



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## EUROPEAN AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

2nd Meeting, 2011 (Session 3)

Tuesday 1 February 2011

The Committee will meet at 10.30 am in Committee Room 1.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take items 4 and 5 and further consideration of its Legacy paper at any future meetings in private.
2. **Brussels Bulletin:** The Committee will consider the Brussels Bulletin.
3. **International Engagement inquiry (in private):** The Committee will consider a draft report.
4. **Appointment of EU Reporter:** The Committee will appoint a member to serve as EU Reporter during the pilot of an early warning system for consideration of EU legislative proposals.
5. **Legacy paper:** The Committee will consider a draft legacy paper.

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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Item 2**

Brussels Bulletin

EU/S3/11/2/1

**Item 3**

PRIVATE PAPER

EU/S3/11/2/2 (P)

**Item 4**

PRIVATE PAPER

EU/S3/11/2/3 (P)

**Item 5**

PRIVATE PAPER

EU/S3/11/2/4 (P)



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### EU Energy Summit

An extraordinary meeting of Heads of State & Government will convene on **4 February 2011** to discuss energy. The principal discussion is expected to be on energy efficiency

### Europe 2020

The Commission launched its final flagship initiative, 'Resource Efficient Europe' on **26 January 2011**, focusing upon sustainable use of natural and man-made resources.

### Multi-Annual Financial Framework

The Alliance of Liberal & Democrats for Europe (ALDE) group in the Parliament has published its recommendations for the next MAFF.

### Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Commission has opened a consultation (**18 January 2011**) to determine how such a proposal could be developed. The closing date is **15 March 2011**.

### Cross Border Health Directive

The Directive completed its second reading in the Parliament on **19 January 2011**. It will now be considered by Council (**February/ March 2011**) when it is expected to be adopted.

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### Iceland & Mackerel

The EU has announced it is to block landings of mackerel from Icelandic Boats into all EU ports (**17 January 2011**).

### EU Sports Policy

The Commission has published a Communication '*Developing the European Dimension of Sport*' (**18 January 2011**).

### EU 'Accessibility Act'

Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding has announced that she will present a proposal for an EU Accessibility Act before the end of 2012 (**13 January 2011**).



## EU ENERGY SUMMIT

### Current status

An extraordinary Heads of State & Government summit is to be convened on **4 February 2011** to discuss a range of energy issues. The extraordinary summit will be chaired by the Hungarian Presidency of the EU.

### What's happening?

Hungary (the President of the European Council) together with other eastern and central European countries is particularly concerned about energy security, having experienced acute shortages in recent years. For that reason Hungary (and Poland, which succeeds to the EU Presidency on **1 July 2011**) is keen to secure progress on a number of energy issues.

Several energy issues are to be discussed at the summit: (i) energy efficiency; (ii) necessary steps for the completion of the EU's internal market for energy; (iii) energy infrastructure; (iv) promoting innovative energy technologies; and (v) co-ordinating the EU's energy policy towards third countries.

The summit is expected to be dominated by the issue of energy efficiency. The current target of consuming 20% less energy by 2020 was first adopted in 2007. This was followed by an action plan for energy efficiency which proposed measures to achieve a 1.5% efficiency saving per year until 2012.


Member states agreed to submit national action plans to the Commission under the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services

Directive by June 2007. These plans were to outline how each country meant to reach a 16% savings target by 2016. However, progress has been hesitant with savings of only around 11% (based on current trends) now expected.

Energy efficiency remains the only energy commitment without binding targets. Earlier in the month, Commission President José Manuel Barroso signalled the importance of the issue when he stated that he would press member states for '*concrete progress*' to meet the 2020 targets, widely interpreted as binding targets (**5 January 2011**). This view is very much in line with the recent position adopted by the European Parliament which called for binding national targets (**December 2010**; see Bulletin 53). However, a majority of member states remain opposed to such targets.

Energy will next be discussed by the Energy Council of **28 February 2011**. Draft Council [conclusions](#), which reflect the outcome of preparatory discussions between Member State governments, are already available. On the agenda are the Europe 2020 energy commitments and energy infrastructure priorities.

There is also an early indication of the nature of the discussions on energy efficiency (page 4). The draft conclusions clearly state that no additional targets should be set at this stage for energy efficiency, although monitoring of savings achieved is necessary. The conclusions also state that no sectoral efficiency targets should be considered at this stage.



However, special attention should be paid to the building, transport, and industry sectors in the Commission's forthcoming Energy Efficiency Strategy.

Regarding energy infrastructure, the conclusions largely agree with the Commission's suggested priorities (as set out in the Commission's **November 2010** Communication), which include the offshore North Sea grid and deployment of smart grids. The Commission is invited by Member States to produce frameworks for action for each of the priority projects.

The text also notes that future developments should be taken into account in developing the EU's long term infrastructure strategy, including new offshore and marine energy developments which are foreseen.

Other energy meetings of note coming up include the **2 - 3 May 2011** informal meeting of energy ministers where the 2050 energy roadmap will be discussed and the **10 June 2011** Council at which ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on the upcoming Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

## **EUROPE 2020**

### **Current status**

The Commission launched its growth strategy for the coming decade in **March 2010**. The Commission intends to achieve the objectives of the initiative via a series of seven flagship initiatives (of which six have already been launched).

### **What's happening?**

The Commission launched its final flagship initiative, 'Resource Efficient Europe' on **26 January 2011**. The initiative was published in Communication form and establishes a framework for action in this area, together with an indicative list of priorities.

The initiative covers natural resources, such as water, air and soil, as well as raw materials and food. Its ambition is to secure sustainable utilisation of resources. The initiative is expected to feature in the development of a number of longer-term EU policy streams including climate, energy, transport, innovation, biodiversity, agriculture and fisheries.

Of particular importance will be a 'Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe' outlining a long-term vision for 2020 and for 2050 as to how Europe should decouple growth from resource use and consumption. The roadmap will be published in **June 2011**.



## **MULTI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (MAFF)**

### **Current status**

The Commission is expected to publish its proposals for the next MAFF in **June 2011**. In advance of this, the political groups in the Parliament have begun to outline their positions.

### **What's happening?**

The first Parliamentary group to outline their views is the Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) (**11 January 2011**).

The principal initiative of the ALDE group is to move from relying on member state contributions to the EU becoming responsible for raising its own monies.

Launching the document, ALDE group leader Guy Verhofstadt said, *'if the European Union could secure its own funding, then EU institutions would become directly accountable to citizens... it would give European citizens the opportunity to directly control European policies'*. This position is much in line with the Commission Communication, issued in **October 2010**, which introduced the concept of a European tax.

The ALDE group would also like to see reform of the budget structure itself with the elimination of all national rebates. (The UK net rebate is valued at roughly €3 billion in 2011).

Somewhat controversially the ALDE group called for consideration of the abolition of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Economic and Social Committee

(EESC). Carl Haglund MEP, the ALDE group co-ordinator on the Parliament's special budget committee stated, 'The CoR and the EESC, in the form that they are in today, do not bring enough added value to the policymaking process,' said Haglund, noting that together they cost the EU over €200 million a year.

Also to be abolished would be the second home of the Parliament in Strasbourg.

## **ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)**

### **Current status**

The Commission is considering introducing an EU-wide alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system to prevent consumers from having to go to court to settle disputes with companies.

### **What's happening?**

There are currently two EU Recommendations on ADR that set out the minimum guarantees any ADR schemes should respect, together with a series of directives related to specific sectors, like energy and telecommunications, also oblige or encourage member states to set up ADR systems.

ADR is non-judicial and requires the appointment of a neutral third party to help settle disputes. It is mainly used for individual cases, but can also deal with several individual cases when they are similar.

ADR does not cover business customer complaint handling systems, amicable

settlements directly between a consumer and a trader, or mediation processes within the judicial system.

To establish whether there is a desire for such a dispute resolution framework, the Commission has launched a public consultation on setting up an ADR system in Europe (**18 January 2011**). The consultation closes on **15 March 2011**, with draft legislation if required expected in **November 2011**.

## **CROSS BORDER HEALTH DIRECTIVE**

### **Current status**

The Commission published its draft Cross Border Health Directive in 2008. In a deal brokered before Christmas (**21 December 2010**), agreement on the proposal within the Council appeared possible for the first time (see Brussels Bulletin 53).

### **What's happening?**

The European Parliament considered the draft directive in Strasbourg on **19 January 2011**. There the directive secured unanimous support so completing its second reading in the Parliament. (Details of the amended text can be accessed [here](#)).

The key issues addressed by the Parliament included: (i) combatting medical tourism, by confirming the prior authorisation principle, *albeit in a simplified form*; (ii) tightening the 'quality and safety of healthcare' criteria proposed by the Council; (iii) ensuring the provision of information and co-operation between Member States, *and placing the burden of this*

*information service on the member state*; and (iv) providing far greater clarity on the concept of 'e-health', and introducing forward looking guidance.

The draft directive has now (pending acceptance on the amended position by Council) completed its journey through the Parliament.

Following the discussion in the Parliament and with general agreement reached by EU ambassadors, final approval of the draft directive is expected at Council, likely to be the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council of 7 March 2011. Shortly after, the law will be published in the Official (legislative) Journal of the European Union, so completing its legislative journey. From this point member states will have 30 months to enact the law.

## **ICELAND & MACKEREL**


### **Current status**

Following Iceland's unilateral setting of a mackerel quota, the EU has initiated proceedings to block landings of mackerel from Icelandic boats at all EU ports (**17 January 2011**).

### **What's happening?**

Talks between Iceland and the EU broke down in summer 2010 and since then Iceland has unilaterally increased the amount of mackerel its boats could catch to 130,000 tonnes, compared to a traditional catch which the EU estimates at 2,000 tonnes.

The Commission has notified the European Economic Area (the 27 EU member states along with Iceland,



Norway and Liechtenstein) of its intention to block Icelandic mackerel landings into the EU, the final step before a blockade can be enforced (**14 January 2011**). (It remains unclear how the ban would deal with issues such as ships carrying mixed catches or imports of processed fish).

Tomas H. Heidar, Iceland's chief negotiator on mackerel fisheries, said that the Icelandic authorities will not object to the EU banning its mackerel ships, pointing out that almost all its catches are landed in to its own ports anyway. He continued, 'we emphasize that any such ban must be in full accordance with the EEA Agreement'.

## **EU SPORTS POLICY**

### **Current status**

The Lisbon Treaty (Article 165) initiated EU competence over sports policy. Further, the Treaty gave the Commission a mandate to develop a specific EU sports programme, supported by a budget.

### **What's happening?**

The Commission has published a communication ['Developing the European Dimension in Sport'](#), which sets out the EU's first sports programme, a limited version of which the EU executive hopes to launch in 2012 ahead of the first fully-fledged raft of policies in 2014 (**18 January 2011**).

The Commission is proposing action at EU level in areas where it believes the challenges cannot be sufficiently dealt with by governments alone. These include the societal role of sport, its

economic dimension and the organisation of sport in Europe.

The communication proposes that the EU should: (i) sign up to the Anti-Doping Convention of the Council of Europe; (ii) develop and implement security arrangements and safety requirements for international sports events; (iii) continue making progress towards introducing national targets based on the EU's Physical Activity Guidelines; and (iv) develop standards for disabled access to sports events and venues.

On economic matters, the Communication calls on sports associations to establish mechanisms for the collective selling of media rights to ensure adequate redistribution of revenue.

The Commission is also committed to addressing sport-related intellectual property rights, promoting exchange of best practice on transparent and sustainable sports financing, monitoring the application of state aid law in the field of sport and pushing for full exploitation of sport-related aspects of the EU's structural funds.

Questions still remain about the funding of these EU sports activities, particularly as the EU budget is likely to be squeezed in the years ahead.



## EU 'ACCESSIBILITY ACT'

### Current status

As part of the fulfilment of the European Disability Strategy (November 2010), Commission Vice President Viviane Reding announced that she will present a proposal for a 'European Accessibility Act' before the end of 2012 (**13 January 2011**).

### What's happening?

Vice-President Reding spoke about the overall goals and scope of the 'European Accessibility Act' when she addressed a special meeting of the Disability Intergroup in the European Parliament.

She stated that the Commission will shortly launch a major study to identify and analyse the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from making full use of public buildings, transport and all kinds of services. The results of this study will provide the basis for developing new EU legislation on accessibility standards.

The Vice President would like the EU to become a world leader in developing products and services that are accessible to people with disabilities: *'Europe should become an exporter of those goods and services'*. To make the most of these opportunities, the Commission will develop common standards for ICT (information and communication technologies), the built environment and product design. Reding hopes that it will be possible to agree on common standards not only at EU level, but also in co-operation with other major players in the global economy.

## OTHER NEWS

**Financial watchdog.** The European Systemic Risk Board ([ESRB](#)), established as part of the EU's financial oversight strategy, held its first meeting on **20 January 2011**. The board is made up of the governors from the 27 national central banks, the president and vice-president of the ECB, a member of the European Commission and the chairpersons of the three European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs).



# UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

<b>February</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>2011</b>
2 – 3	Parliament mini plenary, Brussels		
3	<a href="#">European Growth Summit 2011</a>	7 – 10	Parliament plenary session
4	Extraordinary Heads of State & Government Council focusing on energy	8	Employment, Social Policy, Health & Consumer Affairs
8	Informal Transport council	10 – 11	Competitiveness Council
14	Education, Culture, Youth & Sport Council	14	Environment Council
14 – 17	Parliament plenary session	15	ECOFIN Council
15	ECOFIN Council	17 – 18	<b>ADR consultation closing date</b> Agriculture & Fisheries Council
21 - 22	Agriculture & Fisheries Council	20	Trade Council informal dinner
23 – 24	Informal meeting of sports ministers	23 - 24	Parliament mini plenary Brussels
24 - 25	Justice & Home Affairs Council	24 – 25	European Summit
28	Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council	25 - 26	Environment Council informal
		28	Education, Youth & Culture Council informal
		31	Transport Council
		31 – 1.4	Committee of the Regions Plenary

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**European and External Relations Committee**

**2nd Meeting, 2011 (Session 3), Tuesday, 1 February 2011**

**Brussels Bulletin**

**Background**

1. The Committee has agreed to include the Brussels Bulletin on its regular committee meeting agendas. The latest Brussels Bulletin – Issue 54 is attached as the **Annexe**.

**Purpose of the Brussels Bulletin**

2. As Members will be aware, the Brussels Bulletin is produced by the Parliament's European Officer and is based on the key themes identified by the Committee as a result of its consultation on the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme for 2011. At its meeting on 14 December 2010, the Committee agreed that the European Officer should focus on the following key themes over the coming year—

- Europe 2020
- Cohesion policy
- The Justice (Stockholm) Programme
- Energy and climate change
- Agriculture and fisheries
- Multi-Annual Financial Framework

3. The European Officer provides early intelligence on expected developments, actions of the key players and detail of debate on these key themes, primarily through the Brussels Bulletin. This is circulated to relevant parliamentary committees and is published on the Parliament's website. More detailed briefing can also be commissioned by a committee on any specific issue.

**Recommendation**

**4. The Committee is invited to consider the latest issue of the Brussels Bulletin and to agree to forward it to relevant committees for their consideration.**

**Committee Clerk  
February 2011**