

# In touch with EU



## News from the Association

### **EGM, Monday 5 March, London**

As announced last month, the EIA is to be dissolved at the end of 2012.

The decision to dissolve the Association is to be formally approved at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be held on the afternoon of Monday, 5 March, at Europe House, London.

There will be no charge for admission to the meeting, which will start at 14.00. An agenda will be available in January, together with any other relevant information.

Only those attending the meeting in March will be able to vote on the motion to dissolve the Association. However, their views may be swayed by comments from others - so please get in touch with your views, even if you won't be able to attend.

Feedback on a possible successor to the EIA will also be welcomed - and will also feed into the EGM discussion.

If you wish to attend the EGM, please mail me.

### **Season's Greetings**

**To all our members.**

#### **Using the document Registers**

Just added to our Moodle site is a section on using the institutions' document Registers.

With brief 'how to' video clips, examples and handy hints and tips, the new addition to Course 4 'Finding out about EU legislation' offers an introduction to these useful but often overlooked sources of information.

The Moodle site can be accessed via the members area of our website at [www.eia.org.uk](http://www.eia.org.uk).

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

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# It's official:

## EU documents , publications and sources

### 'Silver economy'

The Council has adopted Conclusions on 'Ageing as an opportunity for the labour market and for the development of social services and community activities'. Amongst other things, Ministers have invited the European Commission to analyse the potential for job creation by development the 'silver economy', and to 'take into account the needs of an ageing population when launching a new momentum for flexicurity ...'

See: [Conclusions text](#)

### EHIS

Data from the 'European Health Interview Survey' (EHIS) show that between 8% and 25% of EU adults are obese. For both women and men, the lowest shares of obesity in 2008/2009 were observed in Romania and France. The highest proportions of obese women were found in the UK, Malta, Latvia and Estonia. The countries with the highest proportion of obese men were Malta, the UK, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Details are given in an article on Eurostat's Statistics Explained website.

See: [Statistics Explained website](#)

### Energy, transport, environment

Eurostat's pocketbook 'Energy, transport and environment indicators' comprises a broad set of data collected by Eurostat and the European Environment Agency. The 218-page publication gives an overview of the most relevant indicators on energy, transport and environment, with particular focus on sustainable development, with data for the Member States, candidate countries and EFTA.

See: [Publication page](#)

### COSME

The proposed 'Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs' (COSME) aims to promote access to finance and encouraging an entrepreneurial culture, including the creation of new enterprises. With a budget of €2.5 billions for 2014-2020, COSME will largely replace the current Competitiveness and Innovation programme (CIP), and will in particular target: entrepreneurs, the potential self-employed, and national authorities.

See: Press Release [IP/11/1476](#)

### EMFF

The European Commission has proposed a new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to help deliver the objectives of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy. With a budget of €6.5 billion for 2014-2020, the EMFF is intended to help fishermen in the transition towards sustainable fishing, and to support the diversification of coastal communities. The EMFF will replace the existing European Fisheries Fund (EFF).

See: Press Release [IP/11/1495](#)

### Innovation Union

The report 'State of the Innovation Union 2011' (COM(2011) 849) shows that, overall, good progress has been made, with action taken on 30 of the 34 elements of the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative.

See: Press Release [MEMO/11/872](#)



### 'Global Europe' - funding external action

The Commission has adopted proposals for funding EU external action for the period 2014-2020. The package comprises the Communication 'Global Europe : A New Approach to financing EU external action' (COM(2011) 865) and legislative proposals for nine geographic and thematic instruments accompanied by a common implementing Regulation. The total budget proposed is €96 bn.

See: [Communication text](#)

### Regional statistics

The 'Eurostat regional yearbook 2011' is now available, giving regional indicators for 16 topics: population, labour market, labour cost, education, health, cities, GDP, household accounts, structural business statistics, information society, tourism, land cover and land use, coastal regions, transport, science, and technology and innovation. This edition also includes a section on trends in densely and thinly populated areas.

See: [Publication page](#)

### EU-28

Croatia has signed an Accession Treaty with the EU and is now scheduled to become the 28th Member State on 1 July 2013.

See: Press Release [SPEECH/11/869](#)

### ESDE

The first annual review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) 'underlines that a mix of employment and social policies is necessary to ensure a long-term job-rich recovery in the current climate of fiscal

consolidation and bleak economic outlook.' The 292-page publication shows that 23% of the EU population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

See: Press Release [IP/11/1552](#)

### 'Single Permit Directive'

MEPs have voted to adopt the 'Single Permit Directive' aimed at simplifying migration procedures and ensuring that workers from countries outside the EU, but who are legally residing in it, will enjoy a common set of rights on equal footing with nationals. The proposal was issued as COM(2007) 638 'on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State'.

See: [EP news item](#)

### PSI

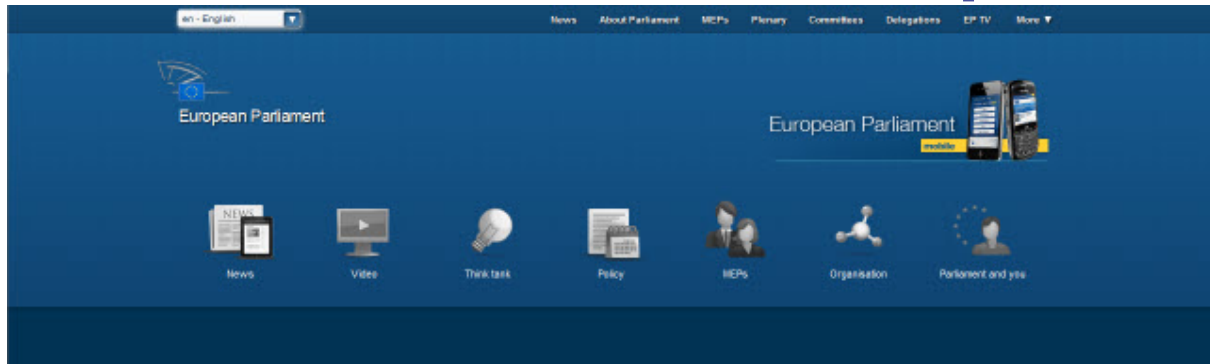
An 'Open Data Strategy for Europe', launched by the Commission, is expected to deliver a €40 billion boost to the EU economy each year by making it easier to access and re-use public sector information (PSI). The Commission is to make its own data public through a new 'data portal' to be launched next Spring. It also proposes revising the existing Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information to, amongst other things, extend its scope to include libraries, museums and archives.

Press Release [IP/11/1524](#)



# Focus on ...

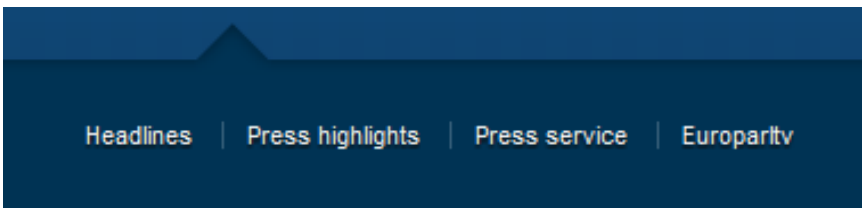
# Europarl



The European Parliament's website [Europarl](#) has had a serious makeover, offering 'a cleaner, more contemporary and visually appealing appearance and some important new features'. The [press release](#) announcing the changes claims that the site 'retains its former content and underlying structure', with 'no mysteries' for those of us familiar with the previous incarnation of the site.

No mysteries, eh? I beg to differ. So exactly where are the recent press releases then? Not the handful just added to the site, but the ones from the last week or two or maybe a month ago. I know now - but it took me five minutes or more to work it out.

Instead of having a 'more news' link on the main page, it now seems that those of us interested in what's been happening in the recent - but not necessarily immediate - past must choose the 'news' link from the 'portal' (the portal is the 'new point of entry to the site with quick links to the most popular pages' - as shown above). That then gives a choice of:



Of these four, 'Headlines' is really recent stuff, plus some items on selected issues, so that's no use. Europarltv isn't relevant, so it must be either 'Press highlights' or 'Press service'. The relevant section turns out to

be 'Press releases - all', which is a *subsection* of the 'Press service' subsection. Having to dig this far down to get an overview of EP activities and developments for the last month or so is far too tedious. In this instance, it seems that the makeover has given too much emphasis to highlighting very recent developments - and of course to Web 2.0 technologies.

Which brings us neatly to the second of my complaints (and I only tried to find two things!). Where are the excellent EP Fact Sheets to be found? Rather than tangle with sub-sub-menus, I tried the site A-Z. Entries under 'F' include Facebook and Flickr, but no Fact Sheets.

Using 'fact sheets' in the site search option finds a page titled 'Fact Sheets on the European Union'. From there, it's possible to find out that they're buried in the 'At your service' section, to which the most obvious link is at the foot of the main page under 'About Parliament'. But that's finding the answer by working backwards from it. Why no entry in the A-Z? Not considered important enough, I suppose - at least not to the target audience, whoever they may be.

There are some good things about the site - Committees are more prominent, and there's a neat slideshow of MEPs on the main page, with a 'Find your MEP' option. However, even to someone well versed in navigating EU websites, initial experience of the new Europarl finds it to be disappointing, with the smart new layout not compensating for difficulties in finding basic and long-standing sources of information.

# Snippets:

## News and views from non-EU sources

### Statewatch

From: [On Globalisation of Control: Towards an Integrated Surveillance System in Europe](#)

During the past thirty years, the Western world has seen a tremendous development in information technology. The technology has changed our lives. But while we easily grasp the bright side of the information technology the mobile telephones we can avail ourselves of, the computers we can use, the Internet where we search for information and (mostly?) entertainment information technology also has a dark, dangerous side. Never in the history of mankind has there been a technology which so dearly has had a "double character" (to borrow an expression from Marx). The dark side comprises the use of the sophisticated and rapidly advancing technology for surveillance purposes, a surveillance which quickly is coming to a point where it threatens the democratic fibres of our societies.

### Notre Europe

From: [Europe abroad: twenty years after Maastricht, is there anybody there?](#)

Twenty years ago, the Treaty of Maastricht created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)\*, based on the assumption that EU countries will progressively act as a block and speak with a common voice on the international stage. However, when looking at the material and institutional means put at the EU disposal, the CFSP looked toothless when faced with the challenges brought by globalization and multipolarity, and has constantly been challenged for this simple reason.

### European Policy Centre

From: [Enlargement to the Balkans: one step forward, two steps back](#)

Croatia's signing of its EU Accession Treaty at last Friday's European Summit was a step forward on enlargement policy. But the EU took two steps backwards when the member states postponed a decision on giving Serbia candidate status and Montenegro a date for the start of accession negotiations until the upcoming General Affairs Council in February and the European Council meeting in March.

### EurActiv

From: [As EU presidency nears end, Poland vents frustrations](#)

Poland's European affairs minister said the "biggest disappointment" of his country's EU presidency, largely seen as successful under the difficult circumstances of the euro-zone crisis, was the failure to take on board Bulgaria and Romania in the EU border-free Schengen area.

### Euobserver

From: [EU to make public data easily accessible](#)

"Today's package will radically shake up how the EU institutions and most public authorities in Europe share their data. Public data generated by all administrations in Europe will become automatically re-usable," EU digital affairs commissioner Neelie Kroes told reporters in Brussels. The proposal is nothing short of "a revolution", she said.