Business networking in front of a fantastic snow backdrop

Birrwil, January 23, 2019: Personal exchanges, cultivating existing contacts and initiating new business relationships: Hardly any other congress offers such a good networking platform for the electronics recycling industry as the International Electronics Recycling Congress IERC. Last week, around 450 industry representatives came to Salzburg for this annual industry meeting. More than 39 different nations were represented - not only expecting a beautiful winter landscape in sunshine and a bright blue sky, but also a varied conference program.

Three keynote speakers opened the congress: Aaron Goldberg, an excellent expert on the Basel Convention; Steven Clayton, Regulatory Affairs Manager at Samsung and Dr Janez Potočnik, Co-Chair of the UN International Resource Panel and former EU Environment Commissioner. The three presentations were the prelude to a two-day conference program that covered the entire spectrum of current developments in E-waste market and how it relates to the Circular Economy. On both days of the congress, participants were able to choose from a total of 27 presentations.

One of the main focus areas of the conference was the further development of the circular economy. Among other things, representatives of HP and the Sims Group presented their recycling activities for printers. Further presentations explained measures for the further development of the recycling economy in Norway and Denmark. Parallel to this, recycling experts presented new technological developments for the recycling of E-waste. The focus was on advanced sorting solutions and smart separation & shredding.

This year’s country reports, which are an integral part of the IERC, also showed that the E-waste markets in the individual countries are very different. This year there were presentations on the development of producer responsibility in South Africa and future opportunities for E-waste in India. Other presentations focused on the new electrical and electronic waste recycling plant in Hong Kong. And, last but not least, renowned experts discussed the impacts and opportunities of China’s Scrap import restrictions in a Round Table.

Many other topics were on the agenda, including the current uncertainty about the further development of the discussion about the possible tightening of the thresholds for plastics containing decaBDE from waste electrical and electronic equipment. In another presentation the question was raised, how efficient is the dry separation technology of flame-retardant WEEE plastics.

For the first time, the IERC 2019 also examined the impact of the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the E-waste industry and took stock of the implementation of the new ‘WEEE Open Scope’ approach. Presentations on the new rules for the transport of lithium batteries and lithium batteries contained in equipment (ADR 2019) also met with great interest. This also applied to the presentation on new UN classifications for transport of lithium batteries, related to their hazardous materials.
Once again, the conference was accompanied by an impressive Exhibitor Forum. Many well-known companies were on site as exhibitors. A total of 62 exhibitors presented their range of services, processes and products. Those who did not have the opportunity to visit all the exhibitor stands were also able to socialize on the evening of the first day of the congress. The networking dinner took place under the motto “Oktoberfest” and was heated up at a late hour by the band “Münchner Zwietracht”.

After two days of the conference the “practical part” followed on the third day. Three plant tours were on the agenda on Friday. The trips went to Montanwerke Brixlegg, to the Austrian recycling group Müller-Guttenbrunn in Amstetten/Kematen and to Voestalpine Stahlwelt in Linz.

The date for the next IERC 2020 has already been set: Please mark January 22 to 24, 2020 in your calendar. We will see each other in Salzburg again!

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About ICM

ICM AG is an international leader in the organisation of conferences that specialise in the recycling of vehicles, electronics and batteries. These waste streams have been among the world’s fastest-growing raw materials markets for many years.

ICM is a Swiss company which has organised conferences in Europe, North America and Asia since the year 2000. The company was founded by Jeanette Duttlinger. Her team consists of 15 employees who speak German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese and Japanese.