

In touch with EU



News from the Association

Welcome to the first issue of our monthly newsletter.

Available to EIA members by e-mail and on our website, this new publication aims to let you know what's going on both in the Association and in the wider world of EU information.

Our intention is to produce four to six sides of news and views each month, although the flexible, pdf-only format allows us to vary the length and content according to the material available.

It is of course possible to print this newsletter, but note that it is not intended to be printed, as the embedded URLs will be lost!

Training

July's meeting of the EIA Committee agreed that, despite the difficult economic situation, the Association should continue to offer face-to-face training courses.

We will therefore be organising a basic 'How to' course during the first half of 2011, and a more advanced course on case law later next year. Given the difficulty of attracting sufficient delegates to courses in the regions, both events will be held in London. Details will be circulated once dates, venues and costs are known.

New Resource Centre

July's Committee meeting also confirmed the end of September as the target for stocking our new Moodle-based

Resource Centre, which we intend to turn into a single source of materials on EU information.

Work is therefore underway to migrate our existing publications to the new site and to add new materials.

Amongst the latter will be a guide to tracing an EU act from its origins as a Council request to the Commission, through the COMdoc and discussion phases, to publication in the Official Journal.

With explanatory text and screenshots, it will provide a useful tool for anyone needing to understand how the process works and where to find relevant information.

Once stocked, the Moodle site will be available via the EIA Members' Area on our current website.

2011 Conference

Next year's Conference will be held on Monday 14 March at the British Library. We're still finalising the programme and will announce details as soon as we're able to.

Feedback

Please send comments, criticisms etc about the newsletter to me at eric@eia.org.uk.

Eric Davies
EIA Coordinator

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It's official:

EU documents , publications and sources

New ABC

The guide 'The ABC of Community law', originally published as part of the series 'European Documentation' has been reincarnated as 'The ABC of European Union law'. Available in two versions - printed (131 pages) and pdf (140 pages) - the book is 'intended for people with no specialist legal knowledge who wish to understand the implications of European law for their daily lives.' The main sections are: 'From Paris to Lisbon, via Rome, Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice', 'Fundamental values of the European Union', 'The 'Constitution' of the European Union', 'The legal order of the EU', and 'The position of Union law in relation to the legal order as a whole'. See: [ABC page](#).

Financial bodies

The European Parliament, European Commission and Council have agreed to establish a European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) and three European Supervision Authorities (ESAs), covering banks, insurance and pensions companies, and securities and markets. See: Press Release [20100902STO80930](#).

Farming in the regions

'A regional picture of farming in Europe - what, where and how much?', issued by Eurostat as Statistics in Focus 44/2010, highlights the wide variety of farming in the EU. See: [Publication page](#).

JHA websites

1 July 2010 saw the creation of two separate Commission DGs from DG Justice, Freedom and Security. The newly-created DG for Home Affairs and DG for Justice now have their own websites. See [DG Home Affairs](#) and [DG Justice](#).

Environment review

The Commission's 2009 Environment Policy Review looks at EU policy developments under the priorities of the 6th Environment Action Programme: climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, and natural resources and waste. The Review also summarises policy initiatives in the Member States. It is issued as SEC (2010) 975, parts 1-3. See: [Environment Policy Review page](#); Press Release [IP/10/1047](#).

Organ Transplants Directive

Directive 2010/45/EU concerns standards of quality and safety of human organs intended for transplantation. It applies to the donation, testing, characterisation, procurement, preservation, transport and transplantation of organs intended for transplantation. Member States are to implement the Directive by 27 August 2012. See: [Directive text](#).

EEAS

Official Journal L201 includes the text of Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service. The EEAS is created as an autonomous EU body, operating under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It will comprise a central administration and EU Delegations to third countries and to international organisations. A list of Council and Commission departments to be transferred to the EEAS is annexed to the Decision. See: [Decision text](#).

Focus on ...

e-Justice

Described as 'an electronic one-stop-shop for access to justice throughout the EU', the [European e-Justice portal](#) aims to provide quick answers to citizens' legal questions. Launched on 14 July, and initially comprising some 12,000 pages, the first version of the site gives information about - and links to - laws and practices in all Member States.

Future developments are envisaged, including fact sheets on defendants' rights and on victims' rights - both expected early in 2011 - and tools to let people make a cross-border small claim or payment order online. It is envisaged that courts will be able to deal with cross-border requests online and to communicate with claimants, defendants and courts in other Member States.

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The site currently has four main sections, each aimed at a different audiences:

- Citizens (including 'Going to court', 'Family matters', 'Legal aid', 'Costs of proceedings')
- Businesses (including business, insolvency and land registers, 'Going to court', 'Mediation')
- Legal practitioners (including 'Law', 'Case law', 'Judicial systems', 'Videoconferencing')
- Judiciary (including 'Tools for courts and practitioners', 'Judicial Training', 'Funding', 'Legal professions and justice networks').

The four sections are presented on the main page of the site, which also includes tabs to access 'Content' and 'Recent update' pages, with the former presenting the site pages without the focus on specific audiences.

The site offers a mix of information about EU-level legislation and initiatives and details of rules and services in individual Member States.

For example, the pages on mediation include an 'EU overview' which summarises the 2008 Mediation Directive and links to the full text, as well as giving links to pages about mediation in each Member State. The pages are written specifically for this initiative, rather than simply linking to existing national sites.

Whilst it's clearly impossible for a quick tour to take in any more than a handful of the thousands of pages available, first impressions are that this is a genuinely useful site that should be bookmarked by all of us who have need to use - or advise others to use - information on justice-related issues.



Q&A

Our AskEric service gives EIA members the chance to pose their questions to our EU information experts. Whether it's simple or complex - if you're having trouble finding the answer, try AskEric ...

Here's an example of recent question posed by an EIA member:

We have been asked by one of the lawyers here about the status of legislation within Eur-Lex. Regulation 1782/2003 still appears, but we know that it was repealed by 73/2009. Is there any way on Eur-Lex to find out the status of EU Regulations?

AskEric answered:

There is no doubt that the act has been withdrawn. However, EUR-lex is a database of *all* EU legislation, not only acts in force.

If you do a search by 'natural number' using 2003 and 1782, you should get 10 hits - see [this results page](#). If you go to the main entry - 32003R1782 - and choose 'bibliographic notice' (or 'bibliographic notice + text') you'll see [this page](#).

Scroll to the section 'Amended by', where the last item says 'Repealed by 32009R0073' - exactly as you said. However - and somewhat disconcertingly - if you don't check the bib record and go direct to either the html or pdf full text, you'll get the text with no warning that it is no longer in force. That may be what you or your client have done, and is certainly something to be aware of.

Another option is to check the Directory of Community Legislation in Force (DOCLIF). I can't see that the 1 May 2010 version has any reference to the Regulation being live - the [relevant section](#) can be easier to scan using the pdf versions offered and using the standard ctrl + f option.

All our AskEric questions and answers will soon be available in the Moodle Resource Centre, available exclusively to EIA Members via our website:

www.eia.org.uk

Snippets:

News and views from non-EU sources

EurActiv

From: [Commission plans communication 'revolution':](#)

The European Commission's communication strategy is undergoing structural change in a re-branding centred on President José Manuel Barroso, increased centralisation of public communications, a new organisational chart and a key reshuffle of top officials, a person close to the matter told EurActiv.

The new commissioner in charge of communication, Viviane Reding, wants to bring about a "culture shock" and genuine "revolution" of existing Brussels communication methods, replicating her experience as information society commissioner, when she often sided against national telecommunications champions in breach of previous practices, EurActiv has learned.

European Policy Centre

From: [Implementing Lisbon: a critical appraisal of the Citizens' Initiative:](#)

The Lisbon Treaty has introduced the Citizens' Initiative, an instrument designed to increase democratic participation in the EU, by enabling more than a million EU citizens to submit a proposal to the European Commission to change EU regulations. But how exactly is it meant to operate, who is likely to use it and will it have the desired effect?

euobserver

From: [Barroso blames capitals for plunge in EU popularity:](#)

Faced with a plunging popularity of the EU institutions, European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso has blamed national capitals for not defending the European project during the economic crisis.

The devastating results of a Eurobarometer published last week showing that support for EU institutions is waning across the continent are due to the economic crisis, argued Mr Barroso in an interview with the Italian daily Corriere della Sera. He said it is "normal" that citizens' confidence is dropping during such times.

EUbusiness

From: [Iceland's whalers lead battle against EU membership:](#)

Worried their controversial livelihoods will be sacrificed on the altar of membership negotiations, Icelandic whalers are leading a rebellion against their country's European Union candidacy.

The official launch of membership negotiations with Brussels last month revived the debate around whaling in Iceland, which along with Japan and Norway figures among the world's only nations to authorise the hunt.

Last word

A Court by any other name?

Can you name the EU's two main courts?

If you said Court of Human Rights, go to the bottom of the class: that's run by the Council of Europe and is nothing to do with the EU.

If you said European Court of Justice (ECJ) and Court of First Instance (CFI), well done: almost right.

If you said the Court of Justice of the European Union and the General Court – you probably need to spend less time reading the Lisbon Treaty and get out more. This is of course correct as, when the Treaty came into force in December 2009, it changed the names of Europe's two leading courts.

The question is, should it have?

The ECJ and CFI have become relatively well-known over the years, even in areas not known for informed awareness of European matters - like the UK media. ECJ fits nicely in a headline and, apart from occasional confusion with the Court of Human Rights, it is sufficiently recognisable to be used in non-expert publications. Perhaps less so the CFI, but then that court has always had much less publicity than its big brother.

But what will 'General Court' or even 'Court of Justice' mean to the man or woman in the street? Certainly the latter lacks the recognisability that ECJ has built up over the years and it seems silly to throw away one of the few 'brand names' that the EU has managed to produce.

But what if no-one takes any notice? Will the former names ever disappear? This seems worth asking, as the renaming of the Official Journal (as the Official Journal of the European Union) seems to have failed to capture public support. Ask most people in the public procurement area and they will still happily refer to 'OJEC notices', never having seen any reason to adopt 'OJEU'.

ECJ seems to be going the same way, with even the EU cognoscenti such as EurActiv still using the old term. So perhaps there is no need to start a campaign to save the ECJ: if we keep using it, what can anyone do?

Europe's law-makers might like to think about these matters next time they ponder name changes. But then, should we expect commonsense from the people who decided that EEA was so good, it should be used twice? Give yourself another two points if you remember it applies to both the European Economic Area and the European Environment Agency.

www.eia.org.uk