



**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.**

---

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Brussels, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2003

### **BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition Oslo, 26-28 May 2003**

#### **Plastics Committee: SARS affects Asian market**

The Asian market - and China in particular - had been rocked by a number of developments since the end of last year, BIR's Plastics Committee meeting was told by Jean-Michel Cauche of Sobeca Int. in Belgium.

The SARS epidemic had created such 'panic' that many Chinese factories had been deserted by their workforce, while the drop in the value of the US dollar was disrupting export markets, he said. Transport costs to the region had risen by 20-25% since the early part of the year, the meeting was also informed. On a brighter note, Mr Cauche pointed to growing demand from Korea for beads and strong orders from Japan, particularly for PET.

Market reports from France and Spain reflected the impact of problems in the Far East on Western European exporters. Marc Figueras of Spain spoke of 'a really bad year' for his domestic industry with many smaller producers having been forced to cease production while utilisation rates were generally below 80%.

Plastics Committee Chairman Peter Daalder of Daly Plastics BV in The Netherlands highlighted the difference in market approaches adopted by German and Italian recyclers. Whereas competition for raw material had become quite fierce in Germany as a result in part of reduced volumes from DSD collections, operators in Italy were prepared to live with 80% capacity utilisation. 'It is not so good to run at full capacity when material is short,' he commented. 'We have to convince German recyclers to keep a cool head.'

Earlier, Enrico Bobbio of Polieco in Italy confirmed that prices were holding up reasonably well in his country even though plants were operating well below full

**BIR**

**Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 24, B-1050 Brussels (Belgium)  
Tel: + 32 2 627 57 70 - Fax + 32 2 627 57 73 - E-mail: [bir.sec@skynet.be](mailto:bir.sec@skynet.be) - <http://www.bir.org>**

capacity. Noting that Italy's plastics recyclers had the capacity to consume an additional 400,000 to 500,000 tonnes of material per annum, he suggested the domestic industry required some degree of restructuring since a large proportion of the country's 200 plants had annual capacities well below the optimum 25,000 to 30,000 tonnes. Indeed, there were only five recycling plants of this size throughout the entire country, he added.

Mr Bobbio called for efforts to ensure closer contacts with the paper and textiles industries to improve the availability of secondary plastics.

'Vinyloop: complementing PVC recycling' was the subject of the guest presentation from Eric Breny, Vinyloop Marketing & Business Manager within Solvay, Belgium. He explained that the Vinyloop process was based around pre-treatment, dissolution, filtering and precipitation stages through which no solvent was released to atmosphere. The first plant of this type was opened in Ferrara, Italy, early last year and was expected to reach 100% capacity by the end of the summer.

Vinyloop was most effective, said Mr Breny, where PVC was a composite with other materials and where there existed a mixture of ground material or material fragments. Current related projects included PVC recovery from cable and even from wallpaper. The guest speaker insisted that Vinyloop was 'economically viable' and required 'reliable sources of raw material'. He called on scrap collectors to contact his company to discuss possible supply opportunities.

ends

*For further information please contact:  
Elisabeth Christ  
BIR Communications Director  
Tel: + 32 2 627 57 78  
e-mail: [info@bir.org](mailto:info@bir.org)*