



FEDERATION NEWS

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EFCA has 29th member, new president-elect and new board member

At the EFCA General Assembly meeting held on 7 June 2007 in Rhodes, Panos Panagopoulos (Greece) was appointed EFCA president-elect. Bernd Kordes (Germany) was elected director to the EFCA Board.

The revised format of the 2007 General Assembly meeting was to make the federation’s work known to its stakeholders and to facilitate the debate on further progress.

EFCA president Yann Leblais reported on the federation’s achievements and set out the main areas of activity against the 2005 - 2008 Forward Plan.

The secretary general highlighted EFCA communications as well as the federation’s continuous efforts to ensure the effectiveness of its representational work.

The meeting welcomed Jean Félix’s well-presented overview of the EFCA 1992-2007 actions in the area of public procurement as well as TECNIBERIA’s presentation of the study on the cost structure and profitability of Spanish engineering consultancies and business trends. Panos Panagopoulos highlighted the progress of the Project Financing Committee’s work to ensuring recognition for the important role of the

industry in innovative and often complex PPP projects.

Formal General Assembly approvals included observer membership for the Russian Association of Engineering Consultants (RAEC), EFCA's 2006 accounts, and the 2008 budget and subscriptions.

The meeting also unanimously agreed on the second term as vice-president for Pablo Bueno Tomás (Spain).

Finally, the participants shared thoughts on the framework of the various layers of the industry's representation (i.e. national, regional and international).

2007 EFCA Conference shows range of challenges for the industry

The business-oriented formula of the annual conference found the interest of 250 engineering consultants and their business representatives, gathered in Rhodes in early June 2007.

An excellent mix of relevant business-related topics, addressed by gripping speakers from the industry's and clients' side, featured in this year's conference programme.

The European Commission - through Reinhard Klein - provided insights on recent and forthcoming European initiatives in the field of construction.

Already some national associations have taken the opportunity to repeat the experience and requested a presentation on life-cycle costing, EUROCODES and energy efficiency.

Developments in, and challenges from public private partnerships and globalisation to engineering consultancy were top of the programme.

Growth strategies and a provocative examination of the engineers' values and attitudes proved particularly impressive.

All attendants highly appreciated the efforts HELLASCO brought into this outstanding event.

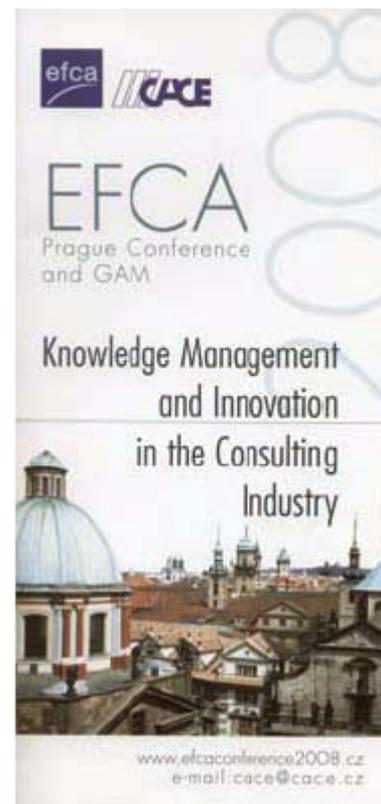
Presentations are available at:

<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/news.aspx?item=3507>

Knowledge management and innovation in the consulting industry

On the occasion of the Rhodes General Assembly meeting, CACE, the Czech host association for the 2008 Conference, presented the planned 2008 Prague programme.

The 2008 Conference theme is 'Knowledge management and innovation in the consulting industry'.



Knowledge management is challenging the traditional concepts of creativity, innovation and multi-partner networks. It is providing insight in knowledge sharing and management in product development and manufacturing and materials.

Knowledge management related services represent a huge new global market in which any innovative engineering consultancy firm can make its mark.

More information will be made available as from September 2007 at:
www.efcaconference2008.cz

EFCA sits on Health and Safety experts committee

The European Commission will develop an interpretative guidance document in order to assist national governments in the proper interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Health and Safety Directive.

As a member of the Construction Safety Forum, EFCA together with the ACE (Architects' Council of Europe) had called on the European Commission to review the Directive. The Commission had made clear that this matter was beyond the Forum's remit.

However, having noted that the implementation of the Directive's requirements was not harmoniously carried out across the member states, the Commission has decided to develop practical and pragmatic guidance. This non-binding guidance is to assist member states in developing national policies for the protection of health and safety of workers and in the review of their national legislation. It will also carry principles and practical knowledge for both clients and designers.

Both ACE and EFCA were invited to sit on the advisory experts committee. The nominated experts will assist the external consultant in the work. It is expected that the contract will be signed with the external contractor in November 2007. The contract would last 18 months so that the guide would be available to member states in early 2009.

At its June 2007 meeting, the EFCA Working Party on the H&S Directive

concluded that it is essential that the designers community promotes powerfully its views.

EFCA endorses EP views on implementation of the 2004 procurement directives

The European Parliament's Internal Market Committee (IMCO) is calling for a European Commission action plan to encourage member states to finally clear up transposition and implementation problems. In response, EFCA outlined its views and the needs of business to the IMCO Chair.

EFCA explained to the IMCO Chair that the specific nature of engineering consultancy services offered by design professionals requires careful consideration in the transposition of the Directives.

In order to contribute to the consistency of interpretation and implementation of EU public procurement law, EFCA has developed guidance on how to deal with the specific nature of engineering consultancy services.

EFCA also referred to its report and position paper on award procedures for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), as well as its position paper on Institutional PPPs. These EFCA papers address the industry's concerns and comprise a series of recommendations.

Eurocodes: some misunderstandings but positive perspectives

Further to concerns expressed about the timetable for the implementation of the structural Eurocodes, EFCA examined approaches and current progress of the national implementation of these reference design codes.

The EN Eurocodes are a series of 10 European Standards, EN 1990 - EN 1999, providing a common approach for the design of buildings and other civil

engineering works. They will be used in parallel with existing national standards until 2010, when all conflicting standards will be withdrawn.

Publication of the national standards, transposing the Eurocodes and the National Annexes, is expected to take place in 2007.

At the end of the implementation process, the Eurocodes will become Harmonised European Standards and thus the standard technical specification for public works contracts.

Many of the EN Eurocodes are based on the same theories that are embodied in the national standards. However, EN Eurocodes are less prescriptive and allow greater scope for innovation.

EFCA invites all national associations to draw the attention of design engineers to the switchover to the Eurocodes to benefit from this set of standards in their design work as soon as possible.

<http://eurocodes.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showpage.php?id=01>

European Code of Conduct: means of facilitating free movement?

The EFCA Public Procurement Committee is looking at an essential aspect of the Services Directive, namely codes of conduct at Community level.

The purpose of such a European Code of Conduct is twofold: to facilitate the free movement of service providers and to contribute to the improvement of quality of service.

Member states have a maximum of three years to transpose the Services Directive into national legislation (i.e. until 27 December 2009).

At its June 2007 meeting, the Public Procurement Committee debated the impact of the Directive on the engineering consultancy industry so that appropriate guidance may be prepared for use by the

national associations, ahead of the entry into force of the Services Directive.

The Committee contuse to examine the European Commission's policy for improving the quality of services through national registration/certification systems and codes of conduct at European level.

Meanwhile, the European Commission opened a consultation on professional associations' codes of conduct.

The consultation, open until 30 July 2007, takes the form of an online questionnaire, which is available at

ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/conduct_en.htm

Progress towards European engineering consultancy career paths

Stakeholders, including EFCA, presented views on the ENGCARD, a proposed European engineering qualification passport, at the 14 May Roundtable in Brussels.

FEANI, the European Federation of National Associations of Engineers, presented its approach to the proposed instrument, which is primarily aimed at facilitating mobility of engineers.

EFCA believes that the ENGCARD might contribute to cross-border mobility of staff. However, many challenges remain: easy comparability of qualifications and accurate and transparent data on engineering curricula are prerequisites.

EFCA considers the ongoing exercise on the proposed mobility tool useful although its practical relevance for our industry is rather limited.

EIB presents new energy policy at Brussels EFCA seminar

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has made 'sustainable, competitive and secure energy' one of its priority objectives in its Corporate Operational Plan for 2007-2009. The targets set for 2007 within the EU have been raised to 4 billion euro of loans for investment in the energy sector.

At the 15 June 2007 EIB-EFCA-FEACO seminar, EIB officials set forth the five priority areas for EIB lending: renewable energy; energy efficiency; research, development and innovation in energy; security and diversification of internal supply (including Trans-European Energy Networks); and external supply (neighbour and partner countries).

Further energy-related measures include a multi-annual 3 billion euro facility for energy sustainability and security of supply. Running till 2013, from own resources, the facility will provide lending for European Neighbourhood Policy countries, ACP states, as well as Asia and Latin America (ALA) and South Africa.

Other changes in EIB energy lending policy include the increased maximum share of EIB financing (now up to 75%) of the cost of renewable energy projects, especially with respect to emerging technologies. EIB financing is now also available for up to 75% towards the total cost of projects with an energy consumption reduction of at least 20%.

As for research, the EIB will support European Technology Platforms on energy, in carbon capture and storage (CCS) as well as demonstration plants and other large European research infrastructures in the energy sector.

The EIB is also prepared to finance high-risk research that previously had difficulty accessing EIB finance, and to develop financial instruments for smaller-scale investments.

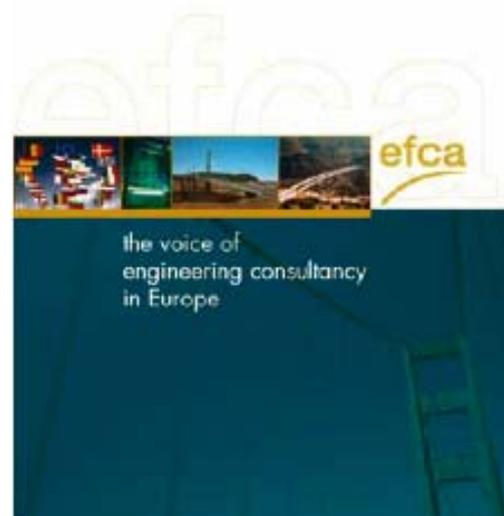
Presentations can be downloaded at:
<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/news.aspx?item=3524>

New EFCA brochure

In line with the review of EFCA's communications policy and image, EFCA produced a new brochure.

The brochure presents the association, the profession and the membership. It is available from the secretariat and can be downloaded from the website at:

<http://www.efcanet.org/>



E F C A A G E N D A

Project Financing Committee	Brussels	26.09.2007
Working Party on Directive 92/57 (H&S)	Brussels	27.09.2007
Board of Directors	Berlin	28.09.2007
Public Procurement Committee	Brussels	09.10.2007
Standardisation Working Party	Brussels	10.10.2007
D&S meeting	Bucharest	26.10.2007
Professional Liability Committee	Brussels	15, 16, 21 or 22.11.2007 (tbc)
Board of Directors	Ljubljana	06.12.2007



EFCA conference 2007 in Rhodes

By courtesy of Mátyás Borostyánkői



EUROPEAN BRIEFING

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EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

2007-2009 strategy (3,961 billion euro financial assistance) for candidate and potential candidate countries in place

The strategies set out the priorities for EU financial assistance for 2007-2009 under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo.

Financial assistance to these countries aims to enhance political and economic reform and development on their path towards EU membership.

EU assistance will also help strengthen ties with neighbouring countries, including EU

Member States, through cross-border cooperation projects.

Besides the country-specific financial assistance, a multi-beneficiary programme, supporting joint projects by several countries, identifies eleven areas of intervention. These areas include regional cooperation, infrastructure, justice and home affairs, internal market and trade, market economy, supporting civil society, education, youth and research.

Now that these strategies are in place, the next step is to prepare, with the beneficiaries, programmes to implement the assistance.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/ipa/index_en.htm

Life+: first annual call for proposals will be issued on 15 September 2007

With a budget of 2.143 billion euro LIFE+ is providing specific support for the development and implementation of Community environmental policy and legislation, in particular the objectives of the 6th Environmental Action Plan and ensuing thematic strategies.

Life+ comprises three components: Nature & Biodiversity, Environment Policy & Governance, Information & Communication. At least 78% of LIFE+ will be for the co-financing of project action grants, and at least 50% of this amount will be for nature and biodiversity projects.

The Commission will organise annual calls for proposals, select, revise and monitor projects, make payments with the help of external experts for the selection and revision of proposals; and organise external teams for monitoring of ongoing projects. The member states will be responsible for forwarding all project proposals to the Commission, setting national priorities and objectives (from 2008 onwards), and preparing comments on proposals, in particular in relation to national annual priorities.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifep/us.htm>

EU increases aid to Mongolia to 14 million euro (2007-2010)

Mongolia is the first Asian country to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that endorses the new Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2007-2010.

In March 2007, the new Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 was finalised with a focus on rural development. The corresponding Indicative Programme 2007-2010 allocates 14 million euro to Mongolia, up 17% from the previous allocation of €3 million per year.

In co-operation with the World Bank and the Mongolian Government, most of the funds will be used to support sustainable livelihoods in the Mongolian countryside.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/mongolia/spmipa/index.htm

<http://www.delmg.ec.europa.eu/en/index.asp>

60 million euro aid package allocated to Yemen (2007-2010)

The EC assistance strategy will focus on good governance, private sector development and human capital development.

Priorities of the Commission's 2007-2010 cooperation with Yemen are: electoral assistance, human rights and civil society, private sector development through sustainable development, local community development and reproduction health measures.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/yemen/cs/p/index.htm

INTERNAL MARKET

EU public procurement law to strengthen national review procedures

The European Parliament approved in first reading a proposal for a directive that would improve national review procedures to improve bidders' rights and combat illegal direct awards of public contracts.

The proposed directive imposes a mandatory ten-day standstill period between the communication of the award decision and the conclusion of the public contract. Secondly, if the standstill period, which enables grieved bidders to initiate a review procedure, is not respected, then national courts may deem the signed contract 'ineffective'. The contract will need to be tendered again, this time according to the appropriate rules.

National courts may decide that these contracts remain in force only if required by overriding reasons relating to a general interest. In those cases, alternative penalties must be applied instead. These alternative penalties must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive, and may entail the shortening of the duration of the contract or the imposition of fines on the contracting authority.

For contracts based on framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems, where speed and efficiency are an essential part of their success, the Directive provides for a specific review mechanism. For these types of contracts, Member States may choose to replace the standstill obligation by a post-contractual review procedure.

After being formally adopted by the Council, and published in the EU's Official Journal, member states will have 24 months to implement the directive in national law.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/remedies/remedies_en.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

European Ombudsman helps settle firms' problems with the EU administration

Of all complaints the Ombudsman receives, 95% come from citizens, and only 5% from companies, associations and other organisations.

The European Ombudsman wishes to step up cooperation with business that are in direct contact with the EU administration, for example following calls for tender or contracts signed with the institutions and bodies.

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/home/en/default.htm>

New regional JASPERS office to support EU-funded investment projects

The Bucharest office is the third regional office of JASPERS, following the opening of the Warsaw and Vienna offices earlier this year.

JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions) is a major joint policy initiative of the EIB (European Investment Bank), European Commission (Regional Policy Directorate-General - DG Regio) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

JASPERS will assist beneficiary countries (principally the new Member States and acceding countries of the EU) to prepare major infrastructure projects which will be assisted by the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds over the budgetary planning period 2007-2013.

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



DOCUMENTS & WEB SITES OF INTEREST

EU LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Proposals & Regulation

DIRECTIVE 2004/35/CE on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage

On 30 April 2007, the Directive on environmental liability, which establishes the 'polluter pays' principle in EU law, officially came into force. The parties potentially liable for the costs of preventing or remedying the environmental damage are the operators of the risky or potentially risky activities listed in the environmental liability directive. These include activities releasing heavy metals into water or into the air, installations producing dangerous chemicals, landfill sites and incineration plants. Other economic operators may also be liable for the costs of preventing or remedying damage to protected species and natural habitats, but only if they are found to be at fault or negligent.

There will be no retrospective effect and the European Commission will present a general report on the implementation of the directive in 2014.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/l_143/l_14320040430en00560075.pdf

New rules adopted by the Council and the Commission, amending the previous versions of the **Financial Regulation** and its **implementing rules** - unofficial consolidated versions

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/implement_control_en.htm

Proposed Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks

With its adoption of a number of compromise amendments agreed with the EU Council, the European Parliament paved the way to the final adoption at second reading (co-decision procedure) of the Directive on flood risk assessment and management.

The Directive obliges member states to implement long-term planning in three stages:

1. The member states will carry out preliminary flood risk assessments of their river basins and coastal zones, to be completed by 2011.
2. For flood prone areas, they must compile, by 2013, flood hazard maps and flood risk maps.
3. By 2015, member states must have devised flood management plans for these zones. The plans must include measures to reduce the likelihood of flooding and to mitigate potential consequences.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5306072>

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/flood_risk/index.htm

Global Europe: A Stronger Partnership to deliver Market Access for European exporters

This Communication proposes a stronger Partnership to deliver market access between the Commission, Member States, and business. It sets out a results-oriented approach that focuses on concrete problems that EU businesses face in third country markets. It foresees a greater decentralisation of the current system and better use of local knowledge and initiative through the development of locally based EU Market Access Teams drawn from Commission Delegations, Member State Embassies and business organisations.

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/mk_access/global_europe_en.htm

Commission report on combating corruption in the private sector

Report on member states' progress on implementing measures agreed upon in a July 2003 Council framework decision (2003/568/JHA) on corruption in the private sector. The legislation aimed to ensure that promising, offering or giving (active corruption) or seeking or receiving (passive corruption) an undue advantage of any kind in business activities in the private sector are criminal offences in all member states.

The EU has limited powers in sanctioning companies involved in corrupt business, as such sanctions would fall under the scope of national law and not Community law.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0328en01.pdf

Annual Report 2007 on the European Community's Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance in 2006

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0349en01.pdf

Annual SOLVIT performance report

The SOLVIT network helps to solve practical problems in the Single Market. SOLVIT has since 2002 dealt with more than 1,500 cases relating to a variety of areas such as residence permits, recognition of professional qualifications, employment and social security rights, market access for products, provision of services, VAT reimbursements or border controls for businesses. SOLVIT delivers pragmatic solutions to complainants within an average period of ten weeks. SOLVIT is a free-of-charge, easy-to-use service.

http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm

Report from the Commission 'Better lawmaking 2006'

According to the report, much work remains to be done if proposed fast-track actions to reduce the administrative burden on business are to be implemented.

The Commission estimates that the measures would save companies 1.3 billion euro a year.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0286en01.pdf

Report of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (2005-2006)

Eco-industries currently represent 2.1% of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP). Despite the strong global position of European eco-industries, much greater levels of deployment and take-up of environmental technologies are required at EU and global level.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/pdfs/comm_pdf_com_2007_0162_f_en_acte.pdf

Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion

The Report provides an update on the progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion. It also gives a first assessment of the preparation for 2007-2013, based on the programming documents submitted to the Commission by Member States by end of April 2007.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_en.htm

Synthesis of the Commission's management achievements in 2006

This Communication reports on how the Commission has performed its management responsibilities and on the assurance its internal controls systems provide and summarises the conclusions of the Annual Activity Reports. It examines areas where Directors-General or Heads of Service have made reservations, and presents an initial analysis of how the underlying weaknesses can be addressed.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0274en01.pdf

Consultation on auditors' liability – Summary report

Summary of 85 replies to the public consultation on the possible reform of auditors' liability regimes in the EU, launched in January 2007.

The audit profession prefers limitation based on capping, whereas the other respondents who support a Commission initiative would prefer a solution based on proportionate liability. Nevertheless, some respondents stress that if a Commission recommendation is adopted, it should give maximum flexibility to Member States in relation to the method of limitation at national level. Many respondents underline the need to consider the principle of subsidiarity.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/auditing/docs/liability/summary_report_en.pdf

Customer Mobility in relation to Bank Accounts

Report on banking mobility, published by the European Commission.

With the Single Euro Payments Area, which comes into play from 2008, the Commission is seeking to open up the banking market within Europe and to encourage cross-border business. The report is open for public comment until 1 September 2007 (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/baeg_en.htm).

ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finservices-retail/docs/baeg_report_en.pdf

CONSULTATIONS

Opening new markets worldwide for Europe's ICT industry

Public consultation to help strengthen the global position of Europe's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industries by ensuring access to global markets. The Commission aims to formulate a more ambitious, targeted international EU strategy for ICT that explores new markets for EU industries, improves the competitiveness of Europe's ICT industry in global markets and promotes EU interests worldwide.

Deadline: 17 September 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=3475

MISCELLANEOUS

Taxes in Europe

The (English language) database is the European Commission's on-line information tool covering the main taxes in force in the EU Member States. It provides information on around 500 types of taxes in force in twenty-three member states (information on Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Portugal will be available at a later date). In addition, the online system provides visitors with information on tax assessment bases, the main exemptions, the applicable rates, economic and statistical classification, as well as the generated revenue.

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/info_docs/tax_inventory/index_en.htm

Euro area labour cost rose by 2.2% - EU27 up by 3.7%

Total hourly labour costs in the EU27 rose at an annual rate of 3.7% during the first quarter of 2007, up from 2.8% for the previous quarter.

The two main components of labour costs are wages and salaries and non-wage costs. In the EU27, wages and salaries rose by 3.3% and the non-wage component by 4.9%. For the previous quarter, the corresponding rate was 2.3%.

A breakdown by economic activity shows that, in the EU27, labour costs grew by 3.4% in both industry and construction, and by 3.9% in services.

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_06/3-14062007-EN-BP.PDF

Annual Environment Policy Review

The annual Environment Policy Review (EPR) highlights the main developments in environment policy at EU and member states level over the last year. It highlights recent findings and environmental trends and indicates the main issues to come up over the next year.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/policyreview.htm>

Facts and figures of the European Research Area

http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/newsroom_en.html

Bathing Water quality – Report 2006

The 2006 report focuses on water quality for 21,094 bathing areas monitored. Of these sites, 14,345 were in coastal waters and 6,749 in inland freshwater areas.

As per last year, the Commission is still concerned by the member states' practice to remove non-compliant beaches, sometimes without justification, from the official lists.

http://ec.europa.eu/water/water-bathing/report_2007.html

Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways

Study, commissioned by Regional Policy Directorate-General, showing that Rail Baltica, a 1200 km railway connecting Warsaw, Kaunas, Riga, Tallinn and Helsinki, is economically viable.

It is expected that the first project applications to the Cohesion Fund for the Warsaw - Kaunas section will be presented to Regional Policy Directorate-General in 2008. This section is to be completed within the 2007-2013 programming period. The next sections Kaunas - Riga and Riga - Tallinn will most probably be implemented during the next programming period.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/rado_en.htm

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