THE WORLD UNDER COVID-19: YOUNG TRADERS TELL THEIR STORIES

WHAT A GREAT TIME WE HAD: FAREWELL FROM FORMER COMMITTEE MEMBERS
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Hi all,

I would like to start by saying that I hope all of you are safe and healthy.

What a strange situation we are in now. Normally I would be writing about our upcoming Young Traders networking evening, about the contents of this Gazette, about how I am looking forward to seeing you all at the Convention, and so on. Unfortunately, not on this occasion. We won’t be seeing each other for quite some time. COVID-19 has made sure of that.

As you have seen, BIR is working very hard to keep everyone up to date. They have set up a special Outbreak team to follow everything that is happening in the world. They are in contact with shipping lines, with federations in many countries and with governments - all to help out as much as possible and to minimize the damage and losses to everyone’s businesses.

In this Young Traders Gazette, you will not see our regular articles. Our members have all written a piece about how COVID-19 is affecting their own life, company, country or region.

Turning to another subject. As most of you know, we have chosen a new Chairman for the Young Traders Group. Niels Keyaert will be taking over because, as I mentioned last time, unfortunately I don’t qualify as a Young Trader anymore. We have also appointed a new Vice Chairman, Josh Brough. I wish both of them all the best and I’m 100% sure they will lead the Young Traders Group very well.

As most of you will know, I have changed companies right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Later in this Gazette, I will write about how the situation is affecting us at Inter Metals GmbH.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the members but also every one of you for your support during my years on the Young Traders Committee, as a member, as Vice Chairwoman and as Chairwoman. I think you guys are all amazing and I’m convinced the Young Traders Group will become even more successful under the leadership of Niels and Josh.

Let’s hope we conquer this virus and see each other very soon at the next Convention.

Please stay safe and healthy.

All the best,

Sandra Vrielink
Inter Metals GmbH, Germany
The World under Covid-19: Young Traders tell their Stories

A time to experiment and to get creative

What crazy times we live in!

Like in some movie, we are not allowed to travel, many scrap yards are closed and the global economy is on pause. Fortunately, recycling always restarts quickly after any crisis - even wars.

We have a great opportunity to do things we did not have time to do before. We can learn and experiment with new things. We have time to indulge in reading, cooking, building, painting or other creative activities.

While we will always remember this historic event, we need to keep the hope for a better future.

Take care,

Alexandre Torneberg
Torec AB, Sweden

Making sense of a noisy and confusing world

2019 was a good year but everyone had been optimistic that 2020 would be even better...

As they say: “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.”

2020 started very slowly, especially with prices of the major commodities falling below expectations and with oil prices plummeting in our region and on international markets. For metals, supply and demand suffered a significant impact. And then we were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic: countries under curfew, streets ghostly quiet, shopping malls closed and factories lying empty.

Uncoordinated country-by-country decisions disrupted the movement of both people and goods. Global manufacturing went into decline as businesses with international supply chains were able to operate only intermittently.

Many manufacturing firms rely on imported intermediate inputs from other countries affected by the virus. Many companies also rely on sales in the Far East to meet their financial goals. The slowdown in economic activity and transportation restrictions have impaired the production and profitability of global companies, particularly in the case of manufacturing and the raw materials used in manufacturing. For companies that rely on intermediate goods from affected regions and that are not able to switch sources easily, as correlates to businesses in the recycling industry, the scale of the impact will depend on how quickly the virus fades. Small and medium-sized firms may have greater difficulty surviving this disruption. Businesses tied to travel and tourism are facing losses that are likely to prove unrecoverable; the same applies to small yard owners who are suffering huge losses because of an inability to move their stocks.

Jordan has taken a strong lead and become a role model for its approach to fighting COVID-19. It has dealt with the virus in a very strict manner, with the whole country put under complete lockdown to avoid its spread, a precautionary measure which has proved very effective in drastically reducing the number of cases. Indeed, the success of the
strict lockdown is such that the government has been able to ease restrictions as the number of cases has dropped gradually. An excellent effort has been made by the Ministry of Health under the direct command and wise leadership of his majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan.

However, it remains unclear when businesses will return to normal. For example, some buyers on the Indian Subcontinent have abandoned containers at ports in the face of heavy demurrage costs and some have been asking for hefty discounts, thus creating a huge impact on trade.

Thankfully, the worst appears to be over. As the number of infections is stabilising or dropping in many parts of the world, factories are hungry for materials as economies return to some sort of normality. Some companies outside of the Far East are experiencing short-term supply disruptions, but the impact on the global economy is a temporary one.

Although the spread of the disease is slowing in certain parts of the world, outbreaks are occurring on a rolling basis and are requiring production to be slowed in that area. In a globalized world, that means rolling disruptions to different regions and industries as outbreaks emerge and are controlled. The overall impact is to disrupt economic activity enough to slow global growth substantially. Businesses that are nimble enough to manage switching suppliers and that have enough liquidity to survive periods of low sales and revenues will have a competitive advantage.

BIR’s Strategic Sensing and Insight Market reports help members to make sense of the noisy and confusing world in which they operate, as well as to understand and anticipate important changes that prompt members and businesses to revisit their growth and value-creation strategies in such rough times.

Hashem Al-Sharif
Metals Bank Co. Ltd, Jordan
Learning to work together while apart

It has been nine weeks since I traded in the skyscrapers and sidewalks of Manhattan for the trees and tranquility of Long Island, moving in with my parents in the process and reliving what it felt like to be in my teenage years. While my reality has become one of working from my bedroom, eating delicious home-cooked meals and complaining to my parents about not being allowed to leave the house, I recognize this comes at a time that is devastating for New York and for the world.

While the numbers have been staggering (over 70,000 have been hospitalized in New York), I am humbled by how our communities have pulled together in this time of need. Over 90,000 people from outside New York have volunteered to provide services in the city’s hospitals. Charitable food donations, demonstrations of support for front-line providers and virtual events/concerts to boost morale have become the norm. Steelbro has sought to contribute by donating over 50,000 KN95 masks to New York City hospitals in need.

While many of us are slowly losing our minds being sheltered at home, we are finding ways to pull together and support each other. We have hosted virtual happy hours, formed shared drives for COVID-19 related documentation and communication, and have been willing to put business aside to simply check in on each other instead. Our industry is a tight-knit community, and while things have changed in ways we never could have imagined, we are still here, still working and still thriving.

Abhijay Goenka
Steelbro International Co., Inc., USA

We’ll meet again soon - with more to discuss

The global lockdown has certainly kept me even busier than before Coronavirus came along! I have been part of a skeleton crew of staff, with the rest of our workforce furloughed. It has been a great opportunity to tidy the site and do some of the jobs that can’t usually get done. I’ve mainly been driving the forklifts, 360-scrap grabs and JCB tele-trucks while also helping to get the site ready for when all of the UK and European automotive companies return in mid-May (although with car sales down 97% on last year, I cannot see this happening).

Social distancing has been pretty tough in the UK, as usually I’d like to be out and about most weekends, travelling and hiking. However, it has given me an excellent opportunity to write my dissertation for my Masters and to learn German and French alongside yoga (it gets pretty addictive) and landscaping my garden - things I’d never have got chance to do under normal circumstances. We had the sunniest and driest April in 126 years, so it’s been great to work from home in the garden. Clearly, it is a shame that we cannot all meet at the BIR Convention in Istanbul and catch up, but perhaps we may all see each other very soon with a lot more to discuss. Hopefully soon it’ll be business as usual. Stay safe!

Josh Brough
JBMI Group Ltd, United Kingdom
Working from home not all bad

Greetings from Munich, Germany.

I had been working from home from the end of March until last week. That was when I decided that wearing jogging pants and T-shirts every day, waking up an hour later than usual and having barely any interaction with co-workers were no longer healthy for my personal and professional life.

At the beginning, it took some getting used to working from home, and thankfully I don’t have scales there to confirm how much my weight has increased owing to the close proximity to a lockdown-related, fully-stacked kitchen.

Working from home wasn’t all bad, though, as I gained not only kilos but some new co-workers in the form of two cats and a dog, which gave me valuable advice on thinking outside the box in these trying times. Their input was at times quite literal - for example, when one of my cats decided that my laptop keyboard was the perfect place for a little siesta.

To my colleagues in the business, I apologize for any emails that did not make much sense - it was the cat!

After a couple of weeks, the business noticeably quietened down and we have been doing way less volume than normal, but we are hopeful that the recovery will be as swift as the decline. We will be working hard on that!

Lorenz Dahmen
Metallhandelsgesellschaft, Germany
CO-VIDa: Learning to live a different life

Terrible things happen every day but I guess we feel kind of untouched when we are not directly involved. This time, we have all been pretty much in a similar situation, which probably has led to feeling a bigger-than-ever connection despite the enforced distancing. It might feel like a social experiment when you are alone (or with the few family members you live with) and stuck at home, facing a whole day without your usual commitments, no meetings on your agenda, no business trips and no weekend gatherings with family and friends. But you figure out that you can actually still have a life outside your office/yard, survive without your fitness classes, walk instead of run, and drive virtual shuttles instead of actual cars. You get to understand that, to avoid insanity, you must focus on what you can do and not on what you can’t, and that there is a whole universe inside for us to discover even though sometimes we just choose to ignore it. Routine often kills wonder, but wonder means life. And children are our special heroes, always there to remind us of this important detail.

So while the virus has been a tragedy indeed, hopefully many of us have had the chance to choose a more authentic, conscious and deeper way of living our day.

I spent a month and a half in my “smart yoga office” where I could keep working and spend a lot of time “dancing with myself”. And do you know what? I was surprised at how much I found in such a tiny space.

Martina Franceschi
Fonderie Pandolfo SPA, Italy
Belgium has been hit quite hard by COVID-19, with more than 50,000 confirmed cases. This means that our daily life is dominated by news on the Coronavirus and by measures to contain it. Belgium implemented what we might call a “lockdown light”, meaning that we were always allowed to go out for a walk or a run but unfortunately that economic activities have been reduced significantly. All bars and restaurants remain closed and, as a consequence, we now have virtual drinks with our friends instead of going out.

A lot of business activities have been suspended but Metallo Belgium has been recognized by the government as an essential company. Together with a number of other businesses in our sector, we form a non-ferrous metals cluster which ensures a unique base metals supply system for our economy. In order to be able to operate in these strange times, it’s important to think in terms of solutions and so we implemented a lot of small initiatives in order to cope with the “new normal”. For example, a solution suggested by one of our workers was to install 3D printed door handles so the doors could be opened without using our hands. We now source these 3D printed items from a local Belgian company and have installed them company-wide. It is just one small example of the many changes we have to introduce into our daily lives to cope with the altered reality created by COVID-19. New challenges trigger people’s ingenuity and I believe this is what we will see in our recycling industry as well. The coming months will be tough for a lot of businesses but our industry is resilient and will surely recover from this crisis.

Niels Keyaert
Metallo Belgium N.V.
The Coronavirus pandemic may have halted our freedom of travel and locked down virtually the whole world but, with the help of modern technology such as video conferencing, people are still able to go on with their professional lives and to thrive in the face of adversity. Most organizations have started working from home, but we and other companies are still operating as normal - but with some basic limitations, for example in the way people interact in the office, operationally and with customers, such as social distancing and no handshaking, wearing masks, etc. We are very cautious about what employee interactions we allow with customers and fellow employees.

COVID-19 has had a large impact on the MENA region as well as on the global economy. The pandemic has hit all industries in different ways, altering supply and demand. Most countries in this region such as the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan have imposed full or partial curfews and lockdowns in order to slow and control the spread of the virus, causing a reduced supply of scrap. Suppliers are either not keen to leave their homes or are unable to get any scrap material owing to the lockdowns and the sharp drop in metals prices. With borders closed, it has been difficult to import materials from neighbouring countries.

These lockdowns, along with the sharp decline in oil prices, have negatively affected the infrastructure and real estate sectors, which are the largest sources of scrap metal supply in the region.

China and India are known to be the MENA region’s biggest buyers. But with both countries implementing lockdowns, it has been very difficult to get material exported. This also led to movements of scrap metals either slowing down or being diverted to other countries that were able to import them. Luckily, both countries are now starting to operate with greater normality.

For a quicker market recovery, let us all abide by the advice and instructions of the government and health sector. On the brighter side, people are spending more time with their families and loved ones, putting their spare time to good use.

Hopefully, the world will be through this pandemic very soon, so let’s do so with the least damage possible.

Stay safe.

Nasser Al Sharif  
Sharif Metals International, United Arab Emirates
Simple solution to border-line decision

The past couple of months have been crazy! The Coronavirus has really messed things up. For me personally, it has been really weird. In March, I started working at Inter Metals GmbH. Most of you will probably know the company, a big scrap yard operator/non-ferrous exporter based in Germany, close to the Dutch border. Two weeks later, all kinds of measures were put in place across Europe and the rest of the world, for that matter. Borders were closed and lockdowns imposed. Living in the Netherlands but working in Germany and having a car with German licence plates, how was I going to get from my home to Inter Metals in Germany and back again (when not working from home)? Thankfully, a simple letter and a big sign on my windshield saying “Pendler” (or “Commuter” in English) did the trick and I have had no problem crossing the border.

We’ve noticed quite a drop in business worldwide, but lately we have been seeing some improvement. China appears to be buying again and, at the time of writing, we are seeing more and more relaxation of lockdown measures around the world. Let’s hope we can return to “normal” very soon and we will see each other at BIR Istanbul in October!

Sandra Vrielink
Inter Metals GmbH, Germany

Desperate times call for desperate measures. As most of us currently can’t enjoy the pleasure of having drinks with our friends in real life, we need to come up with some alternatives in order to have some fun. One of our Young Traders sent us this picture of an “online” beer pong game with his friends. A great idea if you ask us!
What a Great Time we had: Farewell from former Committee Members.

Wonderful memories bring a smile to my face

For the first Young Trader event I joined, we have to go back to Warsaw 2013. It was a really fascinating time, because I was new to the industry, had no network and had very little knowledge of the recycling industry. At this first event, I managed to meet a bunch of people in a really short period of time. Many of them were new to the business, so we could understand each other’s situation perfectly. Our initial conversations were not necessarily business-related but were more about sharing our thoughts and exploits. After a few years, many of the people I met that night became the next generation of recyclers.

Following this first experience at the Warsaw Convention, I wanted to be more involved and with the help of some people such as Paul, Graeme and Jose, I was able to join the Young Traders board and become an active part of it. I felt really welcomed by the whole group; I could share ideas about arranging events and could be a part of the various committees that BIR organizes. All of this helped me to build friendships, boost my network and also to develop a better understanding of the recycling industry and the different aspects of the BIR events.

Since then, I have been to all the BIR events. These were wonderful occasions and looking back on them brings a smile to my face. In Prague, for example, where we had a great party; and in Barcelona and Singapore where we got to see famous places. The next day was often difficult but, in the end, we established new business, a better network and most importantly friendships.

I am a little sad to leave because it means I am not young anymore! However, I have to give the stage to the new generation and I hope you will carry on with such unique events. Thanks again to the BIR team for organizing these occasions and to all the members of the Young Traders Committee for all the exchanges we have had over the years. Thanks too to former Chairwomen Alexandra and Sandra for all your work, and I wish all the best to Niels as the new Chairman.

I hope to see you all at the next BIR event.

Romain Wagner
Jean Goldschmidt International SA, Belgium

Success built on great friendships

Well, what can I say about being part of the Young Traders Group?

From my first BIR Convention 10 years ago and to joining the Young Traders Group in 2015, it has been a pleasure meeting such great talent and the future of the industry. What I will take from my experience is a group of friends with whom I will speak for a long time to come. Work is the key to success, but the foundations of success are built on great friendships. The Young Traders Group gives you that platform to succeed, to build self-confidence and to develop as a trader.

I leave the group with great memories and look forward to catching up with everyone again soon.

Richard Lewis
Avon Metals Ltd, United Kingdom
YTG members have their say.

Below is a list showing Young Traders Group members’ representation within the BIR’s Advisory Council and all the way through the various Divisions and Committees.

Advisory Council
The Advisory Council is the forum in which the Presidents of the Special Committees present their reports to the Executive Committee. BIR Past Presidents and the BIR Director General also participate in these meetings.

Niels Keyaert, Metallo Belgium N.V., Chairman, Young Traders Group

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**Ferrous Division**
Tarek Al-Sharif  
Sharif Metals Int’L LLC,  
United Arab Emirates

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**Non-Ferrous Metals Division**
Martina Franceschi  
Fonderie Pandolfo SPA, Italy  
&  
Jose-Martin Neumann  
TSR Recycling, Germany

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**Paper Division**
Tarek Al-Sharif  
Sharif Metals Int’L LLC,  
United Arab Emirates

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**Textiles Division**
Open position

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**Stainless Steel & Special Alloys Committee**
Open position

**Plastics Committee**
Andrei Mihai Sofian  
Rematholding Co. S.R.L.,  
Romania

**Convention Committee**
Niels Keyaert  
Metallo Belgium N.V.,  
Belgium

**Communications Committee**
Josh Brough  
JBMI Group Ltd,  
United Kingdom

**International Trade Council (ITC)**
Lorenz Dahmen  
Metallhandelsgesellschaft,  
Germany

**Membership Committee**
Open position

**Shredder Committee**
Hashem Al-Sharif  
Metals Bank Co. Ltd,  
Jordan

**E-Scrap Committee**
Alexandre Tornberg  
Torec AB,  
Sweden

**Latin America Committee (LAC)**
Jose-Martin Neumann  
TSR Recycling,  
Germany

**International Environment Council (IEC)**
Niels Keyaert  
Metallo Belgium N.V.,  
Belgium

**Tyres & Rubber Committee**
Open position
Forged Together.
A special thanks to our committee members below for helping grow, mentor and develop the BIR Young Traders Group.

Niels Keyaert  
Metallo Belgium N.V  
Chairman, Young Traders Group, Representative to the Advisory Council, Convention Committee & International Environment Council

Josh Brough  
JBMI Group Ltd, United Kingdom  
Vice-Chairman, Young Traders Group, Representative to the Communications Committee

Jose-Martin Neumann  
TSR Recycling, Germany  
Representative to the Non-Ferrous Metals Division & Latin America Committee

Tarek Al Sharif  
Sharif Metals International, United Arab Emirates  
Representative to the Ferrous Division & the Paper Division

Hashem Al-Sharif  
Metals Bank Co. Ltd, Jordan  
Representative to the Shredder Committee

Andrei Mihai Sofian  
Rematholding Co. S.R.L., Romania  
Representative to the Plastics Committee

Rami Shahrour  
Sharmetal Trading Co. S.A.R.L., Lebanon  
Committee Member

Jose-Martin Neumann  
TSR Recycling, Germany  
Representative to the Non-Ferrous Metals Division & Latin America Committee

Alexandre Torneberg  
Torec AB, Sweden  
Representative to the E-Scrap Committee

Nasser Al Sharif  
Sharif Metals International, United Arab Emirates  
Committee Member

Lorenz Dahmen  
Metalhandelgesellschaft, Germany  
Representative to the International Trade Council

Abhijay Goenka  
Steelbro International Co. Inc., USA  
Committee Member

PAST CHAIRMEN/-WOMEN OF THE YTG

Sandra Vrielink  
Inter Metals GmbH, Germany  
Chairwoman, Young Traders Group  
February 2018 – May 2020

Alexandra Weibel-Natan  
Pan American Zinc Lic, USA  
August 2016 – January 2018

Graeme Cameron  
Sims Metal Management Asia Ltd, China  
June 2014 – July 2016

Paul Coyte  
Hayes Metals, New Zealand - Dec 2009 – May 2014

Caroline Craenhals  
Belgian Scrap Terminal, Belgium - Oct 2005 – Dec 2009

Boris Bronneberg  
SMP, Germany - May 2004 – Oct 2005

Joen Jensen  
Scandscrap, Sweden - May 2002- May 2004

HONORARY MEMBERS

Paul Coyte  
Hayes Metals, New Zealand

Mark Sellier  
Global Metals Network Limited, Hong Kong, China
Established in 2001, the BIR Young Traders Group has been fostering the industry leaders of tomorrow alongside the development of a worldwide community of fellow industry peers.

The Young Traders Group was created by BIR so that young executives (those aged 35 years and under) could start to become more involved in the activities of the organisation.

The first meeting of what was then called the Young Executives Committee took place in London in 1995 under the chairmanship of Mitchell Padnos of Louis Padnos Iron & Metal (USA). In 2001, it changed its name to the Young Traders Club and was given fresh impetus with the broadening of its framework to include regular Young Trader networking evenings during BIR conventions. These dinners gave younger delegates the possibility to get to know each other and network in a more relaxed setting.

In recent years, the YTG has been developing programmes and activities, and is represented on the board of each commodity division. It is a platform for young traders to become part of the wider BIR organisation and become involved in its decision-making.

The YTG continues to grow and look towards the future, providing opportunities for all those interested in becoming involved.
Online Commodity Sessions: Latest insights from lead experts in the recycling industry at the BIR Global eForum!

Experts from BIR Commodity Divisions and Committees, as well as invited guest speakers talk about how the current crisis is affecting our businesses and what the prospects are for the months to come.

View the schedule of meetings and register for free here: www.bir.org/conventions/upcoming-conventions/bir-global-eforum

BIR Global eForum
2 - 29 June 2020

FREE REGISTRATION
For all BIR members & non-members from the global recycling industry
Get in touch.

If you have any questions or would like further information on the Young Traders Group, BIR, membership or upcoming events and conferences we’d love to hear from you.

Visit www.bir.org, email bir@bir.org or call +32 2 627 57 70

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