

PRESS RELEASE

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2008 World Recycling Convention & BIR's 60th Anniversary Celebration Monte Carlo, 2-4 June 2008

Tyres Committee: Steady increase in EU tyre recovery rate

Latest statistics indicate a steady increase in European tyre recovery rates but historic stockpiles of used tyres remain a considerable issue, the BIR Tyres Committee meeting in Monte-Carlo was informed by its Chairman, Barend Ten Bruggencate from the Netherlands.

According to figures from the European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers Association (ETRMA), some 89% of the 2.789 million tonnes of used tyres arising in the EU-15 during 2006 were subjected to reuse (4%), export (6%), retreading (12%), material recovery (37%) or energy recovery (30%) at a total management cost of Euro 600 million.

For the EU as a whole, arisings in the same year totalled 3.238 million tonnes, of which 87% were subjected to one of the above-mentioned "treatment" options, including 34.1% material recovery and 31.6% energy recovery. However, historic stockpiles in the EU's 27 member states amounted to 5.5 million tonnes - equivalent to 1.73 times total arisings in 2004, Mr Ten Bruggencate pointed out. A large proportion of this total was the result of "illegal dumping", he added.

The Committee's Chairman went on to welcome the fact that scrap tyres would be among a number of recyclables scheduled to be considered at EU level as part of a review of end-of-waste criteria. He also applauded research which had ruled out health and environmental risks associated with the use of rubber granulate in artificial turf.

The guest speaker at the BIR Tyres Committee meeting in Monte-Carlo outlined the progress of Aliapur in helping tyre companies in France to meet their legal producer responsibility obligations. Pierre Henry Remy is responsible for logistics within the organisation, which currently commands an 82% share of the market and handled some 284,000 tonnes of used tyres in 2007. Around 122,000 tonnes went for material recovery while energy recovery, reutilisation and public works applications accounted for, respectively, 29.4%, 15.9% and 13% of the total, he explained.

In addition to preparing the tyres for familiar applications such as artificial sports pitches or as an energy source for cement kilns, Aliapur has also conducted research into new applications, including a new equestrian surface. The company has also set itself the objective for 2008 of establishing “a true solution for the recovery of the metal wire” from used tyres, said Mr Remy.

Companies responsible for putting new tyres on the French market pay towards financing the system, which covers collection, transport, traceability and research/development. Noting that costs had fallen over the course of the five years since Aliapur’s inception, Mr Remy also pointed out that “valorisation” processes accounted for only 11% of the overhead while more than 50% of the organisation’s costs related to collection and transportation.

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