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EU Live Issues

European Minerals Forum 2012

Following last year's success with the new format of open debate, involving participants through moderated roundtable Forum sessions, a highly competent panel of policy and decision makers and experts discussed the way forward for a resource efficient industry. The event took place on 28 November in the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the European Union.



The first session addressed the implementation of the EU Raw Materials Strategy and ensuring sustainable access to resource. Gwenole Cozigou, Director in DG Enterprise & Industry, reported on the progress made, in particular offering EU Member States to exchange good practice and the recent development of national land-use planning and strategies. Representatives from the national minerals planning authorities and industry underlined the increased reluctance of local communities to accept extraction sites in recent years. For the first time, the discrepancy between law in place and the lack of national law enforcement creating an unfair level-playing field harming competitiveness had been highlighted.



The EU Biodiversity Strategy Target of restoring ecosystems by 15% by 2020 was the central theme of the second Forum Session with the participation of Pia Bucella, Director in DG Environment.

Industry was invited to come up with proposals on how to achieve the target. To that extend, biodiversity indicators which are both scientifically sound and applicable for SMEs are needed.



The Forum was ably concluded by Nigel Jackson, Chief Executive of the UK Mineral Products

Association (MPA). The next European Minerals Foundation Parliamentary Debate takes place on 24 April 2013, Brussels.

Water Blueprint published

On 14 November, the European Commission has published the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources. It consists in the following package of documents (click on the hyperlinked text to download the document):

- [The blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water resources – Communication from the Commission \(COM\(2012\)673](#)
- [Impact Assessment SWD\(2012\)381 Executive summary](#)
- [Impact assessment SWD\(2012\)382 Part1](#)
- [Impact assessment SWD\(2012\)382 Part 2](#)

The package was officially launched during a Conference in Cyprus on 26-27 November 2012, stating that 47% of the EU waters will fail to achieve good status by 2015.

Background

In the context of the EU 2020 Strategy and the Roadmap towards a Resource-Efficient Europe, the European Commission aims at identifying the obstacles that hamper actions to safeguard the EU's water resources. This led to a review of the EU legislation and policy on water and to assess both the implementation of existing legislation in different EU Member States and the status of waters.

Implications for the Aggregates Industry

The impacts for the Aggregates Industry will very much depend on the willingness of EU Member States to apply the proposed measures. We can anticipate mainly impacts linked with water pricing and restoration. Furthermore, the EU water policies have effects on a range of key elements for the Aggregates Industry, including authorisations for abstractions, discharges and extraction under the water table.

Detailed actions are proposed in the following areas: Land use and the ecological status of EU waters; Chemical status and pollution of EU waters; EU water efficiency; the vulnerability of EU waters; crosscutting solutions.

Next Steps

The European Council will give its conclusions on 17 December 2012 and the European Parliament will provide an own report.

As agreed at the last UEPG Environment Committee meeting, the UEPG Water Management Task Force will:

- Build a list of references useful for the Aggregates Industry;
- Draft a short paper with positive contributions of the Aggregates Industry to water management;
- Produce a short guidance on KPIs for water;
- Invite the new representative on from DG Environment at the next Water Management Task Force Meeting;
- Review its position papers in order to show a clearer message on the requests from the industry.

The UEPG General Secretariat will keep participating in the EU Strategic Coordination Group on Water. It will also monitor the conclusions from the European Council and the report from the European Parliament following the publication of the Blueprint package.

7th Environment Action Programme

On 29 November, the European Commission published its Decision on the [7th Environment Action Programme](#) (EAP).

Background

The EU Environment Action Programme is meant to set out the framework for

environmental policy-making in the European Union for a fixed period of time and outline actions that need to be taken to achieve progress. The 6th Environment Action Programme (EAP) ended in July 2012. Although acknowledging many outstanding achievements, both the European Parliament and the Council noted the still worrying state of the environment within the EU, and called for a 7th EAP. To prepare its proposal, the European Commission had carried out a consultation with stakeholders to which UEPG participated.

Objectives, key measures and implications

The 7th EAP will guide EU environment policy up to 2020, the timeframe being aligned with the multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020 and other key strategies, including the Europe 2020 Strategy. It draws on a number of initiatives in the field of environment, including the Resource Efficiency Roadmap and the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. As its predecessors, the 7th EAP shall be based on the polluter-pays principle, the precautionary principle and preventive action and the principle of rectification of pollution at source.

The subtitle of this 7th EAP is "Living well, within the limits of our planet". It sets 9 priority objectives and builds on existing initiatives and legislation rather than coming up with new initiatives. One of its objectives is to demonstrate how specific environmental issues are inter-related and how improvements in one area could deliver multiple benefits not only for the environment but also for the economy and society. Most of the initiatives and tools to achieve the 9 priority objectives had been already launched by the Commission and are recommended to be implemented, e.g. 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, revision of Environment Impact Assessment Directive, Water Blueprint.

The main new outcome relevant to the Aggregates Industry is linked with the indicators used by the European Commission to monitor progress on this programme. Some will be existing ones, others are yet to be developed.

Next steps

The Commission's proposal will be considered by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Once

agreed, the new EAP will become EU law (Decision). While monitoring the debates in the European Parliament and Council, UEPG will continue to actively work on the issues addressed in the EAP relevant to the Aggregates Industry, including resource efficiency, water management and biodiversity.

Raw Materials Supply Group

On 12 November, UEPG attended the European Commission Raw Materials Supply Group meeting which reported on the progress to implement the EU Raw Materials Strategy. While most of the progress had been made on the first pillar (critical raw materials) and the third pillar (resource efficiency and recycling), the Commission proposed a set of indicators to encourage improvement in the legal and information framework for sustainable access to resources.

Restructured Unit F/3

The new Head of Unit Mattia Pellegrini replaced Abráao Carvalho who retired end of last year. The scope of this Unit has been extended and covers now forest based industries, i.e. the official title reading "F/3 Raw Materials, Metals, Minerals and Forest-based Industries". New members of the Unit are Malwina Nowakowska, Policy Officer; Anne Auffret, in charge of European Innovation Union Partnership; Milan Grohol, previously DG Research; Slavko Solar, Geologist replacing Antje Wittenberg and 2 additional colleagues from DG Environment.

Encouraging better access to resources

DG Enterprise & Industry is willing to make progress with the EU Member States who are willing to cooperate on the indicators providing data for the second pillar. So far, 14 EU Member States & Norway have responded: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

According to the first set of responses, 80-85% of applications for permits are successful and the Natura 2000 Guidance has been successfully distributed. However, most countries did not provide data on extraction sites within or close by Natura 2000 areas.

Comments from EU Member States

Austria expressed concerns that the quality of data given for some indicators might be low. Portugal currently reviews its Mining Act by the end of 2012 and will update the data provided. Hungary is still implementing INSPIRE protocols and strongly supports to continue the exercise of indicators and measuring progress on better access to resources. Germany had doubts whether these indicators were sufficient for future development. Cuts in public budgets and staff in administration have reduced the number of geological experts. The Netherlands will move to a different planning system which should simplify access to resources.

UEPG Statement

UEPG welcomed the European Commission Initiative on indicators following-up with EU Member States the implementation of better access to resources and asked for particular tools for exchanging good practice, e.g. EU Conference or Platform. It would be useful to address, for instance, the experience of countries which have introduced a maximum time for granting the authorisation/permit (Indicator No. 12). Furthermore, it would be of interest to explore the difficulties identified in providing information on how many extraction sites are within or close Natura 2000 sites. UEPG offered to assist EU Member States in providing some of the data on indicators.

The Industry representatives welcomed the continued efforts from DG Enterprise & Industry to improve access to resources, but expressed concern about the many new restrictive initiatives and proposals on environmental legislation which could jeopardize the objectives of the EU Raw Materials Strategy. UEPG encouraged inviting representatives from DG Environment working on the revision of the Environment Impact Assessment Directive and the Water Blueprint to streamline EU legislation and coordinate action between the two Commission DGs under the overarching principle of sustainable access to resources.

Next steps

The European Commission invites EU Member States and Industry Associations to provide additional data on the indicators by Wednesday 12 December 2012.

European Resources Forum

With the background of the "Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe" presented by the EU Commission in September 2011 and the "German Resource Efficiency Programme" (ProgRes) adopted by the German Federal Cabinet in February 2012, the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) hosted the first European Resources Forum (ERF) in Berlin on 12-13 November 2012, which Sandrine Devos from the UEPG General Secretariat attended.

Speakers included Members of the European Parliament [Jo Leinen](#) (S&D, Germany), [Reinhard Bütikofer](#) (Greens, Germany) and [Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy](#) (ALDE, Netherlands), and [Janez Potočnik](#), EU Commissioner for the Environment. Among the many important messages, the shift from labour to environmental or resources taxation was a recurring topic.

UEPG News

UEPG Board Meeting & Policy Dinner

On 29 November, UEPG Board Members discussed key financial and policy issues, including achievements, areas to be improved and future priorities for UEPG in 2013.



The previous day, Matthew Heppleston, from DG Employment and Social Affairs, and Brenda O'Brien, from the Brussels Liaison

Office of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, were guests of President Arnaud Colson at the UEPG Board Policy Dinner, which focused on Health & Safety. The two representatives committed to promote UEPG Members H&S good practices through EU communication channels.

Safer by Design – EU co-funding

On 5 November, Martin Isles (MPA) and Miette Dechelle (UEPG) discussed with Jost-Peter Sonnenberg from the German Accident Prevention and Insurance Association of the Raw Materials and Chemicals Industry

(Berufsgenossenschaft) the possibility to co-lead in 2013 on the EU Sectorial Social Dialogue co-funding project Safer by Design. The meeting had a positive outcome, UEPG with Sectorial Social Partners, BGs and other interested stakeholders should now prepare an application for funding by March 2013.

5th Forum MIRO

430 participants attended the 5th Forum MIRO, the main event of the German Aggregates Federation (MIRO) on 7-9 November in Dresden. President Arnaud Colson gave a welcome address underlining the importance of the excellent cooperation between MIRO and UEPG and the strong involvement of MIRO at European level.



UEPG at your service

President Arnaud Colson addressing MIRO Forum participants in Dresden, Germany.

Besides an exhibition area with 70 companies presenting latest technologies and services and seminars held by experts, the Forum offered a Platform for government representatives, academia and industry to debate the most urgent national challenges such as permitting procedures and resource efficiency indicators.

The Forum MIRO also awarded the best practice examples of health & safety in the German Aggregates Industry.

Respirable Crystalline Silica

The Chemicals Working Party (CWP) of the European Commission Advisory Committee on Safety and Health (ACSH) discussed on 25 October 2012 its draft opinion on the revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive. The CWP commonly agreed on the

recommendation of Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) to be introduced with a Binding Limit Value of 0.1 mg/m³. However, Employers and Employees Social Partner Representatives were in disagreement with the legal framework used for this introduction. The Employers were in favor of the Chemical Agents Directive while the Employees prefer the Carcinogens Directive. Germany and France are in favor of the Carcinogens Directive, while the UK aims for the Chemical Agents Directive.

UEPG, in coordination with the NEPSI Secretariat, contacted UEPG Members in France, Ireland, Cyprus and UK to lobby Member State Experts participating to the Bureau preparatory meeting and inform each of them.

Should Respirable Crystalline Silica be introduced within the Carcinogens Mutagens Directive, aggregates could be perceived as dangerous substances, labelled as such; targeted aggregates may well fall under the EU Regulation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP) and REACH including all the obligations to register, notify and label; the whole sector will be impacted with a negative public image and it will increase Nimby-ism, i.e. the reluctance of local communities to accept extraction sites in their neighbourhood.

Next Steps

We would strongly recommend UEPG Health and Safety Committee Members to lobby National Expert and Employers Representatives of the ACSH in favor of the Chemical Agents Directive. The list of ACSH National Experts and Employers Representatives is available from the UEPG General Secretariat on request.

MPA Health & Safety Awards 2012

MPA's prestigious Health & Safety Conference and Awards 2012 took place on Tuesday 13 November in London, bringing together 78 organisations, including members, contractors and other key UK stakeholders to recognise, reward and share best practice, progress and results in health and safety.

Overall, the Awards attracted 142 entries from 32 member companies, with a significant

proportion of submissions provided by companies with less than 1,000 direct employees. A full-house of 224 delegates attended on the day.

The theme of this year's Health & Safety Conference and Awards, sponsored by PICS, was Delivering 'Safer by Partnership' and Inspiring Excellence. A key focus of the morning conference session was MPA's 'Safer by Partnership' initiative, launched earlier this year, for members and their contractors to work more closely together to reduce contractor injuries and the incidence of ill health, as part of the drive to achieve Zero Harm. Progress on MPA's emerging Contractor Charter was reported, whilst MPA's new Contractor Database – also part of the 'Safer by Partnership' initiative – was launched at the event.

The afternoon awards ceremony showcased members' cutting-edge approach to understanding and tackling health and safety challenges in ways that are helpful to the whole industry. Four MPA Special Awards were also presented to SME member companies. More information on [MPA Website](#).

Biodiversity Management Plans

The Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI) of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is developing a Guidance for Biodiversity Management Plans (BMPs). This Guidance will illustrate how cement manufacturers are dealing with biodiversity related issues across their operations. In particular, it will serve as guidelines for members managing biodiversity in the extraction operations and developing BMPs for those sites that require it according to the agreed CSI's key performance indicators.

UEPG has been invited to contribute to this document. François Petry, Chair of the Environment Committee, and Sandrine Devos, Public Affairs Manager, contributed to a workshop organised in order to engage with stakeholders, including IUCN.

It is expected that the document will cover as well aggregates extraction sites with the input of UEPG.

Visit of Hainaut Quarry in Soignies

As part of an agreement between the extractive sector and the Wallonia Region the Belgian Federation of Extractive Industries (FEDIEX) invited the Walloon Minister of Nature Carlo Di Antonio to visit the quarry of Hainaut Soignies to learn more about the compatibility of wildlife and extractive activities.

In Belgium, several rare species (e.g. swallows shores, lizards and toads) are under further pressure due to high population density and now almost entirely dependent on the quarrying industry.



Offering nature a shelter
FEDIEX President Jean Marbehan (left) and the Wallonian Environment Minister Carlo Di Antonio.

The sectoral Charter in Belgium "Quarries and Biodiversity" encourages further developing this potential fully in line with the upcoming Plan "100% Nature". The aggregates industry is the first sector to sign such a Charter in Wallonia. The industry is already engaged with biodiversity management plans outlining concrete action.

Upcoming UEPG Meetings

- 14 Dec. 2nd IUCN-UEPG High Level Meeting (Skype conference call)
- 31 Jan. Deadline for entries for the UEPG Sustainable Development Awards 2013
- 5 Feb. PR and COM 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
- 25 April Board Meeting, Brussels