



**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.**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Brussels, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005**

***BIR Autumn Round-Table Sessions***  
***Milan***  
***24-25 October 2005***

**International Environment Council :**  
**Need for legislative methodology**  
**to solve waste definition issue**

Diverging definitions of “waste” have led to court cases in a number of countries, with BIR supporting legal actions where the industry’s interests have come under threat. However, BIR Director General Francis Veys insisted to the International Environment Council (IEC) meeting in Milan: “The solution for any framework legislation on waste is not to re-write the definition of waste at the United Nations or at the OECD or in the EU, but to construct a legislative methodology to determine what is not waste and when waste ceases to be waste.”

Noting the suggestion of a case-by-case approach to this issue, Mr Veys said that this was likely to be a time-consuming political process rather than a scientific one. He therefore issued the following plea to national association members to support the legislative methodology approach and to share news from their national authorities with BIR and the IEC.

Italy is among those countries to have hosted court cases dealing with the definition of “waste”. IEC Co-Chair Ruggero Alocci of Italian association Assofermet explained that, in 2002, legislators in Italy had introduced an “authentic interpretation” of the waste definition which virtually excluded scrap already conforming to specification from waste regulations. The European Commission had responded by issuing an

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infringement proceeding against Italy which was now awaiting the final judgement of the European Court of Justice. And in July this year, he added, the European Commission had begun new infringement proceedings on the grounds that “secondary raw materials have been taken away from the waste regulation”.

In reviewing latest legislative developments, BIR’s Environmental & Technical Director Ross Bartley pointed to some potentially burdensome proposals put forward as part of the revision of EU waste shipment regulations. Several of the proposals outlined by Mr Bartley were subsequently thrown out during a plenary vote within the European Parliament on the evening following the IEC meeting. However, it was agreed to retain the proposal that competent authorities in EU member states should be permitted to publish details of export notifications if they so desired. Finland and The Netherlands, among others, had already chosen to post sensitive information about individual shipments on the Internet, it was explained at the IEC meeting. Mr Bartley also observed that, in response to a Basel Convention Annex IX questionnaire, the authorities in some countries had signalled their desire to prohibit the import of recyclable materials designated as “waste” even though some of these were essential to their domestic industries. “That doesn’t make sense,” insisted Mr Bartley.

Electronics recycling had been a growth issue in the USA since the previous BIR Convention in May this year, according to Robin Wiener of the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries. In this context, her organisation was supporting the introduction of a short-term financing mechanism to stimulate markets and to promote design for recycling, she told delegates.

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