

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Dubai (17 - 20 May 2015)

International Environment Council: **IEC meeting provides instant feedback on important COPs**

Brussels, 28 May 2015

The Dubai meeting of the BIR's International Environment Council (IEC) on May 18 took place in the immediate aftermath of key Conferences of the Parties (COPs) in Geneva covering the United Nations' Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions. The first of these deals with prior informed consent in the movement of chemicals, the second looks to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and the third concerns the transboundary movement of hazardous and other waste. The Stockholm and Basel Conventions have potentially profound implications for the recycling industry.

Offering a first-hand review of developments in Geneva, BIR's Trade & Environment Director Ross Bartley described the "quite dramatic" scenes in Geneva during the Stockholm Convention's first-ever vote to list a POP, namely pentachlorophenol or PCP. "It shows how important these issues are to the majority of countries," he said. There were 90 countries in favour of the listing and two against, with eight abstentions.

The COPs in Geneva provided a platform for the launch of the United Nations Environment Programme's "Waste Crimes, Waste Risks: Gaps and Challenges in the Waste Sector", a report claiming that up to 90% of electronic waste is illegally traded or dumped. Mr Bartley challenged this figure as well as other findings and data contained in the document, telling delegates in Dubai: "Just because it can't be measured or data is missing doesn't mean it's illegal."

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

Mr Bartley went on to express concern over the “creeping scope” of the Basel Convention into areas apparently beyond its original remit. “Most would say used and functioning electronics are not waste,” he said by way of example in Dubai. With the full support of the Africa Group and most others, the Basel Convention adopted its e-Waste Guideline with certain caveats.

Returning in his closing comments to the subject of movements of waste, Mr Bartley called for continued support from all industries for the introduction of electronic notification technology to replace the slow, outdated, paper-focused approach still in use today.

Opening up a panel discussion in Dubai on latest legislative and policy developments at the EU, OECD and other levels, IEC Chairman Olivier François of NV Galloometal argued that any further moves towards a requirement for the classification of recyclables through chemical analysis would be “difficult for our profession”. Former BIR World and Paper Division President Dominique Maguin of La Compagnie des Matières Premières in France said demands for chemical analysis would not only “complicate business” but also “increase costs”. Chemical analysis of wastes would be “largely unfeasible”, insisted Alan Wheeler of the UK’s Textile Recycling Association.

On the issue of moving to a low carbon economy and carbon credits, Mr Maguin pointed to BIR-commissioned research which had concluded that the recycling industry’s activities were responsible for substantially more than 500 million tonnes of annual carbon emission savings. “Some benefit should come back to us,” he insisted, drawing instant agreement from fellow panellists, including Ian Hetherington of the British Metals Recycling Association and BIR Ferrous Division Vice President Ruggero Alocci of Alocci Rappresentanze Ind. of Italy.

ends