

JULY 2007 – EDITION 2

ANGUS COUNCIL

EUROPEAN E-ZINE

This e-newsletter is intended to give local businesses and Angus Council staff information about European Union actions that may have direct relevance to their current and future work. Entries are brief, but hopefully sufficient to allow you to decide whether an item is of relevance. Links to more detailed information and suggested action points are given.

The e-zine is produced by the External Funding Team, Economic Development Division, Infrastructure Services Department, County Buildings, Market St, Forfar DD8 3WD, Tel 01307 473221 email [externalfunding@angus.gov.uk](mailto:externalfunding@angus.gov.uk)

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Summary:** A new EU-wide enforcement network has been launched by the European Commission in a bid to tackle cross-border fraudsters. The network will target scams such as phoney lotteries and bogus holiday clubs, and clamp down on what the commission calls "systematic abuses of EU consumer protection rules". It will also define minimum standards for national enforcement authorities, including the ability to conduct on-site inspections, impose fines and to order companies to stop illegal practices.

**Actions:** For further information visit the European Commission website:

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

**Summary:** MEPs have backed a report calling for a European logo for foods containing 95 percent organic ingredients, aimed at protecting organic food. The report has been submitted in response to proposed regulation on organic production and food labelling currently being considered by EU Agriculture Ministers.

**Action:** For further information visit <http://www.foodnavigator.com/news/ng.asp?n=64751-organic-eu-soil-association>

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Summary:** Small businesses are set to benefit by new European Commission action to cut their administrative burdens. The proposals, aimed at transport companies, small bakers, butchers and grocery shops are part of a package of fast track actions, which the Commission announced in January this year. The total package of ten actions will save companies 1.3 billion a year on administrative costs.

**Action:** For further information visit [European Commission website](#).

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Waste Framework Directive:

**Summary:** this is a review of the 1975 EU Waste legislation as it simplifies the existing legal framework by repealing the Waste Oil Directive (1975) and incorporates the Hazardous Waste Directive of 1991. This proposal also lays down rules on recycling and, crucially, requires Member States to draw up binding national programmes for cutting waste production. These new requirements to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that is landfilled could prove difficult to apply by Local Authorities across the EU and in the UK in particular. MEPs want that by 2020, 50% of municipal solid waste and 70% of waste from construction, demolition, industry and manufacturing must be re-

used or recycled. Also rules on landfill are proposed to be tightened up. These rules could prove difficult to apply at local level.

### **WRAP trials recycling services for SMEs**

**Summary:** A series of feasibility trials to encourage small and medium sized businesses to recycle their waste have been launched across the UK, funded by the Waste and Resources Action Programme. The overall aim of the trials, which will run for six months, is to develop convenient and cost effective services to make it easier for small and medium sized enterprises to recycle. [More info](#)

### **Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations**

**Summary:** Under the new Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations that came into force from July 2007, producers (manufacturers, importers or resellers) will be responsible for collecting, via producer compliance schemes, any waste electrical equipment purchased after 13 August 2005. Organisations should therefore keep a record of where such equipment is bought from. Items bought before that date can be removed as replacement equipment is being delivered or otherwise it is up to the user to pay for it to be recycled or sent for disposal.

**Action:** The Department for Trade and Industry's WEEE Regulations guidance can be found at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file37923.pdf>.

### **Waste Prevention and Recycling Thematic Strategy**

**Summary:** this proposal which has crucial implications for Local Authorities waste collection systems and in particular to municipal incinerators, has already been voted at the European Parliament in February.

One key aspect for Scottish Local Authorities was that of the technical definition of Energy recovery to be applicable to municipal incinerators was compatible with the facilities already in place in Scotland. A second reading at the European Parliament is expected after the summer recess and the MEPs will vote on it end 2007.

**Action:** Contact External Funding for a useful briefing note on this provided by CoSLA.

### **Adaptation to Climate Change – Green Paper launch and Public Consultation**

**Summary:** On June 29 the European Commission, following numerous delays, finally published its long-awaited **Green Paper on Climate Change adaptation**. Being a Green Paper it does not propose specific actions at EU level but aims at quick-starting the debate by making an overall assessment of the impact of Climate Change across the EU and explores several routes in which local, national and EU level could engage to limit its effects. It should be noted that Climate Change Adaptation is related to but not the same as Climate Change mitigation such as reduction of carbon emissions measures endorsed earlier this year at EU level (cut 20% emissions by 2020) and also at UK Level (draft UK Climate Change Bill) and soon at Scottish level. In fact, Climate Change adaptation is a realisation that some degree of climate change is going to happen regardless of the limitation policies that are now being pursued. Within the key issues of the Green Paper, the consequences for Scotland suggest that Scotland would be among the least affected countries in the EU. However this is only in relative terms since by looking at the European Commission broad predictions Scotland is expected to see its temperatures raised beyond the 2 °C threshold (while as regards rainfall the situation will stay the same with slight increases or reductions –see maps). Although the Green Paper does not at this stage advocate concrete policies, it clearly emphasizes the need for coordinated action across the different layers of governance, including Local Authorities who are in the frontline to stimulate behavioural change. The European Commission also recognizes that Local Authorities have first hand knowledge of their areas. :

**Action:** Consultation is open until 30 November 2007.

**Summary:** A directive requiring public bodies to improve and make available spatial data in order to help inform EU policies on the management of the environment, energy and transport has been agreed by the EU institutions and will come into force on 15th May 2009. It had been feared that the

Directive may result in a considerable loss of revenue for public bodies, including local authorities, however amendments agreed between the EU institutions mean that public bodies will continue to be allowed to charge for access to data. More information can be found [here](#).

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Summary:** The UK European Parliament Outreach Team, created to improve contact between the Parliament and the general public, has recently launched its new website which contains information, a magazine to showcase activities and various resources. These include materials for use in schools about the Parliament, organising visits by MEPs etc.

**Action:** More information can be found at <http://www.europarl.org.uk/outreach/>

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Summary:** A five year EU action plan to cut work related illness and accidents by a quarter has been proposed by the European Commission. It would require governments to approve national strategies identifying the sectors and companies most affected.

**Action:** Visit [Commission website](#)

### MIGRANT WORKERS

**Summary:** More support should be given to migrant workers to learn English, council leaders have said following concerns that new arrivals face barriers to local services.

A new report from the Audit Commission says that migrant workers can find it difficult to attend English classes because of their unpredictable shift patterns, and changes to the funding arrangements later this year are likely to make it even harder. Michael O'Higgins, Chairman of the Audit Commission said. "The single most useful thing local agencies and employers can do is to make it easier for migrant workers to speak better English, so they integrate better."

Foreign nationals made up 6% of the workforce in 2006, up from 3.5% in 1996, the report says.

**Action:** a summary of the report is available at <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/downloads/MigrantWorkersandLocalCohesionSummary.pdf>

### PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

**Summary:** The European Commission adopted a Guide on the promotion of innovation through public procurement on 23 February 2007. The guide is meant for people who deal with public procurement and outlines 10 practical approaches that will help promote innovative solutions.

**Action:** The new guide can be found here: [http://www.proinno-europe.eu/doc/procurement\\_manuscript.pdf](http://www.proinno-europe.eu/doc/procurement_manuscript.pdf)

### **Forthcoming Commission proposal on public procurement of Green vehicles**

**Summary:** Since public procurement accounts for 30% of bus purchases and about 6% of the EU van market, the European Commission estimated that setting a public procurement target for the purchasing of new green vehicles would accelerate the market creation for these vehicles and would set an example for private companies. The approach would not be mandatory as it would not be based on ring-fencing purchases but instead it will ask for preferential assessment of all green vehicles when purchasing new vehicles. The Commission has not decided if it will be a simple Communication (therefore without legal force), a new specific Directive or that it would be one of the sections of the new rules for Green Public Procurement, to be tabled in October 2007. The Green Paper on Urban Transport is likely to have a specific section on this when it is published on 12 September 2007. Finally, on December 2007 the Commission will table a new proposal to reduce CO2 emissions and improve fuel efficiency from new light duty vehicles (passenger cars and light-commercial vehicles) below the threshold of 120 g CO2/km by 2012. This is obviously related to the green vehicles procurement issue.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

**Summary:** A new Europe-wide hotline for reporting missing children has been set up. The number, 116000, is the first of several beginning with 116 that have been reserved for other social services.

**Action:** Visit [Commission website](#)

## **TAXATION**

**Summary:** The European Commission has launched a new information tool for citizens and businesses. The "Taxes in Europe" online database provides information on the main taxes currently in force in the Member States. At the time of launch it contained information on over 500 taxes, including the tax base, main exemptions, economic and statistical classification and the rates applicable. The database also provides information on the amount of revenue generated by each tax. The website covers all the main taxes, including personal income taxes, corporate income taxes, value added taxes and excise duties. In addition, the database also contains information on the main social security contributions in each Member State. The European Commission will update the database annually. Currently, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Portugal are not included in the database, but this information will be added in the near future.

**Action:** The database can be accessed at

[http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/taxation/gen\\_info/info\\_docs/tax\\_inventory/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/info_docs/tax_inventory/index_en.htm)