



EU Policy Update 5th December 2008

Lancashire Brussels Office

For an explanation of European jargon visit: [the EU's Eurojargon Guide](#),
For explanations of technical and legal terms see: [the EU's Technical Glossary](#)

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Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of the Lancashire Brussels Office EU Policy Update, this edition covers the MEP's debate on the climate change and energy package with the European Council and European Commission in light of the upcoming vote during the final plenary session of 2008 on December 17 in Strasbourg.

Additionally, this edition covers the Council of Ministers adoption of a Directive establishing a new framework for waste management in the EU in order to encourage the re-use and recycling of waste and simplifying current legislation.

Other articles include the European Commission's adoption of three proposals to amend existing legislative instruments of the Common European Asylum System.

In consumer protection news, this edition covers new rules on switching bank accounts and new legislative proposals on bus and maritime passengers' rights.

The last Policy Update of 2008 is due out on the 18th December; if you have any queries before then please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Anthony Monks
Assistant European Liaison Officer
10th December 2008



Review & Outlook

Review

This week saw MEPs debate the three key topics ahead of the European Council of the 11 and 12 December, namely the climate change and energy package, which is covered in this edition's [EU General](#) section, also the response to the economic crisis and progress on the Lisbon Strategy for jobs and growth.

Outlook

The week ahead sees the second meeting of the European Council in Brussels under the French Presidency, scheduled for 11 and 12 December. The meeting will see French ministers debating with the MEPs about both the work and achievements of the Council over the last six months.

Additionally, the week ahead sees MEPs preparing for the 15-18 December plenary session in Strasbourg. The agenda includes a debate with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, votes on the climate change package in addition to the working time directive. Furthermore, the debate is set to include the 2009 EU Budget and measures to ensure those committing cross-border driving offences do not escape fines.

Finally, next week sees a delegation of MEPs travel to Poznan (Poland) for the UN climate change conference, as negotiations continue on the EU's package of measures aimed at reducing CO2 emissions. Furthermore, next week sees a number of French ministers, including Europe Minister Jean-Pierre Jouyet, set to take part in meetings of EP committees as the French Presidency of the European Council draws to a close.

Funding Opportunities and Consultations

Consultation: A debate on the management of bio-waste in the EU

The European Commission has presented a green paper on the management of bio-waste in the European Union. The green paper explores the options and opportunities in bio-waste management and will contribute to the assessment of the needs for legislative action.

Bio-waste consists of biodegradable garden, kitchen and food waste and accounts for one third of municipal waste.

The main elements of the Green Paper

The Green Paper includes an overview of the current bio-waste management practices in the EU and examines both the benefits and drawbacks of the management methods used.

Additionally, the Green Paper looks at the impact of existing regulatory measures and considers the need for new legislation.

The deadline for submissions is the **15th March 2009**.



To participate in the consultation and for additional details, please visit:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/compost/index.htm>

Partner Searches

If you would like to circulate your own partner search, please [contact us](#)

Secondary schools sought for projects to develop both teachers and students

A Secondary School in the municipality of Cehegin (Region of Murcia) in Spain is working on a project aimed at developing the teaching-learning process by enhancing different strategies and techniques that promotes students' self-learning and confidence.

They are looking for other partner Secondary schools from different EU Member States (a minimum of 3 partners from 3 different countries). The maximum duration of the project will be 3 years.

The grant will be €150.000 per year, although the maximum contribution for the project will be €300.000, with a co-financing of the 75% by the European Commission of the total eligible costs.

The deadline to participate in the call for proposal is the 27th February 2009.

For further information and to participate please contact Gustavo López Cutillas on:
Gustavo.lopez@info.carm.es

Partner Search for the Interreg IV C Program

The Polish region of Opolskie is looking for partners for its project "Young leaders in the labour market contributing to further regional development".

The project aims to develop a network of regional actors (bodies responsible for education and interregional cooperation, universities, public authorities and job centres) which will develop tools and methods for supporting young people in the challenging labour market.

The Opolskie region which is the regional authority responsible for education policy, regional policy, economy and infrastructure is looking for local and regional partners, public authorities, schools and vocational training centres working in the field of entrepreneurship promotion among young people.

The deadline for expressing an interest is December 20 and the deadline for applications is the end of January 2009.

For further information, please contact:

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Conferences

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EU General

MEPS debate the Climate change and energy package recommendations ahead of key vote

MEPS met to debate the climate change and energy package with the Council and European Commission.

According to the European Parliament, most political group speakers underlined the urgency of reaching an early deal on 17 December in Strasbourg, stating that climate change was the 'greatest challenge of our times'.

The main recommendations from the session were:

- A 25-40% cut in greenhouse gases by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050, compared with 1990 levels.
- A binding target of a 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020 with specific interim targets.
- A European Climate Fund.
- Incentives for everyone to cut emissions in an affordable way.

Source, European Parliament

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Agriculture and Rural Affairs

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Education and Culture

New European Union prize for literature

The European Commission is launching a European Union prize for contemporary literature.

The aim of the prize is to showcase the creativity and diversity of Europe's contemporary literature, promote and discover emerging talents, promote the circulation of literature within Europe and to encourage greater interest in non-national literary works.

The first edition of the prize will be awarded in autumn 2009 and will be financed through the Culture Programme of the European Union which supports transnational cultural cooperation projects.

For further information on the prize, please see the below links:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc627_en.htm

Source, European Commission

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International Cooperation in higher education: €60 million given to university cooperation projects

The European Commission has given its approval to for 63 university cooperation and 13 other projects, under a €60 million new phase of the Tempus programme.

The Tempus programme currently operates in 28 countries and supports the modernisation of higher education and aims to foster cooperation between countries outside the EU with its projects.

Tempus projects involve development in such areas as new curricula and the modernisation of teaching methods, based on multilateral partnerships between higher education institutions from the EU and partner countries.

The new fourth phase of the Tempus programme will involve 600 universities from partner countries and 300 from the EU.

For additional information on the selected projects and Tempus in general, please visit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/tempus>

Source, European Commission

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e-Europe and Information Society

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Employment and Social Affairs

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Enterprise

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Environment

The Commission has proposed measures to boost energy efficiency and renewable energy in low-income households

The European Commission has adopted a proposal which will for the first time enable all Member States and regions in the European Union to invest in energy-efficient and renewable energy measures in housing, with the support of European Cohesion Policy funding.

This proposal formed part of the European Economic Recovery Plan and will be targeted at low-income households, which is set to enable the European Union to co-finance national, regional or local authority schemes to install double glazing, wall insulation and solar panels in housing.

The current situation

Current legislation on the EU Structural Funds gives new Member States only a limited right to use support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for housing and can only be used for common parts of a building in deprived urban areas.

The new proposal would allow the EU-27 to benefit from ERDF support for energy efficiency and renewable energy investment in low-income housing.

More information on regional policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Source, European Commission

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EU Member States approve world-wide rules for the labelling of chemicals

The European Commission has welcomed an agreement by Member States to align EU legislation on the classification, labelling and packaging of both chemical substances and mixtures to the United Nations Globally Harmonised System (GHS) which was approved by the European Parliament on the 3rd of September 2008.

The regulation will require companies to classify, label and appropriately package their hazardous chemicals before placing them on the market.

Additionally, the adoption of an internationally agreed classification criteria is expected to help to facilitate trade and work towards protecting workers, consumers and the environment from the potential hazardous effects of chemicals.

The regulation will replace the current rules of the classification, labelling and packaging of substances) Directive (67/548/EEC) and mixtures (Directive 1999/45/EC). The deadline for substance classification according to the new rules will be 1 December 2010 and for mixtures 1 June 2015.

For further information, please see the below links:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals.ghs/index_en.htm

Source, European Commission

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The European Commission has proposed a revision of two environmental directives

The European Commission has proposed revised laws on the collection and recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and on the restriction of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. The WEEE¹ and RoHS² directives have been in force since 2004.

The revised proposals surround setting higher, but more flexible, targets on the collection and recycling of electrical and electronic equipment.

The main objective of the proposed directives

The objective of the new proposed directives is to work towards the development of a better regulatory environment, which would be user-friendly and enforceable, thus clarifying the scope and definitions of the directives.

Additionally, the proposed directives would aim to improve the compatibility of the current directives with other EU legislation such as the Waste Framework Directive. Other potential

¹ Directive 2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment

² Directive 2002/95/EC on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment



benefits foreseen in the proposed directives include a more streamlined administrative process and enhanced implementation and enforcement of the laws.

Background

EU legislation to restrict the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment and to promote the collection and recycling of such equipment has been in force since August 2004 and according to the European Commission has proved difficult to implement and enforce by both market actors and public authorities.

The European Commission also notes that only one third of electrical and electronic waste is reported to have been treated in line with the legislation, with the other two thirds being sent to landfill or potentially going to sub-standard treatment sites in or outside the European Union.

More information: European Commission webpage on electrical and electronic equipment:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/weee/index_en.htm

Source, European Commission
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Waste management in the EU

The European Council has adopted a Directive establishing a new framework for waste management in the EU in order to encourage the re-use and recycling of waste and simplifying current legislation.

Through the promotion of the use of waste as a secondary resource, the new legislation aims to reduce reliance on landfills and so reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by landfills.

New waste laws will have to take effect on 12 December 2010, after national governments reached agreement in the EU Council of Ministers.

The new law, which Member States will have two years to transpose, sets out recycling targets of 50% by 2020.

Member States will therefore have to draw up and implement waste prevention programmes, and the European Commission will report regularly on progress achieved in this area.

For further information, please [contact us](#).

Source, European Commission
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Air quality: New proposals to limit harmful vapour emissions from service stations

The European Commission has proposed legislation to ensure that harmful petrol vapour which escapes during the refuelling of cars at service stations is captured and recycled.

The proposed legislation would require petrol pumps in many service stations across the EU to be fitted with equipment that can recover 85% or more of the vapour.

The proposal will now go to the European Council and European Parliament for their consideration under the co-decision procedure.

The legislation in more detail

The proposed directive will require 'Stage II' petrol vapour recovery (PVR) technologies to be fitted to any new or refurbished petrol pumps, at all service stations with an annual petrol throughput greater than 500 cubic metres per year.

Additionally, the larger existing petrol stations with a throughput greater than 3000 cubic metres per year will have to implement 'Stage II' PVR by 2020. All other existing petrol stations with a throughput of less than 500 cubic metres will also have to install the equipment.

How does Stage II PVR work?

Inside a car's petrol tank, petrol vapour exists above the liquid petrol and when the car is refuelled, the vapour is displaced, escaping into the atmosphere.

'Stage II' PVR captures this escaping vapour through the creation of a vacuum to suck the vapour through the dispensing hose or nozzle, either into the petrol station's underground storage tank or directly back into the fuel pump.

For further information on the proposal, please visit the link below:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/transport/petrol.htm>

Source, European Commission

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Health and Consumer Protection

Consumer Protection: The European Commission welcomes new rules on switching bank accounts

The European Commission has welcomed the European Banking Industry Committee's (EBIC) adoption of a set of 'Common Principles for bank account switching', which will make it easier for consumers to switch their current account from one bank to another within their own member state.

The new rules have been developed in response to an invitation from the European Commission as part of the 'Single Market for 21st Century Europe' package.

Some of the main features of the Common Principles for Bank Account Switching include:

- Banks will provide consumers with a switching guide, which will explain what steps need to be taken during the switching process.
- Clear deadlines for the old and new bank.
- Compliance with the principles will be monitored by the national banking associations.
- The EBIC will undertake a review process one year after the entry into force of the principles at national level and will regularly inform the European Commission and consumer associations about their operation.

The principles will apply in each member state as from the 1st of November 2009 and can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/mobility/baeg_eg.htm

Source, European Commission

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European Commission steps up pressure on airlines to ensure websites selling air tickets fully comply with EU law

In a joint letter to airline representatives, EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva and Vice-President of the European Union and EU Transport Commissioner, Antonio Tajani, stepped up pressure on all airline companies who sell air tickets online to meet their legal obligation to fully comply with all the requirements of EU law.

The joint letter included a 30 point checklist of consumer rights which all web pages selling air tickets must respect. Additionally, the letter requests that members of the airline associations should amend all websites to ensure they fully comply with the listed obligations.

Background

The current situation

There are over 700 million air tickets sold in the European Union each year, with many of them being bought electronically. However, the European Commission has concerns that the consumer rights for those buying air tickets online are not as secure as they could be, as the European Commission receives many complaints about websites that sell air tickets.



This is apparent from the Airline Sweep investigation in 2007 ([MEMO/08/287](#)) when one in three websites surveyed had to be followed up with enforcement action.

Two new pieces of legislation

Two new pieces of European legislation aimed at improving air passengers' rights have come into force recently: The directive on unfair commercial practices and the air services regulation. The two pieces of legislations work toward creating a clear and straight forward legal framework for business operators selling air tickets.

For further information on the enforcement action, please see the below link:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweep/index_en.htm

Source, European Commission

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Justice and Home Affairs

The European Commission proposes to modify the Common European Asylum System

The European Commission has adopted three proposals to amend three of the existing legislative instruments of the Common European Asylum System:

The proposal on reception conditions for-asylum seekers aims to:

- Ensure that detention is only used in exceptional circumstances.
- Provide legal safeguards in order to ensure that detention is not arbitrary and guarantees that children are not to be detained unless it is in their own interest.
- Facilitate access to the labour market and ensure that further restrictions applied by member states do not hinder actual access to employment.

The proposals to Dublin regulation which determines a Member States' responsibility for an asylum application, aims to:

- Ensure that asylum-seekers are not sent to member states who cannot offer them an adequate standard of protection, particularly in terms of reception conditions and access to the asylum procedure.
- Clarify the circumstances and procedures for applying certain rules, such as those allowing Member States to take responsibility for an asylum-seeker for humanitarian and compassionate reasons.
- Better define the rules applicable to unaccompanied minors in order to protect their best interests



The proposals to the Eurodac Regulation, a database containing the fingerprints of asylum seekers, which supports the operation of the Dublin Regulation, aims to:

- Establish rules to ensure prompt transmission of fingerprints to the Central Unit of EURODAC in order to ensure the Member State responsible under the Dublin Regulation for examining the application is correctly identified.
- Establish technical rules to ensure that Member States delete data which is no longer necessary for the purpose for which it was collected and to work towards ensuring the European Commission can better monitor Member State adherence to the data protection principles.
- Clarify the provisions ensuring effective monitoring by the European Commission and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) of access to data in EURODAC by national authorities.

These amendments form part of the first concrete proposals presented by the European Commission to implement the Policy Plan on Asylum and the Pact on Immigration and Asylum.

For a more detailed summary of the main amendments, please [contact us](#).

Source, European Commission

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Regional Policy

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Research

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Transport

New proposed rights for bus and maritime passengers

The European Commission has adopted two legislative proposals establishing sets of rights for passengers using bus and maritime services on both domestic and international routes.

The adoption of the two legislative proposals includes:

- Minimum rules on the provision of information for passengers before their journey.
- Assistance and compensation in the event of interruptions of journeys.
- Measures in the event of delays.
- Specific assistance for persons with reduced mobility.

The two adopted proposals cover four main areas:

- Rights of persons with reduced mobility
- Compensation and assistance to passenger when their journey is interrupted.
- Liability for death and injury of passengers.
- Treatment of complaints and means of redress.

For further information, please visit the link below:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air_portal/passenger_rights/index_en.htm

Source, European Commission

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Diary

- 24 November Conference with Danuta Hübner, Regional Policy Commissioner, to discuss the European Commission's proposals on the future of European Regional Policy. For further information, please contact: Tanja.siggs@lancashire-brussels.org
- 25 – 26 Nov Forum on Intercultural Dialogue at the Heart of Europe's Regions and Cities Committee of the Regions: For further information, please contact; Jayesh.patel@lancashire-brussels.org
- 27 Nov Breakfast Briefing "Energy policy: Regional answers to climate change" AER: For further information, please contact; Jayesh.patel@lancashire-brussels.org
- 28 November Environment UKBO (UK Brussels Office Network). Meeting with the European Commission to hear about the White Paper on adapting to climate change. For further information, please contact: Tanja.siggs@lancashire-brussels.org
- 3 Dec Euro Access Final Workshop – Towards an Accessible European Transport Network Euro Access: for further information, please contact; Jayesh.patel@lancashire-brussels.org

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