

“The steel industry needs scrap with improved quality”, says Arcelor Mittal

Steel giant supports narrow definition of recycling

(EU) – If ferrous scrap is to be recognized as a secondary raw material and recycling is to be sustainable, then the quality of shredder scrap must be improved, said Norbert Prüm of Arcelor Mittal in March at the International Automobile Recycling Congress in Amsterdam. Mr Prüm also warned that steel scrap may be subjected to a “double regulatory framework” if it becomes a secondary raw material under the end-of-waste mechanism being discussed in the revision of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) and is not exempted from the scope of the European chemicals regulation (REACH).

Arcelor Mittal, which describes itself as “the world’s number one steel company”, is reportedly planning to produce 120m tonnes of steel in 2007, using 46m tonnes of steel scrap input. The company is also a significant purchaser of shredder (E40) scrap, but according to Mr Prüm, this grade of scrap has two major drawbacks: the amount of tramp substances and varying quality.

He stated that Arcelor’s analyses had shown the average copper content of its deliveries over two years was above the E40 upper limit of 0.25 per cent. The E40 copper content was 0.35 per cent in 2004 and 0.36 per cent in 2005, according to Mr Prüm’s presentation. He pointed out that a further increase in copper concentration would rule out automotive applications for steel. He attributed the high copper content

to “insufficient sorting” and stated that this could “jeopardize the future recovery of steel and the recycling business as a whole”. Mr Prüm added that “technologies to achieve better quality should be used and further developed”.

There should be international or European quality criteria to classify steel scrap as a secondary raw material, Mr Prüm asserted, stating: “There is no place for national initiatives”. If steel scrap ceases to be a waste according to the planned end-of-waste mechanism in the revised WFD, it could be subjected to the REACH registration procedure, with the responsibility for this registration resting with the “scrap producer”, Mr Prüm explained. He also pointed out that the evaluation of the risks (exposure scenarios) linked to the waste treatment and recovery operations would “require the collaboration of the recovery industry”.

When asked why his company did not support a wider definition of recycling in the WFD that included the use of plastics as a reducing agent in blast furnaces although Arcelor Mittal used this process, Mr Prüm replied that this was “substitution” and that his company considers “recycling” to be solely materials recycling. “Recycling for us is steel to steel or aluminium to aluminium”, he stated.

Contact: Arcelor Mittal, 19 avenue de la Liberté, 2930 Luxembourg, Tel. +352 4792-1, Fax +352 4792 2675, www.arcelor.com. □