

# In touch with EU



## News from the Association

### Farewell ...

For the next month or so anyway. 'Brussels' slows down in August, and some of us EU-watchers can take a well-earned break from the daily grind.

By the time everyone's back from their holidays, PreLex might be working, there might be a new incarnation of EUR-Lex to admire, and there might even be some news of the future for EU information networks in the UK.

And, of course, the coming months will see the Association move inexorably towards dissolution.

So lots to look forward to then - even if you're not off to the beach ...

The next newsletter will be issued in September.

Eric Davies  
EIA Coordinator  
[eric@eia.org.uk](mailto:eric@eia.org.uk)

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



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# It's official:

## EU documents , publications and sources

### Travel app

A smartphone app setting out passengers' rights has been launched by the European Commission. Available for iPhone and iPad, Android, Blackberry and Windows Phone 7, it currently covers air and rail transport and will be extended to bus / coach and marine travel in 2013.  
See: [Press Release IP/12/738](#)

### Vehicle roadworthiness

A three-part 'Roadworthiness Package' has been adopted by the European Commission. COM(2012) 381 is a draft Directive 'amending Council Directive 1999/37/EC on the registration documents for vehicles'; COM(2012) 380 is a draft Regulation 'on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers'; and COM(2012) 382 is a draft Regulation 'on the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles'.  
See: [Press Release IP/12/780](#)

### Human rights

The first EU Special Representative for Human Rights has been appointed. Under Council Decision 2012/440/CFSP, Stavros Lambrinidis takes up the new post - created after a long campaign by the European Parliament.  
See: [Decision text](#)

### Enlargement

Eurostat's 148-page 'Pocketbook on enlargement countries' covers 2000-2010 and includes statistics on: demography, education, social conditions and labour force, national accounts, finance and prices, agriculture, energy, industry, construction and services, transport, communications and information society, external trade, research and development, and environment.  
See: [Publication page](#)

### European Council priorities

The European Council has issued a summary of its priorities up to 2014, together with a tentative work programme. Amongst the issues highlighted are: Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the Europe 2020 strategy, Enlargement, Key partners and regions, Defence, and the 'European idea'. The programme set out 'requires time and sustained effort' and the intention is therefore that the European Council should meet six times each year.  
See: [Priorities page](#)

### ERA

COM(2012) 392 is the Communication 'A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth'. In it, the European Commission sets out steps to be taken by Member States to achieve the European Research Area (ERA) by 2014.  
See: [Communication text](#)

### Research results

In 'Towards better access to scientific information: Boosting the benefits of public investments in research' (COM(2012) 401), the Commission sets out measures to improve access to scientific information produced in the EU. 'As a first step, the Commission will make open access to scientific publications a general principle of Horizon 2020, the EU's Research & Innovation funding programme for 2014-2020.'  
See: [Communication text](#)

# Focus on ...

# Social networks

If you've ever wondered if the EU has embraced social networking, the answer is 'yes - sort of'.

The European Commission's [Take part!](#) page on Europa brings together corporate and personal accounts for a variety of social media.

There's a list of a dozen blogs - mostly maintained by the Commission - links to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts (the EU's YouTube presence is branded 'EUTube'), plus a short list of Flickr pages.

For the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube sections, a standard format lists the EU Institutions & bodies, agencies, Representations, Delegations, and policies (!) for which information can be found on that medium.

Not surprisingly, there are big differences both in the relative popularity of the networks and in the extent to which each is used. A quick glance suggests that Twitter is most popular with the EU, with the relevant page showing that the Commission DGs / Services have 19 tweeters and the European Parliament 22. For comparison, the Facebook page lists 11 and 4 respectively, with YouTube having 4 and 2.

It's very hit-and-miss at the moment, with no guarantee that any of the social media will be used by a specific institution or to promote a particular policy. There's no claim that the lists are comprehensive, and they can be expected to change over time, but they do provide a convenient source of links for what are becoming increasingly useful sources of information.

EUROPA > Take part!
Home
How the EU works
Policies and activities
Your life in the EU
▶ Take part!
EU blogs
Visit the EU institutions
Prizes & Competitions
The EU on Facebook
The EU on Twitter
The EU on YouTube
The EU on Flickr
Publications and documents
Quick links for...

## The EU on Twitter



### [Follow the EU on Twitter](#)

EU institutions, agencies, offices and policies on Twitter

## The EU on Facebook



### [Follow the EU on Facebook](#)

EU institutions, agencies, offices and policies on Facebook

## The EU on YouTube



### [Follow the EU on YouTube](#)

EU institutions, agencies, offices and policies on YouTube

### Institutions and bodies

- Council of the European Union
- European Commission
  - Agriculture and Rural Development - Dacian Cioloș
  - Climate Action - Connie Hedegaard sv
  - Digital Economy and Society - Günther Oettinger
  - Energy - Günther Oettinger
  - Environment and Climate Action - Connie Hedegaard sv
  - Financial Stability and Budget - Janusz Lewandowski pl
  - Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy - Catherine Ashton
  - Health and Consumer Protection - Vyacheslav Kocherov
  - Industry, Innovation and Entrepreneurship - Günther Oettinger
  - Internal Security - Janusz Lewandowski pl
  - Justice and Fundamental Rights - Viviane Reding
  - Labour and Employment - Dacian Cioloș
  - Migration and Home Affairs - Dimitris Avramopoulos
  - Regional Development - Dacian Cioloș
  - Research and Innovation - Dacian Cioloș
  - Transport and Infrastructure - Dacian Cioloș
  - Trade - Dacian Cioloș
  - Youth - Dacian Cioloș
- International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response - Dacian Cioloș

# Snippets:

## News and views from non-EU sources

### European Voice

From: [Auditors criticise Commission training](#)  
European Commission staff spent an average of 11 days in training in 2010, but the Commission has no proper system to identify skills shortages or to ensure that training responds to actual needs, the European Court of Auditors has found.

### Notre Europe

From: [The European Council and the Community Method](#)  
This Policy Paper by Philippe de Schoutheete is part of a series of works that Notre Europe has dedicated to the evolution of the European institutions in the wake of the Lisbon Treaty. It focuses in particular on the European Council, whose role has become so pivotal, that we can now refer not to a 'triangle' but rather to an 'institutional trapezium'.

### Presseurop

From: [The Eurocracy is really quite small](#)  
Whichever way you look at it, claims Rinus van Schendelen, Professor of Political Science, the level of bureaucracy in Brussels is tiny. "The government in The Hague – not including institutions such as the army, the police and education – has one civil servant for every 133 inhabitants. The Commission has one for every 20,800 EU inhabitants. You can't argue with statistics!"

### European Policy Centre

From: [Political Union: Europe's defining moment](#)  
Driven by an obvious loss of fiscal sovereignty on the part of debtor nations and a de facto loss of sovereignty on the part of creditor nations, the concept of deepening integration on fiscal policy and economic governance gained

ground. Now, the old debate about a 'Political Union' – which was postponed at Maastricht, revived after the frustrations of the Nice Treaty and died after the Convention – is back.

### Euobserver

From: Hollande: [EU parliament may need to be altered](#)  
The eurozone has priority when it comes to further integration, says French President Francois Hollande, something that will eventually have to be reflected in the European Parliament.

### Euobserver

From: ['Banksters' could face criminal sanctions under EU rate fixing rules](#)  
Bankers caught fixing the inter-bank lending rate Libor could in future face criminal charges after the European Commission announced plans ... to widen the scope of the ongoing legislation on Market Abuse to include rate fixing.

Unveiling the proposals, which have been added to the Market Abuse legislation aimed at combating insider dealing and market manipulation, Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding accused those involved as acting as though they were "more banksters than bankers".

### EurActiv

From: [EU at the Olympics: An invisible powerhouse](#)  
The Soviet Union and the United States treated the Olympics as a proxy to project and enhance their soft power.

Using this old technique, what would be the EU's soft power if measured by the EU member states' collective performance at the Summer Olympic Games since 1992?