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## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Brussels, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008

### **European recycling federations object to inaccurate statements on illegal waste shipments out of the EU**

The European recycling federations EFR (ferrous metals), EUROMETREC (non-ferrous metals) and ERPA (paper) denounce inaccurate statements that report high percentages of illegal waste shipments out of the EU. These statistics are likely to mislead recycling companies, consumers (steelworks, smelters, paper mills) and legislators alike.

Over the past years, certain lobby organisations have been reporting very high percentages of illegal shipments of waste out of the EU. In late 2007 for example, several EU trade organisations claimed that “51% of all shipments are illegal and of the remaining, 43% have irregularities”. However, such a presentation of these statistics is misleading.

It would indeed be acceptable to say that “less than 0.5% of EU waste shipments have been found to be illegal”, which may indicate a less than 1-in-20 chance of detection of an illegal shipment, and it would also be acceptable to state that “some 51% of EU waste shipments pre-selected as potentially illegal were confirmed as illegal shipments”. It is important to say that illegal transports of waste are not found randomly, but that normally a pre-selection amongst all waste shipments is carried out, on which subsequently physical inspections are being conducted. Therefore it is incorrect to reason that +/-50% of any batch of waste shipments will be illegal. .../...

Sadly, few people care to challenge the misuse of statistics, but such distortions are likely to upset business plans and result in unsubstantiated legislative proposals. A headline in a recycling magazine from December 2005 claimed that “half of EU waste exports are found to be illegal”, encouraging in particular some copper and aluminium recyclers to still talk in such spectacular and misleading terms. And even the EU Commission states in COM (2007) 707 final that “in joint inspections carried out in 30 EU ports by 13 Member States simultaneously in the framework of IMPEL\* around 50% of the waste shipments were found to be illegal.” Such a statement, in failing to explain the context of pre-selection, misleads the reader.

Press releases and statements on illegal waste shipments that can be relied upon are by IMPEL-TFS\*\*.

The European federations EFR, EUROMETREC and ERPA support the strengthening of the work done by IMPEL-TFS in strengthening the waste shipment legislation enforcement, in particular with regard to inspections. However, they strongly object to the proliferation and misuse of distorted statistics that suggest a more fundamental problem with the regulation.

\*The European Union Network for the **Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL)** is an informal Network of the environmental authorities of the Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the European Union and Norway. The network is commonly known as the IMPEL Network. The European Commission is also a member of IMPEL and shares the chairmanship of meetings.

\*\* IMPEL-TFS is a network of representatives from enforcement authorities of the Member States and some other European countries dealing with matters on Transfrontier Shipments of Waste. It is also a cluster of projects within IMPEL. The IMPEL-TFS network was set up in 1992 in order to harmonize the enforcement of Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006 on shipments of waste.

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**EFR** is the European Ferrous Recovery and Recycling Federation. Its members are national associations and federations in the EU Member States representing the interests of commercial firms that are primarily involved in the collection, trade, processing and recycling of ferrous scrap. In the E.U. member states, more than a thousand large companies and SMEs are represented through EFR. [www.efr2.org](http://www.efr2.org)

**EUROMETREC** is the European Metal Trade and Recycling Federation. Its members are national federations in the EU Member States representing the interests of commercial firms that are primarily involved in the collection, trade, processing and recycling of non-ferrous metal scrap. In the E.U. member states, more than a thousand large companies and SMEs are represented through EUROMETREC. [www.eurometrec.org](http://www.eurometrec.org)

**ERPA** is the European Recovered Paper Association. Its members are the national recovered paper federations of the different European Union countries. [www.erpainfo](http://www.erpainfo)

All three federations are daughter federations of the Bureau of International Recycling aisbl.

**For further information please contact: Ross Bartley, Environmental and Technical Director, EFR/EUROMETREC/ERPA c/o BIR, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 24, 1050 Brussels, Belgium – Tel: +32 2 627 57 70, e-mail: [bir@bir.org](mailto:bir@bir.org)**