



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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BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition Barcelona, 23-25 May 2005

Non Ferrous Metals Division:

BIR strives to defend its members' interests

The coming months will see the publication by China's Administration of Quality, Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of a list of sanctions against foreign exporters who fail to respect their commitments or Chinese law. And these sanctions could extend to withdrawal of licences, BIR-Non Ferrous Division President Marc Natan of France-based Malco SA warned on Tuesday, 24th May.

The efforts of BIR and others - notably the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) - had helped to smooth the introduction of the AQSIQ licensing scheme such that, out of some 4000 applications, more than 3000 licences had been obtained, Mr Natan explained. If approval were given, he added, the world recycling body would shortly send a delegation to India - a market subject to new restrictions on imported scrap and 'unprecedented' port congestion - in order to defend the interests of the recycling industry.

Meanwhile, 'excellent' market conditions in the early months of 2005 had been replaced by significant price corrections and fears for the future, despite the fact that China's 'insatiable appetite' for primary and secondary raw materials was unlikely to suffer any appreciable decline. Copper prices were being sustained in the near term by low stocks but it remained to be seen how long this would continue. 'In these last few weeks, I haven't seen any particular difficulties for consumers in obtaining concentrates, blister, cathodes and recyclable products,' he said.

The whistle-stop tour of world markets conducted by Non-Ferrous Division Vice-President Kumar Radhakrishnan of Sims Group Ltd of Australia drew attention to the

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apparent shift in fundamentals 'with supply capacity coming in much faster than demand in a number of key industrial sectors'. Uncertainty surrounding an imminent revaluation of the Chinese currency was also hovering over the market, he added. Ildar Neverov of TeplotovResource told delegates that, in Russia, the Belovsky zinc plant had switched to producing lead because the latter market was considered to be more attractive. His presentation also called for a specific law relating to the country's non-ferrous metals industry since federal 'waste' regulations did not correspond to actual circumstances in the sector.

Miguel Llonch, Director of Gremi de Recuperacion de Catalunya, was one of two guest speakers at the Non-Ferrous Division meeting in Barcelona. He suggested that the recent history of Spain's non-ferrous scrap industry could be divided into three periods: 1980-86 when tariffs were dismantled; the 1986-2003 fiscal period; and 2003 to the present day, which he described as a period of 'opportunism' characterised by finding new customers in a globalised market. In a wide-ranging speech, he suggested that a continuation of the current price differential between copper and aluminium might prompt some manufacturers to switch materials.

The second guest speaker was Ion Olaeta, General Manager of Deydesa 2000 SL in Spain and outgoing Co-Chairman of BIR's Media & Metal Separation Committee. He claimed that Spain was at a disadvantage to other highly-industrialised countries in terms of secondary raw material recovery: he used the example of cars whose life-cycle in Spain was perhaps twice as long as in other more consumer-oriented nations.

According to Eurometrec President Bjorn Grufman of M. V. Metallvarden AB in Sweden, his organisation had been following the development of the EU's so-called REACH directive with a view to assessing whether this evaluation of all chemical substances would have an impact on the recycling industry. Several official sources at European and national level had admitted that recovered and recycled substances had already been registered by primary producers or importers, and that 'our sector should be exempted as mechanical processing or sorting were not producing new substances'. Mr Grufman added: 'The matter needs, however, to be monitored with caution.'

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