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French Aggregates Association demonstrates commitment to biodiversity

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EU Live Issues

Preparing for EU elections in 2014

Europe's main political parties will put up candidates for the post of President of the European Commission as part of their manifestos for next year's elections to the European Parliament. The current Commission's term of office runs until 31 October 2014, and its President is José Manuel Barroso from Portugal.



A new team of currently 27 Commissioners (one from each EU Member State) is appointed every five years. Until now, the European Council nominates a candidate to be President of the Commission, who must be approved by a majority of members of the European Parliament. If the MEPs reject the candidate, the Council has one month to put forward another. The President-elect chooses the Commissioners (and their policy area) from Candidates put forward by EU countries. The list of Commissioners is then submitted for approval (by qualified majority) first to the Council of Ministers, then to Parliament. If Parliament approves, the new Commission is officially appointed by the Council.

Next European Parliament

The Parliament voted on 14 March to adjust the number of MEPs in order to comply with the Lisbon Treaty. The treaty sets a maximum size for the Parliament of 751 MEPs after 2014 election, with no country allowed more than 96 MEPs. The current size is 754 MEPs and Croatia is joining in July this year. Under the plan back this week, 12 EU Member States will give up seats.

European Parliament elections

EU Member States approved a plan to move next year's elections to the European Parliament from the first week of June to 22-25 May 2014 to prepare the Presidential election.

Environmental Impact Assessments

On 21 March, the Environment Council had a policy debate on the review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (EIA). Ministers focused on three questions prepared by the Presidency:

1. Do Member States agree with the proposal to introduce an obligation for a joint or coordinated assessment of a project under one competent authority in all cases, where the obligation to assess its effects on the environment arises from various Union legislative instruments?
2. Do Member States consider that the scoping of the environmental impact assessment by the competent authority should be mandatory in all cases as foreseen in Article 5 of the proposal?
3. Do Member States think that the proposal for a system of accredited experts entitled to draw up an environmental report is necessary to ensure the quality such reports?

During the debate, considerable concerns were raised with regard to the type of measures proposed by the Commission to achieve the objective of simplifying the EIA procedures and to improving their quality. Some Member States pointed out the risk of increased administrative burden and additional costs. Many delegations considered not appropriate to establish a very prescriptive system at EU level.

In preparation of the Council meeting, UEPG provided Member State representatives with its [Position Paper on the EIA review](#) and agreed with other non-energy extractive industry sectors a [NEEIP common position](#).

Next steps

Following this debate, a compromise text might be proposed by the Irish EU Presidency. The vote in the European Parliament is scheduled on 10 July in the Environment Committee and 23 October in the plenary session.

This year, the European Minerals Foundation Debate, taking place on 24 April in Brussels, will address “Smarter Regulation and Environmental Impact Assessments” with the objective to discuss the revision of the EIA Directive. All relevant EU decision makers confirmed their presence to debate with participants of the non-energy extractive industry. The programme and the registration form are available on the [UEPG website](#). Participation is free of charge.

Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS)

On 4 March 2013, the NePSi Employers' meeting took place at the Brussels offices of BUSINESSEUROPE (European Employers' representation association). Martin Isles, UEPG Health & Safety Committee Chair, and Committee Secretary Miette Dechelle contributed to the debate. The meeting focused on an update of the Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) regulatory developments at EU level;

followed by a discussion on agreeing the action plan for 2013 and NePSi Budget; and proposals for a new EU Project on demonstrating the effectiveness of the European (NePSi) Social Dialogue Agreement. The new NePSi partnership with the EU-OSHA Campaign on 'Working together for risk prevention' was underlined.

Next steps

Late 2013 – Early 2014

The European Commission will publish the revision of the Carcinogens Directive. Currently, the Commission is working on exposure limit values for individual substances, resulting in an impact assessment on future proposals for the revised Directive.

For UEPG Members 2013 requires:

- *The mobilisation of UEPG Members to promote the **added value** and **continuous improvement** derived directly from*

national implementation of the NePSi agreement at site level.

- *UEPG Members preparation for 2014 NePSi Reporting: window for data submission: 15 January to 15 March 2014.*
- *Greater intensive use of the UEPG one page summary position paper as lobbying tool to help strengthen the lobbying force at European and National level from many UEPG Members, to raise awareness of the major negative impacts that will result if RCS is controlled by the Carcinogens legal framework.*

7th Environment Action Programme

On 20 March, the Rapporteur of the European Parliament on the 7th Environment Action Plan (7th EAP), Gaston Franco MEP (EPP, France), presented his amendments on the European Commission's proposal. His main focus was the implementation of existing EU environmental legislation. Other important items for the European Aggregates Industry were the role of SMEs and his recommendation to have national systems of soil protection. The Rapporteur was in the opinion that the waste targets were not realistic.

Jo Leinen MEP (Socialist, Germany) and Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy MEP (ALDE, Netherlands) both emphasised the need to have a European framework on soil protection.

Next steps

The vote in the European Parliament is scheduled on 24 April in the Environment Committee and 2 July in plenary session.

Declaration of Performance (DoP)

On 27 March, the Council of European Producers of Materials for Construction (CEPMC) organised a workshop on the Construction Product Regulation (CPR) in the European Parliament. Article 7 of the CPR details the delivery of Declarations of Performance (DoP). Making DoP available on a website will be defined under a Delegated Act in the coming months. A panel of key speakers from the European Commission, Contractors, Distributors and Manufacturers presented the progress made towards an online DoP. Jean-Marc Vanbelle, Chair of the UEPG Technical Committee, Vice-Chair Markus Schumacher

and Mark Tomlinson from Lafarge France were contributing to the event. CEPMC presented a common website in order to simplify the process through a more resource efficient DoP.

Many CPR provisions, such as the DoP, will apply by 1 July 2013. The Delegated Act should enter into force on e-supply of DoP in October 2013.

Maritime Spatial Planning

On 12 March, the European Commission published a proposal establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management. The proposed Directive requires Member States to establish a process or processes that cover the full cycle of problem identification, information collection, planning, decision-making, management, monitoring of implementation, and stakeholder participation. It, however, respects the competence of EU Member States (subsidiarity) leaving the choice of actual developments, location of investment, priority setting and determining solutions to national or local decision-making.

Context

The Commission underlined that the legislative proposal is an essential part to develop Europe's Blue Economy and supports the implementation of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), including the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as its environmental pillar.

Next steps

UEPG will identify other sea bed users and non-energy extractive industries active in the maritime area to aim for coordinated action. As the proposed Directive follows the ordinary legislative procedure, the Council and the European Parliament will debate the text and might propose amendments.

European Health and Safety Strategy

On 26-27 March, UEPG attended a conference on the future of the European Health and Safety Strategy 2013-2020 organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). Panellists from Trade Union 's, European Agencies, Universities, Employers' Association, European Parliament, Irish Presidency and László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion tabled their views on a future Strategy.

After the mid-term review of the 2007-2012 Health and Safety Strategy, a wide public consultation, and the European Parliament report, the European Commission had not yet presented a 2013-2020 Strategy. Commissioner Andor mentioned that, instead, the European Commission was preparing a citizen consultation on the next European Health and Safety priorities.

UEPG News

UEPG Committee meetings

On 7-8 March, UEPG members gathered for the four Committee meetings to discuss and exchange views on topical European and national live issues in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The event was kindly hosted by the Spanish Aggregates Federation (FdA).

Health and Safety Committee

The Spanish Aggregates Federation (FdA) and its Member the Galician Aggregates Association welcomed UEPG Committee Members to Santiago de Compostela and presented regional and national challenges which were further outlined by Rodrigo Chanes Vicente from the Ministry of Industry Energy and Tourism.

Diego López from the Mining Chamber of Galicia, presented detailed data on accidents and the root causes. Wolfgang Pichl from the German Insurance Group 'Berufsgenossenschaft Rohstoffe und chemische Industrie (BGRCl)' presented an E-Learning project on Basic knowledge & occupational safety.

Further live issues discussed were the Social Dialogue Agreement on Crystalline Silica (NePSi), Explosives for civil use and the action plan guidance document for the whole supply chain and a presentation from Ramón González Eguren (MAXAM) on the traceability of explosives.

Environment Committee

Live Issues discussed were the review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and UEPG's position on it, biodiversity and the future cooperation with IUCN, ecological offsets and the EU No-Net-Loss Initiative, Water Management and Marine Aggregates.

Our Spanish colleagues presented the state of play and their actions related to mining waste legislations.

Technical Committee

Live Issues discussed were recycling and the recommendation to create a UEPG Recycling Task Force, updates on regulated dangerous substances, on European Aggregates Standards, Declaration of Performance (DoP) and CE marking and the Construction Product Regulation (CPR), and the Recast of the Euratom Directive on radioactivity in concrete constituents. The Galician Aggregates Association presented the main conclusion of a Technical study on Alkali-Silica reaction.

Economic Committee

FdA presented a strategic plan for the Spanish Aggregates Sector 2012-2025 and the Spanish Raw Materials Strategy. The Committee discussed the UEPG Strategy on the EU Raw Materials Strategy, the European Innovation Union Partnership, the Accounting Directive and the UEPG policy and the state of play on resource taxation.

UNPG implements Biodiversity Strategy

At the end of 2012, the French Aggregates Association UNPG signed a commitment with their government on the National Biodiversity Strategy. This signature demonstrates and rewards the association's efforts, together with environmental associations and scientists, to improve ecosystem knowledge through research projects, to establish good practices for site management and restoration and to edit reference guides. Over many years UNPG has been improving its know-how to better take into account biodiversity in its activity beyond the regulatory requirements.

The 2011-2020 French National Biodiversity strategy (NBS) provides a coherent framework to enable all stakeholders (legal entities) to contribute responsibly on a voluntary basis.

In order to carry out its action for biodiversity in the long-term, UNPG is organising its commitment with the French Government within the framework of a strategy. It will be implemented from 2012 to 2015 and monitored by a dedicated structure. This strategy is organised in three pillars:



Developing the awareness of companies

As head of the network, UNPG commits itself to developing the awareness of its members on the stakes of biodiversity preservation. It will support them in their dedicated actions. UNPG undertakes to provide its members various tools with the aim of helping them work out their own commitment.

Improving our knowledge

Considering the importance of the biodiversity preservation, UNPG undertakes to continue and extend the research on the subject, notably on the ecosystem functioning. The recognised methods for expertise will be promoted in order to ensure the quality of assessment surveys and ecological monitoring.

Promoting a sustainable management for biodiversity

In order to lessen the impacts of quarry operations on biodiversity or to improve its management on sites, UNPG commits to identify scientifically recognised good practises and disseminate them to its members. Developing ecological engineering will be encouraged as well as sharing experiences.