



National Assembly for **Wales**  
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol **Cymru**

## **EU Agenda**

### **Forward look: January – December 2008**

This paper highlights items in the European Commission's Annual Work Programme likely to be of interest to Assembly Members and other developments that can be expected during the Slovenian Presidency to 30 June 2008, and the French Presidency to 31 December 2008.

**February 2008**



# EU Agenda

## Forward look: January – December 2008

February 2008

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## Executive Summary

The Slovenian Government assumed the Presidency of the European Union on 1 January 2008 until 30 June 2008, taking over from the Portuguese Government. They are the third of the so called 'trio of Presidencies' (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) and take the lead for the final six months of the 18 month Presidency programme. They will aim to take forward new proposals expected from the Commission over this period, move forward on-going negotiations, and highlight what they see as priority issues to be tackled by the EU. The French Government will take over EU Presidency from 1 July until 31 December 2008.

The priorities of the Slovenian Presidency are based on the common programme drawn up in cooperation with its two predecessors, Germany and Portugal, and endorsed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 11 December 2006<sup>1</sup>.

The five main priorities of the Slovenian Presidency are:

- **The future of the European Union and the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon:** to allow the new Treaty to enter into force before the next elections to the European Parliament in 2009.
- **The launch of the Second Lisbon Strategy cycle:** with a focus on implementation and smooth transition into the next cycle.
- **Adoption of the climate-energy package:** the European Commission's "climate-energy package" was issued on 23 January 2008.
- **Achieving stability in the Western Balkans:** with the aim of reaffirming the Thessaloniki agenda (the need for a clear prospect of EU membership to help those countries overcome their current challenges); addressing the question of the readmission of unregistered non-EU nationals; and improving regional cooperation.
- **Promoting intercultural dialogue:** opening the European year of intercultural dialogue; support the process of dialogue with the Western Balkans in particular; and found a Euro-Mediterranean university in Piran.

More information on the Slovenian Presidency's priorities and programme for the next six months can be found on its website:

<http://www.eu2008.si/en/>

The European Commission's Annual Work Programme which sets out its political priorities and legislative and policy initiatives for 2008 was published on 23 October 2007 and can be found here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/docs/clwp2008_en.pdf)

The Work Programme has been prepared taking into account the results of the consultation on the Commission's 2008 Annual Policy Strategy (21 February 2007)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the European Union, General Affairs and External Relations Committee, 11 December 2006  
[http://www.eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/conclusions/vko50/en\\_GB/1165914662658/files/76409400367120534/default/92122.pdf](http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/conclusions/vko50/en_GB/1165914662658/files/76409400367120534/default/92122.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, *Annual Policy Strategy for 2008*, February 2007  
[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/doc/aps\\_2008\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/doc/aps_2008_en.pdf)



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## EU Agenda

### Forward look to December 2008

#### 1 Institutional Affairs

##### 1.1 *The Treaty of Lisbon and the Future of Europe*

The year-long period of reflection on the future of the Constitution, announced following its rejection by French and Dutch voters during referenda in 2005, came to a close in June 2007.

A "Reform Treaty", seen as a way of taking the forward the issue of a European Constitution was formally agreed by the European Council in Lisbon on 18-19 October 2007 and was signed by leaders of the 27 member states at the Summit of Lisbon on 13 December 2007. The Treaty is now referred to as the "Treaty of Lisbon"<sup>3</sup>.

Ratification of the Treaty is expected by the end of 2008 with most states not holding a referendum – only Ireland is obliged to (due to its constitution). If ratified, the Treaty of Lisbon is due to come into force on 1 January 2009 in time for the European elections.

In the UK, an act of Parliament will be required to give legal effect to the Treaty. As such, Parliament must be satisfied that a Treaty is in the national interest before that Treaty can become law. Exactly the same procedure will be followed for the Lisbon Treaty as for previous EU treaties, all of which were approved by Parliament in the UK. The European Union (Amendment) Bill 2007-08 was introduced to Parliament on 17 December 2007 and received its second reading on 21 January 2008. The second reading involved a lively debate followed by a motion to approve the Bill in principle, which was won by 362 votes to 224. The Bill will now move on to the committee stage but will be debated by a Committee of the Whole House, rather than in a standing committee outside the chamber, before continuing its journey through the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The House of Lords EU Select Committee and its Sub-Committees are conducting an inquiry into the impact of the EU Reform Treaty (now known as the Lisbon Treaty) on the EU and in particular on the United Kingdom. Each Committee is exploring the Treaty's effects in its area of expertise. Evidence-taking is now over. The Committee aims to provide an assessment of the changes made by the Treaty and how they would affect the EU and the UK in its final stage, to inform Parliament's debates on its ratification.

The Constitutional Treaty included some important gains for regions and local authorities, who are explicitly mentioned for the first time in relation to the principle of subsidiarity. The Presiding Officer of the Second Assembly wrote to the then Europe Minister, Geoff Hoon, to seek his assurance that the UK government would take these into account when seeking an agreement on any institutional reform which might replace the Constitutional Treaty.

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission website on the Treaty of Lisbon  
[http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm)

## 1.2 Communication Strategy

The Commission adopted its *White Paper on a European Communication Policy* in February 2006<sup>4</sup>. Commission publication, "*Communicating Europe in Partnership*", was adopted in October 2007 and outlines the process<sup>5</sup>. It proposes, amongst other things, an agreement on communication priorities with other EU institutions and voluntary management partnerships with Member States.

The Commission has also expressed the need to develop communication with EU citizens at the regional and local level in order to encourage better turnout for the 2009 elections. In 2008, the Commission will launch a call for proposals to renew the network of over 400 Europe Direct information relays, including five in Wales, which provide information locally and regionally, including in rural areas<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to communicating with the public and civil society, the Commission's national offices will step up their activities in organising Commissioners' visits to the regions and in supporting efforts to offer information to regional and local journalists via modern media technology as well as traditional means.

The European and External Affairs Committee were joined, via video link, by the European Commissioner in charge of a Communication Strategy, Margot Wallström, during Committee on 28 February 2007. The Commissioner also visited the Assembly on 31 January 2008 and addressed a Committee of the Whole Assembly, in which she outlined ways of improving the way European issues are communicated to citizens by politicians.

## 1.3 Enlargement

Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union on the 1 January 2007 and took membership of the block from 25 to 27 Member States. Slovenia is the first of the 10 states that joined the EU in May 2004 to take on the Presidency.

On 6 November 2007 the Commission adopted its annual strategy document explaining its policy on EU enlargement<sup>7</sup>. The document also includes a summary of the progress made over the last twelve months by each candidate and potential candidate. The Commission expects substantial progress in accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey during 2008, and aims to sign, or bring into force, Stabilisation and Association Agreements with all Western Balkan countries during 2008.

Early in 2008 the Commission will adopt a Communication taking stock of developments and point the way forward in following up on the Thessaloniki agenda and the Salzburg Communication on promoting the course of the Western Balkans towards the EU<sup>8</sup>.

Further reports assessing the progress made by candidate countries are due to be adopted in November 2008. The Commission might also recommend opening further accession negotiations with one or more countries in the period 2008-9.

<sup>4</sup> White Paper on a European Communication Policy, 1 February 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/communication\\_white\\_paper/doc/white\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/communication_white_paper/doc/white_paper_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> European Commission Communication, *Communicating Europe in Partnership*, 3 October 2007

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0568en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0568en01.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> European Commission website on Europe Direct information relays

[http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit\\_us/relays/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/visit_us/relays/index_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> European Commission Communication, *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007-2008*, 6 November 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2007/nov/strategy\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/strategy_paper_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> European Commission website on the Thessaloniki agenda and the Salzburg Communication

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key\\_documents/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/index_en.htm)

## 1.4 EU Budget Review

The EU budget for 2007-2013 is € 862 billion. Of which, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is allocated 45%; regional policy 35%; foreign policy 8%; administration 6%; and research 5%<sup>9</sup>.

In 2008, for the first time ever, the largest share of the €129.1 billion annual budget (45% of all EU spending) will go on measures to boost economic growth and greater cohesion in the EU-27. Agriculture will continue to receive over 40% of EU cash, whilst global objectives and administration are allocated 5.7% and 5.8% respectively. Citizenship (including health, culture and media); and freedom, security and justice are allocated a combined 1% of the total annual budget<sup>10</sup>.

In December 2005 the EU institutions agreed that the Commission should undertake a fundamental review of the EU budget in preparation for the post 2013 financial framework. An online consultation was launched by the Commission on 12 September 2007 to seek the views of interested parties at local, regional, national and European level<sup>11</sup>. The consultation is due to close on 15 April 2008. The Commission plans to present its budget review at the end of 2008/beginning of 2009.

The budget review will be complemented by preparatory action in key spending areas, including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which will undergo a "health check" to fine tune the 2003 reforms and contribute to the discussion on future priorities in the field of agriculture (see also part 4.1 of this paper); and also a regional policy consultation as set out in the 4<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report of May 2007<sup>12</sup>.

The Commission will present its draft budget for 2009 on 30 April 2008.

## 1.5 Governance and subsidiarity

The Treaty of Lisbon, if adopted, will give national parliaments greater scope to participate alongside the European institutions in the work of the Union. A new clause clearly sets out the rights and duties of the national parliaments within the EU<sup>13</sup>. It deals with their right to information, the way they monitor subsidiarity, mechanisms for evaluating policy in the field of freedom, security and justice, procedures for reforming the treaties, and so on.

One of the key aspects of the new Treaty is the power to enforce subsidiarity. Any national parliament will be able to flag a proposal for EU action which it believes does not respect this principle. This triggers a two-stage procedure:

- ◆ if one third of national parliaments consider that the proposal is not in line with subsidiarity, the Commission will have to re-examine it and decide whether to maintain, adjust or withdraw it
- ◆ if a majority of national parliaments agrees with the objection but the Commission decides to maintain its proposal anyway, the Commission will have to explain its

<sup>9</sup> European Commission website on the EU budget  
[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/budget\\_glance/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/budget_glance/index_en.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> European Commission online consultation on the budget review  
[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/issues/issues\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/issues/issues_en.htm)

<sup>12</sup> European Commission Communication, Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, 30 May 2007  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/4cr\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/4cr_en.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Treaty of Lisbon, Protocol on the role of national parliaments in the European Union  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:0148:0150:EN:PDF>

reasons, and it will be up to the European Parliament and the Council to decide whether or not to continue the legislative procedure.

National parliaments and citizens will be able to see which decisions have been taken by which national ministers in the Council, since all its deliberations on legislative matters will be made public.

## **1.6 The Euro**

Slovenia adopted the euro on 1 January 2007. Cyprus and Malta adopted the euro from 1 January 2008. Inflation problems have pushed back Estonia's anticipated date of euro adoption from 2009 to 2011.

In the fourth quarter of 2008, the Commission will adopt a Communication on a framework for communicating on the euro in the coming years, in particular in those Member States which are still preparing for euro introduction<sup>14</sup>.

## **2 The Lisbon agenda and the internal market**

### **2.1 Cohesion Policy - structural funds and territorial cohesion**

For the period 2007-2013, the budget allocated to European regional policy amounts to around €348 billion, comprising €278 billion for the Structural Funds and €70 billion for the Cohesion Fund. This represents 35% of the Community budget and is the second largest budget item<sup>15</sup>.

In terms of GDP, the EU has taken on an entirely new order across the regions since its enlargement to 27 Member States in January 2007. The surface area of the EU has increased by over 25%, its population by over 20%, and its wealth by only 5% approximately. Average GDP per capita in the European Union has fallen by more than 10% and regional disparities have doubled. Since 60% of the regions whose development is lagging behind are in the 12 Member States which joined the EU in 2004, the centre of gravity of regional policy is shifting eastwards. The EU's Territorial Cohesion Fund looks to address this disparity.

The Treaty of Lisbon provides for the concept of territorial cohesion to be applied alongside economic and social cohesion. The Commission has targeted September 2008 for the launch of a Green Paper consultation on European territorial cohesion, with the aim of gaining a better idea of the way Member States understand and apply the concept. In addition, the Commission will look to initiate in-depth dialogue with member states on the issue and develop a common definition of territorial cohesion.

As part of the 2000-2006 Structural funding period Wales was awarded €2.2 billion in European funding. Although most projects are now complete, some will continue until June 2008. All final payment claims must be submitted to WEFO by 30 September 2008. Wales will receive a total of €121 million in Competitiveness funding for 2007-2013. It will also receive €1.8 billion in Convergence funding for West Wales and the Valleys.

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<sup>14</sup> European Commission website on the euro  
[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/the\\_euro/index\\_en.htm?cs\\_mid=2946](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/the_euro/index_en.htm?cs_mid=2946)

<sup>15</sup> European Commission website on the Structural and Cohesion Funds  
[http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/structural\\_cohesion\\_fund\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/structural_cohesion_fund_en.htm)

The Commission launched a consultation on the future of Cohesion policy on 27 September 2007<sup>16</sup> as part of the preparation for the EU budget review. Regional policy funding will come under close scrutiny during discussions on the future shape of the budget post 2013. The consultation closed on 31 January 2008.

## **2.2 The Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth**

The Lisbon Strategy is the EU's ten year strategy for making Europe "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010"<sup>17</sup>. The strategy was reviewed and reformed in 2005 to focus on jobs and growth.

The Commission published a strategic report on the renewed Lisbon Strategy on 11 December 2007<sup>18</sup>. The report highlights that over 6.4 million new jobs have been created across Europe in the last two years, with another 5 million due to be created up to 2009. It also notes that employment rate, currently at 66%, has moved much closer to the Lisbon target of 70%, whilst economic growth has risen from 1.8% in 2005 to 2.9% in 2007. It is, however, important to reiterate the above point (point 2.1) that the European Union has enlarged significantly in recent years – this will of course have a bearing on economic growth and employment figures.

In 2008, as with previous years, the Spring Council will monitor the progress of the Strategy. Member States will be required to renew their National Reform Programmes (NRPs) in October, which set out plans for achieving shared EU objectives under the Lisbon Strategy.<sup>19</sup> The Commission has called on Member States to work with national and regional parliaments with a view to organising annual debates on the implementation of their NRPs. The Welsh Assembly Government contributed to the UK NRP.

The Commission published a report on each Member States' 2007 NRP in December 2007<sup>20</sup> and will publish an annual progress report on the Lisbon Strategy in December 2008.

## **2.3 Small Business Act for Europe**

As outlined in the October 2007 mid-term review of the Modern Small & Medium-sized Enterprise Policy<sup>21</sup>, the Commission will propose a Small Business Act (SBA) in 2008. It will aim to cut red tape, increase SMEs' access to European programmes, increase their share of public procurement contracts and reduce obstacles to cross border activity, including through a European small company statute. The Commission will examine how taxation policies affect SME growth. The SBA is not expected to propose new regulation but rather a co-ordination of current activities.

<sup>16</sup> European Commission consultation on the future of cohesion policy, 30 May 2007  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/com_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> European Commission website on the Lisbon Strategy  
[http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm)

<sup>18</sup> European Commission Communication, *Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new cycle (2008-2010)*, 11 December 2007

<sup>19</sup> UK Government, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, National Reform Programme website  
<http://www.dti.gov.uk/europeandtrade/europe/promoting-economic-reform/uk-nrp/page25236.html>

<sup>20</sup> European Commission Annual Assessment of National Reform Programmes, 11 December 2007

<sup>21</sup> European Commission, *Modern Small & Medium-sized Enterprise Policy*, 10 November 2005

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52005DC0551:EN:NOT>

The Commission is expected to adopt a Communication on the SBA in July 2008 (coinciding with the start of the French Presidency). The issue is likely to be debated during the autumn 2008 with the Industry and Internal Market Committees taking the lead.

## 2.4 Better Regulation

In December 2007 the European Council welcomed the progress that had been made towards the joint reduction target of 25% of administrative burdens by 2012 arising from EU legislation. The Council urged those Member States who have not yet done so to set national targets of comparable ambition by 2008<sup>22</sup>.

In 2008, the Commission will present an update on the state of play of its better regulation agenda, the simplification rolling programme and a progress report on administrative burden<sup>23</sup>.

## 2.5 Services Directive

The aim of the directive on services in the internal market is to make it easier for businesses to provide and use cross-border services in the EU, thus making the services markets more competitive. The final directive was published on 12 December 2006<sup>24</sup>. A handbook offering technical advice to Member States on implementation of the Services Directive was issued in July 2007<sup>25</sup>. There is an EU-wide implementation deadline of December 2009.

A key feature of the Services Directive is the chapter dealing with quality of services, which aims at ensuring the high quality of services by encouraging, among other things, self-regulation, if need be through the elaboration of European codes of conduct. On 19 December 2007 the European Commission published the working document *Quality of services – the role of European codes of conduct*<sup>26</sup>. The purpose of this document is not to lay down a European model code, or to oblige professional organisations to engage in self-regulation, but to provide a technical overview of existing European codes and to inform professional organisations wishing to draw up such codes.

A consultation on the Services Directive was launched by the UK Government Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) on 5 November 2007 and came to a close on 11 February 2008<sup>27</sup>.

## 2.6 Postal Services

On 10 June 2002, the European Parliament and the Council formally adopted the Postal Directive 2002/39/EC<sup>28</sup>, which amends the initial Postal Directive (97/67/EC)<sup>29</sup> by defining

<sup>22</sup> European Council, 14 December 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=DOC/07/6&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>23</sup> Further information will be available on the Better Regulation pages of the Commission's website

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better\\_regulation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better_regulation/index_en.htm)

<sup>24</sup> Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006L0123:EN:NOT>

<sup>25</sup> Handbook on implementation of the Services Directive, Internal Market and Services DG, July 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/services/docs/services-dir/guides/handbook\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/guides/handbook_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Working document of the Commission, *Quality of services – the role of European codes of conduct*, 19 December 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/services/services-dir/conduct\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/conduct_en.htm)

<sup>27</sup> UK Government, Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), *Consultation on the*

*Implementation of the Services Directive* <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file42207.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Directive 2002/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 June 2002 on further opening to competition of Community postal services

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:176:0021:0025:EN:PDF>

<sup>29</sup> Directive 1997/67/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 June 2002 on Postal Services

further steps in the process of gradual and controlled market opening and further limiting the service sectors that can be reserved. The new Postal Directive was adopted by the European Parliament on 31 January 2008 and sets 31 December 2010 as the final date for achieving full market opening<sup>30</sup>.

The Commission will report on the application of the Postal Directive (as amended) in December 2008. The Commission's report will seek to provide a comprehensive review of the implementation of the postal acquis<sup>31</sup> and to analyze the main developments within the sector during the period 2006-2008.

## **2.7 State Aid**

During 2007 the European Commission presented, for consultation, new draft rules to exempt more subsidies from the notification obligation laid down in EC Treaty state aid rules<sup>32</sup>. The new so-called 'block exemption' regulation would on the one hand simplify and consolidate into one text five existing block exemptions for aid to SMEs; research and development aid in favour of SMEs; aid for employment; training aid and regional aid. In addition, the new regulation also allows the block exemption of three new types of aid: environmental aid; aid in the form of risk capital; and exempting Research and Development aid (R&D) also in favour of large enterprises. Subsidies which fulfilled the conditions laid down in the new regulation would be considered as compatible with state aid rules without requiring prior notification to the Commission. This aims to reduce the administrative burden for the Member State concerned, the beneficiaries and the Commission.

The adoption and publication of the final version of the regulation is scheduled for spring 2008, as the existing block exemptions expire on 30 June 2008.

## **2.8 Research – FP7**

The EU's 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) €50 billion budget marks a significant increase on the previous programme. To help manage this, the European Commission has announced the creation of two executive agencies to manage the R&D project proposals and evaluation process<sup>33</sup>. It is hoped that this will lead to increased efficiency of research management as well as liberate the Commission's resources for policy-making.

The European Research Council Executive Agency will be dedicated to the management of basic research projects funded by the European Research Council. It will support the implementation of the Ideas Programme of the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7), which deals with frontier research.

The other body, the Research Executive Agency, will administer the Marie Curie fellowships schemes, research for the benefit of SMEs, and parts of the Space and Security research themes. It will also provide evaluation and support services to all other parts of FP7. According to the Commission, "these agencies are just one strand of wide-

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<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0039:EN:HTML>

<sup>30</sup> European Commission Press Release, 31 January 2008

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/163&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>31</sup> The acquis is the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all the Member States of the European Union.

<sup>32</sup> European Commission consultation on draft general block exemption, 8 September 2007

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:210:0014:0040:EN:PDF>

<sup>33</sup> European Commission, Research Headlines, 11 January 2008

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article\\_en.cfm?id=research/headlines/news/article\\_08\\_01\\_11\\_en.html&item=Research%20policy&artid=5997](http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=research/headlines/news/article_08_01_11_en.html&item=Research%20policy&artid=5997)



ranging actions within FP7 to improve the efficiency of research management”.

## **2.9 Green Transport**

The European Commission will present, in June 2008, a package of measures aimed at making transport more environmentally friendly. Called ‘Greening Transport’, this package will include four initiatives:

- an inventory of current measures aiming to alleviate the impact of transport on the environment;
- a method and a strategy to internalise external transport costs;
- an action plan for the deployment of intelligent transport systems in the road sector;
- an overall Communication “which will take information from the three previous initiatives”.

## **2.10 Internalisation of Transport Costs**

The Commission believes that external transport costs (pollution, congestion, noise etc.) should be “internalised” meaning that these costs are supported by those who generate them (the polluter pays principle). All types of transport (road, rail, air, maritime and inland waterways) would be affected. One possible option would be the inclusion of all modes of transport in the EU’s Emission Trading Scheme. The “Eurovignette” Directive<sup>34</sup> adopted in May 2006 includes a commitment to produce by no later than June 2008 a presentation of the results of consultation on these issues. The Communication will short-list available policy tools to address the issue and analyse the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of each of the short-listed options, together with a “legislative proposal to allow Member States to use this internalisation if they want to”<sup>35</sup>.

## **2.11 Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Action Plan**

Intelligent Transport Systems are measures that integrate information and communications technology with transport infrastructure, vehicles and users. They include initiatives such as changeable message signs to manage traffic flow and driver assistance initiatives such as traffic information. In addition, ITS systems will make better use of existing road infrastructure, alleviate congestion, enhance the environmental performance of roads and improve road safety. The Action Plan, which will be outlined in 2008, will identify relevant ITS applications, organise the necessary research and validation, and manage implementation.

## **2.12 Action Plan on Urban Mobility**

A Green Paper on a “new culture for urban mobility” was adopted by the Commission on 25 September 2007. This is concerned with transport issues in urban areas such as air and noise pollution, congestion and safety. The public consultation, based on twenty-five open questions, will close on 15 March 2008. An Action Plan will follow in the autumn of 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Directive 2006/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2006 amending Directive 1999/62/EC on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:157:0008:01:EN:HTML>

<sup>35</sup> European Transport Commissioner, Jacques Barrot, during a debate in the Council of Transport Ministers on 29 November on the EU strategy for sustainable development.

### **2.13 Green Paper on future policy for the Trans-European Transport Network**

A Green Paper, due in November 2008, will serve as a basis for the revision of the TEN-T guidelines (proposal scheduled for 2010), taking into account the impact of TEN-T funding from Community sources in achieving progress towards completion of the TEN-T network and reviewing costs of the revised network. The Green Paper will take into account the changed environment of the transport sector since the introduction of the current policy in order to develop a TEN-T policy that is more appropriate for the decades 2010 and 2020.

### **2.14 Maritime Policy**

On 7 June 2006, the European Commission adopted a Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy for the European Union<sup>36</sup>. The Green Paper posed a number of questions ranging from the fundamental "Should the EU have an integrated maritime policy?" to more detailed issues. The Commission sought answers to these questions and made further proposals in a public consultation which lasted from 7 June 2006 until 30 June 2007.

During the Second Assembly, the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee met jointly with the Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee to discuss the EU Green Paper on a future EU maritime policy and respond to the consultation<sup>37</sup>.

A Communication on the future EU maritime transport policy and accompanying legislative proposals is expected in October 2008. The initiative will set out the role and contribution of maritime transport for the EU's economic system for the first time since 1996. This will include the implications of increasing globalisation, the growth in trade, energy and climate change constraints, security factors, sustainable development, human factors, competitiveness and emerging logistics trends.

Also expected in October 2008 is a legislative proposal for a European Maritime Space without barriers. Its objective is to reinforce the efficiency and competitiveness of intra-EU maritime transport by extending the internal market to such transport, and thereby simplify administrative procedures, increase safety, and reduce congestion, environmental damage, and energy consumption.

### **2.15 Public Procurement**

Total public procurement in the EU is estimated at about 16% of the Union's GDP, or €15 billion in 2002. The Commission recognises potential for 'significant further competition in procurement markets'.

In 2007 the Commission put forward a proposal to revise the Public Procurement Remedies Directive providing clear procedures for seeking redress in cases where bidders consider contracts have been unfairly awarded<sup>38</sup>. The Directive requires authorities to wait a certain number of days, known as a 'standstill period', before concluding a public contract, allowing rejected bidders the opportunity to start an effective review procedure at a time when unfair decisions can still be corrected.

The proposed Directive was submitted for adoption under the 'co-decision' procedure to the European Union's Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. An agreement

<sup>36</sup> European Commission Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy for the European Union, 7 June 2006  
[http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/pdf/com\\_2006\\_0275\\_en\\_part2.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/pdf/com_2006_0275_en_part2.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Joint meeting of the Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Committee and the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee, 8 March 2007

<sup>38</sup> European Commission proposal for a directive with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts, 14 June 2006  
[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/publicprocurement/docs/remedies/com-2006-195\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/docs/remedies/com-2006-195_en.pdf)

was reached at first reading and the Directive was formally adopted on 15 November 2007<sup>39</sup>.

In 2008, the Commission will look to raise the political profile of green public procurement by proposing EU wide targets. It will also seek to guide Member States in adopting national action plans on green public procurement and propose regular benchmarking and monitoring by the Member States and the Commission. The Commission will issue a Communication on National Strategies for Green Public Procurement in 2008.

As of 1 January 2008, the European Commission has revised the thresholds above which contracts are subject to EU procurement regulations<sup>40</sup>. The revised thresholds show a further, small reduction over those in force since 2006 (due to fluctuations in exchange rates).

### 3 Environment

#### 3.1 REACH (chemicals policy)

The REACH Regulation concerns the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of CHemicals<sup>41</sup>. It came into force on 1 June 2007 and replaced a number of European Directives and Regulations with a single system. A major part of the legislation is the requirement for manufacturers or importers of substances to register them with the European Chemicals Agency. Unregistered substances are not legally able to be manufactured or supplied.

In the UK, the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of REACH<sup>42</sup>.

#### 3.2 Energy policy

In January 2007 the European Commission proposed a new energy policy<sup>43</sup> for the EU as a first step towards becoming a low-energy economy, whilst making energy supply more secure, competitive and sustainable. A common policy is seen as being the most effective way to tackle today's energy challenges, which are shared by Member States. The aims of the policy are supported by market-based tools (mainly taxes, subsidies and the CO2 emissions trading scheme), by developing energy technologies (especially technologies for energy efficiency and renewable or low-carbon energy) and by Community financial instruments. The policy notes that energy accounts for 80 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the EU<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Directive 2007/66/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 amending Council Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:335:0031:0046:EN:PDF>

<sup>40</sup> European Commission Regulation (EC) 1422/2007 of 4 December 2007 amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council in respect of their application thresholds for the procedures for the award of contracts

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l\\_317/l\\_31720071205en00340035.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_317/l_31720071205en00340035.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> European Commission website on the REACH Directive

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach\\_intro.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm)

<sup>42</sup> UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

<sup>43</sup> European Commission Communication, *An energy policy for Europe*, 10 January 2007

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0001en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0001en01.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid



In November 2007 a European strategic energy technology plan "Towards a low carbon future" was published<sup>45</sup>. The plan highlights energy efficiency; the 2020 targets on renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing primary energy use; and the 2050 vision "towards complete decarbonisation".

A review of the Energy Taxation Directive<sup>46</sup> is envisaged to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2008, with taxation seen as being a means to incentivise more energy-efficient and environmentally-favourable energy consumption.

A Directive on the promotion of renewable energy was published on 23 January 2008. The objectives of the Directive are to put into legal practice a binding 20 per cent target for renewables, a binding 10 per cent target for biofuels, and a sustainability scheme for biofuels. It will now be considered by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers.

A second strategic energy review is scheduled to be completed by 20 November 2008. The review will assess progress towards strategic objectives agreed at the March 2007 European Council and will take forward further work on an EU energy policy for Europe.

### 3.3 *Climate Change Package*

On 10 January 2007 the European Commission set out proposals and options for keeping climate change to manageable levels<sup>47</sup>. The Communication, part of a package of measures to establish a new Energy Policy for Europe<sup>48</sup>, was a major contribution to the discussion on a global agreement to combat climate change after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets expire.

On 23 January 2008, the Commission adopted a Proposal for a Directive designed to amend the current EU Emissions Trading Scheme Directive<sup>49</sup> so as to improve and extend the EU greenhouse gas (GHG) emission allowance trading system.

A White Paper on adaptation to adverse impacts of climate change is due in November 2008. The paper will take into consideration responses to the Green Paper on Adaptation<sup>50</sup>.

A Communication on measures to reduce deforestation (which accounts for 20 per cent of total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the atmosphere) is expected in May 2008. The Communication will present various policy options for halting deforestation and for including associated costs in the post-2012 climate change regime.

An EU Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries is expected to be unveiled in October 2008. It aims to provide a coherent strategy for EU support on disaster preparedness and humanitarian response in developing countries, as part of the climate change agenda.

<sup>45</sup> European Commission Communication; *A European strategic energy technology plan "Towards a low carbon future"*, 22 November 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/setplan/doc/com\\_2007/com\\_2007\\_0723\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/res/setplan/doc/com_2007/com_2007_0723_en.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> Council Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003, *restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity*

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003L0096:en:HTML>

<sup>47</sup> European Commission Communication, *Limiting Global Climate Change to 2 degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond*, 10 January 2007; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52007DC0002:EN:NOT>

<sup>48</sup> European Commission, *Energy for a Changing World* website

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy_policy/index_en.htm)

<sup>49</sup> Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 *establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community*

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003L0087:EN:NOT>

<sup>50</sup> European Commission, *Green Paper; Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action*, 29 June 2007

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007\\_0354en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0354en01.pdf)

### 3.4 Waste

A Draft Directive simplifying the 2002 Directive on Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment<sup>51</sup> is due in September 2008.

A Commission Communication on ship dismantling, due to be adopted in September 2008, will aim to improve implementation of existing Community law on end-of-life ships, such that ships with an EU connection will be dismantled and disposed of in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

Towards the end of 2008 the Commission aims to adopt a Communication on the biological treatment of biodegradable waste. The Communication is envisaged to provide a 'state of play' description for Commission initiatives in the field of biowaste.

### 3.5 Biodiversity

In 2001, the EU Heads of Government agreed a target for halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010. The Commission adopted a Communication in 2006 which provided an updated, more robust action plan for the achievement of this target<sup>52</sup>. The Welsh Assembly Government set out five key actions to address biodiversity in its 2006 Environment Strategy for Wales<sup>53</sup>.

The Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee of the Second Assembly met to consider the Commission's 2006 Communication on 28 September 2006.

A mid term report on the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan is expected in November 2008. The mid term report will enable the Commission and other institutions to assess progress towards the 2010 target and evaluate whether there needs to be increased effort. It is also hoped that this report will bring Biodiversity protection back up the EU agenda.

The work programme of the Slovenian Presidency reiterates the EU's commitment to the 2010 target and states that it will strive for progress on this issue during its 6 month Presidency<sup>54</sup>.

### 3.6 Sixth Environment Action Programme/Sustainable Development Strategy

The Commission's Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan is due on 27 February 2008. Its aim is to promote sustainable consumption and production by addressing social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems and decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation.

In the first quarter of 2008, the publication is due of a Conclusion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol to the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context. The Protocol's objectives provide for a high

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<sup>51</sup> Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 January 2003 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0096:EN:HTML>

<sup>52</sup> European Commission Communication; *Halting the loss of Biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being*

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/index_en.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, Environment Strategy for Wales

[http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/Envstratforwales/about\\_the\\_strategy/?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epg/Envstratforwales/about_the_strategy/?lang=en)

<sup>54</sup> Slovenian Presidency of the EU – work programme for 2008

[http://www.eu2008.si/includes/Downloads/misc/program/Programme\\_en.pdf](http://www.eu2008.si/includes/Downloads/misc/program/Programme_en.pdf)

level of protection of the environment, including health, and ensure that these concerns are integrated into measures designed to further sustainable development.

A mid-term review of the sixth Environment Action Programme (2002-2012) was adopted by the Commission on 30 April 2007<sup>55</sup>. The review confirmed that the Programme remains the correct framework for Community action in the field of the environment up to 2012.

In October 2007 the Commission adopted a first progress report on the Sustainable Development Strategy<sup>56</sup>. According to the report, there have been significant policy developments in some of the seven key priorities identified in the revised strategy of 2006 – including climate and energy – but progress on policy has not yet translated into substantial concrete action. The next progress report is expected in 2009.

### **3.7 Sustainable Industrial Policy**

A sustainable industrial policy is expected in March 2008. The policy aims to develop innovation and lead markets for energy efficient products and services, to exploit the potential of the internal market, and to export EU know-how in a low carbon economy.

### **3.8 Drinking Water Directive**

During 2008, a Directive on the quality of water intended for human consumption will replace Council Directive 98/83/EC. The general aim of the drinking water Directive is the provision of clean and wholesome water to EU citizens. The revised Directive will address the existing problems as regards the assessment of the costs and benefits related to the implementation of Water Safety Plans and a change in monitoring practices.

## **4 Agriculture**

### **4.1 Common Agricultural Policy**

Sub-Committee D of the House of Lords EU Select Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry into the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Sub-Committee issued a call for evidence on 30 April 2007 and closed for submissions on 11 June 2007.

A Communication on the 'Health Check' of the Common Agricultural Policy was launched by the Commission on 20 November 2007<sup>57</sup>. The Communication marked the beginning of a six month consultation, which will result in legislative proposals from the Commission. The 'Health Check' is not a fundamental reform of the CAP; rather it aims to ensure that the CAP functions effectively and to simplify it where possible. This initiative arises from the review clauses regarding the Single Payment Scheme and certain agricultural markets that were included 2003/04 CAP reforms.

The Welsh Assembly Government issued a consultation paper seeking views from the farming and broader countryside interests in Wales on the Commission's proposals on 21 January 2008. Responses are sought by 28th February. The responses received will help to shape the Welsh Assembly Government's position on the discussions within the UK and in Europe.

<sup>55</sup> Mid-term review of the 6th Environment Action Programme, 30 April 2007

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0225:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>56</sup> European Commission Communication on Progress on the Sustainable Development Strategy 2007, 22 October 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/docs/com\\_2007\\_642\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/docs/com_2007_642_en.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy, *Fit for new opportunities*, 20 November 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index_en.htm)

Legislative proposals are expected to be presented by the Commission in May 2008. The Commission hopes that these will be adopted by agriculture Ministers by the end of 2008; they could come into effect immediately after their adoption. The proposals will provide options aimed at making the Single Payment Scheme more effective, adapting the market support instruments and addressing the new challenges facing the sector such as climate change, the protection of biodiversity and water management.

#### **4.2 Rural Development Plan**

The Wales Rural Development Plan 2007 – 2013<sup>58</sup> was approved by the European Commission on 20 February 2008. The EU will provide £195 million to support an overall spend of £795 million to be invested in the farming and forestry sectors through to 2013.

The plan will support activities including the diversification of rural areas through local and community initiatives; improving the environment and countryside through initiatives such as agri-environment schemes and support for organic farming; improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry through mechanisms such as farming connect, training and agri-food initiatives.

The Welsh Assembly Government and various stakeholders are currently reviewing the land management options within the WRDP, with a view to implementing any amendments from 2010.

#### **4.3 Review of Less Favoured Areas**

Proposed changes to the regulation governing support for Less Favoured Areas (LFA) is expected towards the end of 2008. In Wales LFAs are covered by the Tir Mynydd scheme, for which 80% of land in Wales is eligible. A legislative proposal on a new designation of the Less Favoured Areas is expected in the Fourth Quarter of 2008, following criticism from the European Court of Auditors on the criteria used to determine the current scheme.

Support for LFAs is granted with the objective of contributing to maintaining the countryside through the continued use of agricultural land, as well as to maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems. It is a vital part of the Rural Development Policy. The Commission hopes that this initiative will result in an improved delimitation system for areas with handicaps, thus adjusting the measure to changed circumstances.

#### **4.4 Animal Health Strategy**

In September 2007, the Commission adopted a new EU Animal Health Strategy for 2007-2013<sup>59</sup>. The strategy provides a framework for animal health over the next 6 years. It places a greater focus on precautionary measures, disease surveillance, controls and research in order to reduce the incidence of animal disease and minimise the impact of outbreaks when they do occur. The new strategy goes further than just the control of animal diseases, considering issues linked to animal health such as public health, food safety, animal welfare, sustainable development and research.

As part of the strategy, a single regulatory framework will eventually be developed as an 'umbrella' piece of legislation. This piece of legislation will provide the basic, fundamental

<sup>58</sup> Wales Rural Development Plan 2007-2013

[http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/countryside\\_policy/rural\\_development/rdp0713/?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/countryside_policy/rural_development/rdp0713/?lang=en)

<sup>59</sup> European Commission Animal Health Strategy 2007-2013

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/index_en.htm)



rules and principles for animal health, while more specific rules on various animal health issues could then be improved, developed or created where needed. The aim is to have simpler, more modern and more relevant animal health rules, which are flexible enough to be adapted to new situations as they arise. Existing legislation will be simplified, and replaced by the single framework where appropriate. There are no proposals linked to this within the Commission's work programme for 2008.

In June 2008 the Commission will put forward proposals to introduce a Council Regulation on the protection of animals at slaughter or killing. The proposal would promote the humane treatment of animals and have the following main objectives: 1) Update the stunning/killing requirements in line with the most recent scientific data 2) Simplify the legislative framework in line with the food regulations by increasing operators responsibilities, 3) Address the new animal welfare concerns such as more humane killing in case of eradication for contagious diseases.

#### **4.5 Green Paper on Agricultural Product Quality Policy**

The Green Paper, expected in October 2008, will explore ideas and options for farmers and producers who want to better meet consumer demand and add value to their production by providing a higher quality product. The document will ask for contributions, views and proposals for developing measures and the appropriate legal framework to facilitate a shift to quality production and marketing. The Green Paper will also seek the views of stakeholders on the development of existing EC quality schemes for geographical indications and traditional local specialities.

## **5 Employment and social policy**

### **5.1 Review of the EU Social agenda**

The European Commission will adopt a Communication on the mid-term review of the implementation of the Social Agenda in the second trimester of 2008<sup>60</sup>. The Communication will aim at taking stock of the implementation of the Social Agenda, in particular to what extent it has contributed to realising the social objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. This may result in a refocus of priorities in the employment and social fields and improvements to the governance and implementation of the Agenda until 2010.

### **5.2 Alcohol Strategy**

The Commission Communication on Alcohol was adopted on 24 October 2007<sup>61</sup>. It addresses the adverse health effects of harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption in Europe by identifying areas where Member States can co-operate to reduce alcohol related harm. Acknowledging the role of Member States in this policy area, the Commission does not intend to propose legislation at European level.

<sup>60</sup> European Commission website on the Social Agenda

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_policy\\_agenda/social\\_pol\\_ag\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_policy_agenda/social_pol_ag_en.html)

<sup>61</sup> European Commission Communication on an EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm, 24 October 2006

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0625:FIN:EN:PDF>



## 6 Health

### 6.1 EU Health Strategy

The EU health strategy 2008-2013, *Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*, was adopted on 23 October 2007, and the White Paper published on 25 October 2007<sup>62</sup>. The main focus of the White Paper is on fostering good health among older people and the workforce, protecting citizens from emerging threats and supporting innovation towards more efficient and sustainable healthcare systems.

### 6.2 Patient Safety and Quality of Health Service

The Commission's consultation on cross-border health care and co-operation between Member States closed in January 2007<sup>63</sup>. The Commission now intends to secure the adoption of a Council Recommendation that will:

- ◆ Introduce legal certainty through the incorporation of the key European Court of Justice rulings regarding Treaty provisions on free movement of patients, professionals and health services.
- ◆ Support Member States in areas where European action can add value to their national action, and provide those responsible (including social security institutions) with a clear framework of Community law within which to operate.

The Commission is expected to propose a series of Recommendations (in the form of a Communication) before Summer 2008, which are then likely to be debated by the Health Council in June 2008. The European Parliament is likely to take a strong interest in this issue and has already begun to discuss an inquiry.

### 6.3 e-Health Interoperability

The European Commission's "e-Health Action Plan"<sup>64</sup>, which was adopted on 30 April 2004, looks at how information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be used to deliver better quality health care Europe-wide. The plan covers issues ranging from electronic prescriptions and computerised health records to using new systems and services that cut down waiting times and reduce errors.

In June 2006, the Commission's ICT for Health Unit adopted a new strategy to promote the transformation of the European healthcare landscape, in line with the Commission's new policy framework i2010<sup>65</sup>. A draft Recommendation on e-Health interoperability, which sets out guidelines for good practice in the area, was published for informal public consultation on 19 July 2007<sup>66</sup>. The consultation closed on the 10 September 2007. The Commission plans to publish its Recommendations in February or March of 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Commission of the European Communities White Paper on Health, *A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*, 23 October 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_overview/Documents/strategy\\_wp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/Documents/strategy_wp_en.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> European Commission consultation regarding Community action on health services, 26 September 2006

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_overview/co\\_operation/mobility/docs/comm\\_health\\_services\\_comm2006\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/co_operation/mobility/docs/comm_health_services_comm2006_en.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> European Commission e-Health Action Plan - *Making healthcare better for European citizens: An action plan for a European e-Health Area*, 30 April 2004

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2004:0356:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>65</sup> European Commission, ICT for Health and i2010, *Towards a strategy for ICT for Health*

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/health/docs/publications/ictforhealth-and-i2010-final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/health/docs/publications/ictforhealth-and-i2010-final.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> European Commission consultation on draft Recommendation on e-Health Interoperability, 19 July 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=3540](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=3540)

#### **6.4 Organ Donation and Transplantation**

Following a Commission consultation on aspects of the use of human organs, which closed on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2006<sup>67</sup>, the European Parliament and Council are recommending a directive on standards of quality and safety for the donation, procurement, testing, preservation, transport and characterisation of human organs. The directive will include the principles needed to establish a basic quality and safety framework for the therapeutic use of human organs. It is intended there will be an accompanying Communication (due in the autumn of 2008) which will establish an action plan for closer cooperation between Member States to help maximise organ donation and equalise access to transplantation.

Organ transplantation is a non-devolved issue for Wales. However, there has been interest among both Assembly Members and the Assembly Government in promoting organ donation among members of the public and access for patients in need of a donation.

#### **6.5 Health Professionals**

In 2008, the Commission will look at ways to ensure that Member States see a return on their investment in health professionals, by developing a strategic approach to human resources (HR) in the health sector. The Commission aims to develop specific policy recommendations in this area.

#### **6.6 Pharmaceuticals Directive and Regulation Amendments**

In October 2008, it is intended that action will be taken to strengthen EU medicines safety monitoring and to reduce risks from authorised medicines by improving the functioning of the Internal Market and the safety oversight of pharmaceuticals that flow across the EU.

A further directive will be drawn up with the aim of establishing harmonised rules that take into account developments in society (empowered patients seeking more information) and technology (increased use of the internet).

#### **6.7 Diet and Physical Activity**

The EU Platform on diet and physical activity produced an annual report for 2007 and will continue with its programme in 2008<sup>68</sup>.

Also in 2008, the Commission plans to initiate a study exploring the potential for the reduction in levels of nutrients that contribute to the development of chronic diseases.

In 2010, it is proposed that a first review of the progress made in implementing the obesity White Paper<sup>69</sup> will be produced with legislative measures possible if progress is deemed insufficient.

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<sup>67</sup> European Commission consultation on organ donation and transplantation policy, 27 June 2006  
[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_threats/human\\_substance/oc\\_organ/consultation\\_paper.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/human_substance/oc_organ/consultation_paper.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health: Annual Report 2007  
[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/nutrition/platform/docs/synopsis\\_commitments2007\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/docs/synopsis_commitments2007_en.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> White Paper on A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues, 30 May 2007  
[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition\\_wp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wp_en.pdf)

## **6.8 Mental Health Strategy**

The European Parliament adopted its opinion on the EU Mental Health Green Paper<sup>70</sup> in September 2006 and considered that the gender dimension needs to be strengthened in measures proposed to promote mental health. It called on the Commission to do the following: place the reform of psychiatry on the agenda for EU accession negotiations; consider that prison is not a suitable environment for those suffering mental ill health and that alternatives should be actively pursued; to establish a 'Mental Health Coordinating and Monitoring Group' and to follow up the Green Paper with a proposal for a directive on mental health in Europe and the defence of and respect for the civil and fundamental rights of persons suffering from mental disorders. However, the Mental Health Strategy is not mentioned in the Commission's forward work programme for 2008.

A high level conference on mental health is due to take place on 13 June 2008 as a follow up to the Green Paper consultation.

## **7 Equal opportunities**

### **7.1 Equal treatment outside employment**

A Proposal for a Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment outside employment will be issued in June 2008. Article 13 provides the legal basis for the European Union to take appropriate actions to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The principle of non-discrimination only becomes operational when contained in a directive or other instrument made under Article 13 EC. Three such Directives have already been adopted but they do not provide protection against discrimination based on religion & belief, age, disability and sexual orientation outside the sphere of employment. The main policy objective of this Proposal is to improve the level and uniformity of protection against discrimination for all groups.

### **7.2 Follow up to EU Year of Equal Opportunities for All**

A Communication on the follow-up of the 2007 European Year for Equal Opportunities for all - *Setting the future for antidiscrimination policy* - will be issued in June 2008.

Countries participating in the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All campaign produced national strategies<sup>71</sup> and organised local events and activities in an attempt to ensure that the campaign had an impact on local communities. The Communication will give a political follow-up to the campaign and set up the next policy steps to be taken in the EU's continued strategy in this field.

### **7.3 Rights of the Child**

On 4 July 2006, the Commission adopted the Communication *Towards an EU strategy on the Rights of the Child*<sup>72</sup>. The Commission intends to issue a proposed Communication on

<sup>70</sup> European Commission Green Paper, *Improving the mental health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union*, 14 October 2005

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0484:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>71</sup> the UK National Strategy can be accessed here

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/eyeq/index.cfm?page\\_id=345&language=EN](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?page_id=345&language=EN)

<sup>72</sup> European Commission Communication - *Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child*, 4 July 2006

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0367:EN:NOT>

the promotion of children's needs and rights in 2008. The Communication will underlie the comprehensive nature of children rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which serves as the framework for any EU action in this area.

## 8 Education

### 8.1 *Migration and Education*

After consultation with the European Commission, the European Training Foundation (ETF), an agency of the EU, launched a pilot study on the link between migration and education and training (June 2007)<sup>73</sup>. ETF maintain that current knowledge of migration patterns, consequences and their relation to education and skills is still very limited.

The approach in the pilot study includes field surveys in four selected countries - Albania, Egypt, Moldova and Tunisia, representing both new and traditional sources of migration to the EU. Initial survey data from the study in Moldova showed a mismatch between education areas and the demands of the labour market.

A Green Paper on migration and education, due in April 2008, is likely to underline the central role of education in integration policies, raise awareness on the problems faced by migrant pupils and analyse possible solutions and good practices. It will probably also address what Community programmes and funds can do to support policy development.

It will put forward possible options on the need to provide to children of immigrant workers teaching in the language of the host country as well as in their own native language and culture.

Once the consultation is closed the Commission will issue a Communication (probably in September 2008) which is likely to be discursive rather than propose new legislation.

### 8.2 *Modernising Schools*

A public consultation on modernising schools was undertaken by the European Commission between July and December 2007<sup>74</sup>. As a result of this consultation combined with recent research findings, a Communication is due to be issued in June 2008 which will identify aspects of schooling that require modernisation if Member States are to meet their education objectives.

### 8.3 *European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and Vocational Education*

Following the results of a stakeholder consultation, the European Commission published a proposal for a recommendation on a European Qualifications Framework on 5 September 2006<sup>75</sup>.

The EQF aims to act as a translation device between the Member States' qualifications systems. The aim is that this will help employers and educational establishments across Europe compare and better understand the qualifications presented by individuals.

<sup>73</sup> ETF pilot study, on migration and education, 26 June 2007

[http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/opennews/EEB482F32CE23DF3C1257306002B5497\\_EN?OpenDocument](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/opennews/EEB482F32CE23DF3C1257306002B5497_EN?OpenDocument)

<sup>74</sup> European Commission consultation, *Schools for the 21st Century*, 11 July 2007

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/education/commission-seeks-modernise-school-education/article-165522>

<sup>75</sup> European Commission European Qualifications Network website

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/index_en.html)

The system has eight reference levels, from basic qualifications to the highest level. The Recommendation specifies that countries should relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010.

The Second Assembly's Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee heard from the then Minister (in January 2007) that the Welsh Assembly Government's bid with other EU partners to test the alignment of the national qualifications frameworks with the EQF under the EU's Leonardo Programme had been successful<sup>76</sup>.

The Recommendation states that by 2012, every new qualification issued in the EU should have a reference to the appropriate EQF reference level, so the benefits to mobility and lifelong learning that the EQF brings will be visible and available to every EU citizen.

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth launched the Framework for lifelong learning at a major education conference in Lisbon on 7 January 2008. The EQF is now expected to be formally adopted in early 2008.

## 9 Culture, Youth and Audiovisual Affairs

### 9.1 *Audiovisual Media Services Directive - TV Without Frontiers*

On 13 December 2005, the Commission proposed revising the Television Without Frontiers Directive to address significant technological and market developments in audiovisual services.

On 29 November 2007, the European Parliament formally approved, without amendments, the Council's common position on the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive<sup>77</sup>. The Directive modernises the rules for Europe's audiovisual industry and offers a comprehensive legal framework that covers all audiovisual media services – including on-demand services. Less detailed, more flexible and future-oriented rules on TV advertising aim to allow audiovisual content to be better financed.

The Directive was published in the *Official Journal* on 18 December 2007 and came into force on 19 December 2007. Member States shall transpose it in national law by 19 December 2009 at the latest.

On 10 January 2008 the Commission published a consultation paper on the future framework which will apply to State funding of public service broadcasting<sup>78</sup>. This consultation gives Member States and stakeholders the opportunity to submit their views before any commission proposal on the possible revision of the Broadcasting Communication<sup>79</sup> (which was first adopted in 2001). The consultation documents include

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<sup>76</sup> Minister's report to the ELLS Committee, 17 January 2007

[/www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees](http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees)

<sup>77</sup> Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007 concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities

[http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/modernisation/proposal\\_2005/](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/modernisation/proposal_2005/)

<sup>78</sup> European Commission Communication, State Aid and Public Broadcasting, 10 January 2008

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state\\_aid/reform/broadcasting\\_comm\\_questionnaire\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/reform/broadcasting_comm_questionnaire_en.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> European Commission Communication, State Aid Rules to Public Service Broadcasting, 17 October 2001

a questionnaire as well as an explanatory memorandum which gives an overview of the current rules, the relevant Commission decision-making practice and the possible scope for amendments. Key issues for discussion may come forward later this year with a proposal for a revised Broadcasting Communication, with a view to its adoption in the first half of 2009.

## 9.2 Multilingualism

The European Commission published its first Communication on multilingualism in November 2005<sup>80</sup>.

In response to the 2005 Communication, the *High Level Group on Multilingualism* was set up and tasked with advising the Commission on new ideas and initiatives for the development of their approach on multilingualism. The Group produced its *Final Report* on 26 September 2007<sup>81</sup>.

The European Commission is seeking to adapt its policies and actions in the area of languages and ran an open consultation on multilingualism until 15 November 2007<sup>82</sup>. The results of the consultation will feed into a Commission policy statement, in the form of a Communication on Multilingualism, in 2008. The consultation is exploring issues which include the ways to safeguard the place of less spoken languages against a common trend of 'one lingua franca'; the role languages can play in integrating migrants into society; and if the costs of a multilingual EU administration are worth paying.

## 9.3 White Paper on Sport

The European Commission adopted the *White Paper on Sport* on 11 July 2007<sup>83</sup>. The document proposes a number of actions to be implemented and supported by the Commission in three areas, the societal role of sport (enhancing public health through physical activity, fighting doping, enhancing the role of sport in education, volunteer activities, social inclusion, fighting racism, sport as a tool for development); the economic dimension of sport (collection of comparable data, ensuring financial support for grassroots sports organisations); and the organisation of sport (the specific nature of sport, free movement, player transfers, players' agents, protection of minors, corruption and money laundering, licensing system for clubs, media rights).

The proposals are brought together in an Action Plan accompanying the White Paper<sup>84</sup>, which details proposals for future EU action in these areas.

According to Ján Figel, EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, the White Paper is not legally binding, but rather "a show of political will to indicate the direction to be followed with regard to sport in the EU".

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<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/01/1429&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>80</sup> European Commission Communication, *A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism*, 22 November 2005

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005\\_0596en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0596en01.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *High Level Group on Multilingualism, Final Report*, 26 September 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1396&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>82</sup> An analysis of the contributions will be published in spring 2008 at

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/consult/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html)

<sup>83</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *White Paper on Sport*, 11 July 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/sport/whitepaper/wp\\_on\\_sport\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/whitepaper/wp_on_sport_en.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Action Plan "Pierre de Coubertin" accompanying document to the White Paper on Sport*, 11 July 2007

[http://ec.europa.eu/sport/whitepaper/sec934\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/whitepaper/sec934_en.pdf)

The UK Parliament Culture, Media and Sport Committee launched an inquiry into the White Paper on 27 November 2007<sup>85</sup>. The committee is seeking views on the proposals and on their possible impact on sport and on sporting bodies in the UK. The closing date for submissions was 14 January 2008.

## **10 Other Policy Areas**

### **10.1 Trade**

The World Trade Organisation's (WTO), Doha Development Round, commenced at Doha, Qatar in November 2001 and is still continuing<sup>86</sup>. Its objective is to lower trade barriers around the world, permitting free trade between countries of varying prosperity. In June 2007, negotiations within the Doha round broke down at a conference in Potsdam, as a major impasse occurred between the developed nations led by the European Union, the United States and Japan and the major developing countries (represented by the G20 developing nations), led and represented mainly by India, Brazil, China and South Africa. The main disagreement was over opening up agricultural and industrial markets in various countries and also how to cut rich nation farm subsidies.

The Commission will report on the multilateral trade negotiations under the World Trade Organisation's Doha Agenda in the second trimester of 2008. Amongst other things, this is likely to include agreements on; liberalisation of trade in industrial and agricultural goods (tariff cuts) and of services, and; reduction of domestic agricultural subsidies and reform of certain WTO rules governing international trade.

### **10.2 Development**

The Commission will adopt a Communication on the EU's contribution to the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Accra, September 2008), and to the Follow-Up Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha, December 2008). It will also address Policy Coherence for Development, drawing the lessons from the debate of the EU report issued in September 2007<sup>87</sup> and the state of play regarding the EU contribution on Aid for Trade - the EU has expressed a commitment to continue increasing its aid for trade up to €1 billion per year by 2010. The Commission will also examine any new avenues to be followed in its work to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

In April 2008, the Commission will adopt a Communication which will draw lessons from the discussions of the first EU Policy Coherence for Development report, and will present concrete recommendations to enhance coherence of EU policies with development objectives.

### **10.3 External Relations**

The EU adopted its "Strategy for Africa" in 2005, with the aim of establishing a single framework for all EU action<sup>88</sup>. In 2008, the Commission will adopt a Communication that

<sup>85</sup> UK Parliament, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, European Commission White Paper on Sport: New Inquiry, 27 November 2007

[http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/culture\\_media\\_and\\_sport/cms071127.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/culture_media_and_sport/cms071127.cfm)

<sup>86</sup> The World Trade Organisation's Doha Development Round website

[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/dda\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm)

<sup>87</sup> European Commission, *EU Policy Coherence for Development Report*, September 2007

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1376&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguag>

<sup>88</sup> European Commission website on Strategy for Africa

evaluates the implementation EU Strategy for Africa. It will integrate the priorities identified in the first action plan implementing the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and set the necessary guidelines for their implementation. The Communication will be based on a questionnaire circulated to Member States in early 2008.

In addition, the Commission will adopt a Communication aimed at spelling out an innovative agenda for trilateral dialogue and cooperation with Africa and China. The Communication, due to be published in October 2008, will propose a constructive dialogue, cooperation and methods of managing competition in such a way as to make it beneficial to peace, prosperity and sustainable development in Africa.

In June 2008, the Commission aims to define a programme of actions geared towards better harnessing the instruments and assets of the EU's external policy, to pursue the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and contribute to improvement of the competitiveness of the economies of Member States.

The Commission will also set out a policy framework for the external dimension of the internal policies in the field of education, training, youth and culture in July 2008. The Commission intends to demonstrate how policy dialogue and cooperation with third countries in these fields may contribute to strengthening of partnerships worldwide.

#### **10.4 Asylum**

Progress towards a Common European Asylum System will continue in 2008. A Proposal to amend the Directive on refugee status<sup>89</sup> in Member States should be issued by November 2008 to support this aim. The Asylum (Procedures) Regulations 2007<sup>90</sup> implemented parts of the original Directive into UK law. The UK has previously negotiated the right to opt-out of (and to opt-in to) measures relating to asylum, immigration and border controls. Should the Treaty of Lisbon be ratified, the UK will have the right to choose whether to opt-in to any justice and home affairs measures.

#### **10.5 Migration**

A migration package, which is expected to be adopted in February 2008, will include a Communication on Entry/Exit system and other border management tools (e.g. Electronic Travel Authorization); a report on the evaluation and future development of Frontex (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders); and a Communication on European Border Surveillance system. However, the opt-out negotiated by the UK Government on such issues may limit its participation.

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<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12540.htm>

<sup>89</sup> Directive 2005/85/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:326:0013:0034:EN:PDF>

<sup>90</sup> OPSI, The Asylum (Procedures) Regulations 2007

[http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/ukSI\\_20073187\\_en\\_2.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/ukSI_20073187_en_2.htm)