

## PRESS RELEASE

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### *Recent BIR World Recycling Convention in Paris (27-28 October 2014)*

#### *Plastics Committee:*

### **Regulatory approach “depriving Europeans of access to markets”**

**Brussels, 31 October 2014**

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EU regulation is preventing its member states from exporting scrap to some 120 countries around the world, BIR Plastics Committee Chairman Surendra Borad Patawari of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation NV noted in Paris on October 27. So while the USA, for example, shipped scrap to 160 countries last year, EU exporters were limited to 74 potential outlets, he told the latest meeting of the committee.

A key reason behind this disparity, according to Mr Borad, was the questionnaire sent by the European Commission's DG Trade to non-OECD countries in which governments were asked what “wastes” they would be prepared to import from the EU. Some quickly rejected the notion of importing anything labelled as “waste” while others gave vague answers or failed to respond at all. This exercise was fostering “confusion and misunderstanding”, and was “depriving Europeans of access to markets in over 120 countries”, he lamented.

Reviewing the US market, Mr Borad spoke of a “bullish” mood and of a substantial scarcity of raw material owing to higher domestic recycling. Regarding India, the same speaker pointed to the new government's determination to relax administrative burdens which, for some time, had meant the issuing of scrap import licences to only a limited number of recyclers.

Policies and regulations were also a focus of the market report from Steve Wong of the China Scrap Plastics Association. As from January 1 next year, he said, China's Ministry of Environmental Protection would no longer handle applications for imports of pre-approved solid waste; instead, importers would have to apply to the municipal environmental protection department. Also, China's Customs Office was proposing to abolish the zero-tariff preferential treatment for those scrap plastics being imported, recycled into raw materials and eventually turned into products for export.

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**BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS**

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The market in China was slowing owing to reduced domestic demand, he added. Plastics recyclers were under pressure from high wages relative to the rest of South East Asia and would need to be efficient in order to survive.

Of the European market, France-based Gregory Cardot of Veolia Propreté reported a changing trend since October. “Demand for scrap is dropping and converters are buying just in time,” he said. Another speaker from France, Sébastien Petithuguenin of Paprec, highlighted the company’s plastics recycling initiatives relating to windows and “big bag” containers.

Some of the latest technologies in the plastics recycling arena were reviewed in Paris by guest speaker Naemi Denz of VDMA in Germany. A “big development”, she said, was self-cleaning of sensors used in plastics sorting such that “maintenance is much easier than before”.

And in a statistics-rich presentation, Michel Loubry of the PlasticsEurope manufacturers association confirmed that landfilling remained the leading treatment option for post-consumer plastics in Europe, accounting for almost 10m tonnes whereas material recycling consumed 6.6m tonnes and energy recovery 8.9m tonnes. He went on to argue that a sustainable and profitable recycling business in the future depended on driving a quality focus in collection, sorting and processing.

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