



BIR is the **international trade association of the recycling industries**. Around **70 countries** are represented through their national trade associations and individual companies which are involved in recycling. BIR comprises **four commodity divisions**: iron and steel, non ferrous metals, paper and textiles, and has **three commodity committees** dealing with stainless steel and special alloys, plastics and rubber. BIR's primary goals are to promote recycling and recyclability, thereby conserving natural resources, protecting the environment and facilitating free trade of secondary raw materials.

PRESS RELEASE

Recent 2010 BIR World Recycling Convention (Autumn Round-Table Sessions), 25-26 October, Brussels

International Environment Council:

End-of-waste criteria still in the pipeline

Brussels, 4th November 2010

It is likely to become clearer by the end of February 2011 whether the end-of-waste criteria formulated for ferrous and aluminium scrap are to be approved, the BIR's latest International Environment Council (IEC) meeting has been informed by Andreas Versmann, Policy Officer for Sustainable Production and Consumption at the European Commission's DG Environment.

Having failed to achieve a qualified majority by a single vote in September, the criteria proposal will now be scrutinised by the Council of Ministers and then, potentially, the European Parliament. So "we will know more" by the end of February next year, Mr Versmann told delegates.

He also confirmed that end-of-waste criteria proposals for copper scrap and recovered paper are likely to be completed by the end of the current year, but that no definitive decision has yet been taken as to whether end-of-waste criteria work will be conducted for plastics scrap. The purpose of devising these criteria for a variety of recyclables is to overcome legal uncertainty surrounding definitions and to increase both the quality and volume of recycling, added Mr Versmann.

Also at the meeting in Brussels, Radiation Safety Specialist Eric Reber from the Division of Radiation, Waste & Transport Safety at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

confirmed that his organisation is expecting to publish a safety guide on radioactive material in scrap by early 2011. This will outline responsibilities for governments and regulatory bodies, while also calling on the recycling/production industries to, among other things, establish a monitoring programme, provide related staff training, develop an incident response plan, and notify the appropriate regulatory body of the discovery of radioactive material. He agreed that recycling companies should be entitled to report such discoveries “without penalty”.

Mr Reber went on to explain that the IAEA held a meeting in July this year relating to the establishment of an international agreement on the transboundary movement of scrap metal containing radioactive material. This recommended the development of a non-binding agreement to harmonise the approach of different countries and to foster co-operation among relevant authorities and the scrap industry.

Delegates were also informed that BIR had recently produced a poster giving “Advice on unwanted Radioactivity entering into Scrap”. In parallel with the Brussels Convention the poster was distributed internationally as an insert to the trade publication Recycling International, thus reaching 6,500 readers worldwide. The purpose of the poster is to advise on what to look out for and what to do in case radioactive material occurs, as well as giving basic advice on reducing the risk from radiation.

BIR’s Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley provided the IEC meeting with an update on Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) and concluded: “SMM policies should result in greater volumes of recyclables of better quality and value. But we have to be vigilant of trade barriers that might also come with this.”

Mr Bartley also observed that, at the Informal EU Council of mid-July, there was a suggestion the EU and its member states should explore possibilities for the introduction of new market-based instruments - such as tradable recycling certificates - as a means of, for example, stimulating design for recycling and rewarding carbon dioxide emission savings.

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