

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention in Warsaw (28-29 October 2013)

Tyres Committee:

End-of-waste status “essential” for used tyres

Brussels, 5 November 2013

Tyres are listed by the EU authorities as a possible category of waste for which end-of-waste specifications and criteria should be developed, and efforts are continuing to be made to secure this status not only for tyre casings suitable for retreading but also for granulates, powder and chips obtained from the processing of the rubber fraction from tyres. However, a concept end-of-waste declaration document has received disappointingly little attention to date, according to Kees van Oostenrijk, Director of the RecyBEM end-of-life tyre management body in the Netherlands.

This was “a pity”, he told the BIR Tyres Committee meeting in Warsaw on 29 October 2013, given that end-of-waste would be “an essential benefit” to the used tyre industry, such as through the reduction of administrative burdens. The guest speaker had earlier explained that end-of-life tyres ticked all the boxes for end-of-waste status in that: there was an existing demand; their use had been proved to entail no overall adverse environmental or human health impacts; and end-of-life-tyre-derived products were fit for use and met standards or specifications for trading.

BIR Tyres Committee Chairman Barend Ten Bruggencate of Vaco in the Netherlands also underlined the “challenge” of achieving end-of-waste status as well as the importance of close links with universities as a means of building scientific knowledge in crucial areas for tyre recycling such as devulcanisation.

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The Tyres Committee meeting also featured guest presentations on tyre recycling in host country Poland and also in Scandinavia. According to Grzegorz Karnicki, Operations Director of leading Polish producer responsibility organisation CUO, domestic recovery of end-of-life tyres had leapt from 23,000 tonnes in 2002 to 185,000 tonnes a decade later. Some 54% went for energy recovery while 29% was converted into powders and granulate; products made of end-of-life tyre rubber accounted for a further 13% and retreading for 4%.

Hans van Mameren, who is responsible for end-of-life tyres at Swedish recycler Ragn-Sells, pointed out that Sweden, Norway and Finland had been achieving a 100% tyre recycling rate since the turn of the Millennium. Material recycling currently took a 45% share and energy recovery 55% but the aim was to reverse these numbers by 2014, he told delegates. The guest speaker also predicted that, at some point in the future, producers of rubberised asphalt would be the biggest buyers of product derived from end-of-life tyres.

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