



Media release

23rd International Congress for Battery Recycling ICBR 2018

Birwil, August 30, 2018: The program is set, the Congress Guide is printed and the final preparations are in full swing: this year's International Congress for Battery Recycling ICBR 2018 is due to start in less than four weeks and we hope you have already made all the preparations for your participation. We look forward to welcoming you in Berlin!

Again this year we have put together an interesting and highly diverse program for delegates. Our focus will be on the discussion about new technological and economic requirements for battery recyclers. Besides that, the planned revision of the EU Battery Directive in 2020 will also be on the agenda. And last but not least, panel discussions will also take place at the end of the first and second days of the congress.

One of the panel members will be Dr.Ir Alain Vassart, General Secretary of the European Battery Recycling Association EBRA. He has already given us some advance insights into how he assesses the current market situation:

Dr.Ir. Vassart, the EU Commission plans to present a proposal for revising the EU Battery Directive in 2020. If you had three wishes, what would you like to see done?

My first wish would be to improve collection, especially for secondary rechargeable batteries. Secondly, I would like to see a pragmatic rule for the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) when EV batteries have a second life – chiefly on the financial side. My third wish would be a truly level playing field for sorting and recycling.

How would you describe the current economic conditions for battery recycling?

Well, my overall view today is that existing recycling capacity exceeds the quantity collected, resulting in fierce competition among battery recyclers. The profitability margin is therefore under pressure.

How is the evolution of the battery market impacting the collection of waste batteries?

In general, battery market developments have led to a considerable boom in li-ion batteries. However, these quantities are either not being sufficiently collected for portable batteries or they have not yet reached the end-of-life phase for electric vehicles. The booming demand for li-ion batteries has therefore not yet led to a significant increase in the volume of used batteries recycled. For example, the specific collection rate for consumer and portable li-ion batteries is significantly below the target rate of 45% required by the Battery Directive, partly due to the fact that many rechargeable batteries are built into devices. Their collection depends on the return rate of these devices and the subsequent separation of these batteries. As far as the batteries of electric cars are concerned, they are mostly still in use on the road and will only be available for recycling in a few years' time. So today we can only speak of vague forecasts, which can sometimes be contradictory.

What other challenges do you see for battery recyclers?

On the one hand, we need to make sure that we recycle enough batteries within Europe to generate sufficient raw materials to produce new batteries for the same market. This strategy would reduce our dependence on non-EU sources. On the other hand, if requirements regarding recycling efficiency are modified, it will involve a certain degree of investment and operational costs as well as the need for a transition period. It also depends on which materials batteries will be made of in the future.

At this year's ICBR 2018 in Berlin, a panel discussion will be held on the topic "Battery Directive Review: Portable Batteries". Which topics are likely to be addressed there?

The topics for the panel discussion are currently still being prepared. However, I'm sure it's going to be about how specific collection rates for secondary consumer batteries can be improved. EBRA is open to reviewing the calculation method for the collection rate of secondary consumer batteries. The net result needs to be a higher quantity of batteries collected for recycling than previously. Further topics are likely to focus on recycling efficiency and how to achieve more clarity regarding the definition of when an output fraction from the recycling process is considered as fully recovered. And finally, it will also be about how to clarify the EPR rules across all actors in the end-of-life management of batteries, included the new ones involved in the second life (a new commercial activity). A second life extends the service life of batteries, thereby contributing to the circular economy. However, we need to ensure that enough money is made available to recycle these batteries.

If you want to learn more about the challenges of battery recycling, come and meet us at the ICBR 2018 in Berlin. Don't miss this opportunity to exchange news, views and ideas with experts from all areas of the battery recycling sector. We look forward to welcoming you at this year's industry meeting. For all the details on the program and how to register, just go to: <https://www.icm.ch/icbr-2018>.

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About ICM

ICM AG is an international leader in the organisation of conferences that specialise in the recycling of vehicles, electronics and batteries. These waste streams have been among the world's fastest-growing raw materials markets for many years.

ICM is a Swiss company which has organised conferences in Europe, North America and Asia since the year 2000. The company was founded by Jeanette Duttlinger. Her team consists of 15 employees who speak German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese and Japanese.