

EUROPEAN PROPOSALS OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO THE EUROPEAN AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, DEPOSITED 20/5/04 – 17/6/04

Copies of these documents are available at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubasemeuropeancomm2/content/reports-euleg-e.htm>

Where a document is a proposal for legislation this will be indicated at the beginning of the summary. The summary will also indicate whether the document has been, or may be, considered by other Committees.

Of particular significance

Date of deposit	Title	Summary
20/05/04	COM(2004) 374 final - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, ECOSOC and COR - White Paper on Services of General Interest (SGEIs).	<p>This White Paper has also been referred to the Economic Development and Transport and Local Government and Public Services Committees for consideration. It is referred to in papers EUR(2) 06-04(p5) and (p7) to be considered at today's European and External Affairs Committee meeting (1 July).</p> <p>Paper EUR(2) 06-04(p5) informs the Committee that the White Paper on SGEIs sets out the Commission's approach towards developing a positive role for the EU in fostering the development of high quality SGEIs, and sets out a range of possible approaches to achieve this.</p> <p>SGEI's cover both market services and non-market services which public authorities class as being of general interest and subject to specific public service obligations, eg supply of utilities, telecommunications, railways, postal and health services, education and social security as well as</p>

a range of services provided by local authorities.

The White Paper notes that if the EU constitutional treaty enters into force it will give additional legal basis for Community action in this field.

The White Paper is not a proposal for legislation, but In its explanatory memorandum of 7 June the UK Government states that it will consult widely on any proposals put forward by the Commission on this issue in due course.

The Committee may also wish to note the information contained in papers 5 and 7 relating to this White Paper and how it links with the EU's Green Paper on public-private partnerships.

17/06/04

Revision of the regional aid guidelines - A first consultation paper for the experts in Member States

Database ref: 740

This is a consultation paper. It is being considered in detail by the Economic Development and Transport Committee at a special meeting on 29 June 2004.

The consultation paper has been provided to experts in Member States, with comments invited by 1 July 2004. It is a working paper which outlines the approach that DG Competition believes should be followed for the revision of the regional aid guidelines, including changes to the aid ceilings and revisions to the aid map. The current guidelines terminate on 31 December 2006.

Since the proposed approach implies a refocusing of regional aid policy, characterised by a shift from subsidies that temporarily compensate for regional disadvantages to the provision of public goods and incentives permanently increasing the potential of regions to growth, The Commission says it considers consultation at this early stage important.

A DTI consultation on the proposals was issued

on 15 June 2004 (it was judged not possible to issue this during the 'purdah' period before European elections on 10 June) and early responses have been requested by 28 June. There will then be further discussions between Member States and the Commission, with a final deadline for the UK consultation of 6 September 2004.

The Committee may wish to request feedback from the Economic Development and Transport Committee on its consideration of this issue.

To note for information

Date of deposit	Title	Summary
19/05/04	<p>COM(2004) 196 final - Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union</p> <p>Database ref: 631</p>	<p>This information and communication strategy builds on an earlier paper setting out the Commission's communication objectives (2 July 2002 [COM(2002)350 final]).</p> <p>The principal objective of the strategy is "to improve perception of the European Union and its Institutions and their legitimacy by deepening knowledge and understanding of its tasks, structure and achievements and by establishing a dialogue with its citizens".</p> <p>It states the need to coordinate the efforts of the Commission and Member States, and details how to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation and develop structured partnerships with Member States. Various types of partnerships will be possible under the strategy. It recognises that better-structured communication is needed in an EU 25. Five priority information topics are; enlargement, the future of the Union; freedom, security and justice; the euro; the role of Europe</p>

		<p>in the world.</p> <p>This includes in particular raising the quality of European public debate, associating the public in European decision-making, listening to the public and their concerns more attentively, and the methodical, consistent rebuilding of the EU's image.</p> <p>The strategy will be implemented from 2005. The Committee may wish to note it for information.</p>
<p>20/05/04</p>	<p>SEC(2004) 593 final - Preliminary draft amending budget No 7 to the budget for 2004 - General statement of revenue</p> <p>Database ref: 649</p>	<p>The document presents Preliminary Draft Amending Budget (PDAB) No. 7 for the 2004 General EC Budget. It proposes changes relating to the revenue section of the budget, resulting from the return of a surplus from the implementation of budget year 2003. This will affect the global contribution of Member States to financing the EU Budget, and results in a reduction in the UK's gross contribution in 2004.</p> <p>The surplus arising from the implementation of the budget year 2003 is €5.47 billion (£3.86 billion). This is the combined effect of an over-registering of revenue (€850 million/£599 million), under-spending (€4.73 billion/£3.33 billion) and a negative balance of monetary exchange (-€109 million/-£77 million).</p> <p>The 2003 surplus will benefit all 25 Member States, despite the fact that only 15 countries were members of the EU in 2003 and contributed to the 2003 budget. This practice is consistent with the Own Resources Decision and the experience of previous enlargements. It is justified by the fact that the surplus mainly arises from unspent Structural Funds payment which are likely to be implemented in subsequent years and paid for by all 25 Member States.</p> <p>Treasury's explanatory memorandum states that this is the fourth consecutive year in which there</p>

		<p>has been a substantial budget surplus arising mainly from under-spending in the Structural Funds. The Government has consistently called on the Commission to improve the accuracy of its payment forecasts to prevent the emergence of large end-of-year surpluses. However, Member States also have a role to play in submitting accurate national forecasts of Structural Funds expenditure. The Government is working hard to achieve this for the UK and has taken voluntary action to correct its national forecast in the past.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to note this financial information.</p>
02/06/04	<p>COM(2004) 383 final - Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - The Social Dimension of Globalisation – the EU's policy contribution on extending the benefits to all</p> <p>Database ref: 683</p>	<p>This report presents the Commission's initial views on some of the issues raised by the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation (WCSDG). The WCSDG was established by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in February 2002, and in February 2004 produced a report addressing concerns that the benefits of globalisation were not reaching the poor and suggesting what the ILO could do to help spread the benefits more equitably. The report is wide ranging and its follow up could, potentially, have an impact on some areas of UK policy.</p> <p>The Commission paper details how EU policies and initiatives, such as Lisbon agenda reforms and economic partnership agreements, relate to extending the benefits of globalisation worldwide.</p> <p>The UK has been involved in discussions on follow up and a defined plan of action will begin to emerge after November. The Committee may wish to note the report for information.</p>

03/06/04

COM (2004) 373 final
Communication from the
Commission - European
Neighbourhood Policy -
STRATEGY PAPER

Database ref: 696

This document sets out the strategy for implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - responding to the opportunities and challenges presented by the fact that with EU enlargement the external borders of the Union have changed. It will also support efforts to realise the objectives of the European Security Strategy.

The objective of the ENP is to share the benefits of the EU's 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries in strengthening stability, security and well-being for all concerned. It is designed to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and offer them the chance to participate in various EU activities, through greater political, security, economic and cultural co-operation.

Jointly agreed Action Plans with the EU's new neighbours have been produced, detailing the priorities to bring them closer to the EU, and covering a number of key areas for specific action. These include; political dialogue and reform; trade and measures preparing partners for gradually obtaining a stake in the EU's Internal Market; justice and home affairs; energy, transport, information society, environment and research and innovation; and social policy and people-to-people contacts.

The Committee may wish to note the strategy for information.

14/06/04

COM (2004) 391 final Proposal for a Council regulation establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders

Database ref: 723

This is a proposal for a regulation establishing a Community code on cross-border controls on the movement of persons in Member States applying the Schengen acquis. It has also been referred to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee team for information.

The document refers to five components of EU moves towards a common policy on border control: a common corpus of legislation; a common operational coordination and cooperation mechanism; a common integrated risk analysis; staff trained in the European dimension and interoperational equipment; burden-sharing between Member States in the run-up to a European Corps of Border Guards.

However, it should be noted that the proposal builds on the provisions of the Schengen acquis, in which the United Kingdom and Ireland do not participate. The United Kingdom and Ireland do not, therefore, take part in its adoption and are not bound by this proposal or required to apply it, but may at any time request to take part in some or all of the provisions of the acquis.

In addition, as far as internal borders are concerned (Title III of the Regulation), account must also be taken of the protocol on the application of certain aspects of Article 14 of the Treaty establishing the European Community to the United Kingdom and Ireland, under which the United Kingdom and Ireland are allowed to adopt or exercise controls at their borders, including the borders of territories for whose external relations the United Kingdom is responsible. The same protocol allows the other Member States to exercise controls on persons entering their territory from the United Kingdom (or any territories whose external relations are under its responsibility) and from Ireland.

		<p>The Committee may wish to note the proposal for a regulation at this stage, pending further information on possible application by the UK.</p>
15/06/04	<p>COM(2004) 417 final Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - The European Union and Iraq - A framework for engagement</p> <p>Database ref: 724</p>	<p>This is a paper setting out how the European Union plans to engage with Iraq. It aims to provide a framework for discussions with the incoming sovereign Iraqi Government in areas including elections, rule of law, trade relations etc</p> <p>The Committee may wish to note it for information.</p>
17/06/04	<p>SEC(2004) 685 final Report on Commission Policy - 2003 Part One XXX111rd Report on Competition Policy 2003</p> <p>Database ref: 722</p>	<p>This is the Commission's annual report on Competition Policy for 2003. It has been referred to the Economic Development and Transport Committee for possible further consideration.</p> <p>The document reports on progress in all areas of competition policy, including sections on: modernisation of competition rules (including in relation to monopolies and cartels). It examines statistics on applying competition law in 2003, and relevant court cases in fields including energy, postal services, transport, electronic communications and the information society, motor vehicle distribution, financial services, media, liberal professions. It also reports on merger control, bi-lateral and international cooperation, and the application of state aid, regional aid, fiscal aid and sectoral aid in areas including coal, transport, agriculture and fisheries. It also contains a section on developments relating to the links between financing services of general interest and State aid rules.</p> <p>The report notes the appointment of a 'Consumer Liaison Officer' to provide a focal point for consumer groups and individuals on competition and consumer protection issues in the EU.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to note the report for information.</p>

