of Recutex in Belgium.