

# In touch with EU



## News from the Association

### EU information in the UK

Following the 14 May meeting at the European Commission in London, to discuss options for an EU information providers network in the UK, a [LinkedIn](#) group has been formed.

'EU information in the UK' is a closed group, but Antonia Mochan, Head of Communication, Partnerships and Networks at the Commission says that anyone interested in networking may apply to join it.

The group was established primarily to help decide if and how to set up a support network for providers of EU information. However, the 30 or so members do not yet appear to have started discussing the issue, and time constraints on Commission staff suggest that it may well be some months before anything is agreed.

Meanwhile, anyone interested in the future of EU information networks in the UK is invited to complete a brief poll intended to gauge opinions on the possibility of staging a face-to-face event. Amongst the issues covered in the survey are: where such an event should be held; whether participants should be able to display information about their services; whether there should be workshops / round tables - and if so, on what topics.

If you're interested, visit Survey Monkey [Planning a UK information event on the EU](#)

The Association does, of course, have its own [Eurotalk](#) discussion group. Now described as a list 'for people willing to share their experience and expertise in handling EU information and/or who are seeking help with EU-related materials, websites etc.' it currently has some 280 members.

However, despite pleas for contributions, it is rarely used. If you'd like to help revitalise it, please sign in and make your contribution before it's too late (if you're not already a member, you can sign up to Eurotalk by visiting the JISCMail [Eurotalk](#) page and choosing the 'Subscribe or Unsubscribe' option).

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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

### Schengen

COM(2012) 230 is the Commission's first 'Biannual report on the functioning of the Schengen area'. Spanning 1 November 2011 - 30 April 2012, it assesses a number of issues, including: the application of Schengen rules, visa issuance procedures and visa free regimes, guidelines on the issuing of (temporary) residence permits and travel documents, and guidelines on police measures in the internal border zones.

See: [Report text](#)

### 'Consumer Agenda'

A 'European Consumer Agenda' aims to increase consumer confidence by: reinforcing consumer safety; enhancing knowledge; stepping up enforcement and securing redress; and aligning consumer rights and policies to changes in society and in the economy. Published as COM(2012) 225, the Agenda supports consumer interests in five key sectors (food, energy, finance, transport, and the digital) and presents actions to be implemented by 2014.

See: [Communication text](#)

### BRICs

A new 132-page Eurostat pocketbook presents a statistical comparison of the EU Member States with the BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China. Ten sections look at: demography; economy; health; education; labour market; trade in goods; agriculture, forestry and fisheries; energy and environment; transport and communications; and science and technology.

See: [Publication page](#)

### Growth initiative

COM(2012) 299 is the Communication 'Action for Stability, Growth and Jobs'. In it, the European Commission makes proposals for a growth initiative and concludes that 'there is a need to give more prominence and urgency to growth measures in the coming twelve months, while continuing with fiscal consolidation and stabilisation of the financial sector. This needs to be done in a co-ordinated way at national and at EU level to get the most out of policy measures and reforms.' The Communication is part of a package of recommendations for budgetary measures and economic reforms to enhance financial stability, boost growth and create employment across the EU.

See: [Press Release IP/12/513](#)

### Horizon 2020

The main elements of the eighth framework programme for research, development and innovation have been agreed by the Council. Known as 'Horizon 2020' the programme will span 2014-2020 and is expected to start in January 2014. Negotiations on a final text will now start with the European Parliament.

See: [Council news item](#)

### EUR-Lex

The main page of EUR-Lex is warning of changes to the service and offering anyone interested the opportunity to be informed about the new developments.

See: [EUR-Lex changes request page](#)



### Renewable energy

COM(2012) 271 is the Communication 'Renewable Energy: a major player in the European energy market'. In it, the European Commission calls 'for a more coordinated European approach in the establishment and reform of support schemes and an increased use of renewable energy trading among Member States.' The Commission also identifies four main areas where more effort is needed until 2020 if renewable energy goals are to be met: the energy market, support schemes, cooperation mechanisms, and energy cooperation in the Mediterranean.  
See: [Communication text](#)

### Transparency Portal

A new Transparency Portal launched by the European Commission aims to make EU decision-making processes more open and accessible, by bringing together information on: legislation, impact assessments, expert groups and advisory committees, consultations, interest representation and lobbying, access to documents, and recipients of EU funding.  
See: Press Release [IP/12/574](#)

### 7EAP

The Council has adopted Conclusions 'on setting the framework for a Seventh EU Environment Action Programme'. The 6EAP expires on 22 July, and Ministers want its successor to be adopted as soon as possible. The Conclusions set out environmental objectives for 2020 and a 2050 'vision for a green Europe'. They also consider the issues of implementation, enforcement, monitoring and strengthening of environment policy and legislation, and of the transition to a green economy.  
See: [Conclusions text](#)

### Business registers

Official Journal L 156 includes the text of Directive 2012/17/EU 'amending Council Directive 89/666/EEC and Directives 2005/56/EC and 2009/101/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the interconnection of central, commercial and companies registers'.  
See: [Directive text](#)

### Human trafficking

COM(2012) 286 sets out an 'EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016' based on five priorities:

- Identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking
- Stepping up the prevention of trafficking in human beings
- Increased prosecution of traffickers
- Enhanced coordination and cooperation among key actors and policy coherence
- Increased knowledge of and effective response to emerging concerns related to all forms of trafficking in human beings

See: [Communication text](#)

### Civil service principles

The European Ombudsman has set out five public service principles for the EU civil service: commitment to the EU and its citizens, integrity, objectivity, respect for others, and transparency. The Ombudsman admits that the principles are not new, but that they 'represent existing expectations of citizens and civil servants [and] are already embodied, both explicitly and implicitly, in the Staff Regulations and in other documents such as the Financial Regulation, and the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour.'  
See: [Public service principles page](#)

### Europeana apps

The 'Hack4Europe 2012' competition invited participants to create apps aimed at providing new ways of sharing, re-using, creating or opening-up access to the 23 million digitised objects on Europeana - the digital library, museum and archive. Awards were presented at the Digital Agenda Assembly to winners of hackathons from Belgium, Latvia and Poland.  
See: Press Release [MEMO/12/475](#)



# Focus on ...

## Transparency Portal

Announcing the Commission's new [Transparency Portal](#) on 7 June, Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič said:

“The European Union is a unique, but complex structure. Therefore, transparent decision making is particularly important for us. Many information tools already exist in the Commission, and we have to make them easily accessible to citizens.”

### Access to legislation

### Your voice in Europe: access to open consultations

### Information on Commission Impact Assessment

### Register of expert groups

### Comitology Register

### Transparency Register

### Access to documents

### Information about recipients of EU funds

### Ethics for Commissioners

### Ethics for staff

### Useful links

To that end, the Portal brings together a range of information previously scattered across the Europa website. It is divided into the following sections:

- Access to legislation
- Your voice in Europe: access to open consultations
- Information on Commission Impact Assessment
- Register of expert groups
- Comitology Register
- Transparency Register
- Access to documents
- Information about recipients of EU funds
- Ethics for Commissioners
- Ethics for staff
- Useful links

Before it was launched, people from NGOs, the media, interest representatives and the European Parliament were invited to test the user-friendliness of the Portal. Presumably they approved, as did a spokesman for the European Ombudsman, who said that the site is a great improvement compared to the old transparency page.

This is a very simple page - Links are listed on the left, with sub-menus being displayed where appropriate in response to a hovering pointer.

Note that, although the Portal brings together various sources of information, the sources themselves haven't changed.

### Access to legislation

- ▶ [EurLex](#)
- ▶ [Work programme](#)
- ▶ [Road maps](#)

### Your voice in Europe: access to open consultations

### Transparency Register

### Access to documents

- ▶ [Register of the Commission documents](#)
- ▶ [Application form for access to internal documents](#)
- ▶ [Search for Committee documents](#)
- ▶ [Access to DORIE Database \(institutional European matters\)](#)
- ▶ [Access to historical archives](#)

### Information about recipients of EU funds

# Snippets:

## News and views from non-EU sources

### **Euobserver**

From: [Angry MEPs postpone patent vote](#)

Just days after being hailed as solved, the EU decades-long quest for a single patent hit an unexpected snag on Monday evening when MEPs postponed a vote on the draft patent claiming member states had "emasculated" the proposal.

Eurodeputies are up in arms about a late-minute deal - struck at last week's EU summit - with France, Germany and the UK on where to house the patent court.

### **Presseurop**

From: [The end of the Merkel method](#)

Merkel has not visited any of the southern European capitals to explain the German position. She could tell them: "What use is it to you, friends, when the aid drains away into the same channels they have been running out into all these past decades? When only the real estate sector, the financial sector and the football industry have any vitality left in them?"

Older Germans can imagine what [former foreign minister] Hans-Dietrich Genscher would have done: He would have practically taken up residence in Athens, the Greek foreign minister would have become his best friend; then the same thing in Rome, Madrid, Lisbon and back to Athens – and that just in the first week of the crisis.

### **European Policy Centre**

From: [The end of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina: What lessons for the Common Security and Defence Policy?](#)

On 30 June the EU's first and longest-serving Common Security and Defence Policy mission will come to an end: the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina will close after a near-decade of activities. In this Policy Brief, Eva Gross explores the impact of this decision on the rule of law in Bosnia, but also examines lessons learned for the CSDP in general. With new CSDP missions planned for deployment in Africa, what 'dos and dont's' can be learned from Bosnia?

### **EurActiv**

From: [Green groups: Barroso team too slow on environment](#)

Ten environmental organisations say the Commission under José Manuel Barroso's leadership has either been too reserved across an array of conservation issues, chemicals regulation and pollution, and in some cases has retreated in the face pressure from lobbyists and EU national governments.

"Overall, we're extremely concerned that the Commission is very behind in the race to create a better environment in Europe," said Jorgo Riss of Greenpeace, one of the 10 groups involving in grading the Commission at the halfway point in Barroso's second term.

## 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 ...

### **This question was recently received:**

I wonder if you could help. I'm trying to see if it's possible to obtain copies of the debates in council for the Water Framework Directive, rather than just the summaries shown on the [Legislative Observatory](#).

I suspect that copies of the debates in council aren't publicly available, but I'd like to give the solicitor I'm working with a definite answer as to whether they are or not. I've been able to track down copies of the debates in Parliament, but I've had no joy with locating the debates in council.

Any help, or guidance would be much appreciated.

### **Eric's answer was:**

The Council has traditionally been the most secretive of the EU institutions.

Pressure has gradually forced it to become more open (see [Openness and transparency of Council proceedings](#) under the Treaty of Lisbon) and many debates are now broadcast live.

However, at the time you're interested in (1996-2000) I suspect it would have been just about impossible to obtain more than a summary of what was said.

If those Council summaries (as opposed to material from the Parliament) might be of interest, you should be able to track them down in the form of press releases issued after each of the meetings listed on the Legislative Observatory page you quoted.

Most of the meetings were of the Environment Council. If you go to the relevant press releases [page](#) you should see the relevant press releases. For example, the press release for the meeting of March 1999 is [2165](#).