



BIR
Bureau of International
Recycling

BIR is the international trade association of the recycling industries. More than 55 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 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

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General Assembly: **Extended membership services a top priority**

The BIR 2006 Spring Convention in Beijing had attracted well over 900 delegates – one of the largest attendances enjoyed by the world recycling body since its reorganisation in the 1990s, the General Assembly was informed by BIR President Fernando Duranti of Leghe & Metalli International SRL of Italy. To applause, he declared this ground-breaking event for BIR to be “a big success”.

Mr Duranti went on to outline some of his key objectives for BIR, including an ever-expanding role for the Young Traders Group. In addition, the proposal to set up a new committee to monitor and exchange information between members on non-environmental, trade-related issues - such as customs duties and quotas - was still “very much alive”, he said. Meanwhile, BIR's New Projects Committee had put forward an idea to establish an award for selected candidates proposed by national federations. To be conferred perhaps every four years, this would “contribute to the wider promotion of BIR throughout the world of recycling”.

A recent and already successful initiative had been the introduction of BIR's sponsorship programme which, according to Mr Duranti, was enabling member

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companies to enhance their visibility while at the same time widening the world recycling body's convention services.

On the theme of extended membership services, Membership Committee Chairman Michael Lion of Sims Group (Australia) outlined the benefits to members of the BIR's new "Toolkit". Framed in a simple format, this provided valuable information not only on the structure of BIR and its span of activities, but also on the organisation's complete range of services, including sources of information, legal advice and an arbitration service for resolving disputes. He also mentioned the publication of another membership tool, the Implementation Guide on Environmentally Sound Management, which was planned for the second half of the year.

Having been confirmed as BIR Treasurer for a second two-year term, Anthony Bird of the UK-based Bird Group of Companies was in a position to declare to the General Assembly: "BIR's financial situation is sound and looks healthy for the future." The new sponsorship programme was making a "considerable" contribution and would be expanded to service providers, he added.

Keynote speaker at the General Assembly was Dr Frank Richter, former Director of the World Economic Forum in charge of Asian affairs. He argued that, far from indulging in "China bashing", business people throughout the rest of the world should look to develop partnerships and seize the opportunities offered by this huge market. He underlined the thrust of his presentation with the following quotation: "The risk of not being in China is much bigger than the risk of being there."

Analysts expected China to become the world's leading economy by the year 2050, according to Dr Richter. Contrary to widespread belief, "the real growth story" was happening not among China's state-owned enterprises but in the country's private sector, he added.

The General Assembly held a minute's silence in honour of BIR Past President Jean-Pierre Lehoux of France, who died earlier this year. He was described by Mr Duranti as "a sustaining column" of BIR who had been a driving force behind the restructuring of the world body.

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