



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

Plastics Committee :
Plastics recycling – a business with future

The progress of a company at the cutting edge of recycling plastics from cars and electronic goods was detailed at the Plastics Round-Table in Milan.

Mike Biddle, founder and Managing Director of MBA Polymers, Inc. of the USA, confirmed that his company had just started up a 40,000 tonnes per annum processing facility in China's Nansha Development Zone under a joint venture with Guangzhou Iron & Steel Enterprises. A plant with a similar processing capacity was also scheduled to come on stream early next year in Austria as part of a joint venture with Muller-Guttenbrunn GmbH. Mr Biddle added: "We plan on expanding in Asia and Europe. I have investors lined up to build more plants."

MBA Polymers has invested over US\$ 30 million in developing its technology. The process comprises: size reduction and liberation; separation of non-plastic items; separation of mixed plastics; final cleaning and sorting; and pelletisation and/or compounding. According to Mr Biddle, the company's approach ensures the separation not only of different plastics but also of different grades.

Some of the companies supplying scrap to MBA Polymers are also taking back the final product and using it to manufacture 100% recycled content components, such as TV housings. "So we close the loop," insisted Mr Biddle.

Round-Table delegates in Milan also heard several country-specific market reports.

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According to Surendra Borad of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation NV, upwards of 2 million tonnes of plastics are recycled each year in India - a country which consumes some 4.2 million tonnes of plastics per annum. However, an uncertain future awaited some 20 of the 30 Indian operations licensed to import plastics scrap; their licences were due to come up for renewal at the end of October and extensions had yet to be approved. He added: "About 6000 tonnes of plastics scrap is being imported every month. If these licences are not renewed, then the quantity will be reduced to about 3000 tonnes per month."

BIR Plastics Committee Chairman Peter Daalder of Daly Plastics BV in The Netherlands reported that, on June 1 this year, Germany had implemented a ban on the landfilling of burnable and recyclable materials. The supply of some grades - such as mixed rigid plastics and dirty LDPE 60/40 - had improved since the introduction of the ban, he contended.

Reporting on the French, Spanish and Italian markets, Jacques Musa of France-based Soulier said a fall in secondary PET demand - particularly for bottles from household collections - could be attributed to over-stocking in the key Chinese market. LME plastics trading had been reasonably active since polyethylene and polypropylene quotations had been introduced in May this year and prices had increased by some 50%, according to Giuseppe Lacchini of Cell-Data Information Systems, Italy. The LME was intending to commence trading in PVC and PET next year, he added.

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