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EU Live Issues

Strategic Coordination Group on Water

On 7 March, Ivana Oceano from the General Secretariat attended the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) meeting on Water, where representatives from the European Commission, discussed together with member States and stakeholder the state of the art of EU legislation on Water.

The programme of the 3rd Water Conference, taking place in Brussels on 24-25 May, embedded in the Green Week, was briefly presented. Further to the SCG meeting, a [Public Consultation](#) on Policy Options for the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Waters has been launched on Thursday, 15 March 2012 and will run until Thursday, 7 June 2012. The next SCG meeting will take place on 10 May 2012.

UEPG is also monitoring a parallel discussion on Water management, taking place at the European Parliament which is drafting a report on "the implementation of EU water legislation, ahead of a necessary overall approach to European water challenges". The opinion from the Industry Committee (Rapporteur: [Konrad Szymański](#) MEP, ECR, Poland) was discussed on 21 March 2012. The importance of both water recycling and of the need to develop a coherent approach to the internalisation of the costs resulting from water use and water pollution were raised.

Next steps

The UEPG Water Management Working Group will closely monitor the development of the Parliamentary report and the Consultation.

B@B Platform workshop

On 22 March, Jim O'Brien, President of UEPG and Sandrine Devos from the General Secretariat participated in the

B@B Platform workshop which was held with the objective of presenting the mirror initiatives at national level. This made apparent the diversity of forms that national Business@Biodiversity Platforms could take.

The second objective was to discuss the future of this EU Platform as the funding comes to an end this year. Lively debates and innovative ways forward demonstrated the general interest in this Platform. After formal discussion with Member State Representatives, a consultation with stakeholders will take place.

EP report on biodiversity

On 21 March 2012, the European Parliament Environment Committee voted on [Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy's](#) MEP, (Liberals, Netherlands) report on "our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020". The report was adopted with 58 votes in favour and 4 abstentions.

The adopted Parliamentary report calls:

- for environmental, economic and social impact assessments;
- to value ecosystem services and to integrate these values into accounting systems;
- to provide member states with more guidance and best practice on the management of Natura 2000 sites and of sites adjoining them;
- for a directive on environmental inspections;
- to set "a considerably higher restoration target";
- to define "degraded ecosystems" and to set a baseline against which progress can be measured;
- to consider payment for ecosystem services (PES) as a promising innovative financial tool for biodiversity conservation;
- for a comprehensive Framework Directive on Soil;

- that the precautionary principle constitutes a legal basis to be applied in all legislation and decisions affecting biodiversity;
- for developing innovative financial mechanisms particularly habitat banking in conjunction with offsetting;

The report welcomes the launch of the Business and Biodiversity Platform by the Commission to engage the private sector in the biodiversity agenda.

Analysis

It is the tendency of the European biodiversity policy to aim at identifying the economic value of ecosystems services and biodiversity. This calls for indicators to measure biodiversity and its economic value. UEPG is observing different indicator projects and underlined that measurement should be simple and cost effective. UEPG expressed its concern that putting a price on nature would not be an appropriate way to increase the performance on restoration. The preferred means to offset if required is restoration rather than payment.

Next steps

Ongoing Close monitoring of the EC “No Net Loss” initiative

18 April Vote of the European Parliament biodiversity report in plenary session, Strasbourg, France

UEPG News

UEPG Committee Meetings

On 8-9 March, UEPG members gathered in the beautiful city of Cracow, Poland, in order to address priorities for the industry and define future actions.

UEPG welcomed the participation of the Israeli Aggregates Association (IAA) as observer, represented by its Chairman Mr. Meir Bar-El, as well as a very strong delegation from the Polish aggregates Association PZPK. The main points discussed during the four Committees were the following:

Health and Safety Committee

- Presentation “*Work safety in the new Polish geological and mining law*” – Dr.

Małgorzata Waksmańska – Polish State Mining Authority;



- Analysis of SDIs 2010, Social Pillar;
- Social Dialogue Agreement on Crystalline Silica Latest development, including 2012 NePSi reporting;
- Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the Extractive Industry Report;
- Safer by Design Project for future EU funding;
- Postponement of the implementation of the directive on explosives for civil use and creation of a working group to train users;
- EU Directive on Explosives for Civil Use;
- Roundtable: National Health & Safety Activities & Best Practices.

Environment Committee



- Presentation “*Protection and valorisation of deposits in Poland*” – Prof. Barbara Radwanek-Bak, Polish Geological Institute;
- Update on EU environmental policies, including the Resource Efficiency Roadmap;
- Preparations for the SD Awards 2013
- Biodiversity Task Force Report;
- Marine Aggregates Task Force Report;
- Water Management WG Report;
- Natura 2000 and Land Use;
- Information from the Technical Committee on CEN/TC 396 Earthworks and Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for Aggregates
- Analysis of SDIs 2010 – Environmental Pillar.

Technical Committee



- Presentation ‘*The quality of aggregates in Poland*’ – Dr Stefan Goralczyk, Polish Committee of Standardization;
- RDS & EPD Working Group;
- European Standards for Road Construction Materials - CEN/TC 227;
- Recast of the Euratom Directive;
- Radioactivity in concrete constituents;
- TC351 WG3 State of play;
- European Platform of Recycled Aggregates (EPRA)

Economic Committee



- Presentation ‘*Forecasting the production and transport of aggregates in Poland*’ - Prof. Wiesław Koziol, AGH University of Science and Technology;
- SDIs 2010 for the Aggregates Industry Economic Pillar;
- EU Raw Material Strategy;
- Incoming Accounting Directive;
- Implementing the Economic Value of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity (TEEB);
- Possible taxation and Market based instruments for the aggregates industry;
- Transport Efficiency – Redrafted Position Paper.

Recycled Aggregates – EPRA meeting

Partners of European Platform for Recycled Aggregates (EPRA) met on 23 February in the UEPG office in Brussels to discuss:

End-of-Waste Criteria: Following the exchanges with both the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and Gunther Wolff (DG

Environment) on the JRC report, the EPRA comments had been acknowledged. EPRA is awaiting to meet the JRC in Seville at a later stage. EPRA and the European Concrete Platform have agreed to liaise on their strategies.



End of waste criteria for recycled aggregates
Brian James (centre) leading the discussion of EPRA partners.

Organisation of a Workshop: The opportunity to organise a workshop in one of UEPG's member countries was discussed, with the objectives to promote the provision of recycled aggregates and to raise the profile in the operational field and to demonstrate good practices.

Next steps
16 May Next EPRA meeting, Brussels

Strengthening links with Canada

UEPG President, Jim O'Brien, gave a keynote address at the Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA) annual general meeting in Toronto, Canada, which took place on 22-24 February. The meeting attracted 200 participants from the industry, local politicians, regulators and NGOs, and its theme was "Empowered and Engaged, Reshaping our Destiny".



(Left to right) Teri Muhlbeier, Manager of the Alberta S&G Association, President Jim O'Brien and Moreen Miller, President of OSSGA

Jim's presentation on "UEPG and OSSGA – industry challenges and win-win opportunities" was well received and led to lively debate on the key common challenges of the aggregates industry in Ontario and Europe, particularly access to resources, permitting, recycling, biodiversity and public relations.

NSSGA's International Roundtable

UEPG President, Jim O'Brien, and Secretary-General, Dirk Fincke attended the National Stone, Sand & Gravel (NSSGA) annual convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 12-15 March, with over 300 US industry attendees.

Jim first gave a presentation to the NSSGA Health & Safety Committee on European initiatives on Fatality Prevention, Safer by Design, Cycle Safe and NePSi. NSSGA faces very similar challenges on these themes, and it was agreed that UEPG and NSSGA working together could more positively influence regional regulators and industry on these common important issues.



President Jim O'Brien addressing the NSSGA Board of Directors

Next day, Jim addressed the NSSGA Board of Directors on the theme of "An Overview of UEPG – Championing the European Aggregates Industry". The US aggregates industry has suffered an even greater decline (-35%) than that of the EU (-20%) since 2007, and is now very actively lobbying the US Congress to improve highway funding and thereby to stimulate growth and jobs.

NSSGA organised an International Roundtable as it is particularly keen to promote the Global Aggregates Information Network (GAIN). This was a unique gathering of key representatives from the USA (NSSGA, principally Jennifer Joy Pinniger and Joe Casper), Canada (OSSGA, Moreen Miller) New Zealand (AQA, Roger Parton), Australia (CCAA, Ken Slattery), Columbia (ASOGRAVAS, Carlos Fernando Forero Bonell), China (CAA, principally Jixian Han, Jialong Chen and Alan Maio) and UEPG (Jim O'Brien and Dirk Fincke), with apologies from Brazil (ANEPAC, Fernando Valverde) and South Africa (ASPASA, Nico Pienaar), which altogether represent 60% of global aggregates production.



Some of the International Roundtable GAIN group at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Each representative gave an overview of the key statistics and challenges of their region. Specific follow-up GAIN actions were agreed on the key common topics of statistics, health & safety, environment, aggregates policies and permitting, recycling and PR & communications. All were convinced of the great potential for ongoing exchanges of regional experiences and best practice solutions in the years ahead.

COLIN LOVEDAY - 1948 – 2012

On behalf of Jean-Marc Vanbelle, Chairman of the Technical Committee we would like to inform you with great sadness that Colin Loveday, Director of Technology for Tarmac Limited passed away peacefully at home on Monday, 19 March 2012.



Colin, who was in his 41st year with Tarmac, had been fighting bravely against cancer for the last 9 months. We express our deepest sympathy for his wife Anne and the family.

Upcoming UEPG Meetings

- 17 April** Working Group on Biodiversity Indicators, Stuttgart, Germany
- 25 April** Board Policy Dinner, Brussels
- 26 April** Board Meeting, Brussels
- 24-25 May** Entrepreneurs' Forum & Delegates Assembly, Limassol, Cyprus
- 13 September** Biodiversity Task Force meeting, Brussels