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EU Live Issues

Financing Biodiversity

The last workshop of the European Commission Business & Biodiversity Platform before closing down came up with new proposals to finance biodiversity and the implementation of Natura 2000. While the positive contribution to biodiversity of the non-energy extractive industry, and in particular the aggregates industry with its 24000 extraction sites, was underlined DG Environment urged the private sector to play a key role in funding. Speakers from the European Investment Bank and the Economics for the Environment Consultancy (EFTEC) presented their views on the innovative use of financial instruments and approaches to enhance private sector finance of biodiversity.

UEPG and other non-energy extractive industry sector associations stated that companies are unlikely able to fund additional projects on biodiversity in the current economic crisis. What is needed is recognition for the many achievements in financial and/or administrative burden for an industry which has no subsidies and is obliged to undertake cost-intensive restoration projects.

Sectoral Social Dialogue

On 6 September, Members of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Extractive Industries (SSDCEI) approved a renewed joint statement on the further improvement of the working conditions and occupational health of employees in the extractive industries in the context of European social dialogue. The previous statement issued in 2004 needed to be updated with new social partners joining the SSDCEI. Martin Isles, Chair of the UEPG Health & Safety Committee currently chairing the SSDCEI, has contributed to the paper.

Marine Knowledge 2020

On 18 September, Jeffrey Thompson, Chair of the UEPG Marine Aggregates Task Force,

Christian Haeser, Managing Director of the German Aggregates Federation (MIRO) and Dirk Fincke, UEPG Secretary General discussed the Green Paper "Marine Knowledge 2020 from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting" with the person in charge within DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ian Shephard.



The Green Paper explores possibilities to gather maritime data acquired from public authorities and other stakeholders including industry. UEPG expressed reservations in case companies were obliged to provide data for public use. The European Commission invited UEPG to provide further comments and to attend the 17th meeting of Marine Observation and Data Expert Group on 30-31 October.



UEPG News

FEDIEX reviews priorities

On 7 September, Jean Marbehand, President of the Belgian Aggregates Federation (FEDIEX) and its Secretary General Michel Calozet presented their industry priorities to Arnaud Colson, UEPG President and the UEPG team. The Belgian UEPG member undertook a recent reorganisation of its structure and reviewed priorities; among those are access to resources, environmental, biodiversity and water management.

APPA strengthens links to Brussels

On 13 September, Arnaud Colson, President of UEPG and Dirk Fincke, UEPG Secretary General briefed members of the Romanian Aggregates Association (APPA) on current EU lives issues and the services offered by UEPG to a full member. APPA members intend to promote sustainable development fighting against illegal extraction which harms the environment, distorts the market, has negative impacts on competitiveness. Carmen Ionescu, Director of APPA wishes to strengthen the links to EU Institutions strongly supported by UEPG.

Cooperation with EuDA

Jeffrey Thompson, Chair of the UEPG Marine Aggregates Task Force and Dirk Fincke, UEPG Secretary General reviewed potential areas of common interest with Paris Sansiglou, Secretary General of the European Dredging Association (EuDA). The meeting is part of the efforts to strengthen the voice of European seabed users as the UK demonstrated positively at national level. It was agreed that UEPG and EuDA will exchange information on a regular basis.

Non-energy Extractive Industry Panel

On 10 September 2012, members of the Non Energy Extractive Industries Panel (NEEIP) exchanged information about potential common areas of interest. The meeting started with a presentation from Mattia Pellegrini, Head of Unit for the Metals, Minerals, Raw Materials Unit within DG Enterprise & Industry. Mr Pellegrini introduced the new developments related to the Raw Materials Strategy, including the Innovation Union Partnership, and to the resource efficiency roadmap.

Other key topics were a draft common position on taxation, on ecological offsets, and crystalline silica.

UEPG Task Force and WG meetings

UEPG Task Forces and working groups are meeting in September and February each year to prepare the more detailed policy recommendations for the Committees in October/March.

PR & Communication Task Force

On 12 September, Members of the Task Force discussed the new Communication strategy, exchanged good practice, new PR tools and presented upcoming events. Excellent projects were presented by Austria (FSKI), France

(UNPG), Finland (Infra ry), Norway (Norsk Bergindustri), UK (MPA), CEMEX, HeidelbergCement and Lafarge.



Participants also focused on the European Minerals Forum 2012, the new UEPG website and the UEPG Sustainable Development Awards 2013. Task Force members agreed to support PR and Communication of UEPG priorities and to further communicate national and European achievements.

Biodiversity Indicators Working Group



On 12 September 2012, members of the Biodiversity Indicators Working Group met in the UEPG office and agreed on a general approach based on habitats, which would be the first building block of indicators suitable for the industry.

A number of EU initiatives will require the development of biodiversity indicators (including No Net Loss Initiative/offsetting and resource efficiency) and it was considered as important that UEPG proactively would develop suitable indicators which could be used by other sectors. This would avoid that indicators not fitting the purpose would be imposed on our industry.

Biodiversity Task Force



On 13 September 2012, members of the Biodiversity Task Force met in the UEPG office.

One of the main objectives was to review, together with Shulamit Alony from IUCN, how UEPG and IUCN could move forward on the Letter of Intent signed in May 2012.

Members also discussed upcoming EU initiatives such as Green Infrastructures and No Net Loss as well as the UEPG strategy on biodiversity indicators.

Release of Dangerous Substances & EPD



On 14 September 2012, Members of the working group on the Release of Dangerous Substances & Environmental Product Declaration (RDS & EPD) reviewed the EPD for approval at the Technical Committee. More work was still needed on RDS taking into account the results of the next meeting of TC351 WG6.

Marine Aggregates Task Force



On 19 September, Members of the Task Force welcomed Stephan Lutter, expert on International Marine Policy & Marine Protected Areas from WWF Germany to present his organisation's activities on the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Natura 2000 at sea. Views on the environmental impacts and the question of alternatives were discussed. The Task Force members agreed to send an invitation to WWF to learn more about the impact of marine aggregates extraction.

UEPG Members are welcomed to participate to the Task Forces and Working Groups.

Upcoming UEPG Meetings

All meetings are taking place in Brussels.

16 October	Water Management TF
25-26 October	UEPG Committee meetings
28 November	European Minerals Forum
29 November	UEPG Board meeting