

PRESS RELEASE

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

Plastics Committee:

“Recycling of automotive plastics has just started,” says ARN

Brussels, 27 October 2016

Prospects for Europe's plastics recycling industry are “not that promising” at present but conditions could be improved by a number of potential measures, such as an increase in landfill taxes or elimination of VAT on goods produced from recycled materials. So said BIR Plastics Committee Chairman Surendra Patawari Borad of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation NV at the latest meeting in Amsterdam on October 24.

He also called for a reduction of the legislative and administrative burden on non-hazardous recyclables such as non-complex plastics and recovered paper.

In the first of three guest presentations in Amsterdam, it was revealed that Dutch car recycling specialist ARN achieved a materials recycling rate of 87.7% last year while energy recovery took its overall recycling performance to 97% - both figures easily exceeding the legal objectives of, respectively, 85% and 95%. Arie De Jong, Chief Executive Officer of ARN Holding, reported that the operation is recovering 3600 tonnes per year of low-density plastics, 2200 tonnes of average density, and 3500 tonnes of high density.

The speaker identified a number of ongoing challenges relating to plastics recycling, including PVC contamination in the high-density fraction, and the emergence of new and sometimes difficult-to-recycle materials such as thermosetting resins and carbon fibre reinforced plastics. This led him to conclude: “Recycling of automotive plastics has just started.”

Fellow guest speaker Herman Van Roost, Business Development Manager-Recycling at Total in Belgium, detailed the virgin plastics producer's role in recycling, including the recent introduction of virgin molecular design incorporating substantial recyclate content to form “circular compounds”. He described this “breakthrough” product as “a showcase” to “break open the

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minds of people and regulators” and demonstrate the possibility of delivering high performance with a high recycle content.

The circularity theme was also central to the presentation of Marc Pruijn, Program Leader-Circular Economy at the Netherlands’ Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. The Dutch government has set a target of achieving a 100% circular economy by the year 2050, as well as a 50% reduction in the use of raw materials by 2030. To reach the former goal, circular economy paths are currently being defined for the different materials, with the transition agenda set to be finalised next year.

Among several market reports delivered at the Amsterdam meeting, Executive President of the China Scrap Plastics Association Dr Steve Wong of Fukutomi Co. Ltd noted that high-level meetings arranged with the EU among others emphasised the desire within China to co-operate with supplier countries to ensure environmentally-sensitive scrap imports.

For Europe, Marc-Antoine Belthé of Veolia Propreté France Recycling reported strong generation of PET over the summer months and a subsequent reduction in pricing. And according to the Middle East report from Mahmoud Al Sharif of Sharif Metals Int’l LLC in the United Arab Emirates, the mood among the region’s recyclers is “not so positive” at present, with the result that they are generally minimising their purchased volumes.

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