



FEDERATION NEWS

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Young Professionals in Europe to optimise exchange of experiences and ideas

EFCA offered 45 young engineering consultants an insight into the impact of European policies on business and EFCA's representational activities. What's more, the two-day seminar encouraged future contacts, promoting awareness of European issues and networking both at national level and throughout Europe.

In the introductory roundtable, the participants presented a range of national key issues and developments.



Lectures on the EU institutions and activities provided the framework for understanding the effects of EU legislation on the engineering consultancy business along six wide-ranging thematic areas: free movement of services and workers, public procurement, environment, health and safety, standardisation and research and innovation.

The presentation on EFCA's challenges in influencing EU policies proved most relevant for the subsequent meeting with two Members of the European Parliament, and the debate with an EC official and representative of the Irish Permanent Representation.

YONRI, the Dutch Young Professionals organised a debate on 'sustainability'.

Following the presentation on the ACE Progress Network, the participants reported on national initiatives for, and activities of, young engineering consultants. It was concluded that these need stimulating efforts to build up active networks.

The challenge for the European Young Professionals is now to capitalise on the results of this first encounter and to develop further initiatives.

EFCA will continue to provide information on the relevance of the EU dimension for the business and facilitate the exchange of experiences.

Meanwhile, Young Professionals are invited to sign in at the FIDIC Young Professionals website

<http://ypf.fidic.ch/forum/Pages/default.aspx>

and/or to register at

<http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/30218/580449536E9E>

Solutions to skill shortages require taking broad perspectives

The Directors of the national associations looked at possible responses to the engineering consultancy industry's skill needs and best practice strategies to attract young people.

Whilst the Young Professionals indicated skill gaps (e.g. communication, awareness of legal and regulatory design requirements, business management etc.) in the Brussels seminar, the Directors and Secretaries General of the professional associations discussed at their annual autumn meeting what might be done to address the need for suitably skilled engineering staff.

Causes of engineering skill shortages are complex and are interrelated with negative career perceptions. Routes to attract students into engineering include greater ties and enhanced collaboration between industry and schools/universities.

It was concluded that more efforts are required to raise young people's awareness of both the industry's emphasis on innovation and creativity, and exciting and rewarding opportunities open to engineering consultants.

National associations briefed on 'alliance contracting'

The principles and characteristics of 'alliance contracts' were described to the directors and secretaries general (D&S) at their 26 October meeting in Bucharest.



Jan Van der Putten – Paul Oortwijn – Anya de Bie

The principles of alliance contracting to deliver infrastructure projects were adopted in the mid 1990s in Australia.

The alliance agreement is a non-adversarial contract that is based on the principles of equity, trust, respect, openness, no dispute and no blame. Fundamental in an alliance contracting arrangement is the equitable sharing of risk and reward between all contracting parties; partners thus "share the gain as well as the pain".

Major considerations expressed at the meeting related to the complexity of insurance arrangements, the achievement of best value for money (in particular where public clients are involved, who are ultimately accountable for ensuring that the project is delivered for the 'best price'), the estimation of the target cost that includes an appropriate allowance for risks and contingencies, and the EU public regulatory framework.

The EFCA Public Procurement Committee and the FIDIC Contracts Committee will shortly start their examination of the alliance contracting strategy.

EFCA to reinstate constructive dialogue with EuropeAid

Both the Permanent Representations and the consultancy federations EFCA and FEACO (management consultants) expressed concerns about EuropeAid's declining responsiveness.



EFCA's dialogue with EuropeAid is aimed at contributing to the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and fairness of procurement for external assistance projects, and eventually helping to improve the quality of EU development aid.

Through its Partnership for Development Committee, EFCA has for years provided feedback from the practice to contribute to workable and viable procedures for EU external contracts.

To invigorate its contacts, EFCA is now undertaking a survey to define the industry's major concerns in the framework of EC external actions.

12 member countries submitted in total more than 90 responses. At the same time, data is collected on the number of firms operating on international markets.

The analysis of the results will allow EFCA to provide expert comments and to ensure that the industry's voice is heard.

EFCA continues delivering on European standardisation

The EFCA Standardisation Working Party agreed on an internal consultation within the industry, prior to drawing conclusions as to the feasibility of, and need for, standardising engineering consulting services.

At its October meeting, the EFCA Working Party agreed to hold a series of workshops over the coming months.

The first two meetings are aiming to consult internally within the profession on the

definition of functional stages and the definition of project management.

The first workshop will take place on 12 December.

The second workshop, planned on 22 January 2008, will focus on the definition of project management, with special consideration for new and emerging services (e.g. health & safety co-ordination, energy contracting).

On 22 April 2008, EFCA will present the findings of the AFNOR study to external stakeholders.

Eventually, the outcome of the AFNOR study will determine how far the standardisation programme could go, whether limited to a functional terminology and glossary, or further.

Such Europe-wide terminology would serve as a means to improve co-operation between all project parties, to avoid misunderstanding on the content and cost of services, and to open up the internal services market.

E F C A A G E N D A

Professional Liability Committee	Brussels	22.11.2007
Board of Directors	Ljubljana	06.12.2007
Partnership for Development Committee	Brussels	11.12.2007 [11:00-16:00]
Project Financing Committee	Brussels	16.01.2008
Public Procurement Committee	Brussels	18.01.2008
Board of Directors	Lisbon [tbc]	22.02.2008
Standardisation Working Party	Brussels	26.02.2008
Board of Directors	Brussels	18.04.2008
Board of Directors	Prague	29.05.2008
EFCA GAM & Conference 2008 www.efcaconference2008.cz	Prague	29-31.05.2008
Board of Directors	Stockholm [tbc]	19.09.2008
Board of Directors	Brussels	05.12.2008



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EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

450 national, regional and cross-border programmes (2007-2013) turning into reality

The Commission has officially approved the NSRFs (National Strategic Reference Frameworks) of all member states.

The procedures for the adoption of the operational programmes, setting out the member states' and/or regions' priorities, are well underway.

The member states and regions have then the task of implementing the programmes, i.e. selecting the thousands of projects, and to monitor and assess them. All this work takes place through the management authorities in each country and/or each region.

Estonia

Negotiations on the programme 'Development of economic environment' (investment of nearly 1.6 billion euro) and the investment of 1.4 billion euro 'Development of living environment' programme are concluded. A third operational programme to develop human resources has already been adopted by the Commission. In total, Estonia will benefit from 3.4 billion euro to implement the 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy.

Finland

The Commission approved four regional operational programmes. These are financed under the 'Regional competitiveness and employment' objective of the Structural Funds for the 2007-2013 programming period.

Ireland

The Commission adopted three regional programmes involving Northern Ireland. The programmes concerned are: Regional Competitiveness and Employment (307 million euro of EU investment), PEACE III (225 million euro Community co-funding) and Northern Ireland-Ireland-Scotland cross-border co-operation (192 million of Community aid).

Italy

The regional programme for Sicily is approved and will benefit from 3.27 billion euro from the European Regional Development Fund. The total cost of the programme amounts to 6.54 billion euro. The financial counterpart of Community assistance is provided by the central Italian administration, the region of Sicily and other public bodies. The rate of

Community part-financing is 50% of eligible cost.

In total, Italy will benefit from EU investment worth 28.8 billion euro under cohesion policy for 2007-2013.

Latvia

The Commission approved the Operational Programme 'Entrepreneurship and Innovation'. The total budget of the programme is around 1.08 billion euro; Community assistance amounts to 736.7 million euro (approximately 16 % of the total EU money invested in Latvia under Cohesion policy 2007-2013).

Luxembourg

Following the Commission's approval of Luxembourg's National Strategic Reference Framework (65.27 million euro EU financing), negotiations are ongoing on two operational programmes.

Poland

The signature of five programmes for the regions of Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Warminsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie, Zachodniopomorskie and Mazowieckie marks the conclusion of the negotiations for all operational programmes for the Polish regions (except for the Voivodship of Świętokrzyskie).

Poland is the biggest beneficiary of Cohesion Policy investment for the new funding period, 2007-2013 (67.3 billion euro). The country has presented 21 operational programmes (five national and 16 regional programmes) to the Commission.

Portugal

Seven regional programmes (Açores, Alentejo, Algarve, Centro, Lisboa, Madeira and Norte) and three thematic programmes are approved (European investment of 20.9 billion euro). In total, Portugal will benefit from 21.5 billion euro to implement Cohesion policy (2007-2013).

Slovakia

The first four Operational Programmes are adopted: transport (3.2 billion euro to support railway and road infrastructure,

inter-modal transport infrastructure and public urban transportation by rail), Information Society (993 million euro), a Regional programme (1.4 billion euro) and Technical Assistance (98 million euro to contribute to the preparation, financial management, monitoring and audit of the programmes, and reinforcement of administrative capacities).

In total, Slovakia presented 11 programmes for 2007-2013, which will benefit from 11.6 billion euro EU funding.

Sweden

The country's eight regional programmes are adopted and launched. This will lead to a total European cohesion policy investment of 1.89 billion euro or 17.4 billion SEK, up to 2013.

Sweden's contribution to complement the EU investment will be 1.8 billion euro (including Territorial co-operation).

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/scoreboard13112007.pdf

Helping small and medium-sized companies to become greener

The Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme will channel financial resources towards support networks, simplify access to environmental management systems, and promote greater awareness of environmental issues among these companies.

The European Union's 23 million SMEs as a whole represent about 99% of all EU enterprises and 57% of the Union's total economic added value. Representing such a large percentage of the EU economy's turnover, the impact of SMEs on the environment is significant.



The proposed Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme is a set of measures that aim to help SMEs minimise the environmental impact of their activities and to facilitate compliance with existing legislation. The measures also cover the dissemination of information specifically targeted for SMEs, promoting support networks, and training activities that build local environmental expertise.

Funding for the Programme's measures will come from LIFE+ funds (€5 million for 2007-13) with additional funds to be made available through the Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds.

A website providing information on EU environmental policy for SMEs is now available in seven languages.

Guides on energy efficiency, air emissions, soil and water and waste as well as a handbook on funding opportunities are planned.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/index_en.htm

267 million euro for the Pacific states

The Pacific states will benefit from a budget of 267 million euro from the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the period 2008-2013.

The European Commission signed country strategy papers with the 13 Pacific island states. They are the first countries to sign strategy papers in the framework of the 10th EDF.

Three priorities have been set: good governance, sustainable management of natural resources and growth.

The 13 Pacific island states are the following: the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

EU Aid for Trade Strategy

The Council agreed a strategy on 'aid for trade', which is aimed at enabling all developing countries to better integrate into the world trade system and to use trade more effectively and in a sustainable way in the eradication of poverty.

EU Aid for Trade is targeted at helping developing countries develop greater capacity to trade, by helping improve technical facilities in ports, assisting exporters in meeting EU health and safety standards and supporting entrepreneurialism at every level.

In total, 2 billion euro will be potentially available every year from 2010: 50% of this comes from the EU budget managed by the Commission, while 50% comes from the aid budgets of the member states.

About half of the increase in European aid for trade is specifically targeted for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries with which the EU is currently negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements.

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st13/st13070.en07.pdf>

INTERNAL MARKET

New Directive improving rights of rejected bidders adopted

The new Directive improves the national review procedures that businesses can use when they consider that a public authority has awarded a contract unfairly.

Contracting authorities need to wait for at least 10 days after deciding who has won the public contract before the contract can actually be signed. This 'standstill period' is designed to give bidders time to examine the decision and to assess whether it is appropriate to initiate a review procedure. If this standstill period has not been respected, the Directive requires national courts under

certain conditions to set aside a signed contract, by rendering the contract 'ineffective'.

The Directive also seeks to combat illegal direct awards of public contracts, which is the most serious infringement of EU procurement law.

National courts will also be able to render these public contracts ineffective if they have been illegally awarded without transparency and prior competitive tendering. In these cases, the contract will need to be tendered again, in accordance with 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. 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 may be particularly relevant, 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.

The Directive will soon be published in the EU's Official Journal. EU member states will then have 24 months to implement it in their national laws.

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

Reference tool to compare qualifications near to formal adoption

The European Parliament voted in favour of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF).

The EQF will act as a translation grid for qualifications systems in the member states. It has two principal purposes: promotion of

mobility between countries and of lifelong learning.

At the core of the EQF are its eight reference levels, covering basic to most advanced qualifications. These describe what a learner knows, understands and is able to do, regardless of the system in which the learner's qualification was acquired. The EQF therefore shifts the focus away from learning inputs (such as the length of a learning experience, or the type of institution), to learning outcomes.

The EQF is already influencing the development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) in many Member States, where NQFs are often themselves part of the wider national reform process. Most countries now are developing NQFs.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html

Public procurement: infringement proceedings against Austria, Germany and Greece

The European Commission is controlling the full application of EU public procurement law in practice.

Austria

The Commission is sending a reasoned opinion to Austria concerning the award of a works contract by the Krankenhaus Spittal/Drau GmbH. The Austrian authorities originally disputed that the Krankenhaus Spittal/Drau GmbH is a public contracting authority. Subsequently they acknowledged the breach of Community law. However, their efforts in the present case to ensure compliance with Community law have not been sufficient.

Germany

The Commission considers that the contracts for database services concluded by 13 states and 'juris (a company partially owned by the Federal Republic of Germany) might be public contracts, which should have been awarded by competitive

tendering procedures with publication of European-wide calls for tenders. It has therefore sent a letter of formal notice to the Federal Government inviting it to present its observations. If there is no satisfactory reply within two months, the Commission may issue a reasoned opinion.

Greece

The Commission decided to refer Greece to the European Court of Justice over the compatibility with Community law of the procedures for awarding contracts for six sub-projects of the overall project 'Protection and restoration of the forest around Thessaloniki (Seih-Sou)'. Two sub-projects were awarded on the basis of qualitative selection criteria. The Commission also considers that the procedures for awarding contracts for the six 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.

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/index_en.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

Highly skilled migrants are welcome in the EU

The proposed 'EU Blue Card' is part of a proposed scheme to facilitate entry and residence conditions, and access to the labour market for third-country nationals.

The Commission adopted two legislative proposals in the area of economic migration.

The first proposal aims at establishing a Framework Directive for the purpose of admission of highly qualified migrants to the EU, creating the EU Blue Card.

The scheme is entirely demand-driven.

The proposed harmonised requirements are: valid work contract or a binding job offer (for at least one year) and proof of relevant higher professional qualifications. The other key criterion is that the gross monthly salary for the job must not be inferior to a specific

'salary threshold' set in each member state (at least three times the national minimum wage). Other requirements relate to the need for applicants to have sickness insurance and valid travel documents (e.g. visas).

The second proposal is a Directive, establishing a single application procedure for a single residence and work permit and a common set of rights for third-country workers already legally residing in a Member State.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0637en01.pdf

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0638en01.pdf

EIB opens representation offices in Ankara and Istanbul

An agreement on the establishment of two European Investment Bank (EIB) representative offices to be opened in Ankara and Istanbul was signed on 5 November.

The EIB local offices will make it easier for the EIB to be responsive to the financing needs of public and private sector clients and strengthen cooperation with local institutions and partners.

The EIB's offices will become operational soon after ratification of the agreement by the Turkish Parliament.

Turkey is by far the largest recipient country of EIB financing outside the EU. Total lending over the period 2000-2007 came to 7 billion euro with 3.5 billion euro being channelled to the private sector alone. The EIB's investments in Turkey will reach a record figure of over 2 billion euro in 2007.

EIB renews its transport lending policy

In the present context of heightened attention to climate change the European Investment Bank (EIB) is committed to a review of its lending approach in the transport sector to ensure that its support focuses on the sustainability of Europe's transport.

The bank will uphold its strong commitment to the funding of Trans-European Networks (TENs). Priority will continue to be given to railways, inland waterways and maritime projects, in particular 'motorways of the sea', as well as to urban transport and hubs between modes of transport.

All road projects will have to demonstrate appropriate economic returns. Further emphasis will be placed on the RDI activities of vehicle manufacturers, focusing on energy efficiency, emissions reduction and safety enhancement.

<http://www.eib.org/projects/publications/eib-transport-lending-policy.htm>

Road infrastructure safety management

The Council of transport Ministers reached a general approach on the proposed Directive.

The draft directive is aimed at ensuring that safety is integrated into all phases of planning, design and operation of the road infrastructure across the Trans-European Network (TEN-T).

The draft directive establishes four procedures to ensure a high level of road infrastructure safety within the EU: road safety impact assessments, road safety audits, network safety management and safety inspections.

In June 2007, the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism recommended that the plenary session reject the Commission's proposal. However, it was decided in plenary to send the proposal back to the Committee for further examination.

http://ec.europa.eu/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=194746

Energy challenges: member states late submitting energy efficiency plans

Infringement procedures are launched against twelve member states for failure to notify their national Energy Efficiency Action Plan, and against France and Latvia for failure to notify implementing measures, required by the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

Belgium, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden failed to notify the Commission of their National Energy Efficiency Action Plans (NEEAPs). NEEAPs should contain national strategies on reaching 9% energy savings by 2016.

The **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive** requires Member States to establish minimum energy performance standards and energy performance certification schemes for buildings, as well as to ensure that heating and air conditioning installations are regularly inspected to enable performance improvements.

<http://www.buildingsplatform.org/cms/>



DOCUMENTS & WEB SITES OF INTEREST

EU LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Proposals & Regulation

Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA) - Multi-annual indicative financial framework for 2009-2011

The Multi-annual Financial Framework sets out the financial assistance, available to support the reform efforts of the candidate and potential candidates.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0689en01.pdf

The Commission's Work Programme for 2008

The 2008 legislative work programme sets out 61 'priority initiatives' and 26 'strategic initiatives', both legislative and non-legislative.

Main priorities are: growth and employment, sustainable Europe, an integrated approach to immigration, putting citizens first, and Europe as a global partner.

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

EU's freight transport agenda: Boosting the efficiency, integration and sustainability of freight transport in Europe

The new package of measures consists of proposals concerning logistics, a rail network giving priority to freight, and European ports, as well as two documents on the barrier-free European maritime transport area and the motorways of the sea.

The Logistics Action Plan suggests a range of concrete actions in priority areas such as electronic information on freight, training and quality indicators, simplification of processes, vehicle sizes and loading units, urban transport and long-distance corridors.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/logistics/freight_logistics_action_plan/index_en.htm

REPORTS

Enlargement Strategy and Progress Reports 2007

Annual strategy document, explaining the Commission's policy on EU enlargement. The document includes also a summary of the progress made over the last twelve months by each candidate and potential candidate: Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244).

The so-called 'enlargement package' contains proposals for revised European and Accession partnerships for each country. Finally, the Multi-annual Financial Framework sets out the financial assistance available to support the reform efforts of the candidate and potential candidates.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/reports_nov_2007_en.htm

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

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/publications/annual-reports/2007_en.htm

Annual Report of the Instrument for Structural Policy for Pre-Accession (ISPA) 2006

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0685en01.pdf

18th Annual Report on Implementation of the Structural Funds (2006)

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0676en01.pdf

Annual Report on the Cohesion Fund (2006)

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0678en01.pdf

2006 Report on PHARE, pre-accession and transition instruments

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0679en01.pdf

European Development Fund accounts

Balance sheets and accounts of the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th EDF and Statement of Assurance by the Court of Auditors for financial year 2006

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/annual_budgets_reports_accounts_en.htm#budget_2006

The 2007 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard

The EC's annual scoreboard of companies' spending on research and development (R&D) shows that corporate R&D has increased by 10%, with EU-based companies increasing their R&D investment by 7.4%. The scoreboard also shows an upward trend in companies' profitability all over the world.

The figures are derived from company accounts and indicate the R&D invested by companies' own funds, independently of the location of the R&D activity.

The Scoreboard comprises the top1000 R&D companies from the EU and the top1000 R&D companies from the rest of the world.

http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu/research/scoreboard_2007.htm

The European Competitiveness Report 2007

In 2006, the European Union had its best economic performance since 2000 with a growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 3%. Productivity, measured by the increase of GDP per employee, grew strongly for the EU-27 with 1.5%, compared to an annual growth rate between 2000 and 2005 of 1.2. Employment growth accelerated for the EU-27 by 1.6%, whilst the average annual rise for the period 2000 until 2005 was 0.5%.

The Report focuses on issues of economic reform bearing on the various drivers of productivity growth as well as on competitiveness developments concerning particular industries. It also includes a statistical annex with sector and country-specific competitiveness indicators.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/competitiveness/1_eucompetrep/eu_compet_reports.htm

Small and medium-sized enterprises - Key for delivering more growth and jobs. A midterm review of Modern SME policy

The review takes stock of the progress achieved since 2005 in five main areas of the Commission's SME policy: cutting red tape, improving access to markets, promoting entrepreneurship and skills, improving growth potential and strengthening dialogue with stakeholders.

It also states that the Commission will seek the views of small businesses on the possible content of a Small Business Act.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/docs/com_2007_0592_en.pdf

CONSULTATIONS

Motorways of the Sea

European maritime transport space without barriers

The European Commission is proposing a series of measures to promote the freight transport logistics, make rail freight more competitive, create a framework which will allow European ports to attract investment for their modernisation, put maritime freight transport on an equal footing with other transport modes and review progress made in developing Motorways of the Sea.

Deadline: 20 December 2007

The online questionnaires to contribute to the public consultations are available at

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/home/consultation/transport_en.htm

Transport - Preparation of an Impact Assessment on the Internalisation of External Costs

The services of the Directorate General for Energy and Transport of the European Commission are calling for comments on their proposed approach to internalisation of external costs, with a view to preparing a European strategy on this matter.

External transport costs could be internalised and thus supported by those who generate them (the 'polluter pays' principle). The costs to take into consideration are congestion, air pollution, climate change, accidents and noise. The following are not included: costs associated with the need to construct and maintain infrastructures and the repercussions on the physical environment in which we live.

Cost by cost, transport mode by transport mode, the Commission considers various methods of internalisation, such as taxes, charges (contrary to taxes, charges are associated with the supply of a clearly defined service) or emission quotas. The Commission's questionnaire also tackles the highly controversial issue of the allocation of resources generated by taxes and charges.

Deadline: 31. December 2007

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/white_paper/consultations/index_en.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

Overcoming the stigma of business failure: for a second chance policy

The Communication should help focus stakeholders' and policy-makers' minds on a range of necessary actions to remove the barriers which result from an entrepreneur's business going bankrupt when he/she wants to start afresh.

<http://ec.europa.eu/sme2chance>

Europe's environment - The fourth assessment

Report published by the European Environment (EEA). It assesses environmental progress in 53 countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, South Eastern Europe, as well as Western and Central Europe. It calls for better implementation of environmental policies and the clear and realistic definition of goals.

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/pan-european/fourth-assessment>

European Court of Auditors report on the Commission's management of the CARDS programme

The Court examined the management systems of the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme, and a sample of over 30

projects in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia.

In 2007, the CARDS programme was replaced by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance. Projects under the CARDS programme will, however, continue to be implemented for a few more years.

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/367232.PDF>

Progress Report on the Sustainable Development Strategy 2007

The EU's sustainable development strategy was adopted by the European Council in June 2006. It addresses seven major challenges: climate change and clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, public health, social inclusion, demography and migration, and global poverty.

http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/news/index_en.htm#report_2007_en

Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU

The new policy will build on Europe's strengths in marine research, technology and innovation. The accompanying Action Plan covers a wide spectrum of issues ranging from maritime transport to the competitiveness of maritime businesses, employment, scientific research, fisheries and the protection of the marine environment.

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/index_en.html

Selected Principal European Economic Indicators (PEEIs)

New webpage, bringing together in one single place a set of the most relevant and timely short-term economic indicators for the euro area and the European Union.

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1194,47773485,1194_47782287:1194_66724556&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

August 2007 compared to July 2007 - Construction output up by 0.4% in the euro area

In the construction sector, seasonally adjusted production¹ rose by 0.4% in the euro area (EA13) and by 1.0% in the EU27 in August 2007, compared with the previous month.

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_10/4-18102007-EN-AP.PDF

Life cycle costing (LCC) as a contribution to sustainable construction: a common methodology

This study provides an analysis and evaluation of the different national approaches to LCC as well as an EU-wide methodological framework for the estimation of life cycle costs for buildings and constructed assets. It gives guidance on how to make cost estimates at each stage of a construction project, from the initial appraisal to the completion and post-occupation phases, including the disposal of the asset. A number of concrete case studies illustrate the practical implementation of this EU-wide approach.

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/construction/compet/life_cycle_costing/final_report.pdf

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