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EU Live Issues

Green Week 2014 – Circular Economy

The 2014 edition of the Green Week, organised by the European Commission (DG



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

saving resources, creating jobs

Environment), took place this year on 3-5 June in Brussels, promoting the Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency & Waste. The main issues discussed were on:

Waste

Waste was now a resource. Members States were nowadays obliged to prevent waste starting from reuse, repair, recycling before landfilling. The waste targets would match the proposal from the 7th Environmental Action Programme (including a ban on landfill of recyclables).

Taxes

Taxes on resources reappeared a few times within the discussions, in particular, to undertake a shift from labour taxation to resource taxation. The principle of a “green tax” was debated and seen by some speakers as the only way to meet resource efficiency targets. Such “green tax” should be introduced progressively with different rates adapted to the country. Binding and ambitious targets would give business certainty needed to get engaged in waste reduction. A fiscal policy reform should be based on quantitative modelling simulation. A major obstacle was the lack of political will. UEPG expressed the view that taxing mineral resources would be an inappropriate fiscal tool to foster resource-efficiency for industries trying to create jobs.

Ecosystems

It was stressed as essential to monitor the state of natural capital for a truly circular economy. The key point in natural capital was mapping, assessing and accounting ecosystem

services. The European Commission several times referred to the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and informed that its current work was based on TEEB work and its results.



In Sweden the Environment Ministry had drafted a [2020 strategy for biodiversity and ecosystems services](#).

In this framework, aggregates producing companies were quoted because of their positive contribution to Ecosystems in terms of restoration of quarries and pits. On Nature as capital, questions were raised on the methodology, common indicators and risk management.

Circular Economy



Jo Leinen relected MEP (S&D, Germany) and former Chair of the EP ENVI Committee.

The European Commission informed that a Communication on the Circular Economy with legislative proposals on waste handling was in preparation. A Communication addressing growth ‘beyond GDP’ was equally being drafted. The Italian Presidency will organise a conference around that topic. A joint work between DG Environment and DG

Employment had been launched. The common basis will be on creating green jobs through initiatives moving towards a circular economy.

Further information and presentations, see <http://www.greenweek2014.eu/>.

No Net Loss

Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES)

On 22 May 2015, International Day of Biodiversity, the European Commission organised a High Level Conference on “Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services” in Brussels. This is part of the EU 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity. The objective of the initiative is to provide the knowledge base on ecosystems and their services in Europe through a coherent analytical framework. Decision-makers need to be able to make informed decisions. This will be one of the tools on which the No Net Loss Initiative will rely.

No Net Loss Initiative – Impact Assessment

The call for tenders for the study supporting the elaboration of the impact assessment for a future EU initiative on No Net Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services has been published. It provides the specifications for a tender, and particularly the tasks which have to be performed. Amongst the foreseen tasks, we would like to underline the following:

Task 1: The contractor shall review 4 policy scenarios and the Business as Usual scenario, identified in the previous contract and amend and refine them in the light of the latest information. This will include, for example, the latest status in relation to the revised EIA Directive, the new provisions on Marine Spatial planning and the latest position in relation to EU policy on soil protection.

Task 2: The contractor shall analyse and compare the economic (including administrative and legal costs of implementation and administrative burdens), social and environmental impacts of the different scenarios. A quantitative (and as far as possible monetary) assessment of the impacts is expected.

Stakeholders' consultations are not foreseen in the tender.

Internet Consultation on No Net Loss

The European Commission has published in parallel an on-line consultation to seek the public's views on a future EU initiative to halt biodiversity loss. You can find the questionnaire following this link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/nnl_en.htm

The consultation asks questions about the scope and operational principles of the initiative. Common grounds had been discussed and agreed by the European Commission's Working Group, but these were recommendations which we now need to support.

The consultation specifically addresses the issue of compensation/offsetting. The consultation will be online for response by 26 September.

Next steps

UEPG will draft shortly a reply to the consultation which we will then circulate to UEPG Members. As foreseen in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, the No Net Loss initiative is expected in 2015.

Mining Waste – BREF Review

Background

- Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries (the “mining waste directive” or the “MWD”) was adopted in 2006.
- The Reference Document on Best Available Techniques for Management of Tailings and Waste-Rock in Mining Activities (BREF) was produced in 2004 (when the directive was not yet adopted) but formally adopted by the EU Commission in 2009. This BREF did not cover aggregates apart from limestone.

BREF Review

In the light of the new definition of BAT and the new approach taken for the BREF's in line with the Directive on Industrial emissions and recent guidance documents, the scope of the Mining Waste BREF needs to be expanded to cover the scope of the MWD, not excluding any commodities by limiting the scope to a few metals and minerals (ie. aggregates would be included).

The review is carried by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), one of the scientific institutes of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

All experts that will become involved in the review of the Mining Waste BREF need to be nominated by the Industrial Emissions Directive Forum (IED Forum) or the Technical Adaptation Committee (TAC) on the Mining Waste Directive (the TAC only contains Member State representatives).

State of Play following the Kick-Off meeting

Although UEPG was not directly represented at the Kick-Off meeting of May 2014, it had liaised with other industry representatives which share our views on the need to respect the principle of proportionality in this BREF.

The most important results of this Kick-off meeting are the following:

- To broaden the scope and align it with the Mining Waste Directive 2006/21/EC (MWD), but the BREF addresses only activities with current relevance in the EU and for which extractive waste may pose a potential environmental or human health concern including major accidents (recognition of the principle of proportionality)
- To expand the listed extractive sectors in view of new and future EU mines and extraction activities. The non-exhaustive list of industrial and construction material covered does not refer to specific rocks relevant to the Aggregates sector.
- The legal base is the Mining Waste Directive and not the Industrial Emissions Directive
- The BREF is a descriptive document and it does not prescribe the use of any technique or specific technology
- Some key environmental items include emissions to air, to water, and to soil.
- Inclusion of waste pretreatment
- Associated environmental performance levels or emission level will be defined in the BAT conclusions if appropriate and agreed at the TWG final meeting, considering the applicability conditions and after proper assessment through the exchange of information
- To adapt the title of the reviewed BREF to the scope of Directive 2006/21/EC: Best Available Techniques Reference Document for the Management of Waste from the

Extractive Industries – in accordance with Directive 2006/21/EC and to abbreviate this title as MWEI BREF

It is a positive step forward that we have the confirmation that the legal base is the Mining Waste Directive. However, some aspects deserve our close attention, including the introduction of performance or emission levels.

Next steps

UEPG will ask to be officially involved in the process. It has been recommended that Benoit Lussis (Fedix, Belgium) be nominated as Technical Working Group (TWG) member and represent UEPG, with the active support of a Working Group.

UEPG's position should be based on the fact that our mining wastes are mainly inert and our mining wastes facilities are not of category A in a clear majority of cases. We will in any case defend the proportionality principle on a risk-basis which is in the Mining Waste Directive.

First draft of the MWEI BREF: October 2015

Next TWG meeting: June 2016

Final draft of the MWEI BREF: November 2016

Land as a Resource

Background

The European Commission is preparing a Communication on land as a resource, foreseen for 2015.

This Communication will address some key items from the Roadmap for a Resource-efficient Europe, the 7th Environment Action Programme and the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy:

- the objective of no net land take by 2050
- soil degradation (both in quality and quantity, through over-exploitation, contamination and sealing)
- raising awareness about the value of land as a resource for crucial ecosystem services

High-Level Conference

In its keynote speech, Commissioner Potočník reminded that land being a finite natural resource, it is all the more essential to tackle the shortcomings of the current European land use model (including conflicting policy drivers)

and to highlight the importance of good land management.

He underlined 4 axes of work:

1. to set targets to reduce land take at government level (cf. Germany)
2. to avoid land degradation and to address in particular protection of soil: in this regard, the withdrawal of the Soil Protection Framework Directive meant a commitment to address the topic in another binding legal framework. Mapping and assessment of ecosystem services for informed decisions on land use planning, complemented by the No Net Loss initiative, would be useful tools
3. to recycle land (remediation and addressing brown fields)
4. to address land outside of the EU and the EU dependency

Next steps

A public consultation will be launched in the coming weeks, in preparation of the Communication in 2015.

Potential impacts for the Aggregates Industry would be the implementation of a land offsetting scheme, limited access to land and measures related to soil remediation. The Conference however focused mainly on the role of agriculture and the EU land footprint outside of its borders.

2014 Call for proposals for LIFE

LIFE is the financial instrument for the environment since 1992. The new programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) 2014-2020 was approved 2013 with a budget of €3.4 billion. [View LIFE Regulation in 24 languages.](#)



The total budget for project action grants for this call is EUR 283 million.

The category of interest for our sector is "Traditional" projects, which cover:

- LIFE Nature & Biodiversity; LIFE Environment & Resource Efficiency; LIFE Environmental Governance & Information &

- LIFE Climate Change Mitigation; LIFE Climate Change Adaptation; LIFE Climate Governance and Information.

It may be best-practice, demonstration, pilot or information, awareness and dissemination projects.

Deadline is **16 October 2014 at 16.00** hours Brussels local time and format required is: [eProposal](#)

All information are available at

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

Greek Presidency Raw Materials High Level Conference - Athens Declaration

On 20 June, Dirk Fincke, Secretary General, represented UEPG at the Raw Materials High Level and Greek Presidency Conference on "Maximising value: the Importance of the extractive industry to growth in the EU economy and its regions" which gathered 150 attendees in Athens, Greece.

UEPG, Euromines and IMA-Europe had drafted a declaration which was sent to the European Commission prior to the event on Industry's call for sustainable access to resources.

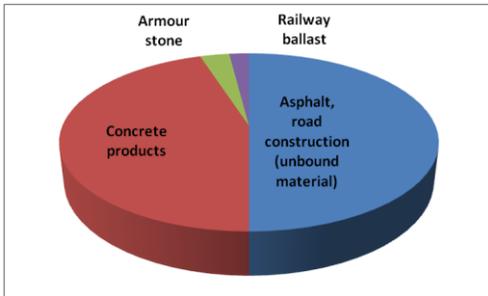
Panel speakers included the Greek Ministry to the European Commission and Industry representatives, amongst whom was the UEPG Representative, Serge Schmidt (Halyps Greece), were invited to talk on the progress of the Raw Materials Initiative and its reports on critical raw materials and the exchange of good practices in Minerals Policy, Land-planning, and permitting of raw materials within the EU. Equally, it was discussed the way forward in implementing Mineral policies and related regulations in the Member States for attracting and facilitating new investments in the sector in Europe.

UEPG Secretary General, Dirk Fincke, took the opportunity to visit UEPG Members' sites in Greece and to exchange views on their good practices and challenges at site and national levels and to inform them on UEPG activities to support them.

UEPG News

Promoting aggregates in construction

Across Europe, aggregates are mainly used in asphalt, road construction and other unbound applications (50%) and in the different concrete products (45%). Only 3% is armour stone and the remaining 2% are used as railway ballast. This is why the UEPG Delegates Assembly during its last meeting in Bern (Switzerland) approved to support the European Asphalt and Concrete Industries in their projects to promote the advantages of their products.



The support in kind may include the promotion of their projects “Asphalt Advantages” and “The Concrete Initiative” at UEPG events and during daily Public Affairs activities.

NePSi 2014 Report



All sectors are highlighting that the economic crisis had a very visible impact on the 2013 workforce headcounts in all the represented sectors. This economic downturn is however partially compensated by a large number of new sites joining in the process and new employees being covered by the Agreement. Compared to 2012, and on a longer timeframe since 2008, all Key Performance Indicators proved to be steady or having improved. The 2014 KPIs on training show improvements, although efforts regarding training on task sheets could probably still be improved. The 2011 workshops were very positive and effective, they should be repeated and extended. The NEPSI 2014 Report was approved and the NEPSI Council positively acknowledges the good 2014 reporting results.

The NePSi Secretariat will send in August 2014 an application for EU co-funding supporting Social Dialogue on ‘raising awareness on

NePSi Agreement’ – focusing on Communication and Workshop Campaigns in Europe; and especially with UEPG support keep on liaising with the Construction Sector (Employees and Employers’ Representatives), and new sectors for joining the agreement; meet the New Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner’s Cabinet when in place.

We would like again to thank UEPG Members for their active support within the NePSi 2014 Report, illustrated with continuous positive results.

UEPG Next Steps

The European Commission is still looking for good practices examples for its risk assessment study on substances by the end of the year. Therefore, we would like to maintain our contribution and collect good practices in the control of Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) on sites.

6th Explosives for civil uses Task Force Meeting



On 12 June the 6th Explosives for Civil Uses Task Force Meeting took place in UEPG Brussels Office. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange on the latest developments from the European Commission, Manufacturers, Track and Traces IT system providers and end users. The main focuses were on latest challenges of the second phase of the implementation, such as keeping a record of all identifications of explosives for 10 years, and the tight time schedule to order devices, implement and test the system as well as train end users. The Task Force agreed on Questions and Answers for a user’s document, a guidance document for end users and a website.



The next step will be now to broadly disseminate the documents and website to the Complete Supply Chain, Authorities and Companies’ Members to be ready in time.

Biodiversity training for the Belgian Aggregates sector

For the second consecutive year, FedieX and the Ornamental Stones association organised a training, in partnership with the Biodiversity and Landscape Unit of the University of Gembloux. The objective was to train quarry staff to the principles of biodiversity management in extraction sites.

Once again, the number of participants reached the maximum allowed, demonstrating that the management of biodiversity remains at the heart of the concerns of aggregates



companies. With now forty people trained, the majority of the FedieX sites now have a “Mrs. or Mr. Biodiversity”.

Sandrine Devos, UEPG Public Affairs Manager receiving her certificate.

Experts from diverse background have come to share their experience: academic experts in biodiversity but also specialists from an environmental NGO, the Department of Forest and Nature and the Department of Study of natural and agricultural areas of Wallonia, consultants and the quarrying sector itself. The program included presentations on the legal and European framework, on principles of biodiversity management in quarries and good practices. This was complemented by workshops for the recognition of key species and habitats that may be seen in quarries as well as group work.

A full day was dedicated to the discovery of biodiversity on two extraction sites in activity.



Sandrine Devos, Public Affairs Manager at UEPG, exposed to participants the European context and the UEPG actions for biodiversity, and has benefited from the training and obtained a certificate.

Hillhead 2014: MPA Focuses on Partnership & Sharing

MPA actively participated in Hillhead 2014 at Hillhead Quarry, Buxton, on 24-26 June, where the showground covered an area of some 140,000 m² and included outdoor displays, covered pavilions and extensive working demonstration areas.



Images below (clockwise from top left): Visitors explore the extensive showground; Nigel Jackson, Chief Executive MPA, speaks at the PRIME launch; MPA's busy stand.

On 24 June took place the official launch of the MPA sponsored PRIME (Professional Recognition In Mineral Extraction) project, which has been partly funded by a grant from UKCES and which has received universal support from the mineral products industry. It is being delivered by the Institute of Quarrying and MPQC, supported by a steering group representing producers, contractors, suppliers, and trade associations.

New EU Institutions

A New European Parliament

On 25 June, the European Parliament's Political Groups were established:

	EPP	221
	S&D	191
	ECR	70
	ALDE	67
	GUE/NGL	52
	Greens/EFA	50
	EFD	48

The first party was the EPP ([European People's Party](#)); the second party was the S&D ([Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats](#)); the third party was ECR ([European Conservatives and Reformists](#)); the fourth the ALDE ([Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe](#)); the fifth was the GUE ([European United Left - Nordic Green Left](#)); the sixth the Greens/[European Free Alliance](#); the EFD ([Europe of Freedom and Democracy](#)) was the seventh.

There were still some MEPs uncertain which political group to join. They might remain independent known as non-attached Members. You can find provisional results at the [European Parliament website](#).

The first plenary session of the new European Parliament will be held on 1st July in Strasbourg. At the start of its new legislative term, the European Parliament will decide on the composition of each of its standing and sub committees, and then composition of each committee and sub-committee, members of corresponding committees and its respective bureau made up of a chair and a number of vice-chairs.

In July, MEPs officially would have taken their seats in the Parliament and will elect the Parliamentary President, Vice-Presidents and Quaestors.

A New Commission

During an EU summit on 26-27 June, EU leaders agreed in Brussels to designate Jean-Claude Juncker as the next President of the European Commission. The European Parliament would hold vote on the chosen candidate, possibly as early as 15 July.

The first party was the EPP ([European People's Party](#)); the second party was the S&D ([Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats](#)); the third party was ECR ([European Conservatives and Reformists](#)); the fourth the ALDE ([Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe](#)); the fifth was the GUE ([European United Left - Nordic Green Left](#)); the sixth the Greens/[European Free Alliance](#); the EFD ([Europe of Freedom and Democracy](#)) was the seventh.

In summer National leaders would designate their commissioners to Brussels. The new President of the Commission would distribute portfolios within his team of 28 commissioners. In September, each commissioner would be scrutinised in individual hearings before Parliament committees and in October, the European Parliament would vote to approve or reject the new Commission College as a whole.



It is only in November that the new Commission would take office.

EU Italian Presidency kick off



EU Italian Presidency kicked off on 1st July. The coming six months rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union will fall under a new 5 years legislature with a new Parliament, a new President of Commission and Cabinets.

Italy, between 1959 and today, has already held 11 presidencies. In line with its Stability Law, Italy plans to spend the lowest budget.

The three main focuses of the Italian Presidency will be on growth, citizens and the external dimension.

Website: <http://www.italia2014.eu/>.

Upcoming UEPG meetings

- 8-9 Oct.** Committee meetings, Brussels
- 10 Oct.** GAIN – Global Aggregates Information Network meeting, Brussels
- 20 Nov.** NEEIP Conference, Brussels
- 19-20 Nov.** Board Meeting and Board Policy Dinner, Brussels