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EU Insight is edited by the UEPG General Secretariat as part of its communication service to UEPG Members

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EU Live Issues

2013-2014 EU Presidency priorities



The next Council work programme as established by the future Irish, Lithuanian and Greek Presidencies covers the period January 2013 to June 2014. The main policies of sector interest are:

Environment

Within the wider umbrella of sustainable development, environment will continue to be on the forefront of the EU agenda with a continuing emphasis on green growth and resource efficiency.

The adoption of the 7th Environment Action Programme, closely associated with the Resource Efficiency Roadmap, remains a priority. Developing and reviewing environmental legislation will be one of the focuses of the three EU Presidencies, including:

- Review of the waste legislation (including targets);
- Review of the air policies;
- Water and the Blueprint will be at the core of the programme;
- Review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.

Protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as conservation and management of natural resources will also be high on the agenda of the three EU Presidencies.

Related new legislative measures on invasive alien species will be progressed and also will seek to advance the implementation of the broader EU Biodiversity Strategy objectives and corresponding targets within the EU.

Employment

The three EU Presidencies will pursue the implementation of the 2012 Employment Package putting emphasis on quality job creation, structural reform of labour markets and investment in human capital.

As for legislative activities, the EU Presidencies will continue working on:

- the Commission proposals on the review of the Working Time Directive;
- a new Community Strategy on Health and Safety at Work for 2013-2020;
- a new legislative instrument regarding occupational diseases of the musculoskeletal system;
- a legislative initiative to amend the Directive 2004/37/EC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work.

Transport

Furthermore, the three upcoming EU Presidencies will take forward the work on the proposal for the revision of the Directive on weights and dimensions aiming at improving aerodynamic characteristics of trucks and at changing their dimensions. They will also examine the "internal road market package" including legislative proposals on cabotage (access to road haulage market and access to the occupation of road transport operator); on minimal rules on sanctions and their enforcement in commercial road transport and on charging systems for heavy goods vehicles. These initiatives will be aimed at improving the economic and environmental efficiency of road freight transport and creating a more even playing field.

Several new proposals are expected to be presented which aim to improve the implementation of the European Maritime Transport Strategy.

Innovation

The Council has underlined the need for the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) to

have a clear focus, the importance of Member State involvement and the need for effective streamlining of existing instruments. Regular monitoring by the Council will be necessary in order to reach long term objectives as well as concrete goals to be fixed year by year.

SMEs

The EU Presidencies are looking forward to possible new European Commission Initiatives on better regulation and the reduction of the overall regulatory burden at EU level with specific emphasis on SMEs and micro-enterprises.

In future, efforts will be focused mainly on cutting bureaucracy, facilitating access to finance, supporting businesses' access to new markets and stimulating entrepreneurship. The EU Presidencies will also ensure the necessary follow-up to the Entrepreneurship Action Plan to be launched by the Commission at the beginning of 2013.

The adoption of the Regulation establishing a Programme to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) is equally a priority.

Next steps

UEPG will identify the key meetings and proposals from the Irish Presidency in close cooperation with its Irish Member, the ICF.

Commission supports NEPSI

On Monday 3rd December, the Liaison Forum focused on the results of social dialogue and its monitoring. NEPSI (Social Dialogue Agreement on Respirable Crystalline Silica) was presented as a good example and the European Commission reiterated its support to the agreement. The NEPSI Secretariat continues its dialogue with the Commission to ensure funding of next years' NEPSI projects.

Social partners took the opportunity also to highlight the Social Dialogue essential multi-sectoral network platform between Employers and Employees' Representatives in Europe allowing common projects and acting on specific issues.

UEPG News

2nd IUCN-UEPG High Level Meeting

Following the signature of the Letter of Intent between IUCN and UEPG in May 2012, and the 1st High Level Meeting which took place on 26 July 2012, the two parties continued their high-level dialogue on 14 December 2012. Arnaud Colson, UEPG President, François Petry, Chair of the UEPG Environment Committee and of the Biodiversity Task Force, and Gerard Bos, Head of Business & Biodiversity within IUCN, looked at the way forward for the IUCN/UEPG cooperation.

This follows fundamental internal staff changes within the IUCN Brussels office. Gerard Bos welcomed the constructive and positive approach of UEPG stressed the role of its members, especially SMEs, and their great achievements and further potential in protecting biodiversity. Further action was agreed, which will be discussed and implemented at the UEPG Biodiversity Task Force.

Next steps

6 February UEPG Biodiversity Task Force meeting, Brussels

UEPG Team – out in the field

Upon the initiative of UEPG President Arnaud Colson, the UEPG team had followed specific training on different extraction sites across Europe during the summer break. The purpose was to get a first-hand-experience on the daily business and challenges of aggregates producers and to learn more about the impact of EU legislation on the industry.

United Kingdom

From 11 to 13 July, the SME [Midlands Quarry Products](#) (MQP), 7th biggest UK aggregate and asphalt producer, welcomed Miette Dechelle, Public Affairs Manager at Whitwick Office, Wednesbury, Cliffe Hill and Boon' sites, in Leicestershire, Midlands, UK.

The training was focused on the implementation at company level on one hand of EU, National and local law and norms, and

on the other, of innovative, safe and sustainable initiatives to reach a company's sustainable cultural behaviour.



Safety on site from top management to employees, contractors, haulers and visitors
Instruction given on driving engines, before talking with drivers on safe and sustainable driving.

Phil James, new Chief Executive of [The Institute of Quarrying](#) and [Minerals Products Qualification Council](#) (MPQC) were also participating.

A special thanks to Simon Willis, MQP Managing Director and its team, Jason Keen, [Wednesbury plant](#)' Manager, Ian Bredbury, [Cliffe Hill](#) site's Operation Director, Richard Nevin, Production Manager, David Gazzard, SHE Manager, Jeremy Dial, HR and Training Manager, Nadeem Saeed, Laboratory Manager and Annette Mabe, Secretary.



New habitats and nature protection zones
Rehabilitated Boon quarry in the Midlands, UK

France

From 17-20 July, UEPG Secretary General Dirk Fincke was hosted by [Holcim](#) Aggregates Centre-East and [Lafarge Aggregates South](#) in France.

The programme included numerous site visits and meetings with the Quarry Managers and colleagues in charge of Health & Safety,

Human Resources, Permitting and Environment.



Published in the UEPG Biodiversity Database
The Holcim Sand and Gravel pit Faverny, France created a high diversity of habitats.

Both companies explained the challenges aggregates producer are currently facing and showed strong interest in upcoming EU legislation.

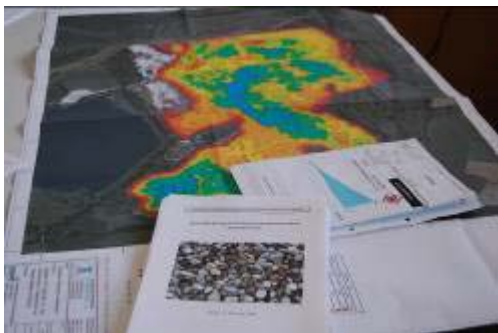


Excellence in Innovation and Sustainability
The Lafarge quarry next to Signes is an outstanding example on sustainable management.

Special thanks to Alain Le Tetour, Regional Director, Holcim Aggregates and Patrick Rolland, Director General, Lafarge Aggregates South and their teams for an excellent preparation and training.

Germany

From 13 to 16 August, HeidelbergCement welcomed Sandrine Devos, Public Affairs Manager, in the Heidelberg area in Germany.



Gathering information
Regional planning and permit documents for aggregates extraction

The objective of the internship was to get a better knowledge of the local operations and their daily challenges. One main focus had been on the permitting system.

Stefan Bliese, Project Analyst at the Competence Center Materials Central Europe/Central Asia for HeidelbergCement, presented the company and its ambitions, as well as the aggregates industry in the area of Heidelberg, along the Rhine River.

Jörn Ebeling, responsible manager for Ressources & Land management guided Sandrine Devos and Yevgeniya Shamatulska, Environmental auditor at HeidelbergCement, in four sand and gravel pits. Forchheim was of special interest to Sandrine Devos as Secretary of the Environment Committee, as an [example](#) of habitat enhancement.



Save haven for pioneer species
The gravel pit of Durmersheim, Germany is equally a nature protection zone.

The Netherlands

[Cascade](#), the Dutch Sand and Gravel Association, kindly organised an internship programme including site visits to [Netterden](#), [Smals](#) and the [Grensmaas Consortium](#) for Ivana Oceano in August, then UEPG Secretary.



All inclusive
Smals floating plant, extracting, processing and directly loading a customer's boat.

Thank you

The UEPG Team would like to warmly thank all colleagues from national associations and companies, who have dedicated their time to make this experience valuable and fruitful. The UEPG Team will repeat the internship in summer 2013.

Season's Greetings

The UEPG General Secretariat would like to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2013!

We would like to warmly thank all our Members for their much-valued support for UEPG activities in 2012.



UEPG Meetings in 2013

- 1 March Deadline for entries for the UEPG Sustainable Development Awards 2013
- 5 Feb. PR & Communication Task Force, Brussels
- 6 Feb. Biodiversity Task Force, Brussels
- 6 Feb. Water Management Task Force, Brussels
- 7 Feb. Marine Aggregates Task Force, Brussels
- 7-8 March Committee meetings, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 24 April European Minerals Foundation Parliamentary Debate, Brussels
- 24 April Board Policy Dinner, Brussels
- 25 April Board Meeting, Brussels
- 6 June Entrepreneurs' Forum, Helsinki, Finland
- 7 June Delegates Assembly, Helsinki, Finland
- Sept. Task Force meetings, Brussels
- 10-11 Oct. Committee meetings, Brussels
- 27 Nov. European Minerals Foundation Forum, Brussels
- 27 Nov. UEPG Sustainable Development Awards 2013 Ceremony
- 28 Nov. Board Meeting, Brussels