

PRESS RELEASE

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

General Assembly / Keynote Session:

BIR launching World Council of Recycling Associations

Brussels, 3 June 2016

BIR is spearheading the formation of a new body “to take forward the message of facilitating free and fair trade of recyclables with minimum regulatory controls”, it was announced at the body’s Annual General Assembly in Berlin on May 31.

The BIR World Council of Recycling Associations would bring together the presidents of the various recycling associations of the world in an initiative that would enable them to “work together to tackle the challenges facing the global trade of recyclables”, explained BIR President Ranjit Baxi of UK-based J&H Sales International.

He also noted that more than 900 people from 57 countries were participating in the BIR Convention in Berlin - “a great result” given that “our industry is currently going through one of the most testing times we have ever experienced” in terms of the pressure on demand and margins. He went on to announce that BIR was targeting October 2017 for its first-ever Convention in India, describing the country as “an extremely important and growing market for our business”. Before then, BIR Conventions would be held in Amsterdam in October 2016 and Hong Kong in May next year.

Mr Baxi expressed the hope that BIR efforts to launch a Global Recycling Day would also come to fruition in 2017; this event would be designed to celebrate the importance of recycling and to promote the major environmental contribution of the recycling industry. In this latter regard, BIR’s updated report on “The Environmental Benefits of Recycling” had concluded that 572m tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were avoided each year by the recycling industry’s global activities in just three areas, namely ferrous, aluminium and

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copper. By extension, therefore, the recycling industry's efforts across all the commodity sectors could be reducing such emissions by well over 700m tonnes per annum, Mr Baxi suggested.

Following the formal ratification of the 56 new members to have joined BIR since its Annual General Assembly in Dubai in May 2015, Interim Treasurer Jens Hempel-Hansen of Denmark-based H.J. Hansen Recycling Industry revealed that the world body had recorded a financial surplus last year despite difficult market conditions for the industry. It was then confirmed that Tom Bird of UK-based Mettalis Recycling would be the new BIR Treasurer for an initial two-year period.

Immediately following the Annual General Assembly in Berlin, the Convention's Keynote Speaker Klaus Töpfer underlined the progress of the last 30 years towards making the closing of material cycles "a business case" rather than an environmental issue. A former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr Töpfer identified a shift towards "a sharing economy" in which companies would start to insist that products were returned to them at end-of-life.

The guest speaker said that recycling represented "a huge pre-condition" for furthering the pro-climate agenda and that the "stigma" must be removed from recycled products.

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