

## IFMA EU Monitoring Newsletter – January 2011

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### Context

As expected in our previous edition, negotiations on the EU budget and the proposal that was put forward by France and Germany, to review the Lisbon Treaty to create a permanent EU financial crisis mechanism topped the EU agenda these months.

The deal on the review of the Lisbon Treaty was struck on the occasion of an EU summit on 29 October 2010. The goal of the deal is to establish a permanent mechanism aimed at reassuring the financial markets. The move followed doubts over the Irish budget that have led to an increase of Ireland's interest rates and have forced the country to benefit from a financial aid from the European Financial Stability Facility (the current financial mechanism that will expire in 2013). The idea of a treaty change was initiated by Germany and France to avoid an extension of the financial crisis to other countries such as Portugal or Spain.

The change was however criticised by Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk who said that the deal does not represent the final word on the issue and that a treaty change should be fully justified and should not serve the interest of only one or few countries. Czech Prime Minister Petr Necas added that the approval of a treaty change would be complicated in his country as it will be necessary to have recourse to a referendum.

However, Member States invoked the Lisbon Treaty's "*special revision procedure*", a new clause which allows them to modify the treaty without consulting citizens or the European Parliament, provided there is unanimity and EU powers are not extended.

Germany put pressure to modify the Lisbon Treaty as a permanent EU crisis mechanism could be in breach of the EU's no-bailout clause, meaning Germany would likely face a challenge from its constitutional Court. The details of the change will be discussed in the coming months.

As regards the EU budget, the discussions concerned the 2011 budget. Moreover, some proposals were already put forward concerning the pluri-annual budget for 2014-2020.

Negotiations, between the European Parliament and the Council, on the 2011 EU budget were supposed to last from the 27<sup>th</sup> of October to the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2010. The European Parliament took part to this discussion for the first time as under the Lisbon Treaty it gained so-called co-decision powers on the budget with the Council.

The issue was planned to be controversial as the Parliament called, ahead of the launch of the discussions, for a 5,9 per cent increase of the 2011 EU budget compared to the 2010 budget, while several Member States, which are struggling to cut their domestic spending, were in favour of a 2,9 per cent increase.

According to Polish centre right MEP Sidonia Jedrzejewska, who is responsible for drafting the Parliament's position, the Parliament was ready to back down on its budget increase demands but Governments are dishonest by delaying payments to

which they have already committed for 2011. She explained that if the EU budget is increased of 2,9 per cent, more money would have to be added in “*amended budgets*” throughout the course of 2011. She stressed that 10 amended budgets were adopted in 2010 and that this situation increases the lack of transparency of the EU accounts and leads to more lack of understanding from the EU citizens.

On 11 November, EU Finance Ministers and the European Parliament failed to find an agreement. Ms Jedrzejewska, Alain Lamassoure, the Chairman of the budgets committee of the European Parliament, and Jerzy Buzek, the President of the European Parliament stressed that they were ready to accept the 2,9 per cent increase but have asked in return more power concerning the negotiations of the 2013-2020 budget.

The 2011 EU budget was finally adopted by the Council on 14 December and by the European Parliament on 15 December with a 2,9 per cent increase. The situation was particularly tensed as if the budget would not have been adopted before the end of the year, a sum equivalent to one twelfth of the 2010 budget would have been spent each month until there was an agreement.

It is expected that the wrangling is just starting as the negotiations on the 2013-2020 EU budget were supposed to be launched in June 2011. However, the Commission has already proposed on 19 October 2010 ways to fuel the EU budget such as an EU VAT, a tax on air transport or a share of the new financial, corporate or energy taxes. Moreover, on 29 October the issue was discussed on the occasion of an EU summit following a request from the UK Government who managed to include a declaration that the EU budget will be moderate. The move have outraged some countries such as Poland and Hungary who are in favour of an increase. While the position of the UK is supported by France, Germany, The Netherlands, other net payers to the EU budget and the EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy.

This early discussion was followed on 11 January 2011 by a call from the liberal group of the European Parliament for targeted spending cuts to expenditures such as the EU's common agricultural policy and the potential scrapping of several EU institutions such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Consequently, even if the proposal from the European Commission is expected by June 2011 the issue may continue to be discussed before that date.

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### **Profile: Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action**

Contrary to some of her colleagues, Connie Hedegaard has previous experience in her area of interest.

Before being appointed as Commissioner for Climate Action, Ms Hedegaard held positions in similar areas in her home country. She was the Danish Minister for the Environment from August 2004 to November 2007, and the Danish Minister for Climate and Energy from November 2007 until her appointment as European Commissioner. As a Danish Minister for Climate and Energy she hosted the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in December 2009.

Connie Hedegaard is the first Commissioner for Climate Action. Her post was created by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to show that the EU is serious about tackling global warming. Her Directorate-General was consequently established in February 2010. Some of her responsibilities have been

moved from the Directorate-General for the Environment. The New Directorate-General leads international negotiations on climate, helps the EU to deal with the consequences of climate change and to meet its targets for 2020, as well as develops and implements the EU Emissions Trading System. As regards emissions, the Directorate-General is responsible for the so-called "Effort Sharing Decision" which establishes annual binding greenhouse gas emission targets for Member States, that were published on 23 April 2009, for the period 2013–2020. These targets concern the emissions from sectors not included in the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)– such as transport, buildings and waste.

Even if perceptions of the effectiveness of Ms Hedegaard's work are shaped by their views on climate change, observers give her credit for helping to keep international negotiations moving forward after the disappointment that followed the Copenhagen climate conference.

Claude Turmes MEP (Member of the European Parliament), a Luxembourgish Green MEP, says that 2011 will be a critical year. *"2010 was a good start for Hedegaard but the litmus test for the Climate Commissioner will be in 2011 – will she be able to move the Commission and Member States to accept a 30% reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions in 2020? Everything else, like talk on possible 2030 targets, is pure diversion from what really counts – early reductions in Europe to re-launch the momentum of the international talks,"* he says.

For Chris Davies MEP, a British Liberal who sits on the European Parliament's environment committee, Hedegaard will never succeed unless the rest of the Commission buys into climate action. At the moment, the Commission remains *"departmentalised"* and shows *"great reluctance to endorse her agenda"*, he thinks.

*"It is an impossible job for the Commissioner to lead on the international stage while she has one hand tied behind her back fighting turf wars in the Commission."*

"If the Commission collectively wants Connie Hedegaard to succeed, she will succeed. If the Commission does not back her, she will fail."

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## ENVIRONMENT

### **EU Set to Revise Law on Hazardous Substances in Electrical and Electronic Equipment**

Published: 24 November 2010

Source: European Commission – Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry

The European Parliament voted on 24 November on a revision of the legislation on the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. The draft legislation, proposed by the Commission in 2008, aims at strengthening the existing law by streamlining procedures for future substance restrictions and by making it coherent with other chemicals legislation.

The Directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS) has prevented many thousands of tonnes of banned substances from being disposed of and potentially released into the environment since it came into force in 2003. It has led to important changes in the design of electrical and electronic products in the European Union and worldwide and

facilitates the recovery of many rare substances and materials used in electronics. This law thus contributes to making the EU more resource-efficient, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. RoHS has also served as a model for similar laws introduced in at least 15 other jurisdictions outside the European Economic Area.

RoHS currently covers a vast spectrum of products that use electricity, including small and large household appliances, IT and telecommunications equipment and consumer goods such as radios, TV sets, video cameras and hi-fi systems.

The revised Directive agreed on 24 November 2010 aims to improve implementation and enforcement and introduces greater coherence with other EU legislation, such as REACH and the new legislative framework for the marketing of products.

Key elements include, among others:

- The extension of the scope to all electrical and electronic equipment
- Electrical and electronic equipment that was outside the scope of the current RoHS Directive but which will be covered by the revised Directive, does not need to comply with the requirements during a transitional period of 8 years, giving producers time to adapt;
- A lighter and more effective mechanism for reviewing or amending the list of banned substances is introduced, enabling further substances to be considered on the basis of scientific evidence and specific criteria,
- The rules for granting exemptions from the substance ban are further streamlined to provide legal certainty for the economic operators

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## GREEN BUILDINGS

### Three of Britain's Most Famous Palaces to Be Insulated

Published: 17 November 2010

Source: Build-Up

Three of Britain's most iconic and best-loved palaces are getting a green makeover through a rigorous insulation project, which will be installed by British Gas and Rockwool. After these historic buildings - Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace's Orangery and the Tower of London's Queen's House - have been properly insulated, they will cut a combined £130,000 from their gas bills and reduce their CO2 emissions by 850 tonnes over the lifetime of the insulation.

In total, nearly 4500 square meters of the three palaces will be covered by insulation – the equivalent of 100 average semi-detached houses. 11,000 rolls of insulation will be required for the project which will take around 1000 hours to complete.

Hampton Court Palace, the former 16th Century residence of King Henry VIII, will be the focus for nearly 80% of the work with over 3,500 square meters of the palace, being insulated. The Queen's House at the Tower of London, built in 1530 for Anne Boleyn (King Henry VIII's second wife) and Queen Anne's early 18th century Orangery at Kensington Palace will also feel the warmth of this initiative.

The palaces, managed by independent charity Historic Royal Palaces, are probably the oldest former royal residences to be insulated and will require unique expertise to

install insulation in rafters which are over 500 years old.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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### **New Greek Strategy on Sustainable Buildings Announced**

Published: 1 December 2010

Source: Greek Ministry of the Environment

On November 4, 2010 the Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, presented the programme "Building the Future", a programme for Sustainable Buildings and Green Development. In the framework of this programme, which will start early 2011 and will last until 2020, there will be 3,100,000 energy interventions in buildings (houses, apartments and commercial buildings), while the benefit of the savings for the citizens will be 9 billion. These resources will both allow the country to achieve its goals regarding 20% energy saving by 2020 and offer a driving force for further refinement and development of the sector of building construction, materials and energy products.

Please click [here](#) for more. (In Greek)

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### **Launch of the IEA Policy Pathway 'Energy Performance Certification of Buildings'**

Published: 02 November 2010

Source: International Energy Agency (IEA)

The International Energy Agency (IEA) presented a report on energy performance of buildings on the occasion of the Clean Energy Technologies Symposium that took place in Singapore on 02 November 2010.

The IEA Policy Pathway series provides details on how to implement specific recommendations drawn from the IEA's 25 Energy Efficiency Policy Recommendations. Based on direct experience, published research, expert workshops and best-practice country case studies, the series aims to provide guidance to all countries on the essential steps and milestones in implementing specific energy efficiency policies. The Energy Performance Certification of Buildings is the second publication of the series.

The Policy Pathway series helps countries to implement essential energy efficiency policies. It provides policymakers with practical "how-to" guidelines for designing, implementing and evaluating energy efficiency policies. In these times of austerity, Governments can save money by learning from the experiences of other countries.

Mr Tanaka, Executive Director of the IEA said: *"I am very pleased to be launching in Singapore, the second of the IEA's new "Policy Pathway" series, Energy Performance Certification of Buildings. "Governments are missing a great opportunity to save energy in buildings. Energy efficiency can save energy and cut CO2 emissions at very little or no cost, but there remains a lot to be done if Governments and industry are to capture these savings. This new Policy Pathway provides lessons learned from countries with buildings certification programmes". Energy performance certification is a way to rate the energy efficiency of individual buildings – whether*

they be residential, commercial or public.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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### **Future European Council Building Considered as a 'Model' of Sustainability**

Published: 10 November 2010

Source: theparliament.com

The new European Council building that is expected to open in 2013 is considered by his architect as a model of sustainability.

The construction of this building was decided following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, in December 2009, which has created new institutions such as the President of the European Council. In addition to its President, the new building will also house the staff working for the Council and will accommodate meetings and conferences.

Philippe Samyn, the top architect behind the project told theparliament.com: *"We will continue to endeavour to keep the costs down but I am sure that, when it is finished, everyone will agree that the amount committed to this project does represent excellent value for money."*

He added that the new façade will be made from a *"harmonised patchwork"* of re-used wooden windows with *"simple, crystal-like glazing"* sources from different member states. This is designed to provide the *"necessary acoustic barrier"* from traffic noise from the nearby busy rue de la Loi and also offer *"thermal insulation."*

Under EU recommendations on energy savings, many old buildings across Europe will change their window frames for double glazing in the next few years.

The building will also feature, he said, *"energy-efficient"* glass and the carpets will be made from Merino wool.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## **ENERGY ISSUES**

### **Report on the Cost Optimality Methodology and its Challenges Within the Recast EPBD**

Published: 16 November 2010

Source: Build-Up

The Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE) has published a document on the Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD). The report discusses the methodology and the challenges of the cost optimality of requirements enshrined in the Directive.

The Directive on energy performance of buildings was published on 19 May 2010, it is the main legislative instrument at EU level to achieve energy performance in

buildings. Under this Directive, the Member States must apply minimum requirements as regards the energy performance of new and existing buildings, ensure the certification of their energy performance and require the regular inspection of boilers and air conditioning systems in buildings. In July 2012, the new Directive shall be implemented, though many elements including the regulation of building systems only need to be implemented by January 2013 for public buildings and by July 2013 for all buildings.

The BPIE's publication supports the EU comitology process on cost optimality in buildings renovations that started following the EPBD recast. It is targeted at all internal and external stakeholders of this process and explains the background, process and generic principles of the methodology.

The issue of cost optimality is a key issue within the EPBD recast. It goes deeply together with how far regulations can require property owners to undertake renovations after, for instance, a buildings performance certificate has been issued with recommendations. The EPBD recast requests that Member States shall ensure that minimum energy performance requirements for buildings are set "*with a view to achieving cost-optimal levels*". The cost optimum level shall be calculated in accordance with a comparative methodology. The following text summarizes the provisions of the EPBD regarding this approach.

The Commission needs to establish by June 2011 a comparative methodology framework for calculating cost-optimal levels of minimum energy performance requirements for buildings and building elements (e.g. the roof of a building).

Please click [here](#) to have access to the report.

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## **Making Better Use of Energy Performance Certificates and Data**

Published: 30 November 2010  
Source: [communities.gov.uk](http://communities.gov.uk)

Energy performance certificates and display energy certificates have an important role to play in improving the energy efficiency of buildings. The UK administration put forward a number of proposals in a consultation document entitled '*Making better use of Energy Performance Certificates and data*'. The consultation closed on 25 May and was published on 30 November, it received 140 responses which came from a wide range of organisations and individuals.

The consultation document proposed to include the energy performance certificate rating for the sale or rent of both domestic and non-domestic properties in property advertisements. The final report stresses that this proposal will not be taking forward at this stage because this requirement will become mandatory in July 2013 with the implementation of the recasted Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.

The consultation document proposed extending display energy certificates to commercial buildings. Initially, display energy certificates would apply to buildings which are larger than 1,000m<sup>2</sup>, with a view to progressively reducing the threshold to 250m<sup>2</sup>. The report specifies that the Government is exploring how this proposal can be taken forward as part of the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Recast. Meanwhile the possibility to set up a voluntary approach will be considered.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## **Energy: Commission Presents its New Strategy Towards 2020**

Published: 10 November 2010

Source: European Commission: Directorate-General for Energy

The European Commission presented on 10 November its new strategy for a competitive, sustainable and secure energy. The Communication, entitled "*Energy 2020*", defines the energy priorities for the next ten years and sets the actions to be taken in order to tackle the challenges of saving energy, achieving a market with competitive prizes and secure supplies, boosting technological leadership, and effectively negotiate with Europeans' international partners.

In the Communication, the Commission identifies five top priorities. On the basis of these priorities and the action presented, the Commission will come forward with concrete legislative initiatives and proposals within the next 18 months.

One of these priorities, entitled: "*Achieving an energy-efficient Europe*", proposes among its actions to focus the initiatives related to energy savings on the two sectors with the biggest energy saving potential: transport and buildings.

The Communication stresses that the energy-efficiency renovation rate of buildings should be accelerated by investment incentives, wider use of energy service companies, innovative financial instruments with high leverage factors and financial engineering at European, national and local levels. The Commission is expected to propose investment incentives and innovative financial instruments by mid 2011.

The Communication also points out that public authorities should use energy criteria (regarding efficiency, renewables and smart networking) in all public procurement of works, services or products.

Talking on the new strategy, Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger said: "*The energy challenge is one of the greatest tests for us all. Putting our energy system onto a new, more sustainable and secure path may take time but ambitious decisions need to be taken now. To have an efficient, competitive and low-carbon economy we have to europeanise our energy policy and focus on a few but pressing priorities.*"

Please click [here](#) to have access to the Communication.

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## **Upcoming Energy Efficiency Action Plan to Focus on Buildings?**

Published: 09 November 2010 (Update: 18 January 2011)

Sources: European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings (EUROACE), European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ECEEE)

MEPs from the European Parliament's Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) Committee called to make the EU's 20% energy savings target by 2020 a mandatory goal. MEPs were voting on 9 November on an own initiative report to give guidance to the European Commission on the upcoming Energy Efficiency Action Plan review that is expected by the beginning of 2011.

MEPs focused, among others, on the potential for energy savings in the existing building stock. The Committee has asked the Commission to assess the refurbishment potential of public administration buildings as a first step towards setting a policy pathway to a nearly zero level building stock by 2050. ITRE MEPs also highlighted that innovative financing instruments must be put in place that are proportional to the level of energy savings made in order to encourage deep refurbishment.

This vote was followed by a call, published on 13 January, from companies involved in producing and developing products and services to make energy use significantly more efficient, for a binding energy savings target.

However, ENDS reported on 18 January that the majority of EU countries do not want binding national targets on energy efficiency, or targets for specific sectors such as buildings.

Energy efficiency will be discussed at a special council meeting in Brussels on 4 February.

Please click on the links below for more.

- [European Parliament's Industry Committee calls for binding energy savings target](#)
- [Most EU states against energy efficiency targets](#)

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## **Thin Film Technologies Go Mainstream**

Published: 10 November 2010

Source: European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA)

EPIA reported that the Thin Film market grew from 1.3 GW in 2009 to over 2 GW in 2010.

Thin film modules are constructed by depositing extremely thin layers of photosensitive materials onto a low-cost backing such as glass, stainless steel or plastic.

This impressive 50% growth shows the capability of the Thin Film industry to increase production towards large scales. CdTe (Cadmium telluride) remains the leading Thin Film technology representing over 90% of the Thin Film segment. CIGS (Copper Indium/gallium Diselenide/disulphide) and silicon-based Thin Films, with recent expansion plans, are also about to enter mass production which will further increase their competitiveness.

Most of the technological challenges have been solved from the technology point of view however, in the current economical environment, access to funds presents deployment obstacles in terms of power plant bankability. But while in the past Thin Film companies have been struggling to make their products bankable, recently it seems that they have found ways to achieve this by including them in larger projects which use other proven technologies.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## **Energy Performance of Buildings: the Commission Asks Italy and Spain to Ensure Full Compliance with European Legislation**

Published: 24 November 2010

Source: European Commission – Directorate-General for Energy

The European Commission formally requested Italy and Spain to ensure full compliance with European rules on the energy performance of buildings.

The infringement proceedings concern the Directive (2002/91/EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2002 on the energy performance of buildings.

The Directive requires Member States to establish a methodology for calculating the energy performance of buildings and to lay down minimum energy performance standards for new buildings and for large existing buildings that are subject to major renovation.

When a building is constructed, sold or rented out, an energy performance certificate must be made available to the prospective buyer or tenant. The certificate will enable the new buyer or tenant to compare and evaluate the building's energy performance and to get a clearer idea of the energy bills. In addition, the certificate must be accompanied by recommendations for cost-effective improvement of the energy performance.

This certification scheme and a scheme for the regular inspection of boilers and air-conditioning systems have been mandatory since 4 January 2009.

The Commission's decisions take the form of reasoned opinions. The Commission may decide to take these Member States to the Court of Justice if no measures are adopted within two months to ensure compliance.

### **Italy:**

Italian legislation on energy performance certificates for buildings does not comply with the requirements of the Directive. Furthermore, Italy has not adopted any measures regarding the requirement to carry out regular inspections of air-conditioning systems in order to evaluate their performance.

### **Spain:**

Spain has not yet adopted a methodology for calculating energy performance or a certification scheme that covers all existing buildings. Moreover, the Spanish system for the inspection of boilers does not cover installations which existed before the legislation entered into force.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## **BUILDING ACCESS FOR DISABLED**

### **European Union Ratified Convention on Disability Rights**

Published: 05 January 2011

Source: [theparliament.com](http://theparliament.com)

The European Union ratified the UN convention on rights for people with disabilities on 23 December 2010.

The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.

All 27 Member States have also signed the document, and 16 have ratified it so far.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) pointed out that this is the first time that the EU has ratified such a treaty, and described the news as a "*landmark victory in human rights*".

EDF president Yannis Vardakastanis said, "*The European Union has not only achieved a major step in its history, but it is also sending a positive signal to its Member States that haven't ratified the convention yet: it is now time to commit to the rights of persons with disabilities.*"

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## **EU to Propose 'Accessibility Act' in 2012 as Part of the Disability Strategy 2010-2020**

Published: 15 November 2010

Source: European Commission – Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, [euractiv.com](http://euractiv.com)

On 15 November 2010 the European Commission adopted a new strategy to break down the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in society on an equal basis.

Under this strategy, the Commission will, among others, consider proposing a European Accessibility Act. On 13 January 2011, European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding told MEPs that she will present such a proposal before the end of 2012.

The EU executive is getting ready to launch a major study that will identify and analyse the barriers which 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.

Talking on the proposal Ms Reding added "*We should work with our partners on other continents in order to get global standards being put in place. We have already started to do so with the United States, and with other partners at international level, and in the end we hope that will bring coherence into our standards.*"

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## SECURITY ISSUES

### **Security Chief Considers That European Approach on Air Security Needs to Be Reviewed**

Published: 12 November 2010

Source: euobserver.com

Marijn Ornstein, the manager of security policy at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam, said on the occasion of an event organised in London on 11 November that EU governments should invest more on human intelligence rather than on regulation and screening technologies.

*"If you look at all the recent terrorist incidents, the bombs were detected because of human intelligence not because of screening ... If even a fraction of what is spent on screening was invested in the intelligence services we would take a real step toward making air travel safer and more pleasant."* she said.

She added that Schiphol airport is reaching the limits of how much extra security equipment and staff it can put in place due to physical space and labour market constraints.

Security costs have climbed 175 percent in the past five years and the airport currently employs 4,000 security guards, equivalent to about 1 in 10 of all security guards working in Amsterdam.

Her concerns were echoed by Kevin Riordan, the UK technical director of private security company Smiths Detection. *"We need to move to dynamic screening - we need to know where you've bought your ticket, where you've been before, not just what you keep in your bag. We need to move away from devices and materials to passenger intent. There's all sorts of information available out there and we're not using it,"* he said.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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### **Commission Strengthens Legislation on Safety at European Chemical Plants**

Published: 21 December 2010

Source: European Commission – Directorate-General for the Environment

The European Commission presented on 21 December draft legislation to strengthen rules on the control of major accident hazards involving chemicals. The revision of the so-called Seveso II Directive was prompted by the adoption of rules to align the EU classification system to the UN Globally Harmonised System. It will ensure that the same hazards are described and labelled in the same way all around the world.

The proposal introduces stricter standards for inspections of installations to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of safety rules. It also proposes to include stronger provisions relating to public access to safety information, participation in decision-making and access to justice, and improvements to the way information is collected, managed, made available and shared.

The remaining changes are technical modifications including simplifications to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens. The new Directive should apply from 1 June 2015.

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik said: *“The Seveso II Directive has been instrumental in reducing the likelihood and consequences of chemical accidents. However, such accidents still occur and can often have devastating effects. We cannot compromise with safety. This is why the proposed new rules will further strengthen legislation in this area and ensure the necessary high levels of protection.”*

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## INDOOR AIR QUALITY

### **First World Health Organisation Indoor Air Quality Guidelines on Indoor Chemicals Now Released**

Published: 15 December 2010

Source: World Health Organisation- Regional Office for Europe

A new volume of the global guidelines for indoor air quality was released on 15 December. WHO guidelines for indoor air quality: selected pollutants results from the contribution of over 60 international scientists to a project coordinated by WHO Regional Office for Europe and presents for the first time evidence and guidance to protect health globally from the impact of indoor chemicals. The guidelines recommend targets for indoor air quality at which the health risks are significantly reduced and provide a scientific basis for legally enforceable standards in all regions of the world.

Hazardous substances emitted from buildings, construction materials and indoor equipment lead to a broad range of health problems and may even be fatal. At least 400 deaths are caused annually by indoor carbon monoxide poisoning in the WHO European Region, and up to 14% of lung cancers are attributable to residential radon exposure. Life-long exposure to benzene concentrations as observed in European houses is associated with up to 10 cases of leukaemia per 100 000 people.

*“Understanding the hazards of these pollutants is a first step to identify the actions necessary to reduce their adverse impacts on health. If these guidelines are sensibly applied as part of policy development, indoor exposure to air pollutants and related health effects should substantially decline,”* says Ms Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe. *“WHO will continue encouraging the relevant policy developments and the intersectoral collaboration necessary for ensuring access to healthy indoor air for everyone.”*

The guidelines are targeted at public health professionals involved in preventing the health risks of environmental exposures, as well as at specialists and authorities involved in the design and use of buildings, indoor materials and products.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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## CONSTRUCTION ISSUES

### Scottish Report: Improving Compliance With Building Regulations

Published: 12 November 2010

Source: scotland.gov.uk

A consultation report published by the Scottish Government indicates that there is a serious discrepancy between approved designs and actual building construction. In a survey carried out for the report, 96% of respondents replied that they believe there is a compliance gap for certain building standards, particularly in energy, noise, fire and structural stability. There is a need for greater certainty on compliance during construction, with respondents suggesting more inspections, air tightness testing and certification of construction schemes.

The Scottish Government says that it plans to improve compliance in the region by establishing a customer charter with building standards verifiers setting out what services and responsibilities should be expected.

Working with the Building Standards Division (BSD), the Scottish Government also plans to produce guides for those involved in building standards clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Please click [here](#) for more.

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### European Parliament Adopted a Report on Construction Products

Published: 20 December 2010 (Update: 18 January 2011)

Source: Build-Up, europarl.europa.eu

The European Parliament adopted in plenary a report on construction products on 18 January 2011. This vote follows a first one from the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) on 22 November 2010.

The report was drafted by Catherine Stihler (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, UK) and proposes to replace the Construction Products Directive by a Regulation.

According to the Committee, under the new Regulation, the "*declaration of performance*", already required for every construction product, would have to include the hazardous substance information that is required by the 2006 REACH regulation. In addition, three years after the Regulation enters into force, the European Commission would have to "*assess the specific needs for information on the content of hazardous substances of construction products, with a view to possibly extending the information obligation*" to other substances and that the report have to be accompanied by any appropriate legislative proposals.

Please click [here](#) to have access to the report.

- 1 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 1 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 2 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 2 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 2-3 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament – Plenary Session](#)
- 4 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Council](#)
- 9 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 10 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 14-17 February 2011, Strasbourg, France: [European Parliament – Plenary Session](#)
- 15 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 23 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 28 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 28 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee Meeting](#)
- 28 February 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council](#)
- 2 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 3-4 March 2011, Berlin, Germany: [Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces](#)
- 7-10 March 2011, Strasbourg, France: [European Parliament – Plenary Session](#)
- 8 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 14 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 14 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [Environment Council](#)
- 15 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 15 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 16 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 16 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 16 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee Meeting](#)
- 16 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 17 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee Meeting](#)
- 23 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)

- 23-24 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament – Plenary Session](#)
- 24-26 March 2011, Budapest and Gödöllő, Hungary: [Environment Council](#)
- 24-25 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Council](#)
- 30 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 31 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 31 March 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council](#)
- 4-5 April 2011, Budapest and Gödöllő, Hungary: [Health Ministers' Meeting](#)
- 4-7 April 2011, Strasbourg, France: [European Parliament – Plenary Session](#)
- 5 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 11 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 11-15 April 2011: [European Sustainable Energy Week](#)
- 12 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 13 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 13 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Industry, Research and Energy Committee Meeting](#)
- 13 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 13-15 April 2011, Sofia, Bulgaria: [International Congress on Energy Efficiency](#)
- 14 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Parliament - Employment and Social Affairs Committee Meeting](#)
- 20 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)
- 27 April 2011, Brussels, Belgium: [European Commission – Weekly Meeting of the College](#)

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### CURRENT ISSUES MATRIX

Issue	Instrument	Institution	Status	Links
<b>Energy issues</b>	Proposal for a Directive on the energy performance of buildings	European Commission	Adopted on 19 May 2010	<a href="#">Energy Performance of Buildings Directive</a>
	Review of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan	European Commission	Expected by the beginning of 2011	<a href="#">Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2006</a>
	Communication - Energy 2020: A	European Commission	Published on 10 November 2010	<a href="#">Energy 2020: A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy</a>

	strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy			
<b>Disability</b>	EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020	European Commission	Adopted on 15 November 2010	<a href="#">European Commission webpage on the EU Disability Action Plan 2010-2020</a>
<b>Airport security</b>	Communication from the European Commission on the Use of Security Scanners at EU Airports	European Commission	Published on 15 June 2010	<a href="#">Communication from the European Commission on the Use of Security Scanners at EU Airports</a>
<b>Chemicals</b>	Evaluation of EU legislation regarding the management of risks resulting from combined exposure to chemicals	European Commission	To be done by early 2012 at the latest	
	Proposal for a Directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment	European Commission	European Parliament adopted amendments on 24 November 2010 (1 <sup>st</sup> reading)	<a href="#">Proposal for a Directive on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment</a>
<b>Construction products</b>	Proposal for a Directive reviewing the Construction Products Directive (CPD)	European Commission	Proposal expected in 2010 (status unknown)	<a href="#">Current Construction Products Directive (Directive 89/106/EEC).</a>
<b>Water Management</b>	Proposal for a Directive on water efficiency in	European Commission	Proposal expected in 2012	

	buildings			
<b>Security Issues</b>	Proposal for a Directive on control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances	European Commission	Proposal presented on 21 December 2010	<a href="#"><u>Proposal for a Directive on control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances</u></a>