

In touch with EU



News from the Association

Newsletter schedule

August is traditionally the main holiday period for the EU. There is usually very little information published during the month. We're therefore taking the opportunity for a break (during which we might check out some of the venues noted in the 'European bathing water quality' report - see page 3).

The next issue of this newsletter will be in September.

Our latest course, on case law, had just five delegates (two dropped out - one on the day). There was much praise for the course content and the helpful, approachable trainers from the five people who attended. However, despite the quality of the course, it lost money.

The Association's Committee has decided that we cannot continue to run courses at a loss.

We will therefore not be arranging any public courses in the immediate future - although we're always happy to consider requests for in-house training.



Training courses

In recent years, we've generally found it difficult to attract sufficient numbers to our training courses to make them viable. A number of courses have had to be cancelled, due to lack of interest. Each time we cancel, we incur a cancellation charge - usually some hundreds of pounds.

Virtual training

Given the lack of face-to-face courses, the Committee is keen to extend and improve the online training offered via our Moodle site. We hope to see significant developments with Moodle over the coming months.

Feedback

Please send comments etc to eric@eia.org.uk.

Eric Davies
EIA Coordinator

This newsletter can be printed, but the embedded URLs will be lost ...

Issue 11 - July 2011

It's official:

EU documents , publications and sources

Business statistics

Eurostat has published 'Key figures on European business'. The 123-page pocketbook 'aims to illustrate the wide range of business statistics available from Eurostat, in particular structural business statistics (SBS)'. In addition to a special feature on SMEs, it gives an overview of the EU business economy and provides a more detailed sectoral analysis for some 100 activities.

See: [Key figures on European business page](#)

Competition

The Commission's Annual Report on Competition Policy for 2010 shows that a near-record amount of fines were imposed on companies for operating price-fixing and market-sharing cartels. To mark the 40th anniversary of the Report, the 2010 edition also includes an overview of the major developments of competition policy and enforcement over the past four decades.

See: [Competition Policy Report page](#)

Literacy

A study of reading literacy in 31 countries shows that most have made progress in developing literacy policies, but that they often lack focus on the groups most at risk, such as boys, children from disadvantaged households and migrant children. Produced by the Eurydice network, the study looked at literacy in the EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. It focuses on four key topics: teaching approaches, tackling reading difficulties, teacher education and the promotion of reading outside school.

See: Press Release [IP/11/846](#)

Scientific information

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on access to, and preservation of, digital scientific information. Scientists, research funding organisations, universities, and other interested parties are invited to submit their views by 9 September.

See: Press Release [IP/11/890](#)

RTD 2010

The Annual Report on Research and Technological Development Activities of the European Union in 2010 has been adopted as COM (2011) 428. Contents include: the Innovation Union, including ERA policy achievements, the Seventh Framework Programme, and the outlook for 2011.

See: [Report text](#)

Audio visual works

COM (2011) 427 is the Green Paper 'on the online distribution of audiovisual works in the European Union: opportunities and challenges towards a digital single market'. The deadline for submissions is 18 November.

See: [Green Paper page](#)

Integration

A 'European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals' (COM (2011) 455) has been adopted by the Commission, with the aim of enhancing the economic, social and cultural benefits of migration in Europe.

See: [Communication text](#)

Focus on ...

Bathing water quality

The Foreword to the report 'European bathing water quality in 2010' states:

Diving into refreshing waters is one of the pleasures of summer for millions across Europe, and as temperatures rise, thoughts turn to the beach. But choosing between the many thousands of lakes, rivers and beaches across the continent can be difficult — so this report from the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Commission can help all water users find high quality bathing water across the region, whether they are swimmers, paddlers, snorkelers, kayakers or surfers.

The 48-page report, available in English, French and German, is based on data available up to 1 May 2011. It assesses the quality of bathing water quality at over 21,000 bathing sites across the Member States, with the aim of indicating where the best quality bathing is likely to be found. National bathing water reports give details for individual Member States and also for Croatia, Montenegro and Switzerland.



The report is one of a number of information sources available on - or via - the EEA's [State of bathing water](#) pages.

Using the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), site visitors can check bathing water quality on an interactive map, view data for selected countries/regions, and compare data with previous years. They can also view data via online mapping services, including Google Earth and Bing Maps.

Additional links include the Commission's Bathing Water pages, where details of the Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC) can be found. Under the Directive, Member States are required to identify popular bathing places in fresh and coastal waters and monitor them for indicators of microbiological pollution (and other substances) throughout the May to September bathing season.

Bathing water quality - data viewer

Use WISE Bathing Water Quality data viewer for a quick check on locations and statistics on the quality of coastal and freshwater bathing waters. You can search by country, region, province and bathing water and see bathing waters on Microsoft Live Maps or Google Earth. You can also explore how bathing waters have changed over the last years.

Latest addition
Water
 Country reports 2009 bathing season
 WISE viewer not available
 GIS applications API
[More >>](#)

Country	Region	Province	Bathing water	Visualisation
EUROPE	--- Geographic region ---		24901 total bathing waters	
AUSTRIA	--- Region ---		271 total bathing waters	
			... bathing waters	
			... waters ---	

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 ...

In response to the question:

We're often asked to find text of EU directives and regulations, but they can be difficult to understand. Can you suggest a source of explanatory materials?

Eric answered:

Two main sources spring to mind: Summaries of EU legislation and PreLex.

[Summaries of EU legislation](#) offers readable explanations of selected acts, COMdocs and the broader policies within which they sit. There is no guarantee that any particular Directive or Regulation will be covered, but with more than 6,300 articles the site is always worth a look. You can browse the collection using the subject guides on the main page. Alternatively, by selecting the 'For further information' link under the 'What's new?' heading, you can use the site-specific search option and also see a list of new and updated factsheets.

[PreLex](#) comes to mind because it provides links not only to adopted texts, but also to proposals (COMdocs) and - where available - press releases. It is therefore possible to quickly obtain not only the act, but also background and explanatory materials.

The [Standard search](#) works well, but Googling can sometimes be quicker. For example 'industrial emissions prelex' finds the PreLex dossier for COM (2007) 844 - Proposal for a Directive on industrial emissions; similarly, using the relevant celex number - 'prelex 32010L0075' - finds the same item; but using the Directive number doesn't, as PreLex isn't set up in the right way (so 'prelex Directive 2010/75/EU' won't work).

It's well worth experimenting with the search engines, as they really can help you find material much quicker than you'd find it going through the 'proper channels'.

Snippets:

News and views from non-EU sources

European Policy Centre

From: [Social media: following EU public diplomacy and friending MENA](#)

In the Arab Spring, social media facilitated action in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, providing a free and accessible tool to organise and coordinate demonstrations. Facebook and Twitter have proved to be resources which help develop civil society, strengthen activism in the public sphere, connect and inform people, transcend borders and impact all demographics. It is recommended that the EU, through the EEAS, engage citizens both inside the EU and around the globe, through the same medium which enabled protestors to topple autocrats and dictators: social media. Though the EEAS is still developing, a clear social media outreach policy should be developed and implemented in the EU's public diplomacy strategy. In this Policy Brief, Megan Kenna suggests more frequent updates, direct responses and a more informal tone to ensure that the EEAS is a 'friend' to freedom of expression and better 'follows' the Arab Spring.

European Voice

From: [Attacks on Norway prompt EU to review far-right threat](#)

The member states of the European Union are collectively to review their efforts to combat political radicalisation, in the wake of last week's mass murders in Norway. [...]

Cecilia Malmström, the European commissioner for home affairs, said European governments were "not well equipped" to prevent the kind of attacks seen in Oslo and

on the island of Utøya. "We don't know how big the threat really is," she said.

EurActiv

From: [Will the Polish Presidency invigorate the EU?](#)

The six-month long EU Council presidency means prestige for EU member states, since any state can only assume the presidency once every thirteen-and-a-half years due to the principle of rotation. For Poland, almost four years of preparations were necessary to prepare for the helm. Consequently, this prestige comes with responsibility.

Poles may feel proud and enthusiastic. And perhaps they should. Statistics from the Eurobarometer indicate that they actually are one of the most enthusiastic countries towards the EU. Their readiness to engage in challenges unsurmounted at EU level was shown through the symbolism of strawberries.

Euobserver

From: [\[Comment\] Public sector workers are being forced to pay for the crisis](#)

The conservative majorities in the Council in the Parliament and the European Commission are pushing through an agenda that has nothing to do with resolving the crisis. A recent UN report on the World Social Situation in 2011 argued that such measures do not address the growing inequalities nor promote a stronger financial system. It has more to do with imposing a vision of a harsher, more unequal, less democratic society and rolling back the welfare state.