

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention (Round-Table Sessions) in Amsterdam (24-25 October 2016)

E-Scrap Committee:

EPR “hodge-podge” is confounding harmonisation

Brussels, 28 October 2016

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes have had a major impact on e-scrap recycling not only in Europe but also, increasingly, in other parts of the world, observed BIR E-Scrap Committee Chairman Thomas Papageorgiou of Greece-based Anamet SA in introducing the main theme of the body's latest meeting on October 24.

In India, it was reported by Surendra Patawari Borad of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation NV, the government has framed detailed guidelines covering the systematic collection and transportation of e-waste by the producers. They must collect 30% of the e-waste by 2018 and the remaining 70% in the ensuing five years, he explained to delegates in Amsterdam.

According to guest speaker Tracy Shaw, President and CEO of the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries (CARI), her organisation's policy calls for producers to focus on designing products to minimise environmental impact and maximise material recovery, and also for any EPR programme to be based on the private sector competitive process. To date in Canada, she said, the “hodge-podge” of EPR programmes has done little to help recycling rates and has made harmonisation difficult.

In the USA, 34 states have EPR-type laws with California “leading the charge” in terms of implementation of EPR programmes, Ms Shaw also noted. E-recycling laws have been introduced in 25 US states.

In terms of e-scrap collection and recycling, some countries in Europe have introduced mandatory standards - and this is “entirely commendable as an approach”, argued Pascal Leroy, Secretary General of the Brussels-headquartered WEEE Forum. “We call on legislators to make the

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

BIR (aisbl)
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 24
1050 Brussels, Belgium

T. +32 2 627 57 70
F. +32 2 627 57 73

bir@bir.org
www.bir.org

standards mandatory as that is the only way to level the playing field.” Once introduced, he added, standards also needed to be properly enforced.

Describing the WEEELABEX set-up as well-organised and incurring manageable costs for achieving the standard, he lamented that some authorities continue to focus their audits on companies complying with this standard rather than on “illegal” operations - something he described in Amsterdam as “disappointing”..

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