



**BIR**

Bureau of International Recycling

BIR is the international trade association of the recycling industries. More than 50 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, 3rd June 2004**

# ***World Recycling Convention Berlin 24-26 May 2004***

## **General Assembly: Free and fair trade of 'vital importance'**

Free and fair trade was of 'vital importance' to everyone involved in buying, selling, importing and exporting raw materials, BIR's President Fernando Duranti of Leghe & Metalli International in Italy stressed to the world recycling organisation's General Assembly in Berlin. It was therefore 'essential' that these transactions were not subject to 'hindrance or use of improper methods to gain a competitive advantage', he insisted.

The German capital represented a highly appropriate venue for the latest BIR convention, according to Mr Duranti, since it effectively formed 'the bridge between old and new Europe' following the enlargement of the European Union. And he added: 'I sincerely hope that the efficient industries and technologies of these new member countries will gradually be put to the benefit of the European Union as a whole, and that continuous improvements and capacity expansions will enable the enlarged EU to remain a solid, competitive business force capable of meeting global challenges.'

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Mr Duranti highlighted efforts taking place within BIR to widen its membership base, including the development of an Ambassadors Committee made up of prominent industry representatives in all the major countries and regions of the world.

After a period as Acting Treasurer of BIR, Anthony Bird OBE of the UK-based Bird Group of Companies was officially elected Treasurer of the organisation for an initial two-year term. He reported that BIR's financial standing was 'sound' and emphasised the importance of building its reserves.

Keynote speaker at the General Assembly in Berlin was Dr Albert Rohan, former Secretary General of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a presentation entitled 'Hot Irons of International Politics', he offered delegates his personal interpretation of major world issues including: the Israel/Palestine and Iraq conflicts; the foreign policies of Russia and China; and relations between Europe and the USA. He expected progress towards European integration to remain 'hesitant' and called on Europe to play a role in world affairs that was commensurate with its economic weight and experience.

BIR Membership Committee Chairman Michael Lion of Sims Group confirmed that 472 companies and 38 National Federations were now associated to BIR, with 41 new members officially ratified at the General Assembly in Berlin. A 'Toolkit' designed to increase awareness of the benefits of BIR membership would probably be ready some time next year, he added.

The General Assembly closed with confirmation from BIR Convention Committee Chairman Peter Mathews CMG of Black Country Metals in the UK that the Berlin convention had been one of the most successful of recent years in that it had attracted more than 750 registered delegates. He outlined proposals to hold BIR conventions in the Chinese capital Beijing in Spring 2006 and in one of the new EU member countries the following year. The intention was then to celebrate the world recycling body's 60th anniversary in Monte-Carlo in 2008.

Mr Mathews called for feedback from members to assist his committee in its efforts to select the most appropriate convention venues, as well as the most attractive topics for divisional meetings and workshops.

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