Bureau of International Recycling

the world federation of recycling

**New Year Message from Arnaud Brunet, BIR Director General**

Dear All,

Let me first wish you a very happy and prosperous year 2018!

With this new year starting, it is time for me to look back (a little) and ahead (a lot).

I have joined BIR seven months ago and had the pleasure and honour to head the Secretariat of your organisation, and this period of time has passed in a wink. I am now starting my first “full year” with you.

In the past months I have spent a lot of time with the Secretariat and the BIR leadership, first and foremost President R. Baxi and Treasurer T. Bird, past Presidents and many corporate members as well as National Associations, to assess the situation, identify the priorities and start to implement the changes that our organisation needs.

It has been a busy time, both exciting and challenging.

Some visible achievements so far have been the redesign of our World Mirrors, a very successful World Recycling Convention in Delhi, with great content and style (but I take little credit of this, most of it going to Ranjit, our Indian Ambassadors and the Secretariat), and, less visible and behind the curtains, a lot of reorganization in our Brussels office.

And, of course, there was China!

No need to say that the changes announced by the Chinese Leader and the Chinese Government in terms of Environmental policies and import restrictions, have kept us (very) busy, and put the industry under stress. The China files have required a lot of energy and leadership from BIR. BIR has been at the forefront of the advocacy battle, interfacing with the World Trade Organization and the Chinese authorities, coordinating the efforts and positions of our national trade federation members, visiting our Chinese members and voicing the interests of the global recycling industry, including the Chinese ones.

When looking at our efforts, I take pride that we have well positioned our industry in the debate. But I also admit that in front of such a strong, long-term, organized, political drive, we have had only some marginal successes. However, the story is not over and we continue to advocate our views and offer cooperation to the Chinese authorities, as we now have to see how all this will be implemented and become concrete.

In any case let’s face it. What happens in China is a real game-changer. We shall continue our efforts to understand, get the practical details, and support our members. But my feeling is that there will be no real way back, that our industry has to comply, adapt and find alternative options in the longer term. In a fast-changing world, agility and adaptability is a key to survival.

This being said, as far as our organisation is concerned, despite the many challenges, I see lots of exciting projects for 2018. Let me mention some of them.

Let’s start with the most important on the long term: it is about our Membership. Understanding the need of our members as well as delivering an ever-better service is a constant objective. Therefore in 2018 I will put a particular focus on an ambitious “members acquisition, members retention” programme, without ever compromising on the high-quality standards of our organisation. Growth is vital, but not on compromising on ethics and quality. We also need to reach out to new territories and we will take initiatives in that respect.

As I mentioned on many occasions, “communications” is also going to be one of our main priorities. Members need to better know the amazing work that the Secretariat is accomplishing for them and stakeholders have to see more what this industry is doing for society. Demonstrating the positive environmental, social and economic contribution of our industry and being more visible is key. We are going to create a new website as well as review and adapt our communication tools, to make them more reactive and fit for mobile devices.

Of course, the first Global Recycling Day on 18 March 18 will be the landmark event of our global communications. We have already done a lot in terms of website, social media presence, petition and of course, the Manifesto. Still, lots remains to be done. But its only excitement when it comes to promoting our businesses and the positive impact we have for the Planet.

We are also going to increase our advocacy presence, simply because this is investing in our future. We are already doing a lot and BIR is a respected authority and stakeholder in global fora, interfacing with international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, OECD, UNEP, the World Bank, the EU Institutions. With the help of our national associations’ members, and at their request and with their support, we engage with national authorities. We are going to do more, and support our positions on solid facts and data. We also want to reinforce our Secretariat in that respect.

Last, but not least, I want to continue meeting you and learning from you. You are the reason why this federation exists, and you make it strong. Even if I have already met many of you, I am still looking at my long list of people and organisations I have not met…yet. Let’s make it happen in 2018!

(I have been too long for a New Year’s message, but I have so much to share with you…)

Let me now simply and sincerely wish you again a very happy, healthy, fruitful 2018!

Yours sincerely,

Arnaud Brunet, BIR Director General