

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Berlin (30 May – 1 June 2016)

E-Scrap Committee:

Committee targets meta-study to “systematise” e-scrap data

Brussels, 7 June 2016

Describing India as the world's fifth-largest producer of e-waste, BIR E-Scrap Committee member Surendra Patawari Borad explained to the body's latest meeting in Berlin on June 1 that the government had introduced an extended producer responsibility system for e-waste earlier this year which proposed a 30% collection target for the first two years, rising to 70% after seven years.

According to Mr Patawari Borad, who is based in Belgium with Gemini Corporation NV, the new rules in India called for “stringent” financial penalties for non-compliance.

Executive President of the China Scrap Plastics Association Dr Steve Wong of Fukutomi Co. Ltd also outlined some of the weighty issues in his own domestic market, including: ongoing discussions about a possible import ban on plastics scrap; closure of factories which lacked the appropriate facilities to process scrap in an environmentally sound manner; an ever-sharper government focus on pollution control; machinery overcapacity; and a “very volatile” economic situation overall.

In China, prices for WEEE scrap had dropped by half or even more and many operators were suffering from “negative” margins, he told delegates.

Also at the meeting in Berlin, BIR E-Scrap Committee Chairman Thomas Papageorgiou of Anamet Recycling Industry SA in Greece outlined progress within the Committee towards streamlining its method of collecting data and providing information on electrical and electronic equipment which, to date, had included a survey of e-scrap studies and

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statistics. The next step for the Committee, he explained, would be to agree on the parameters of a meta-study to “systematise” this information.

Mr Papageorgiou pointed out that e-scrap represented a “very complex” area of business in which materials recycling was not the only route to sales and hopefully profit, with other potential paths including reuse and data security/asset management.

His comments served as an appropriate preface to contributions from two guest speakers in Berlin. Thomas Opsomer, Repair Policy Engineer with iFixit Europe, explained that iFixit was an online community of people freely sharing technology repair know-how in step-by-step guides, financing this platform by selling spare parts and also tools to access equipment. Describing components harvesting as “a very promising business model”, he said a single circuit board “can be worth up to 50 times the entire device’s scrap”. However, he also identified several barriers to reuse and recycling, including non-removable batteries, increasing use of adhesives and lack of information from manufacturers regarding product content and disassembly.

Mr Opsomer called on recyclers to help promote the case with manufacturers for assisting in the development of a centralised, cloud-based database of disassembly information.

Fellow guest speaker Andrew Noel Brown, UK Head of Business Development at Sims Recycling Solutions Europe, underlined the importance of data security within the Circular Economy given that, for example, an estimated 80% of corporate lap-tops contain sensitive information. He recommended working with an externally audited and accredited IT asset management partner to ensure compliance with data security regulations.

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