BIR Textiles Division: Your powerful partner, globally!

What business wouldn’t want a stronger voice when representing its interests with regulators?

What business wouldn’t benefit from improved networking opportunities?

Or from better access to news and legislative developments that could make a crucial difference in business planning?

Membership of the BIR Textiles Division brings you all this and much more besides.

BIR – THE GLOBAL FEDERATION OF RECYCLING INDUSTRIES

For further information, please contact bir@bir.org
The **BIR Textiles Division** is one of eight commodity groupings within the Bureau of International Recycling, created in 1948 and the only truly global federation of recycling industries.

Today, BIR represents more than **30,000 companies** around the globe, with a direct membership of around **800 companies** and **38 national associations** from 68 countries.

### The global fashion industry:

**The problem**

- Puts around **100 to 150 billion new garments** onto the market every year.  
  *Ellen MacArthur Foundation*

- Is responsible for an estimated **8 to 10% of all global greenhouse gas emissions** – more than the aviation and maritime industries combined.  
  *United Nations for Climate Change*

- Accounts for around **20% of all global freshwater pollution incidents**.  
  *UK Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee*

- Has the **fourth-largest impact on the environment overall**, behind housing, transport and food.  
  *EU Textiles Strategy*

### The solution

**The current challenges**

**BIR Membership**

**Actions**
Below are just some of the key benefits derived from the activities of the textiles recycling and used clothing industry.

- For every 100 items of clothing that are collected and sold as used products, some 60 new garments are prevented from being produced. (QSA Partners)

- For each kilogramme of second-hand cotton garments bought instead of new items, around 10,000 litres of precious freshwater supplies are saved and pollution through the dyeing process is prevented. (EU Parliament)

- The environmental impact of reusing textiles is 70 times lower than producing new clothing even when accounting for global exports for reuse, including transport emissions. (EuRIC LCA-based assessment of the management of European used textiles)

- Millions of people are employed directly across the globe while good-quality clothing and textile items become more affordable for even larger numbers of people, particularly those on lower incomes. (Kenyan Institute of Economic Affairs)
The impact that textiles have on the environment is finally getting the attention from policy-makers, the media and manufacturers which is necessary to deliver a global circular textiles economy.

National governments and international organizations such as the EU, the UN and the OECD are developing legislation and strategies such as Extended Producer Responsibility on clothing and textiles as well as eco-design standards in an attempt to improve resource efficiency in the sector, but without full knowledge of the issues at hand and an understanding of the unintended consequences of their proposals which could lead to even bigger problems than those they are seeking to address.

There is repeated negative publicity about used clothing allegedly being dumped in countries such as Ghana and Chile. Based to a large extent on anecdotal evidence rather than on research, these allegations do not offer appropriate context but, if left unchecked, could threaten the future of the global used clothing industry, resulting in its closure. This would bring devastating environmental and economic consequences for both importing as well as exporting countries.
This is where BIR plays an essential role.

What BIR membership can do for you

As a BIR member, you have a seat at the table! BIR actively lobbies and engages with those supranational/intergovernmental organizations (EU, UN, OECD), national governments and other stakeholders that make key decisions affecting your industry and your ability to trade. For example, if the EU decides to restrict or even ban exports of used textiles, this will affect trade for every business that deals with suppliers in the EU.

BIR membership provides you with unique networking opportunities with fellow textile recycling and other recycling organizations throughout the world. The BIR Membership Directory, available exclusively to our members, and two World Recycling Conventions per year put you in touch with the global recycling sector’s key players.

BIR facilitates contact with the international trade and general media to provide enhanced visibility of all the issues relating to the textile recycling sector. During the Textiles Division plenary meetings at BIR Conventions, which are attended by numerous journalists, interactive discussions and expert guest speakers shine the spotlight on the many facets of the textiles recycling industry.

Being part of a global community of used textile supply chain organizations gives you the ability to speak with a powerful voice when areas of key concern are being addressed, thus strengthening your ability to influence decisions and future actions.

Through regular newsletters and push notifications, BIR gives access to the latest industry news as well as international legislative and policy developments that impact on the textiles recycling sector.
Actions speak louder than words.

The following are among the concrete BIR initiatives to promote free trade in the global textiles reuse and recycling industry.

- **BIR organizes international textile recycling summit** in Miami, USA.

- **BIR visits** World Bank in Nairobi, Kenya, in its lobbying efforts to persuade the East African Community (EAC) to review its directive to phase out imports of used textiles and footwear by 2019.

- **BIR produces video on textiles recycling** to showcase the importance of the textiles recycling industry at a global level.

- **BIR stages joint event** with United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with presentation by President of BIR Textiles Division.

- **BIR obtains exemption** for used clothing from REACh regulation.

- **BIR joins the Global Fashion Agenda initiative** with a Joint Position Paper on “Extended producer responsibility for the textile value chain”, co-signed with Policy Hub, Metropoolregio Amsterdam, FEAD, the Government of Catalonia, Circle Economy.

- **BIR puts forward a proposal for the Environmental Goods Agreement** whereby recycled materials, recycling machinery and equipment used in the recycling industry would be considered as environmental goods, in an effort to reduce or eliminate trade barriers and tariffs on textile bales for recycling.

- **BIR proposes to the World Customs Organization** a review of the Harmonised System codes to distinguish worn clothing/worn textile articles from wastes, raising awareness of the discrepancies between the custom codes and waste lists.

**Contact**

**The problem**

**The solution**

**The current challenges**

**BIR Membership**

**Actions**