
Recent BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Rome (30 May – 1 June 2012)

Tyres Committee:

Europe sets tyre recycling pace

Brussels, 5 June 2012

Europe has established itself as a world tyre recycling leader, with figures for 2010 showing that around 95% of EU-27 arisings in that year were destined for recovery rather than for landfill compared to 75% as recently as 2004. A large proportion of these end-of-life tyres (ELTs) is converted either into rubber granulate or into energy for use by the cement industry, explained BIR Tyres Committee Chairman Barend Ten Bruggencate of Netherlands-based VACO in his Rome address.

High ELT recovery rates are also being achieved in North America and Japan, and there are clear signs of the development of a used tyre recycling infrastructure within Russia - although this remained “decades behind Western Europe”, according to Mr Ten Bruggencate.

The advantages of developing end-of-waste criteria for used tyres within the EU was explored by Tyres Committee guest speaker Kees van Oostenrijk, a board member of the RecyBEM organisation in the Netherlands which is responsible for the implementation of the Dutch Decree on Car Tyre Management on behalf of the tyre sector. He explained that the EU Waste Framework Directive offers scope to develop criteria to determine whether

and when waste streams can be considered as product. In this way, waste legislation no longer becomes applicable and so associated costs can be reduced, while exports no longer become subject to onerous waste shipment regulations. He described end-of-waste criteria as “our future” for used tyres.

Mr Van Oostenrijk also talked about research and development work into devulcanisation and pyrolysis, going on to suggest that these techniques could have a substantially increased impact on tyre recycling in the future.

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