

PRESS RELEASE

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BIR Warsaw Round-Table Sessions

Textiles Division: Implementation of eco-levy in France

A French law intended to support textile sorting and recycling operations is on course to be implemented in the second half of next year, it was reported to the latest BIR Textiles Division meeting by its Vice President Mehdi Zerroug of Framimex. The gathering in Warsaw was the first to be chaired by new divisional President Olaf Rintsch of Textil Recycling K&A Wenkhaus GmbH in Germany.

The proposed regulation places a levy-based responsibility on producers and distributors of new clothes and shoes. The text is currently lodged with the European Commission, from whom a response is anticipated by the end of this year, Mr Zerroug explained.

According to the Honorary President of the Textiles Division Klaus Löwer of Hans Löwer Recycling GmbH in Germany, it is unclear whether the eco-levy in France will cause distortion in the market. "Financial aid for textiles recycling in France will not affect large companies, but it could affect competition between French companies and those outside of France," he suggested.

Environment officials within the UK government are interested in hearing more about the eco-levy in France, reported Terry Ralph of Terimpex Ltd. "The government is taking notice of the importance of textile recycling operations," he said. "It has announced that the collection of textiles should become a priority issue and has realised that textiles is the UK's fastest-growing household waste stream." The

subject has already featured at high-profile and well-attended conferences in the UK, he added.

On a different subject, Michael Sigloch of Gras & Sigloch GmbH & Co in Germany expressed fears that changes to EU regulations covering trade in materials designated as “waste” with non-OECD countries have already led to uncertainty and could result in “chaos”. And he added: “We must see to it that we cement the idea that we produce a product.” According to Mr Löwer, the introduction of Annex VII tracking requirements under revised EU Waste Shipment Regulations represents “an unacceptable interference with our confidentiality”.

In the section of the meeting devoted to market reviews, Mr Löwer reported a 20% reduction in used textiles collections in Japan and stiff competition for originals in the USA where “nobody is earning money from sorting”. There is a continuing trend towards sorting operations being switched from developed to developing countries such as India and Pakistan, he added.

A report on the Swiss market delivered by Mr Sigloch confirmed that demand for used clothing is running ahead of supply and that many companies in Europe have duly expanded their collection operations.

Guest speaker Ewa Metelska-Swiat from the Polish Textiles Federation reported that domestic companies are “very active” in exporting to Asia, Africa and also further east in Europe itself. Meanwhile, a substantial increase in collections within Poland has led to a reduction in imports from Germany, she noted.

Ms Metelska-Swiat lamented that transitional arrangements agreed at the time of Poland’s accession to EU membership has inhibited the flow of certain recyclables into the country; the matter has been raised with the Polish government, she added.

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