



BIR is the **international trade association of the recycling industries**. Around **70 countries** are represented through their national trade associations and individual companies which are involved in recycling. BIR comprises **four commodity divisions**: iron and steel, non ferrous metals, paper and textiles, and has **three commodity committees** dealing with stainless steel and special alloys, plastics and rubber. BIR's primary goals are to promote recycling and recyclability, thereby conserving natural resources, protecting the environment and facilitating free trade of secondary raw materials.

PRESS RELEASE

Recent 2010 BIR World Recycling Convention (Autumn Round-Table Sessions), 25-26 October, Brussels

Textiles Division:

Sorters' margins "squeezed" by high costs of originals

Brussels, 5th November 2010

Sorters are enjoying healthy demand for a wide range of their goods - including used clothing, shoes and bed feathers - but their sales prices are not always adequate, the BIR Textiles Division's Honorary President Klaus Löwer of Germany-based Hans Löwer Recycling GmbH insisted to delegates at the latest divisional Round-Table meeting in Brussels.

In the USA, he noted by way of example, sorters' margins are being "squeezed" by the high costs of originals which they are unable to pass on to customers. In Japan, meanwhile, the strength of the Yen against the US dollar has adversely affected the ability of sorters to export.

The BIR Textiles Division's Vice President, Mehdi Zerroug of Framimex in France, provided an update on his country's Eco Tlc initiative to support sorting activities: some 42 sorters - including 29 from France, seven from Belgium, four from the Netherlands, and one each from Germany and Portugal - have entered an agreement with Eco Tlc. Contributions have already been paid this year in respect of volumes sorted in 2009.

Collection and sorting volumes in France are now around 10% higher than in 2008, Mr Zerroug told delegates.

According to Alan Wheeler, National Liaison Manager at the UK Textile Recycling Association, “bogus” charity collections are continuing to have a significant impact on yields and remain “one of the biggest topics of debate amongst UK collectors, charities and licensing authorities”. Indeed, the topic was debated recently in the UK Parliament and duly received national media coverage.

Demand for used clothing has been “as strong as ever” in 2010 - “particularly from Eastern Europe”, noted Mr Wheeler. However, he went to say, the Ukrainian authorities are now considering a ban or restriction on used clothing imports into this “important” market.

Difficulties surrounding exports were also mentioned by Italy’s Sauro Ballerini: Algeria “remains closed” due to import restrictions while trade with Egypt has been affected by rising customs charges. Overall, however, business conditions for Italy’s textiles recyclers have “improved considerably” since the start of this year.

The relationship between used clothing and the “end-of-waste” concept contained within the EU Waste Framework Directive was explored by the Textiles Division’s General Delegate Alexander Gläser of Germany-based Fachverband Textiel-Recycling eV. He maintained that clothing is “donated” to a collection bank on the understanding that it will be worn by someone else and will not therefore enter the waste stream. “The consumer decides at home that an item of clothing is not waste at all,” Mr Gläser outlined. “Reuse has nothing to do with waste - reuse is at a higher stage of the waste hierarchy.”

Guest speaker Dr Thomas Probst of *bvse* in Germany explained that the establishment of proposed end-of-waste criteria for ferrous and aluminium scrap will provide a template that can be followed for other material streams. Pending any official move to create end-of-waste criteria for used textiles, Dr Probst advised the industry to develop a position paper and send it to all relevant authorities to ensure textile recyclers’ specific concerns are addressed.

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