

## PRESS RELEASE

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

#### ***Tyres & Rubber Committee:***

#### **Decline in crumb rubber market despite research findings**

**Brussels, 28 October 2016**

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More than 90 related studies carried out by government, industry and academia have concluded that there is “no link between cancer and crumb rubber in synthetic turf”, it was emphasised by Robin Wiener, President of the US Institute of the Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI), at the BIR Tyres & Rubber Committee meeting in Amsterdam on October 25.

She made the comment in response to opening remarks from Barend ten Bruggencate of RecyBEM in the Netherlands, who was returning as the Committee's Chairman following a change of employment for his immediate predecessor Ruud Burlet. Within recent weeks, he explained, the Dutch media has been full of “sensational” stories based on a TV programme's claim that tyre-derived rubber granulate used in sports pitches is carcinogenic.

Leading industry bodies such as the European Tyre & Rubber Manufacturers' Association will now be revisiting this topic with further research while BIR will maintain a strong involvement and co-operate in any way, insisted Mr Ten Bruggencate. “We have to take this extremely seriously at the highest level,” he stressed. “This is so enormously important for our branch.”

In the USA, the continuing flow of media stories connecting crumb rubber with cancer has led to a 30% decline in the market for this material, according to Ms Wiener. She offered to share details of the toolkits developed by ISRI to help its members mount a positive response to the concerns raised by such stories.

The BIR Tyres & Rubber Committee meeting in Amsterdam also featured two guest presentations. Ruud Spuijbroek, Secretary General of European retreading association Bipaver, outlined his organisation's attempts to defend the trade at EU level against cheap new truck tyre imports, largely from China. However, its argument was rejected on the grounds that: firstly, Bipaver “has

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no legal ground to start a case” because legislation makes no distinction between new and remanufactured products; and secondly, Bipaver “is not suffering any injury” - even though, as Mr Spuijbroek pointed out, more than 100 retreading companies have closed their doors in recent years.

His conclusion was that, despite the high profile granted the transition to a circular economy, the European Commission’s DG-Trade “has no interest” in the added value provided by recycled or remanufactured products through reductions in waste, raw materials usage and carbon footprints.

According to fellow guest speaker Annemiek Tubbing, a Dutch environmental lawyer specialising in waste regulations, no further progress has been made in the EU towards end-of-waste for other waste streams following the collapse of efforts to agree criteria for paper owing to a conflict of interests. She described this as “a pity”.

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