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***EU funding opportunities: where to look for information?***

*This year the European Union is launching a new set of programmes: up to 975 billion euro over the 2007-2013 funding period.*

There are people and networks whose task is to provide you with useful information. In addition, the EFCA Bulletin provides you with a series of practical links that might be of interest.

The best way to start is to go local and contact your national or regional Euro Info Centre. The Euro Info Centre network has around 300 offices spread across 45 countries. EICs directly answer about 360,000 queries from SMEs every year. These concern a wide range of issues, such as business co-operation, Commission programmes and funding and general EU matters.

Have a look at:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/networks/eic/eic.html>

As a majority of EU funds are managed at national or regional level, the national, regional or local authorities often provide the necessary information and support facilities.

For a list of managing authorities for structural funds in every region go to:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/manage/authority/authority\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm)

An overview of the main funding opportunities available for SMEs can be found at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sme/index_en.htm)

The new Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) offers funding opportunities not only for EU companies but also for those from EU accession countries.

For more information go to:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial\\_assistance/projects/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/projects/index_en.htm)

It is important to note that some basic principles apply to grants, which are to implement projects or activities in relation to European Union policies.

Grants are a form of complementary financing. The EU does not finance projects up to 100%, except for projects taking place outside the EU (<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>).

Grants are subject to annual programming. Before 31 March each year, the departments of the Commission that manage grant programmes publish their annual work programme on their Internet site.

The work programme fixes the broad outlines of the grants that are envisaged over the year (area of activity, objectives, timetable, available budget, award conditions, etc.). By consulting these work programmes you may thus already identify the fields which interest you.

Subsequently, the Commission's departments publish calls for proposals on their Internet sites ([http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm)).

The calls for proposals invite candidates to present, within a given deadline, a proposal for action that corresponds to the objectives pursued and fulfils the required conditions. These calls for proposals can also be published in the Official Journal of the European Union – C series (<http://ted.europa.eu/>).

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### ***Explore an array of bottom-line issues that affect virtually every European engineering consultancy firm***

HELLASCO, the Greek host association of the 2007 EFCA conference, developed a flagship programme.

The 2007 EFCA conference offers engineering consultancy firms the opportunity to gain an insight into three key subject areas: public-private partnerships, political, technical/industrial globalisation trends and the industry's responses, and business growth strategies.

Under each theme, speakers will explore and assess challenges facing business, and showcase their experiences.

Conference highlights are:

- public-private partnership projects looked at from the perspective of public clients, contractors, bankers and engineering consultants;
- conflicts of interest in the procurement of integrated contracts;
- challenging the Chinese consulting industry;
- central and eastern European markets;
- the nascent consultancy industry in Russia;
- innovative capabilities;
- key performance indicators.

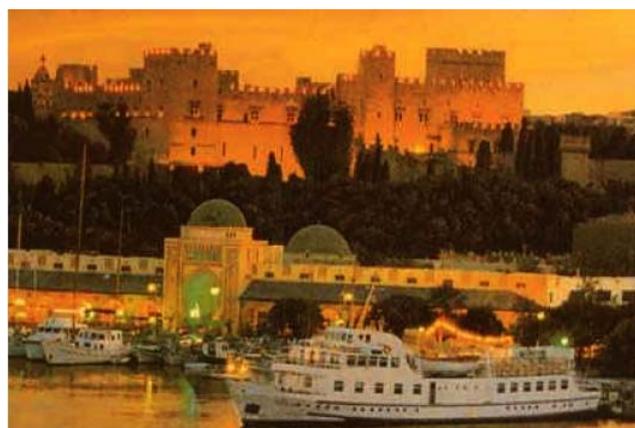
For programme details see:

<http://www.efca.be/downloads/archive/c4f5a562-99c2-4c92-acea-7e67f244dc4b.pdf>

The Conference will feature experts, clients and business managers from all over Europe.

It will give the opportunity to all participants to gather relevant facts, and to discuss and to share knowledge.

### **You can't afford to miss the Rhodes conference!**



Early-bird registration rates are still available until **16 May 2007**.

Register on-line at:

<http://efca2007.conferences.gr/index.php?id=4023&L=0>

## ***EFCA conveys pragmatic proposals to alleviate costs for financial guarantees for external aid contracts***

*Representatives of the Permanent Representations to the EU share the industry's concerns and recognise that the Commission should seek to address this issue.*

At the March 2007 follow-up meeting on matters relating to EuropeAid, EFCA and FEACO (management consultants) clarified to representatives of the Permanent Representations the implications of the complicated guarantee system for consultancy firms.

Indeed, consultancy firms do not only face the financial burden ensuing from the limitation of advance payment to 90% of the contract value and the retained payment of the remaining 10% until the final audit certificate.

They also need to provide a guarantee for advance payments for the implementation of the direct labour component of the first yearly programme estimate. Such outsourcing of management operations and tasks to consultancy firms (i.e. 'externalised direct labour operations') is taking place in EDF (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) and ALA (Asian and Latin American countries) projects. Moreover, for any contract of more than one year duration, an extra financial guarantee is required for the next phase.

This combination of guarantee requirements places a great strain on the firms' financial capacity.

EFCA and FEACO developed pragmatic proposals to reduce that financial burden, whilst ensuring the financial risks connected with payment of pre-financing, and taking into account the current legal framework. These proposals include: the annual payment of the 10% balance after approval of the interim evaluation report, the limitation of the amount of the budget of the programme estimate (in order to limit the amount of the advance payment and the

guarantee), and the release of advance payment guarantees as and when the pre-financing is deducted from interim payments or payments of balances made to the contractor in accordance with the terms of the contract.

The Permanent Representations considered that the Commission is accountable for the sound financial management of the taxpayers' money. Yet, they concluded that the additional costs, which the current excessive guarantee system is imposing on consultancy firms, are extremely onerous.

## ***EFCA adds a dimension to the anticorruption debate***

*After the January 2006 Transparency International (TI) - European Anti Fraud Office (OLAF) policy roundtable on the protection of EU's financial interests through management of effective and transparent debarment systems, EFCA promoted a debate on corruption preventive measures in relation to services contracts awarded in third countries and financed by the EU or other International Financing Institutions (IFIs).*

In close cooperation with TI, EFCA developed a programme for a Commission - EFCA - TI one-day roundtable.

The Commission accepted the proposal, which aims at gathering all stakeholders involved in external aid. If preventive measures are to be successful, all parties involved should agree on a common strategy and practical measures to curb corruption practices.

The roundtable will take place in Brussels on 18 September 2007.

Invited participants will include inter alia Commission and EuropeAid officials, MEPs, member states representatives, Heads of Delegations, OLAF, National Authorising Officers (NAO) and Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) officials, and International Financing Institutions IFI officials.

In the morning all stakeholders will present their views. EFCA will focus on observed corruption opportunities during both the award procedures and contract execution.

The afternoon session will cater for two parallel workshops on practical and effective corruption prevention measures, and a wrap-up conclusion on the results will close the day.

EFCA will keep you informed about the outcome of the debate.

### ***EFCA continues to raise concerns about the use of CVs in the selection phase***

*EFCA had a meeting with Commission officials to clarify its position on the use of CVs in the assessment of the technical and/or professional suitability of consultants.*

In its July 2006 policy statement, EFCA had called for a clear separation between the evaluation of the firm's ability to perform the contract (pre-qualification) and the quality of bids (award).

At the March 2007 meeting with EC officials, EFCA raised yet again the industry's concerns at both practical (exclusivity of experts) and conceptual level (CVs are not equivalent to the firm's professional abilities).

EFCA stressed that the capability of the project team is to be assessed in the award stage.

Requiring CVs in the selection criteria, as EFCA understands the public procurement Directive, should be limited to the responsible managerial staff only. However, the Commission officials questioned and challenged EFCA's interpretation.

In contrast with the views of DG Internal Market, CVs are requested at the award stage in the EU external aid procurement procedures.

EFCA will seek further legal clarification of the Community rule.

### ***Commission invites EFCA to elaborate a guidance document on Health and Safety***

*EFCA and the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), representing the European design community, will collaborate with the Commission to draw up a non-binding guide to good practice for improving health and safety on construction sites.*

In September 2006, ACE and EFCA presented the EFCA-ACE guidance document 'Designing for Safety in Construction' to representatives of the European institutions.



There are considerable problems with the implementation of Directive 92/57, which places responsibilities on various partners involved in the construction process.

As a result, the Commission decided to prepare a guidance document to assist member states in developing national policies for the protection of health and safety of workers. The guidance will also provide principles and practical knowledge to both clients and designers.

EFCA will shortly nominate an expert to the EC Work Group.

<http://ew2004.osha.europa.eu/closingevent/september.2006>

### ***EIB updates policies that guide financing for energy projects***

*The European Investment Bank (EIB) recently updated policy guidelines on renewable energy technologies.*

In February 2007, the EIB committed annual financing of 4 billion euro for 'priority' energy projects. More specifically, the EIB will provide 600-800 million euro for renewable energy projects (compared to 463 million euro in 2006 and 460 euro million in 2005). Some 50% of EIB lending for electricity generation will be linked to renewable energy.

The EIB also finances projects in energy efficiency, including municipal district heating systems, social housing rehabilitation programmes and public transport.

The new EIB energy policy has five priority areas:

- diversifying the EIB's energy portfolio in 'less mature' markets in and outside the EU and with respect to less developed renewable energy sources such as solar and biomass;
- financing energy efficiency solutions;
- research, development and innovation;
- diversification and security of internal supply, including Trans-European Energy Network (TEN) projects, electricity and gas grids, gas/oil storage facilities and power stations;

- financing projects in the field of external energy security and economic development, also in neighbouring countries.

The 5 June EIB Board of Governors meeting will officially adopt the new policy line.

The **EIB-EFCA-FEACO energy seminar**, rescheduled on 15 June 2007, will provide upfront and pertinent information on the new EIB policies and initiatives.

For more information, see

<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/eventdetail.aspx?id=40925>

## E F C A A G E N D A

Board of Directors	Brussels	26.04.2007
Professional Liability Committee	Brussels	27.04.2007
<b>2007 EFCA GAM &amp; Conference</b> <a href="http://efca2007.conferences.gr/">http://efca2007.conferences.gr/</a>	Greece (Rhodes)	07-08.06.2007
Public Procurement Committee	Rhodes	06.06.2007 [09:00]
Partnership for Development Committee	Rhodes	06.06.2007 [14:30]
Project Financing Committee	Rhodes	06.06.2007 [14:30]
Board of Directors	Rhodes	07.06.2007 [09:00-13:00]
GAM (including Presidents' meeting and presentation of the Committees' work)	Rhodes	07.06.2007 [14:30-19:00]
Conference	Rhodes	08.06.2007 [09:00-17:00]
<i>EIB-EFCA-FEACO seminar</i>	Brussels	15.06.2007
Standardisation Working Party	Brussels	28.06.2007
Board of Directors	Berlin	28.09.2007
D&S meeting	Bucharest	26.10.2007
Board of Directors	Ljubljana (tbc)	06.12.2007

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### **TEN-T DAYS Conference in Brussels on 10 and 11 May 2007**

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) event will update your knowledge of the prospects and new opportunities under the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Programme, as the new 2007-2013 scheme is launched.

The event will host around 400 people and is free of charge (including delegate packs and coffee break services).

For registration: go to

[http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/events/2007\\_05\\_10\\_tent\\_days\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/events/2007_05_10_tent_days_en.htm)



## EUROPEAN BRIEFING

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## EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

### ***New EU budget rules in place as from 1 May 2007***

*The EU will soon be able to apply new financial rules to the use of the new generation of EU programmes with a value of 975 billion euro over a seven-year period.*

The principal aim of the revised rules is to simplify procedures, notably a reduction in the bureaucracy, in order to facilitate access to EU funding (both grants and public contracts). The Commission will also have more flexibility in managing the budget and

be better able to respond to humanitarian and end-of-year crises by making immediate use of unused funds without having to obtain prior authorisation from the Council and the Parliament.

The second purpose is to achieve greater transparency and improved control to protect the EU's financial interests. This implies also that the names of beneficiaries of structural funds and external aid programmes (as of 2008) and agricultural subsidies (as of 2009) will have to be disclosed to public view in all member states.

A central database of organisations, condemned for fraud or corruption and excluded from EU funding, will be shared between all EU institutions and national authorities.

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/implementation\\_control\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/implementation_control_en.htm)

### ***Member states start converting the EU's regional policy priorities into operational programmes***

*Denmark is now the fourth state to have reached agreement with the Commission on the national plan and priorities for the 2007-2013 Cohesion policy.*

*Malta, Greece and Austria had already received the Commission's approval.*

All member states have sent their national strategic reference frameworks (NSRFs) to the Commission. That document defines the strategy chosen by the member state and sets out how it will use the EU resources in the next seven years to deliver growth and jobs. It also contains a list of proposed operational programmes, which present the priorities of the member state (and/or regions).

The Commission has three months after receipt of the NSRF to make any comments and to request any additional information from the member state.

After the Commission's decision on the NSRFs, including priorities, negotiations are

started on the indicative annual allocations and operational programmes (OP). Thereafter, the member states and its regions have the task of implementing the programmes, i.e. selecting the thousands of projects, and to monitor and assess them. This work takes place through the management authorities in each country and/or each region.

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/atlas2007/fiche\\_index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm)

### **840 million euro for EU-Central America aid programme**

*The 2007-2013 aid programme, proposed by the Commission, includes for each country a strategy in support of its political and social priorities.*

*The new cooperation programme increases aid for the region by 25% over previous periods.*

The sums proposed for 2007-2013 are 34 million euro for Costa Rica, 121 million euro for El Salvador, 135 million euro for Guatemala, 223 million euro for Honduras, 214 million euro for Nicaragua, 38 million euro for Panama, and 75 million euro for regional cooperation.

The primary areas for cooperation are good governance and democracy, justice, the environment and the fight against insecurity, inequality and poverty.

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/ca/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/ca/index.htm)

### **Colombia: planned aid for 2007-2013 amounts to over 160 million euro**

*The aid will be mainly granted through peace and stability initiatives, including reinforcement of institutional capacities and promotion of sustainable development.*

The strategy also includes a new economic cooperation line to boost competitiveness in the country.

The priorities will be reviewed in 2010. Of the 160 million euro assigned, 65% (104 million euro) will be assigned in 2007-2010 and 35% (56 million euro) in 2011-2013.

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/colombia/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/colombia/intro/index.htm)

### **494 million euro aid package for Ukraine**

*The Commission will provide a substantial increase in financial assistance to Ukraine over the next four years.*

Key EU assistance activities over the period 2007-2010 will include:

- support for the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Memorandum of Understanding on Energy (the development of gas, oil and renewable infrastructure and integration with the EU energy market);
- support to strengthen Ukraine's capacities in the areas of border and migration management ;
- support to the reform of the judiciary system;
- support to address environmental challenges, notably in the areas of climate change and improved water quality.

In addition, Ukraine will benefit from increased lending by the European Investment Bank.

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/ukraine/csp/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/ukraine/csp/index.htm)

### **First call for proposals under the Marco Polo II programme**

*The general aim of the programme is to help companies during the high risk start-up phase of new services for shifting freight from road to short-sea shipping, rail and inland waterways.*

*The first call for proposals is budgeted with 57 million euro.*

Five types of actions can be financed as part of the Marco Polo programme:

- modal shift actions (projects should aim to shift freight off the road);
- actions aimed at overcoming structural barriers in the freight transport market (projects should be highly innovative, aiming to achieve a real breakthrough);
- actions to pool knowledge (the objective is mutual training or exchange of information to help cope with an increasingly complex transport and logistics market);
- actions to promote motorways of the sea; and
- traffic avoidance actions, which integrate transport into production logistics to reduce demand for freight transport by road.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 22 June 2007.

[ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo/guide\\_proposers/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/marcopolo/guide_proposers/index_en.htm)

## INTERNAL MARKET

### ***Public procurement: Commission acts to ensure that member states implement EU laws***

*The Commission is controlling the full and timely respect of Community law in co-operation with the Member States and closely monitoring how EU law is being applied in practice.*

#### Italy

The Commission has decided to refer Italy to the European Court of Justice over infringement of EU public procurement rules in the tendering procedure followed by the Municipality of L'Aquila for the award of the design, the realisation and the management of a tramway for public transport. In the view of the Commission, the awarded contract is a public works contract and not a public works concession.

#### Greece

The Greek government is challenged on six sub-projects of the overall project for the protection and restoration of the forest around Thessaloniki. Two of the sub-projects were awarded on the basis of qualitative selection criteria. All sub-projects failed to respect the principles of transparency and equal treatment of tenderers, because they were initiated at a stage when the content of the contracts could not be defined with certainty or precision.

This formal request takes the form of a 'reasoned opinion', the second stage of the infringement procedure laid down in Article 226 of the EC Treaty. If there is no satisfactory reply within two months, the Commission may refer the matter to the European Court of Justice.

#### Germany

A formal request is sent to Germany regarding the long-standing practice of German public broadcasting organisations to award works, supply and service contracts without conducting European-wide competitive tendering procedures. In the view of the Commission, the fee-based funding of the German public broadcasting organisations has to be considered as financing by the State. The organisations are therefore public contracting authorities and have to apply EC procurement rules, making sure that the fees paid by the German public are spent in an efficient, transparent and economical manner.

#### Czech Republic

The Commission sent a reasoned opinion to the Czech Republic regarding the public procurement practice of the state enterprise Lesy České Republiky (Forests of the Czech Republic). In the Commission's view, the state enterprise interpreted the definition of a contracting authority incorrectly and awarded framework contracts for forestry services without following relevant public procurement rules. The state enterprise has not yet made its public procurement practice fully compliant with EU public procurement rules, despite the commitment of the Czech

Republic given to the Commission after the letter of formal notice.

The European Commission has decided to refer Belgium, Finland, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Sweden to the European Court of Justice over their continued non-communication of national measures implementing one or more EU public procurement Directives.

The deadline for complying with the provisions of these directives expired on 31 January 2006.

[http://ec.europa.eu/community\\_law/eulaw/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/eulaw/index_en.htm)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### ***Commission decides to create voluntary 'Register of Interest Representatives'***

*Through the register, it is aimed at fostering full transparency and contributing to the achievement of the Commission's 'better regulation' aims.*

Lobbyists that register certain information about themselves would be given an opportunity to indicate their specific interests and, in return, would be alerted to consultations in these specific areas.

The voluntary register will be combined with a new standard template for internet consultations. If organisations submit their contributions in the context of such a consultation, they will be systematically invited to use the register to declare whom they represent, what their mission is and how they are funded.

The 'European Transparency Initiative' relates to three areas: lobbying activities, feedback on the Commission's minimum standards for consultation and the publication of beneficiaries of EU funds.

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/kallas/transparency\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/kallas/transparency_en.htm)

### ***EU Court of Auditors plans 20 special reports in 2007-2008***

*The Court does not have the capacity to audit each area in detail every year. The risks and amount of spending involved, the time since any previous audit, forthcoming developments in the regulatory or operational frameworks, and political or public interest are taken into consideration in the Court's selection of performance and compliance audit tasks.*

The Court will respond to changes in EU management and accounting, including the start of the new Financial Framework period 2007-2013, the enlargement of the European Union with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, and the consolidation of the introduction of accrual-based accounting from the 2005 financial year.

Special reports will include a mid-term evaluation of the major projects funded by the Regional and Cohesion Funds, the management of the EU Solidarity Fund, and the management of major structural measures projects. New or ongoing audit tasks include ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession), the outermost regions, and structural policies spending on waste water projects.

The Court of Auditors will also examine technical assistance in the context of capacity building (general budget and EDF).

New or ongoing audit tasks include TACIS spending in the area of justice and home affairs in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, pre-accession aid to Turkey, spending on CARDS justice and home affairs in the Western Balkans, rehabilitation and reconstruction following natural disasters, and banking instruments in the Mediterranean.

[http://www.eca.eu.int/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eca.eu.int/index_en.htm)



## DOCUMENTS & WEB SITES OF INTEREST

### EU LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

#### Proposals & Regulation

#### **Intelligent Energy II (IEE II): 2007 work programme**

The second Intelligent Energy – Europe programme is part of a broader Competitiveness and Innovation programme. The programme will be managed by the Commission's Intelligent Energy Executive Agency (IEEA).

The total budget allocated to implementation of Intelligent Energy – Europe II for the period 2007-2013 is 727.3 million euro. 65 million euro has been allocated to the 2007 Work Programme.

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html)

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call\\_for\\_proposals/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/index_en.htm)

#### **Black Sea Synergy – A new regional cooperation initiative**

The new strategy on the Black Sea region aims to increase the EU's involvement in the area through enhanced regional cooperation.

Alongside conflict resolution, it also focuses on enhancing cooperation in areas such as energy, transport, environment, movement of persons and security, maritime policy, fisheries, trade, research and education. Among these, energy plays the most important role.

The projects will be supported by Community financial mechanisms under the national, regional and cross-border programmes of the ENP (European Neighbourhood Policy) Instrument as well as other external assistance instruments. In the case of the EU member states Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, projects will be financed by the Regional Development Fund.

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0160en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0160en01.pdf)

#### **Commission calls for more predictable and more effective development aid**

Three Commission communications, on the EU commitments in the area of development aid.

#### **Keeping Europe's promises on Financing for Development**

[http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/DGdev-PO-COM\\_2007\\_164-PO-521-07\\_Financing\\_Monterrey\\_EN\\_ACTEclean.pdf#zoom=100&page=2](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/DGdev-PO-COM_2007_164-PO-521-07_Financing_Monterrey_EN_ACTEclean.pdf#zoom=100&page=2)

#### **Towards an EU Aid for Trade strategy – the Commission's contribution**

[http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/Final\\_Communication\\_COM\(2007\)163\\_EN.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/Final_Communication_COM(2007)163_EN.pdf)

#### **From Monterrey to the European Consensus on Development: honouring our commitments**

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0158en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0158en01.pdf)

Staff working paper

[http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/SEC\(2007\)\\_415\\_\(30032007\)clean.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/ICenter/Pdf/2007/SEC(2007)_415_(30032007)clean.pdf)

## **Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation**

The communication provides 41 specific suggestions on how gender equality can best be supported in five areas: governance, employment, education, health and domestic violence. The document contains guidelines on how to improve the integration of gender equality into development policy and the different budget lines available to promote it.

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0100en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0100en01.pdf)

## **EC Communication - Towards an integrated approach to trans-European transport, energy and telecommunications networks**

The communication reiterates the Commission position that there will be no possibility of accumulating subsidies from different budgets for TEN projects. It reconfirms the importance of its public private partnerships. It emphasises the advantages of combining the different types of network and the importance of intelligent transport systems (ITS).

[http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/legislation/doc/com\\_2007\\_0135\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/legislation/doc/com_2007_0135_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/legislation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/legislation/index_en.htm)

## **REPORTS**

### **Review of the effectiveness of European Community legislation on combating late payments**

The report concludes that nearly all of the tools provided by the Directive are relevant and useful in the fight against late payment. However, greater coherence in the Directive could improve its effectiveness.

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/late\\_payments/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/late_payments/index.htm)

### **Report of the Expert Group on innovation in services**

The report will feed into the Commission's strategy to foster innovation in services, to be outlined in a Staff Working Document in May or June 2007.

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/library/enterprise-europe/news-updates/2007/2007-03-13.htm>

### **Report on the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP)**

European eco-industries represent 2.1% of the Union's GDP and 3.5 million full-time jobs. These range from air pollution control and the management of residual water and solid waste, to the decontamination of flooring, renewable energies and recycling. Some of these sectors are recording particularly buoyant growth: the wind farm sector increased by between 20 to 25% over the last 5 years, and the world market for photovoltaic energy is expected to increase by 25 to 35%.

The Commission envisages a growth of about 6% per year for the water management sector over the next 10 years, the solid waste recycling sector having recorded a yearly annual growth of 4.5% during the period 2000-2004.

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/index_en.htm)

### **European Court of Justice - 2006 Annual Report**

Statistics show a significant reduction in the duration of proceedings before the Court of Justice and an appreciable increase in the number of cases brought before the Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance.

<http://curia.europa.eu/en/actu/news/index.htm>

## **Development aid from OECD countries fell 5.1% in 2006**

Total official development assistance (ODA) from the 22 members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD fell by 5.1% in 2006. This aid has only remained high thanks to debt relief operations. Rich countries are far from the 0.7% target in terms of spending their gross national wealth in development aid. Overall the EU respected its commitments by dedicating on average 0.43% of its GDP to development aid - a total that is significantly higher than Europeans had established in 2002.

[http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_38132297\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,2340,en_2649_201185_38132297_1_1_1_1,00.html)

[http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_201185\\_38341265\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/49/0,2340,en_2649_201185_38341265_1_1_1_1,00.html)

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan)**

The SET-Plan was one of the main ideas in the Energy Package adopted by the Commission on 10 January 2007, and discussed at the Spring European Council. The purpose of the plan will be to identify the technologies with the most potential to make Europe's energy system sustainable. It will identify barriers to their development and take-up, as well as the policies needed to overcome them.

Deadline: 13 May 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/consultation/setplan\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/consultation/setplan_en.htm)

### **Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive**

The current EU legal framework on industrial emissions comprises the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive, plus the so-called "sectoral Directives" on large combustion plants, waste incineration, solvent emissions and titanium dioxide.

Deadline: 18 June 2007

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ippc/index.htm>

### **Green Paper on Market Based Instruments for environment and related policy purposes**

Market-based instruments (MBI), such as environmental taxes, tradable permit systems or targeted subsidies, are a cost-effective way to protect and improve the environment. They provide incentives to firms and consumers to opt for greener production or products. In the Green Paper, the Commission explores a wide range of areas where the use of market-based instruments including taxation could be promoted further, such as energy consumption, environmental impact of transport and other areas of environment policy.

Deadline: 31 July 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/green\\_paper.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/green_paper.htm)

### **Green Paper on the European Research Area (ERA)**

Launch of a broad institutional and public debate on what should be done to create a unified and attractive European Research Area, which would fulfil the needs and expectations of the scientific community, business and citizens

The Commission will use the results of the debate to prepare initiatives that will be proposed in 2008. The on-line consultation, linked to the Green Paper, will be opened on 1 May.

Deadline: 31 August 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.html)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **Green Public Procurement**

EC website, offering a multitude of new and updated information on environmental purchasing in the European Union and beyond.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index.htm>

### **Water Framework Directive: implementation reports**

The assessment of water management by member states, drawn up by the Commission, shows mixed results.

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html)

### **WISE - Water Information System for Europe**

DG Environment, Joint Research Centre and Eurostat, and the European Environment Agency launched a web portal. It will make available water-related information as well as on related issues such as water quality data or water treatment plants.

<http://water.europa.eu/>

**Construction output up by 0.6% in the euro area - Up by 1.1% in the EU27 (January 2007 compared to December 2006)**

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP\\_PRD\\_CAT\\_PREREL/PGE\\_CAT\\_PREREL\\_YEAR\\_2007/PGE\\_CAT\\_PREREL\\_YEAR\\_2007\\_MONTH\\_03/4-20032007-EN-AP.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007_MONTH_03/4-20032007-EN-AP.PDF)

### **Improving knowledge transfer between research institutions and industry across Europe: embracing open innovation**

Set of recommendations to actively promote the pooling of intellectual property between universities, and between universities and the private sector.

[http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/com2007182\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/com2007182_en.pdf)

### **Voluntary guidelines for universities and other research institutions to improve their links with industry across Europe**

[http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/sec2007449\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/sec2007449_en.pdf)

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