

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention in Munich (24-25 October 2011)

Textiles Division: "Unauthorised" collections intensify supply pressures

Brussels, 31 October 2011

The proliferation of "unauthorised" collection containers has been proving detrimental to established recycling businesses, according to Olaf Rintsch of Germany-based Textil Recycling K&A Wenkhaus GmbH. In his initial comments as President of the BIR Textiles Division, he told delegates to the Autumn Round-Table meeting in Munich that "we need to do something about this", especially as the market for originals is currently "very competitive".

Voicing similar concern over the actions of "those who do not follow the law", the division's Honorary President Klaus Löwer of Hans Löwer Recycling GmbH, also of Germany, noted that a continuing lack of raw material had prevented sorters from building winter stocks. In the USA, he noted by way of example, prices of originals had climbed between 10% and 25% depending on the region.

Alan Wheeler of the UK's Textile Recycling Association ventured: "Yields from collections are decreasing as both legal and illegal competition for collections increases and thefts continue." The UK's National Fraud Intelligence Bureau had undertaken a nationwide campaign to raise awareness among law enforcement agencies of the seriousness of charity bag fraud, he added. Meanwhile, Mehdi Zerroug of Framimex highlighted thefts from containers in his summary of the French market.

In reports from other European markets, Sauro Ballerini of Italy said he expected the shortage of originals to keep prices at high levels for the rest of the year. And Pol T'Jollyn of NV Recutex in

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

Belgium emphasised that there was “a long way to go” to solve the problem of subsidised competition.

Following confirmation from Mr Rintsch that a hold had been put on the process within the EU to devise end-of-waste criteria for used textiles, Michael Sigloch of Gras & Sigloch GmbH & Co. stressed the belief within the German Federal Association of Secondary Raw Material and Waste Management (BVSE) that textiles and footwear are “at no time waste” and so should never be considered under end-of-waste procedures. The public donates an item of clothing or shoes on the specific understanding that they will be used again, he argued.

Two guest presentations at the Textiles Round-Table were delivered by representatives of clothing producer organisations. Firstly, Dina Mehta - Textile Consultant with the European Outdoor Group - explained that this organisation, which represents the common interests of the outdoor industry, had established a sustainability working group aimed at improving the sector’s environmental footprint. She invited input from clothing recycling “experts” such as those found in BIR membership, stating: “We understand that we need collaborations to drive forward and develop the end-of-life (management) of our garments.”

Fellow guest speaker Kilian Hochrein of US-based garment producer W. L. Gore & Associates made a similar point: speaking on behalf of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition whose members represent around 30% of global apparel retail value, he confirmed that this recently-developed entity would welcome the recycling industry into affiliate membership.

Mr Löwer suggested co-operation with such ventures could help to improve the image of the textiles recycling industry.

ends