

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention in Barcelona (29-30 October 2012)

International Environment Council: **Concern over differing quality management positions**

Brussels, 7 November 2012

In the EU, end-of-waste criteria for glass were adopted at the Technical Adaptation Committee's meeting in July this year. However, work towards this same goal must continue for copper/copper alloys and for recovered paper, it was confirmed at the BIR International Environment Council (IEC) meeting in Barcelona.

The IEC gathering featured an update on end-of-waste developments in the BIR Convention's host country of Spain. Alicia García-Franco Zúñiga, Director General of the Spanish Federation of Recovery and Recycling (FER), argued that compliance with end-of-waste requirements "is not difficult" for recyclers and that it represents "a good solution for transboundary trade". However, she also emphasised that "not every scrap material will cease to be waste" and that, up to this point, consumers have not been prepared to pay more for material designated as a product than for a "waste". In this context, Ruggero Alocci of Alocci Rappresentanze Ind. in Italy argued that obtaining product status constitutes a "big opportunity" only if producers reward suppliers with a premium over the market price.

The relationship between end-of-waste status and quality management systems (QMSs) occupied much of the discussion in Barcelona. It was noted that France has caused consternation within the domestic recycling industry by specifying ISO 9000 as the end-of-waste benchmark; a potential compromise, suggested IEC Chairman Olivier François of NV Galloometal, would be to insist on the implementation of a QMS "compatible with ISO". He also drew delegates' attention to the fact

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

that BIR has produced “Tools for Quality Management” to assist recyclers worldwide towards the objective of an ISO-compliant QMS that includes end-of-waste procedures.

A presentation from BIR’s Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley dwelt on progress at United Nations/Basel Convention level towards a framework for environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes. A Technical Expert Group, with active observers from BIR and the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries among others, is conducting work on a framework document for presentation to next year’s Basel Convention Conference of the Parties; current indications are that the United Nations will “set the bar higher” than the OECD, extending the requirements on governments to, for example, environmental insurance, environmental impact studies and the setting of emission limit values.

Mr Bartley also commented on the non-binding code of conduct relating to the transboundary movement of scrap metal that may inadvertently contain radioactive material, which is being developed under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In its present form, he said, the document shows a “good understanding” of the issues affecting the scrap industry and of the need to avoid “punishing” recyclers who discover in incoming scrap radioactive sources which governments lost control of. He also predicted that the instrument could require the generation of some millions of radioactivity test reports every year, and hoped that scrap producers and semi-producers would support such administrative requirements.

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