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GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

February 2011

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Commissioner Damanaki outlines the importance of the EU's integrated maritime policy

Economy

Angela Eagle, Brendan Barber and Yanis Varoufakis on economic woes

Law

Interview: Michael Mansfield QC talks about his career at the Bar

Health

Commissioner John Dalli argues the importance of clinical trials

Child Protection

Marina Yannakoudakis MEP on combating internet child sex abuse

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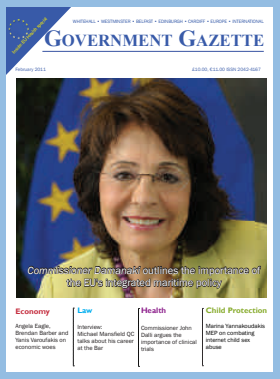

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Tackling the scourge of child pornography

By Marina Yannakoudakis MEP

The European Parliament deals with a range of issues; several influence national agendas, others interfere with sovereign matters and some touch on topics so delicate and universal that we welcome a joint approach. In all areas there are side effects which result in simple moral issues becoming complicated by political debates. This has been most notable in the child abuse directive which I have recently been working on.

The abuse of children is a grim fact of life in our society. Child pornography for both commercial purposes and personal amusement grows with the development of the internet: it is more common than most people realise and is equally as serious a crime as that of human and drug trafficking. With this in mind you would expect any legislation to be simple in its objective and united in its approach.

As adults and parents we have a shared responsibility in protecting both male and female children. As politicians we have a duty to ensure legislation is in place to protect the vulnerable, especially children. In a world where technologies are changing and developing constantly we must be ready to react to tackle the crime and protect society's children. The Commission recently put forward proposals to combat sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. It is a comprehensive document that firmly understands the need for holistic action. The report draws on a diverse number of stakeholders, approaches and tools to combat these crimes. In my capacity as a member of FEMM I have provided an opinion to Rapporteur Roberta Angelilli of LIBE.

While the aim to protect children seems simple enough, controversy was evident from the start. Simple matters such as definitions had to be debated and clarified: for example, the Commission's definition that child shall mean any person below the age of 18 years has, in my view, too broad a scope. I believe we need to make a distinction between a ´child´ who is under the age of consent, and a ´adolescent´ who is over the age of consent but under the age of 18 and needs to be protected from sexual exploitation.

The term ´child pornography´ is also controversial. The argument here is ´pornography' implies an act that is socially acceptable to some. For this reason the term ´child abuse image´ has been put forward by some colleagues. I feel we should use the term ´child pornography´ as the accent is put on the sexual purpose of the act whereas ´child abuse image´ is a broad term used to describe images from a diverse range of criminal acts not necessarily of a sexual nature. Furthermore, when we consider current legislation and legal terminology in protocols and conventions relevant to this draft directive it is prudent for clarity to remain with the current wording.

However, the most controversial matter, and most talked over aspect of the Commission's proposal, is that of the internet and the case for blocking sites which show child pornography. The issue of the controls over internet content is one that will persist over the next few years as politicians' battle with the issue of freedom of the press, individual, censorship and human rights. I strongly believe that we need to take on the challenge of internet censorship in the sense that there are certain matters that require boundaries. The internet is a huge living organism which makes it challenging to police but some level of control is arguably necessary. Internet sales need to be clear and clean.

Child abuse on the internet is one area this debate needs to be firm in its objectives. As politicians in the European Parliament, and also within national Governments, we need to be firm in our resolve to deal with these issues. I argue, in agreement with Commissioner Malmstrom, that the ultimate aim is to remove such sites through deletion at source, but where this is not possible blocking should be instigated. Blocking must be seen as a complementary tool in the evolving arsenal to combat such an appalling crime against the innocent. When we focus on human rights we need to remember human rights stop when they start to impinge on other people's rights and on the safety of children.

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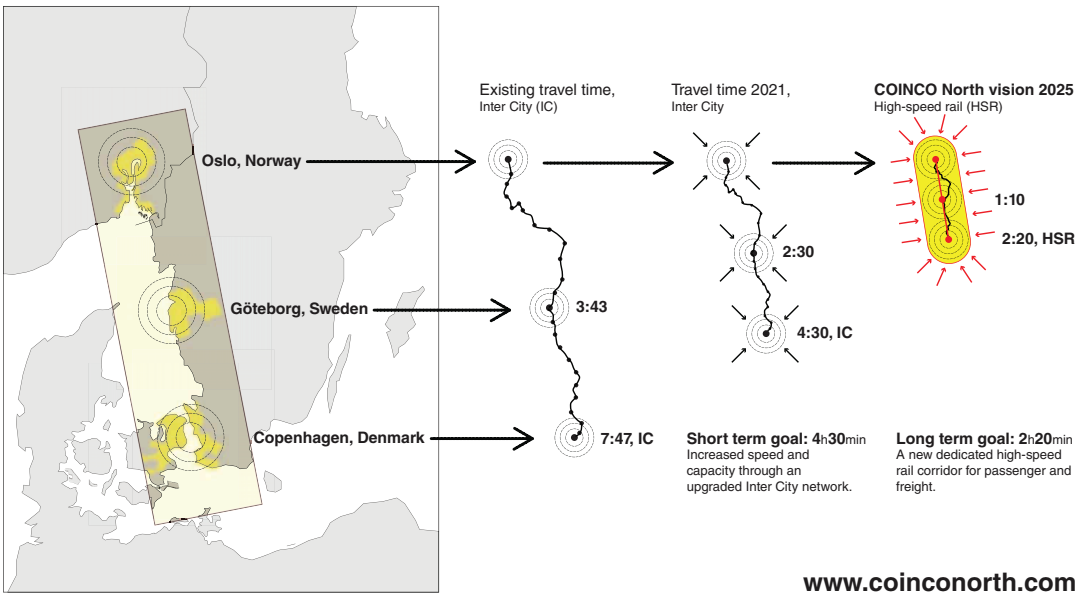
Welcome to the Scandinavian 8 Million City



www.coinconorth.com

3 countries, 4 metropolitan cities, including 2 capitals: 8 million of Scandinavia's 19,3 million inhabitants live in the corridor between Oslo and Copenhagen. The area covers a distance of 600 km from Oslo, Norway, via Göteborg, Sweden, to the Øresund region (Malmö in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark).

Corridor of Innovation and Cooperation (COINCO) North is a strategic development project working to improve infrastructure for transport and innovation and business in the corridor, creating the Scandinavian 8 Million City.

This region is already in the world`s top league when it comes to an educated and skilled workforce, and represents one of the most dynamic an innovative regions in Europe. Scandinavian cities have, however, got small and rather dispersed populations, with notable concentrations only around the metropolitan areas of Oslo, Göteborg, Malmö, Copenhagen and Stockholm. In a world were regions increase in size to attract talent and be more competitive globally, this is a challenge.

The aim for COINCO North is to secure sustainable growth and development through reducing time and cost of travel in this corridor. Our vision is to get high-speed trains that will serve the distance between Oslo and Copenhagen in 2 hours 20 minutes by 2025.

To realise this vision an upgrade to the existing Inter City networks to double tracks and building separate tracks for high-speed is required in the whole corridor. This will create more capacity for both passengers and freight, generating a vast reduction of travel time and enabling new mobility patterns. One dynamic effect will be the large and integrated employment market that is created - a mega-region of 8 million inhabitants stretching from Oslo in the north to Copenhagen in the south. This will have a magnetic effect for employees, employers, innovators and investors.

Potential results for the Scandinavian 8 Million City:
-Green mobility that reduces urban sprawl
-Higher productivity and competitive edge
-Easier access to skills and talents
-Reduced costs in logistics
-Increased access to suppliers and customers
-Greater influence due to overall increased size
- New possibilities for cooperation and innovation across a wide range of areas

COINCO North is co-funded by the EU. The project was approved for funding through the Interreg IV A Öresund-Kattegat-Skagerak programme in the end of February 2009, and will be running until autumn 2011. Oslo Teknopol is the project manager and the Norwegian project owner of COINCO North, whilst Business Region Göteborg is the Lead Partner.

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CORRIDOR OF INNOVATION AND COOPERATION
COINCONORTH

EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

Interreg IV A

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A call for a sensible approach to maternity leave

By Marina Yannakoudakis MEP

October 2010 will go down as the month the Women's Committee in the EU scored a home goal in terms of Women's Rights. For this was the month the plenary session in Strasbourg voted in favour of the "Pregnant Works and Health Directive" which, in real terms, turned into the "Maternity Leave Directive" with compulsory 20 week fully paid maternity leave for all women, employees and the self-employed.

As one famous entrepreneur once said: "Equality legislation, if taken too far, can actually reduce the chances of women gaining employment".

The original Directive was co-decision, and therefore legislative. It was based around the health and working conditions of pregnant workers and women who have recently given birth. However, in the midst of the hundreds of amendments, it was amendments 12 and 38 that resulted in shock waves being sent through most European governments.

Amendments 12 and 38 asked for compulsory 20 weeks of fully paid maternity leave. When these amendments were originally included in the Directive some 5 months prior to the Women's Committee, the Directive was barely passed by 6 votes. At this stage it was clear the Directive had moved a long way from the original proposals by the commission and the effect of this amended Directive were not known. I therefore requested the Parliament to carry out an Impact Assessment on behalf of my group, the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, in the hope that once the full impact was known the Women's Committee would reassess their position on this Directive. The Impact Assessment came back stating that the cost of this leave would be catastrophic to business, in that the total cost to the EU would be €121 billion between now and 2030 - the UK being the most adversely affected, at a cost of £2.5 billion a year.

Regardless, the Directive was put forward for a vote in Strasbourg, and it was passed; with amendments 12 and 38 being passed by only 7 votes.

There are two main arguments for the compulsory leave. Firstly, the EU should achieve an employment rate of 95% for women by 2020. Secondly, the EU needed to increase its falling birth rates, and this Directive will encourage women to have children. One of the major flaws here is it negates choice. It assumes all women want to work outside of the home. Furthermore, social engineering in terms of increasing the birth rate through this Directive is at best ill-conceived; children are a lifelong commitment, both financially and emotionally.

It was interesting to see that when the chips were down national governments advised their MEPs to vote in support to the national interests. The majority of UK MEPs voted against the Directive, as did the German and the French. The smaller member states voted in favour. Here again it was interesting to see that many member states who voted in favour already have 20 weeks of compulsory maternity leave in place, which meant the Directive had no effect on their economy. In fact, one MEP from a smaller state said that the UK should pay for the maternity leave costs from the Defence Budget.

This legislation, should it become law, will in my opinion have a negative effect on the employment prospects of young women. The economic bite on cash strapped governments will probably be passed on to companies. The truth is "the devil is in the detail" and this legislation did not take into account who would cover the extra payments proposed. In today's economy it would hit hard the very SME's on whom the economic recovery is relying on.

The Directive is now in the hands of the European Council where each Member State will have to argue national interest. Once the Council has had their input the Directive will return to Parliament for its second reading. There were some good sentiments behind this Directive. But what it failed to understand was that it would have unintended consequences which are harmful to taxpayers, to businesses, to Member States and, most importantly, to women.

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ECCE Innovation

The Economic Clusters of Cultural and Creative Enterprises (ECCE) project aims to foster the innovation capacity of Creative Industries and turn creative ideas into businesses in order to access new markets.

The project, which started in 2009, recognises the creative sector as not only dynamic, but as a driver of economic and social development. The project focuses on exchanging ideas, sharing expertise, transferring knowledge and developing innovative partnerships between creative industries, higher education and research.

The project aims include:

- Helping to develop new markets for creative SMEs and micro enter prises across cities;
- Developing business, academic, artistic, scientific and policy exper tise that will support the development of new products, services and processes;
- Supporting participating cities and regions to adapt to the new economic models and demonstrating their role in developing the creative and knowledge economy in Europe, enabling participating cities to remain competitive in attracting talents or retaining them.

The lead partner for the project is ***Nantes Métropole*** in France, but other partners are spread across a number of North West European cities with *Aachen, Birmingham City University, Cardiff, the Creative and Development Agency (CIDA) based in Huddersfield, Dublin, Eindhoven and Stuttgart.*

As part of their work, the ***ECCE Innovation project*** has established and trained a network of intermediaries or "transfer agents" that now operate across the partner regions to support and advise artists and creative businesses. The transfer agents help businesses mould themselves to attract additional investment through finding public and private funding opportunities, as well as developing links with universities, businesses and arts schools.

In addition, tools to help realise creative ideas and turn them into

successful businesses have been developed including a European creativity voucher to encourage access to knowledge and research for creative entrepreneurs and to foster and facilitate international collaborations between companies from different partner cities.

The **ECCE Innovation project** also promotes an interdisciplinary approach within higher education, with pilot projects to sponsor joint teaching methods amongst higher education institutes in the creative field and to develop a new European Art-Business training approach based in Nantes.

Key Facts:

Start date: 2009
End date: 2011
Total cost: 3,853 M€
EU funding: 1,926 M€

Project partners
1. Nantes Métropole [FR]
2. Stadt Aachen (Municipality of Aachen) [DE]
3. CIDA - Creative Industries Development Agency [UK]/ Doncaster
4. Gemeente Eindhoven [NL]
5. Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart [DE]
6. Birmingham City University [UK]
7. Cardiff [UK]
8. Dublin City Council (Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath) [IE]

Photos: Patrick Garçon.

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Spreading the Europe word

By Morten Løkkegaard MEP

Politics and communication are two sides of the same coin. Therefore it is always a problem when politics fails to be communicated. In this regard, the EU faces a tremendous challenge.

Hence, Communicating Europe to EU citizens and increasing EU coverage have been two important objectives during my first year in the European Parliament.

When I started running for Parliament, I was often met with alienation and indifference when it came to debating EU matters. "Brussels is very far away" and "it doesn't have anything to do with us anyway", were phrases I often came across. While it is true that Brussels maybe far away, its influence on national matters should not be underestimated. In fact, the EU has an enormous influence on our everyday lives. Looking at my own country, more than half of all national legislation is based on lawmaking from Brussels.

Therefore it is a paradox that the EU is by and large absent in mainstream media. This may explain why parts of the public are uninformed on EU matters, but it doesn't justify the media's poor coverage of the EU. There are examples of substantial EU coverage, but, generally speaking, broadcasters tend to focus on national matters.

However, the media is not the only one to blame. We as politicians carry a huge part of the responsibility, and the aim of increasing the coverage of EU matters must be achieved on several levels. This task does not belong solely to the media, but also to politicians and public institutions.

Both the Commission and the Parliament have taken initiatives to promote a pan-European debate in the past and there have been achievements. The Parliament has been a front runner in using social media and carried out an effective campaign on Facebook during the European election. This has led to more than 80,000 'fans' joining the Parliament's Facebook-page. The Commission is using online communication effectively when working on EU Tube and has taken important steps with the European public spaces campaign. And recently a new initiative, "Tweet your MEP", was launched. The site enables citizens to reach MEPs via Twitter.

There are promising initiatives from the media, too. A European regional network of radio channels-Euranet-is working well and broadcasting to countries all over Europe. Likewise, a regional TV network is to be launched in the coming year-also with the aim of broadcasting all over Europe.

The institutional and technological setting has never been better. The Lisbon Treaty is an important step in the democratisation of the EU while new media outlets present new possibilities. The potential for involving citizens has never been higher.

However, the situation has not improved accordingly when it comes to putting EU issues on the agenda in Member States. The key instrument to overcoming this gap is communication.

The problem is not the lack of information; several players-media as well as institutions-are involved in the dissemination of information on European issues but this alone is not sufficient. In other words, there is lot of food but not a lot of appetite. We have to create this appetite and the tool to be used is communication rather than information. Informing is a one-way process whereas communication is a two-way process involving dialogue.

Presence is also a key word. Therefore it is my hope that media corporations and the written press will upgrade their presence in Brussels and consequently their output on the EU.

As we cannot and shall not put any demands on private broadcasters, we have to look at public service broadcasters. This view was backed by the Parliament when my report on improving EU communication was adopted in Strasbourg this September. The report states that Public broadcasters have a responsibility to cover the EU - of course with full editorial independence.

Communicating the EU is a complex task. So far no one has found the Columbi Egg. Personally, I do not think this egg exists. I believe the optimal way of improving the communication of the EU is by using a lot of different approaches, involving media, politicians and public institutions.

A difficult, but not impossible task!

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Recovery of Electronic Waste through Advanced Recycling and Demonstration (REWARD)

Electronic Waste (WEEE) needs increasing recycling. In Europe the amount of WEEE generated is 12 million ton/yr. Only slightly over 2 million tons is recycled. WEEE will increase in the coming decades with an expected rate of at least 4%/yr, about three times higher than the growth of the average municipal waste. Much of the waste is exported to Africa, China and India and disassembled under inadequate working conditions. More than 78% of European WEEE is currently land filled or incinerated. In August 2009 the Dutch companies Dolphin Metal Separation in Harderwijk, PHB in Waalwijk, Promikron in Delft, Recycling Consult in Eindhoven and the French research institute BRGM in Orléans jointly decided to investigate improved recycling through better size reduction, smart sensor sorting and advanced separation techniques. The consortium of companies has set out a range of demonstrations with the end result a design of a new prototype recycling facility for WEEE.

A resource of metals and materials

WEEE contains different plastics that need further separation. Currently only part of the plastics is recovered. WEEE also contains ferrous and non-ferrous metals, precious metals, platinum group metals and rare earth metals, the latter are currently hardly recycled. The prices of these metals and materials are expected to increase by 15% annually due to increased demand, quotas, supply shortages and a limited number of suppliers.

Modern innovative size reduction and separation techniques

It is the purpose of the project to demonstrate in a number of demonstrations the generation of recyclable products from WEEE with a higher added value for substitution of virgin primary materials and for decreasing dependency on imports. This project will demonstrate advanced size reduction, separation and sorting techniques as verified by earlier laboratory analyses. A dozen full scale unit processes will be demonstrated in this project. They include among others: improved size reduction for optimal material liberation and better subsequent separation; metal detection sensor sorting; smart magnetic separation for magnetic metals and materials; the latest eddy current techniques; advanced density separation; electro-magnetic sorting; a variety of x-ray sensors; colour sensor sorting and near-Infrared sensor sorting. These best available technologies are investigated for maximum liberation, optimal size distribution, maximum grade and recovery with lowest cost and best revenue. The new design of a demonstration plant will generate more fractions of high purity suitable for recycling. These improved technologies are required for increased internal EU utilization of discarded e-wastes, reduced environmental and human health impacts from disposed hazardous materials and reduced export of dangerous materials to developing countries. The partners have large dissemination networks to facilitate the introduction of this technology in all 27 EU countries.

Expected and/or achieved results

Effective demonstrations have been performed with size reduction, screening, polymer type sensor sorting, flame retardant polymer separation, recovery of metals from incinerator ashes and metal recovery with magnets and eddy currents. We cooperate with the companies Steinert, Unisort-RTT, Titech, InashCo, Immark France, Redwave.

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Will the EU expand to the eastern lands of frozen conflicts?

By Robert Evans, *an MEP from 1994 – 2009 and who served on the delegations for relations with Moldova and the South Caucasus countries*

When I was elected to the European Parliament in June 1994, there were just twelve member states of the EU. By the end of 2004, ten central and east European countries had joined the Union. In 2007, Romania and Bulgaria gained accession. So in the space of little more than a dozen years, the Union changed from twelve western European states to 27 countries representing half a billion people stretching from Ireland to the borders of Russia.

Today we have a new jig-saw map of Europe, with many pieces missing or very different from those of just a few years ago. And what of the next few years? How might things be different in 2031? It would be a brave person who predicts no change at all. Quite apart from the unpredictable things that might happen there are plenty of moves afoot, all destined to change the face of Europe for good-if they take off-but all of them beset with problems or special challenges.

Take Moldova, for example. A tiny land-locked republic next to Romania was, for much of its life, part of Romania until annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. It gained independence from Moscow in 1991 and maintains strong ties with Romania including an almost identical language and a very similar flag. Some Moldovans argue for reunification with Romania and a short cut to EU membership but in the meantime the lengthy negotiations for separate accession continue.

A real stumbling block to Moldovan membership remains the disputed region of Transnistria, where a war was fought in the early years of Moldovan independence with the loss of over 2,000 lives. Today, the tiny area of 150, 000 people is governed from its 'capital' Tiraspol and retains not just strong ties with Moscow but Russian troops on its soil. Together with its 'supreme Soviet' and the Russian language, there is an air about the place that suggests Russia has no intention of giving up its influence while in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, there are no moves to relinquish claims to the territory.

Could this long running dispute or 'frozen conflict' put further stumbling blocks in the way of Moldova's accession to the EU? It certainly won't help but the presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus didn't prevent this country joining while five years of membership have not brought about the long anticipated resolution of the division.

A similar situation exists in the South Caucasus countries where a kaleidoscope of peoples, languages and races living together has led to a history of wars, moving boundaries and disputed regions. The three states of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have all indicated a possible desire to join the EU.

Moscow retains its claims on the impoverished region of South Ossetia, which is officially part of Georgia and over which an ill-judged conflict was provoked in 2008. Since then, Russian troops have maintained a strong presence in the area while the citizens use the Russian language, the Russian Rouble as their currency and work on Moscow time. Without some sort of resolution to this 'frozen conflict' or the similar problems in Abkhazia, it seems hard to imagine Georgian accession negotiations becoming any easier.

In neighbouring Armenia and Azerbaijan, the long standing dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is an unsolved problem that shows no sign of reaching an acceptable agreement. The Armenian-speaking region of Nagorno-Karababak is a self proclaimed independent area entirely within the borders of Azerbaijan controlled by Armenian troops.

Considering Europe's chequered history and the emergence of a strong European Union, it would be a brave person to say that the issues addressed above are not insurmountable. Conversely, without full Russian cooperation, it is hard to imagine a solution to the frozen conflicts or an early accession to the EU for Moldova or any of the South Caucasus countries. But twenty-two years ago, if anyone had suggested that the Berlin wall would be breached without real bloodshed or that Moscow would allow the democratic break up of the Soviet Union, it would have been hard to find an audience to listen seriously for very long.

For myself, I actually do believe that a very different European Union will probably exist in twenty-one years time-some forty countries, a substantially different structure and with English being increasingly used as the language in diplomatic use. The territorial disputes may not all be solved by 2031 but the tensions should be lessened and with ever improving relations between Moscow and the West, new and imaginative agreements ought to be possible.

But you never know…

GG Jan Evans.indd 10 01/02/2011 13:10:47

VER-DI
Vern og verdiskaping – naturskyddsområder som ressurs i hållbar økonomisk utvikling

The question which the partners in the VER-DI project have in common is the following: "How can we create sustainable industrial development in and around nature reserves and national parks?"

Danish national parks is a new concept and both the Fegen area and Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell are new nature reserves. Thus, there is a large untapped potential for tourism and sustainable regional development in the participating areas. In countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland it is a tradition to consider protected areas in relation to regional development, which is something the Nordic countries can learn from.

In the five participating areas there is a need for new business opportunities, to attract new businesses and make it more attractive to visit and to settle down in the areas.

And even though there is an enormous variation of the nature and the way it is managed, with the Norwegian mountain villages and Danish villages being the extremes, the project partners expect to inspire each other and together find new ways to develop the areas. This applies, for example, to the important involvement of citizens and the existing businesses in natural areas.

The development will primarily be through the following activities:
Consulting and competency development aimed at businesses in the areas
Development of food and other national park products
Development and marketing of existing and new tourist activities
Development and testing of new forms of dissemination of experiences in the national parks

The five cooperating natural areas are:
Trillemarka-Rollagsfjell natur reserve (Norway)
Hardangervidda national park (Norway)
The Fegen area (Sweden)
Mols Bjerge National Park (Denmark)
The future National park Skjern River (Denmark)

14 partners in the three countries are participating in the project, which commenced on 1 August, 2009 and ends on 31 July, 2012. In addition, businesses and citizens in the five areas will be involved in the project.

Norwegian partners:
Buskerud count municipality (Norwgian project manager), Sigdal municipality, Rollag municipality, Nore and Uvdal municipality and the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

Swedish partners:
Svenljunga municipality, Gislaved municipality and Falkenberg municipality.

Danish partners:
Syddjurs municipality, Destination Djursland, Ringkøbing-Skjern municipality, Herning Municipality, Destination Ringkøbing Fjord and Central Denmark Region (Lead Partner).

Additional information is available from Project Manager:
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You can also visit the project's website: **www.ver-di.eu**

The project has a total budget of just under 2.5 million euros, half of which comes from the EU Interreg IVA Programme for transnational cooperation in the Kattegat-Skagerrak region. www.interreg-oks.eu

Mols Bjerge National Park

Skjern River National Park

Hardangervidda National Park

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ÖRESUND – KATTEGAT – SKAGERRAK

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Roma deportation: a dangerous precedent

By Claude Moraes MEP

For many years now, I've used my position as a Labour MEP to highlight a worrying trend – the growth of the far-right in Europe. But I've also highlighted how it is the entrance of far- right ideas into the mainstream of European politics that should concern us the most.

This is precisely why the removal of a Roma community has provoked such outrage from myself and other Members of the European Parliament. In forcibly removing a small Roma community from France, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has responded to low poll ratings by running into the arms of the far-right. But the danger is that, as much as Sarkozy has moved to the right, he may also have brought the attitudes and policies of the right firmly into the centre.

Naturally, in deporting Roma, Sarkozy has attracted support from those normally consider more at home with Jean-Marie Le Pen's 'Front National'. But the French polls have rewarded Sarkozy and its hard to know exactly how many people are lending their support to the removals because an otherwise controversial policy has been "normalised" by the French state.

And what has been normalised is extremely worrying. This is because the Roma community in question are European citizens. That European citizens have been forcibly removed from any member state, contravening their freedom of movement, is something that has deep implications for Europe.

The free movement of EU citizens - whilst not an unconditional right – is a critical part of EU law. The expulsion of people without work permits can only take place on grounds of a threat to public order, security issues or due to an undue burden on social assistance schemes. Even then, each case should legally be assessed 'on an individual and personal basis'. In this case, the correct legal process hasn't taken place: the expulsion essentially amounts to a removal of a group based on their ethnic origin.

The European Commission is now taking legal action against France,

'The Roma are the most isolated and misunderstood minority in the EU'

sending a clear signal to France that this action was wrong. This is partly in response to pressure from an increasingly powerful European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty, from which my S&D Group made its feelings on the issue plain, pushing the Commission to act.

But there are those who support the expulsion. And this is where the lines are blurred. Members of the European far-right, including the BNP, predictably defended the French government from the European Parliament. But if the BNP are welcoming the French government's illegal and frankly racist stance on EU citizenship, associating with the official government position of a major Member State brings the BNP a degree of credibility they should not have.

Sarkozy will not worry too much about aiding the European far right – he sees his actions as popular amongst centre voters in France. As with the burka ban, and changes in naturalised French citizenship, he knows that French Socialists may not go out on a limb to make this a national election issue. French Socialists in the European Parliament were uncompromising in their condemnation, but Sarkozy is also a master of putting the centre-left on the back foot.

Instead, Sarkozy will continue to bring his approach into the mainstream of European politics. He has, in fact, called on the UK, Germany, Italy and Spain to form a 'super group', one composed of European member states who will take a grip on immigration policy in a way similar to his current policy. European Commissioners were not invited – as no doubt they would mention the rule of law.

Sadly, ahead of Sarkozy's plans, Sweden and Denmark have also begun less publicised deportations of Roma.

The Roma are the most isolated and misunderstood minority in the EU. They face severe poverty, segregation and discrimination. I have seen for myself Roma poverty in Romania and like many MEPs I have been extremely critical of the way Romanian, Bulgarian, Slovakian, Czech and Hungarian governments have in some cases squandered well intentioned EU funds intended to improve the Roma's position. These countries are members of the EU – but their governments have also swung sharply to the right in recent months, with negative implications for minorities.

We are at a cross roads now, one that will decide immigration politics in Europe for a generation. And we should understand why: the mainstream centre of European politics is perilously close to adopting far-right ideas on immigration as the normal terms of debate, with all the implications for the European rule of law, European citizenship and European values that such a potential outcome holds.

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Taken in a lesson in the 10th class of the Friedrich-Ebert-School in Mühlheim am Main. Rolf Degel (pictured right) engages the young people in weather and climate experiments. These pupils will go on to supervise and assist younger children in participating in the experiments and to help them understand more about climate change. (Photo taken by Anne Schleißner)

West London Sustainable Lifestyles
The climate change strategy for the London Borough of Brent was launched at an event in December 2009. It was attended by nearly 200 local residents, school children, businesses, public services and community groups. Also launched on this day was the 'Brent Residents Climate Change Pledge', seen below with local children from Roe Green Primary School, who are championing the pledge in their community and in their school.

Creative Urbans: Healthy Climate WeZt
Healthy Climate WeZt is a project with over 30 student participants (pictured) from schools in the boroughs around the Sloterplas. Over the course of 25 weeks they have been trained to develop a spatial planning approach for one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the Sloterplas area: Buurt 5, with very poor quality open spaces. The program explores the relationship between spatial planning and low carbon, low impact urban living.

C-Change

Changing Climate, Changing Lives

As all EU Member States grapple with their biggest economic challenges in a generation, they must face another, potentially greater, global threat to economic and social stability: the two issues are directly linked.

Given the immediacy of the fiscal challenges, it may be tempting to assume that climate change is long term, so addressing it can be quietly dropped from the agenda until times are easier. But this would be as dangerous as building up a mountain of debt now in the futile hope of paying it off later.

Climate change is inevitable as are its economic impacts. What is less certain, is how soon or how great those will be, or exactly where. But postponing the danger will only make dealing with it more difficult later. And yet this need not be seen only as a high-level technical challenge to be solved by high-cost scientific measures.

Climate change will impact everyone's lives, so the response must involve everyone, throughout society. Fortunately, much that can be done now – by citizens, businesses, municipalities, regional and state governments – is not 'high-tech' and need not sink the exchequer.

C-CHANGE, a partnership of city regions in North West Europe's economic heartland, aims to achieve a 'sea-change' in attitudes, behaviours and practical responses to these challenges by harnessing the power of what is already available to us. It asks how stakeholders from many different social, demographic and economic strata can be engaged together in practical mitigation and adaptation activities. And it demonstrates how we can unlock the potential of urban open spaces – the 'new urban landscapes' of our post-industrial age – to help us adapt to living in a changing climate.

But to ensure the vital changes driven by these informal local partnerships, with their practical "in our own neighbourhood" interventions will be sustained, we must also build what we learn into formal strategies at state and regional levels by climate-proofing spatial plans. The C-Change partners are using the 'test and demonstrate' approach, carrying out locally-designed projects; and transferring the shared learning from these experiences into regional spatial strategies.

Frankfurt region's Rivers of Knowledge project along the Main uses a route of creative landscape interventions to reflect what climate change means to citizens from around the world. In west Amsterdam the Sloterplas lakeside housing regeneration area provides the focus for a raft of sustainability and social cohesion activities.

In London, where the London Plan provides a bench-mark for tackling climate change, 'healthy-eating' local food growing projects are using urban spaces to engage inner-city communities in a range of eco-initiatives that reflect the regional spatial strategy. In Ile de France region, a new school built on ecological principles, a climate change policy throughout secondary education, initiatives to engage communities and a climate change white paper all form part of an integrated strategy.

In Saarland, in Gelderland Province, in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and for the UK Forestry Commission, the C-Change Interreg IVB Project is drawing together the collective force of many ideas and wide experience to tackle the climate change challenge.

Clive Fox, Lead Partner Groundwork London

www.cchangeproject.org

C Change

Investing in Opportunities

The unsung role of women in farming

By Giancarlo Scottà MEP

The agricultural sector occupies a very important place in the European setting: it is under a period of renewal and reforms within the debate for the introduction of the new Common Agricultural Policy after 2013. The discussion is about the achievement of the goals of economic efficiency and competitiveness in agriculture. In this context, one of the main actors is represented by women. The agricultural sector needs new and promising prospects in order to maintain social, cultural and environmental essential values.

The agricultural sector needs feminine sensibility: the capacity and ability of women can contribute to the innovation and the rural development. Women in agriculture commit themselves to assume an active role in order to start a business that is normally carried out by men and to corner farm market. At the same time they aim to revive local traditions and to develop and improve agricultural heritage. They know how to preserve the rural territory through their contributions of ideas and proposals. They are present especially in innovative activities such as in farm holidays, teaching farms, in biological agriculture and viticulture. Their leading role is to look at their business with great attention, in order to improve products quality and traditions tied to the territory. Tradition is preserved by a deep feeling for earth and this allows women to have an important place in local rural communities. Activities like farm catering, embroidery and direct selling generate a significant effect on developing the rural territory and on the approach of the agriculture with the society.

Unfortunately, many difficulties impede women in their activities: the status of women constrains them to blend their professional business with their own familiar business. The number of women employed part-time in the agricultural sector represents 86% of women workers. The entry of young women in the agricultural business is difficult and this is the reason why the majority of women factory managers are more than 65 years old. In addition to this most of the women assumes the role of "Partner assistants". That means they assist their husbands in agricultural activities and they have no right to a legal status, consequently they aren't adequately paid. Moreover, the farm ownership in many cases is attributed to women although their husbands manage the activities and obtain remuneration.

The European Union has to be actively engaged in supporting their presence providing them with a legal status and an equitable remuneration. We need to highlight the successful activities of women involved in agriculture, promoting an environment where local development, biodiversity, cultural heritage and quality of life are a must for the sector. The aim is to support the achievement of female figures in a field where work is often temporary and seasonal despite the fact that they are already engaged in their traditional roles of wives, mothers and daughters. Women's living and working conditions must be improved and their knowledge, skills and experience in the production of food and the conservation of biodiversity must be recognised and improved.

"The agricultural sector needs feminine sensibility: the capacity and ability of women can contribute to the innovation and the rural development"

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SIGNATURE: The European Security Innovation Network

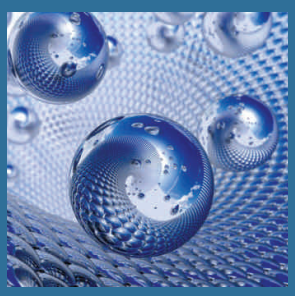
Aims and Objectives
SIGNATURE: The European Security Innovation Network aims to expand the existing security sector cluster infrastructure within North West Europe and become a leading European security network. The network will address the fragmented supply side of the security market.

The objectives of the project are:
- To facilitate innovation by developing and implementing collaboration between clusters, SMEs and other organizations in the security sector.
- To create specific opportunities for collaboration in the security sector through common classification and micro-cluster activity.
- To create highly focused Security Transnational Interest Groups within three themed networks of world class excellence: Security of Information Systems, Critical Infrastructure, and Citizens.
- To improve the quality of partnerships by providing SMEs with a better understanding of their role in complex innovation & research partnerships.

Who is involved?
Five partners from four different countries are working to bring SIGNATURE to life:
- ngage solutions- UK
- Security Innovation & Technology Consortium (SITC) – UK
- Systematic Paris Region- France
- LSEC Leaders in Security- Belgium
- TeleTrusT Deutschland – Germany

Jointly, these security cluster organisations represent over 1,000 companies from all over the world – including EADS, GEMALTO, Thales, MORPHO, Zetes, Vasco, McAfee, Sophos, Unisys and Dimension Data – with an enormous expertise in security.

Why is SIGNATURE important?
Security clusters are a well developed concept across many regions in Europe, taking different forms and structures. However, there is a missing layer of transnational security cluster networks, which could address weaknesses, such as the fragmentation of the supply and demand side of the security market, and the competition coming from clusters and businesses in other parts of the world.



The new and emerging security threats facing NWE and countries across the globe have stimulated a period of rapid growth in the security sector. The clusters have focused so far on business-to-business or business-to-knowledge collaboration largely in their own regions. However, the specialized and sometimes cross-border nature of the sector requires an increased emphasis on working across regions, to ensure that the capacity for innovation and growth in the region is used to its full potential.

For more information, please contact SIGNATURE: The European Security Innovation Network,
Tel: +44 (0)1844 210462, Email: signature@ngagesolutions.co.uk, or visit **www.securityinnovationnetwork.com**

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Investing in Opportunities
This project has received European Regional Development Funding through INTERREG IV B.
INTERREG IVB

The battle for global human rights starts at home

By Heidi Hautala MEP

At a time when rising powers are making headway into the European sphere of influence in the global arena, and fundamental internal changes are reshaping European Union structures, it is imperative to identify key challenges and potential opportunities and develop new corresponding strategies.

In addition to already extensive post-Treaty of Lisbon reshaping of the EU policy, the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton announced in June 2010 a strategic review of EU human rights policy. This is a timely suggestion and should be welcomed.

I was furthermore pleased to learn of the opening of a strategy-oriented discussion concerning in this policy area by the Foreign Minister of Finland, Mr Alexander Stubb. He called in the European Voice on 23rd of September for the EU to adopt a dignified foreign policy and a more efficient human rights policy in a world which tends to listen less to the EU.

I wholeheartedly agree with him. The malaise of weak and incoherent performance has plagued most EU efforts aiming to protect and promote human rights in the recent years. We need a practical and critical look at these policies.

Incoherence and ambiguity is a key reason behind the ineffectiveness of the EU policy. While the domestic policies of member states at times starkly differ from policies they adhere to at the EU level, the policies on the EU level more often than not differ greatly. This allows the non-democratic countries to write us off.

It is most appropriate to note here that in his further commentary on the EU human rights policy, Foreign Minister Stubb has also noted that it is tremendously difficult to lecture to other countries if we do not and are not seen to practice at home what we preach abroad. It is vitally important that the EU remains committed to improving its own human rights record and attention to this will hopefully serve as an effective incentive to stay on course.

Another key reason for the lack of results is that EU has effectively failed to create allies in its human rights work. More could and should be done with the Latin American countries to strengthen international criminal justice; Asian countries to develop regional human rights institutions; and African countries to promote democracy.

Our approach must also be more pragmatic. Each country and each situation merits separate consideration on strategy and goals. In promotion of human rights, democracy and rule of law there is no one size fits all strategy and realistic goals vary inevitably. Setting such strategies and goals must be the job of the EU Foreign Ministers. It is also for them to see that targets are reached. At a time when EU is losing its voice, bureaucrat level operation can no longer deliver.

I intend to take part in the strategic review announced by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on EU human rights policy. Our Subcommittee will be instrumental in debating the new policies and making recommendations to the High Representative. In this capacity we will oversee, for instance, the discussion on how to improve the implementation of EU Human Rights Guidelines, Human Rights Dialogues and Consultations, Human rights and democracy clauses, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and other similar programmes and EU demarches and declarations.

This June, Lene Espersen and Guido Westerwelle, Foreign Ministers of Denmark and Germany, sent a letter to High Representative Ashton making concrete proposals on how the EU human rights policies can be made more effective. I share their recommendation that EU Foreign Ministers engage regularly in discussion on human rights timely and in substantive manner. Equally important is their proposal on a Brussels based EU Council Working Group on Human Rights.

We who care for a strong EU on human rights in the world must now harness the potential of the Lisbon Treaty with the new external action service, and the strengthened powers of the European Parliament, hitherto arguably the most ardent promoter of human rights of all EU institutions.

Finding our voice is, however, imperative not only due to rising power of Brazil, Russia, India, China and the coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. Europe's voice must be rediscovered as the sustained attack against civil and political rights and freedom of speech shows signs of intensifying. Now is the time for EU to snap back from the defensive underdog position it has lost itself in and take back the initiative in promoting the universality of human rights.

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Reducing energy consumption in social housing: 2 European initiatives

CEM - Communication model for energy reduction October 2009 – September 2012

Helping to significantly reduce energy consumption in social housing, CEM aims to accomplish Europe's emissions reduction targets and ease the pressure on the social housing tenants' living costs (including rent and energy bills). This is motivated by the increasing pressure on the social tenant families' housing budget due to the rising energy costs and the general lack of information on energy awareness available to social tenants.

CEM allows European social housing companies to focus on these challenges while aiming to analyse the social aspect of energy reduction and conduct research on intelligent energy and communication. Data on actual living costs are being collected and mapped through mathematical and regression analysis allowing CEM to develop a clear communication tool that enables social tenants to change their energy consumption behavior.

Comprising Zonnige Kempen (Belgium) and Woonstichting Etten-Leur (Netherlands), the CEM is fully supported by the Interreg Vlaanderen 2007-2013 programme, which encourages a joint contribution from Flanders and the Netherlands to achieve the European energy reduction targets. As the project's result is extremely important to all European social tenants, Zonnige Kempen and Woonstichting Etten-Leur are convinced that a platform for dissemination and communication to other European partners is essential. In this context, a sounding board committee has been established, to which all umbrella organizations and relevant instances are invited.

eSESH - Saving Energy in Social Housing with ICT March 2010 – February 2013

eSESH helps to significantly reduce energy consumption in European social housing to meet overall emission reduction targets. By providing user-friendly ICT-based advanced Energy Awareness Services (EAS) and Energy Management Services (EMS) directly to social housing tenants and staff, eSESH strives to enable sustained reduction of energy consumption.

Social housing staff and energy providers use EMS to control the delivery of locally generated heat and power. While EAS can help social housing tenants track their energy consumption, a comprehensive set EMS will be deployed to automatically avoid peak consumption and optimise the timing of domestic consumption considering supplier requirements and tariffs enabling over 5,000 tenants to lower their overall energy consumption.

eSESH will pilot services on 10 sites across France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy and Belgium. Encompassing 32 partners, eSESH is coordinated by empirica and led by government authorities and social housing providers.

Zonnige Kempen, one of the youngest social housing companies in Flanders (Westerlo, Belgium), leads Belgium's contribution to eSESH through director Luc Stijnen and project manager Katrien Van Uytsel. Zonnige Kempen helps people on low incomes by offering them opportunities to lease or own proper, affordable and comfortable housing consuming less energy. Additionally, Zonnige Kempen aims to reduce domestic energy consumption for its social tenants and create more transparency in energy-related terminology, consumption and reduction measurement. It is constructing an experimental housing environment with individual and collective installations at its pilot site in Heist-op-den-Berg to analyse several energy reducing measures. To monitor the results Zonnige Kempen aims to develop a suitable ICT-based solution to be installed and tested on the site.

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Creating green employment pastures

By Elisabeth Schroedter MEP

Chris Huhne, the British Climate and Energy Minister, in September 2010 announced that the British Government will initiate a "Green Deal" ensuring the insulation of 26 million homes in the UK. Raising the energy efficiency of British homes will help meet CO2 reduction targets and opens up a huge job potential in the construction sector. Minster Huhne promised to create 250, 000 jobs in green industries. The Green New Deal is a concept we Greens have long been fighting for, as an integrated approach to fight the economic, social and ecological crisis.

The positive side effect of the expansion and the promotion of the renewable energies and energy efficiency sector are enormous. One Greenpeace study estimates its global green job potential at over 8 million. By taking the lead in shifting to a sustainable economy, Europe can gain first mover advantage and ensure that a substantial share of these jobs will be created in Europe. Greening jobs is a necessity when we take the EU's commitments to CO2 reduction and sustainable development seriously. And the transformation to a more sustainable economy will create new jobs and protect jobs in struggling sectors. Take for example the metal industry: the production of wind turbines requires high quality steel. By more and more engaging in the production of these turbines, the industry is accessing new markets and prevents large set offs.

The key message of my report is that most jobs are potentially green jobs. By adopting the encompassing ILO definition, the EP stated clearly that the term green jobs covers not only job profiles in renewable energies, recycling or waste reduction, but every job that contributes to sustainable development; green jobs save energy, use renewable energies, protect natural resources and the ecosystem, and avoid waste and air pollution.

The greening of jobs calls for an ecological transformation of production and working methods in all jobs segments and thus offers equal potential for job creation in new highly-skilled segments and in the middle and low-skilled ones. Training and retraining for ecological transformation is a responsibility of employers, employees and the state alike. The report calls for a right to training for all workers to equip them with the necessary skills for green jobs. Following the successful example of the Blue-Green-Alliance in the US, we in Europe also need to work closely with social partners to ensure a social just transition and decent working conditions for all jobs.

In Germany, 250, 000 new jobs were created in the renewable energy sector on the basis of the EEG (Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz, Renewable Energy Act) in 2008. Including indirect effects on employment, the Act ensured ongoing job increases

since it entered into force in 2000. Even moderate forecasts estimate 400, 000 more employees by 2020. To open up this huge job potential, it was crucial that the EEG set out a 10 year framework, creating reliable conditions for both entrepreneurs and workers. My report calls on EU member states to learn from this experience and set up long-term framework conditions, ecological standards and financial incentives that will give employers and workers the necessary security to invest in ecological transformation. Minister Huhne's proposal points in the right direction.

With clear political commitment and the right decisions, we could start exploiting the green job potential immediately. Some member states have already 10 years experience, others such as Spain and the UK are quickly catching up. Belgium, like the UK, advocates the huge potential for job creation in the construction sector. In preparing my report, it became clear that the job potential in this sector is even higher than in renewable energies, and that the combination of traditional skills with green skills in this sector will be key. The Belgian EU presidency made the creation of green jobs a priority of their term. I hope that the Council Conclusions in December will set out a commitment for a green jobs strategy and call upon the Commission to deliver on its pledge to outline how to maximise the potential of the green economy in Europe.

"The positive side effect of the expansion and the promotion of the renewable energies and energy efficiency sector are enormous"

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120 Kilometers of Coastal Quality (120KK)

How can the coastal zone be innovated in a sustainable way? This is the main purpose of the Interreg IVA project '120 Kilometres Coastal Quality' (120KK). This European project empowers the eleven Dutch and Belgian partners to innovate the coastal zone in West-Flanders (Belgium) and Zeeland (the Netherlands). Since the coastal zone is of big importance for tourism and recreation, it is indispensable to improve the beach and coastal zone as part of this tourist product.

A safe beach
Working together for a safe beach, is the first topic in the project. As a result of research, a manual for safety and security amongst the coastal zone was established. The aim of this report was also to anticipate the new directives according to the ILSE criteria (International Life Saving Federation Europe). Next to concrete recommendations, a new standard for safety on the beaches was integrated. A checklist deals with the necessary elements a good coast guard location needs to have. Several project partners realised local projects to secure a high safety level on the Flemish and Dutch beaches, such as new coast guard locations in the community of Blankenberge and the peninsula Walcheren, as well as an aquatic sports centre in the community of Middelkerke. In these constructions, sustainable energy use was taken into account as much as possible.

An accessible beach
The aim is to improve the accessability of the beaches in general and, where possible, to adapt them to specific target groups. A manual describes the prior conditions to improve the accessability of dunes and dikes. Concrete projects were executed in for example the municipalities of Veere, Schouwen-Duivenland and Knokke-Heist, where a walkway to the beach was established , and beach wheel chairs were provided. This makes the beach even accessible for disabled persons and families with children.

A clean and natural beach
The objective here is to manage the beaches as environmental friendly as possible, trying to disturb the natural habitat as less as possible. In a first phase, the study 'Integrated Beach Management. For a clean and natural beach.' was made up, looking for possible alternatives to clean the beaches on a more ecological way and a cost benefit analysis of manual versus mechanical cleaning. A second important element is sensibilisaton of the wider audience, always involving the coastal municipalities. The Belgian Coordination Centre on ICZM organized the public campaign against cigarette butts 'Our Beach is not an Ashtray', conducted along the Belgian coast, in this way involving the several coastal municipalities as much as possible. Other examples are the yearly beach clean ups on the Belgian and Dutch beaches, and a campaign against balloon competitions. In 2011, an exhibition on beach litter will take place.

Kathy BELPAEME, Hannelore MAELFAIT, Sofie VANHOOREN
Belgian Coordination Centre on ICZM

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New year, new beginning for Eire?

By Dr John Coulter,
a columnist with the Irish Daily Star and Tribune magazine

St Stephen's Day 2010 – Boxing Day – was the most significant time in the history of the Irish Republic since the Free State came into existence in the 1920s.

As citizens digested their festive dinners, they also digested the impact of the most radical budget in the history of the Southern economy.

If the draconian budget works, the Celtic Tiger will once again become a shining global example of how a modern state can overcome the challenges of recession. The Dail – and Taioseach Brian Cowen of Fianna Fail in particular – will be raised to the dizzy political echelons of perfect political and economic role models.

The Dail's Northern counterparts in the power-sharing Stormont Executive, the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition at Westminster, and even US President Obama's regime will be queuing at the gates of Dublin's Leinster House uttering the immortal words – how was it done?

However, the price of failure is perhaps too tragic to even consider. It will plunge the Republic into an economic meltdown similar to that of Greece. It will certainly cost Cowen his premiership and the leadership of his Fianna Fail party.

It will also mark the end of the Fianna Fail/Green Party coalition government in Dublin, heralding in a new era for the political Left in the Republic. The Atlantic winds will not only bring a predicted severe cold snap winter to Ireland, but also a snap General Election.

The result will 'buck the trend' in the UK's general election and America's recent mid-term elections, which saw massive gains for the centre Right and Right-wing parties. Unlike the United States, there will be no Tea Party breakthrough.

The big winner will be the Centre Left policies of the Irish Labour Party. The polls even predict gains for Sinn Fein, the Provisional IRA's political wing which suffered significant losses in the last Dail General Election.

With only four of the current 166 TDs in the Irish Parliament, it needs to snatch 10 to a dozen seats to hold the balance of power in a future post-Cowen Dail. In spite of holding its ground firmly in Northern republican heartlands, in the South Sinn Fein has found difficulties in trying to shake off the image that it is really a Marxist party covered in nationalist paint.

Such are the worries over Cowen's budget, the European Union has already dispatched a top economic and monetary affairs commissioner to review it amid financial market fears the Dail will default on its debts as Irish bond yields hit new record highs.

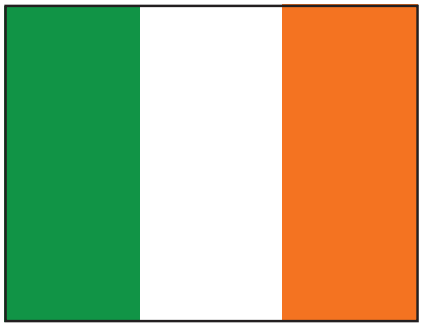
Cowen's government has made sweeping promises to the EU that it will reduce its underlying deficit from 12% of economic output to 3% by 2014. The current deficit is an unheard of 32% of gross domestic product, including the one-off cost of bad debts in the state-guaranteed Irish banking system.

While the Irish Government regards 2014 as the key date for planned economic recovery, Irish consumers may not be as patient with the Dail parties if there are no immediate signs in their pockets of such a recovery.

The dire situation has even prompted jokes that the Republic might want to rejoin the Union with the United Kingdom. A ridiculous concept at face value, but given the crazy nature of Irish politics over the past 100 years, anything is possible in the teeth of a recession.

The key element of Cowen's planned budget is to implement an unprecedented spending cuts programme amounting to six billion euros (equivalent to 5.2 billion in sterling or 8.4 billion in dollars).

Implemented as soon as possible, Cowen's supporters believe this will reduce the Republic's record deficit to between 9.5% and 9.75% by this time next year. But as the Northern parties shift



themselves already into election mode for next May's Stormont and council polls, so, too, in the Republic opposition parties are sensing the whiff of election fever.

The main opposition party, the centre Right Fine Gael, while agreeing the budget needs to be brought under control, has already indicated it does not plan to support the draconian budget because it has not confidence in the Cowen-led coalition government.

However, there are suspicions this stance may have more to do with Cowen's wafer-thin Dail majority of only a handful of TDs rather than sound economic sense.

While Irish Labour will be the big winner in an expected General Election, the Republic has a long history of coalition government. The nightmare scenario is that the predicted Labour/Fine Gael new coalition may need the support of Sinn Fein to survive.

Instability in the Dail will only plunge the Republic into an even deeper crisis, prompting further worries the South will eventually be forced to turn to the EU's new sovereign bail-out fund.

Such talk only brings what Southern republicans would view as 'crazy solutions' onto the political agenda. As well as rejoining the UK Union, these 'solutions' include leaving the euro zone and re-establishing the punt, quitting the EU altogether, and even rejoining the British Commonwealth.

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Central Border Region Working Together

A Spatial Planning Initiative

Above: The ICBAN region

The Irish Central Border Region has received a significant boost having been awarded funding of £1,456,995 for a Spatial Planning Initiative, under the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme. Driving the project is the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd., the local government led cross-border partnership. The region comprises the Council areas of Armagh City & District, Cookstown, Dungannon & South Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Omagh within Northern Ireland, along with Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan and Sligo in the Republic of Ireland.

By creating a detailed vision strategy which has the capability of influencing policy makers, the initiative aims to improve the competitiveness of the rural region and the quality of life for citizens who work and live in the central border region.

The initiative represents an important step towards the comprehensive tackling of disadvantage in the region. It provides a framework for cross-boundary, cross-jurisdictional and interagency collaboration for balanced Regional Development.

It will produce the following 6 key strands:

- A comprehensive vision plan, based on cross-sectoral consultation and participation, which will identify future functionality of the region and priorities for investment in the cross-border area.
- A cohesive cross-border practitioner network, This network will act as a vehicle for ongoing collaboration across sectors and disciplines, at a local level, sub-regional level and at the level of interaction between local government and central government.
- A data capture initiative which will allow for the collation and access to relevant data sets for the entire cross-border area and which can inform various spatial planning initiatives, either at regional or local level.
- A case for the economic benefits of investment in crucial and adequate transportation infrastructure traversing the region and linking it effectively with the rest of the island (Roads to Opportunity Business Case)
- Enhanced civic and political capacity to support and inform the sub-regional spatial development process into the future and provide a supportive environment for collaborative working practices at officer level.
- It will offer central government on both sides of the border a clear engagement and consultative mechanism on policy objectives which relate to the development of the Central Border Area.

The purpose of the project is to establish complementary processes at a sub-regional level and which can support national policies. The initiative represents a progression to a new level of engagement in building a model of best practice in cross-border development, which is capable of delivering key and desired outputs for the region.

It is intended that the process and its by-products will help influence the North-South statutory recognition of the Central Border Region as a spatial entity, requiring attention and a recognition of the key role to be played in economic recovery.

Irish Central Border Area Network

European Union
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in your future

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Right: Development Manager Colin McKenna at the launch of the Initiative

The benefits of the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy

By Maria Damanaki, *Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries*

The European Union's Integrated Maritime Policy has celebrated its third birthday recently. In such a short time not only has it forged ahead on a number of fronts, but also helped engineer a shift in Europeans' attitude toward the continent's seas. Among Member States, administrations and maritime stakeholders there is now a growing enthusiasm to apply the cross-cutting approach to our seas and coastal regions which the integrated maritime policy advocates. The benefits are clear: no duplication of efforts and more synergy means increased efficiency and lower costs.

The maritime policy was conceived at the time of economic boom, when traditional maritime sectors such as shipping and shipbuilding prospered thanks to global trade. But the unprecedented recession that hit us has left its mark on maritime economy, too. We now need to work on how maritime policy can trigger growth and both economic and environmental sustainability. It is what I like to call "blue growth".

In order to make a difference, the maritime policy must push forward on several strategic fronts at once. The first concerns governance: it is up to EU institutions, Member States and coastal regions to ensure that policies are coordinated from the start and to counter any lingering trace of compartimentalised thinking.

The second will be the further development of proper tools to enhance economic growth, environmental protection, safety, security and law enforcement in and around Europe's seas. For example, maritime spatial planning, combined with better marine knowledge, can unblock substantial financial investments and drastically improve the way we manage our maritime spaces. Or putting our various existing maritime surveillance systems together can make a difference in the way national authorities combat illegal immigration. Or evolving technologies, like satellite imagery, can be used in, say, oil-spill tracking, customs control, crime prevention and many other disciplines.

Defining the collective sustainability of all human activities having an impact on the marine environment is a third strategic focus for the years ahead. This is vital if we are to fulfil consistently the maritime policy's ambition of marrying economic and social well-being with environmental responsibility.

We must also be mindful of the need to tailor solutions to local specificities. In this regard, sea-basin strategies adapted to the specific geographic, economic and political contexts of each maritime region have a crucial role to play. This approach is already being tested through two ongoing pilot projects-one on maritime surveillance and the other on maritime spatial planning.

Dialogue with third countries sharing sea basins with the EU will be an important factor in the success of sea-basin approaches. It will also be crucial to the fifth strategic front – developing the maritime policy's international dimension.

This brings me to the last – but by no means least – of the strategic fronts. Given the present economic downturn, the maritime policy should put a renewed focus on sustainable economic growth, employment and innovation. There are many opportunities for us to explore – from supporting the competitiveness of well-established sectors such as tourism, shipping or civilian and military shipbuilding, to developing sustainable growth scenarios for new maritime sectors with great potential, such as offshore energy, deep-sea technology or marine biotechnology.

But if we are to make these many opportunities a reality, we cannot afford sectoral policies to operate in "splendid isolation". In these difficult times the maritime policy is the way forward.

By engaging in cross-sectoral thinking, exploiting synergies and overcoming fragmentation, the maritime policy will deliver the blue growth and jobs I personally have pledged to create and thus do our bit towards achieving the goals set out in Europe2020 Strategy.

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Flood management: how to cope with too much water?

Dr Ir Jean-Marie Stam
Project manager INTERREG IVB NWE ALFA and FRC

In the last ten years, well over a hundred major floods in Europe have caused many hundreds of deaths and billions of insured economic losses. In response, the European Union developed the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC which was published on November 6th 2007. Consequently, flood management is one of the subjects that has received considerable attention in the INTERREG IVB NVW programme. Two of the largest projects in the programme dedicated to flood management, are FloodResilienCities (FRC)1 and Adaptive Land use for Flood Alleviation (ALFA)2. FRC is focussed on flood management in urban areas. ALFA is dedicated to flood management in rural areas.

What is common to both projects is the wide view on how to address flood management. This is expressed in a framework developed by the Scottish Government called the four A's. These four A's stand for Awareness, Avoidance, Alleviation and Assistance.

Awareness means increasing the consciousness of flood risks and what can be done about it. There is a higher need for awareness raising in urban than in rural areas, because of a weaker relation between people and their natural surroundings. Rivers have been canalized and sometimes completely culveted so that people scarcely can remember that a river runs under their city (as in Bradford). Redesigning public spaces so that people in cities become aware of the river, helps. For example in Orleans (France) the new quay walls and banks are designed so that people can recreate and enjoy the river). In rural areas, educational activities such as developed by the Eden River Trust can teach people about the natural dynamics of rivers and the dangers of floods.

Avoidance includes all activities that limit flood damage and ease recovery, for example flood proofing buildings and infrastructure. City quarters close to the river can be designed to withstand a higher flooding frequency. For example the old harbour area in Mainz, which is being revitalized to become a flood proof residential and business quarter. Flood proofing existing buildings is a good option for rural areas where the low population density makes it economically interesting. After the 2009 floods in Cumbria (U.K.) homes had become uninhabitable and people could not return to them for sometimes nearly a year. Flood proofing houses would shorten this period considerably.

Alleviation involves reducing flood risk by implementing physical, technical and procedural measures. Dykes and dams belong to this category but another interesting concept is using streets as streams – which means adapting streets so that surface run-off can flow safely without flooding adjacent buildings (as is being done in Dublin – Ireland). Flood reservoirs and overflow areas are also typical alleviation measures. They are constructed to protect major cities such as Paris or Brussels from flooding. The neighbouring rural areas that often have to provide the space for these measures – are thus confronted with flood protection ensuing discussions with stakeholders about compensation measures.

Assistance implies support for recovery and capacity building in communities. Emergency routes and plans and strengthening the organizational infrastructure are typical alleviation measures. Emergency plans, specially in urban areas, will be very complex including problems as how to maintain the cities services (waste management, social services etc.) in times of floods.

An important component of INTERREG is transnational knowledge exchange. FRC and ALFA are special projects because thy include actual infrastructural projects in the different phases of planning, design and construction. Moreover most of these projects have an innovative character which gives them an added challenge. By working together FRC and ALFA partners profit from sharing experiences and this is reflected in the measures taken.

1 The FRC partners are: Programme Directorate Room for the River of the Directorate General for Transport Public Works and Water Management (NL), De Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (BE), Les Grands Lac de la Seine (FR), La ville d'Orléans (FR), La Communauté d'agglomération Orléans – Val de Loire (FR), Conseil du département du Loiret (FR), L'école des Ingénieurs de la Ville de Paris (FR), Stadtwerke Mainz (DE), Dublin City Council (IE), City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (UK), University of Sheffield (UK).
2 The ALFA partners are: Programme Directorate Room for the River of the Directorate General for Transport Public Works and Water Management (NL), Eden Rivers Trust (UK), Emschergenossenschaft (DE), De Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij (BE), Les Grand Lacs de Seine (FR), Struktur- und Genehmigungsdirektion Süd (DE).

Investing in opportunities

By Ruut Louwers,
Programme Director, Interreg IVB North West Europe Programme

Take a walk to your local park; check the streetlights; look for an info-panel; it will probably say: 'partly funded by the EU'.

One of the funding sources of that is INTERREG and one of the Programmes covering the needs of the UK is INTERREG IVB NWE. Its Technical Secretariat is based in Lille, France, but the Programme also has 2 contact points in the UK.

The funding involves creating and sustaining jobs by helping entrepreneurs in SME's in life sciences to innovate by opening foreign markets, showing them new production processes and new materials through the identification and offering of new resources of knowledge all over the NWE area and beyond.

Below is a sample of some of the projects that the Programme is financing:

FASILIS project

Helping citizens to reduce the global heating trend by picking up on the implementation of all kinds of new energy saving measures, such as LED street lighting and the recapture of energy from braking in Europe's underground systems.

BLISS project

Turning more people into happy users of public transport systems that are better adapted to their demographic needs- more comfortable, better interconnected, and more sustainable.

TRAMSTORE21 project

Improving the quality of life of citizens by stirring up cities' growth potentials through creative ideas for city development and promoting creative industries in order to develop and create jobs at the same time.

NWE transnational cooperation projects are very interesting and sometimes involve moving stories. And we have as many interesting stories as we have projects; 49 have been approved so far by the Steering Committee of the eight cooperating countries.

Fasilis Project

These 49 projects have been allocated slightly more than half of the NWE 2007 – 2013 resources of €355 million.

Each project receives a maximum grant of 50% from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Therefore ultimately the Programme's impact over 7 years will be about € 700 million in North-West Europe and beyond.

We believe a very practical and territorially adapted implementation of the EU2020 strategy is shown in all 49 projects. Each and every one of them proves to tackle the challenge of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in their own specific way and niches. This was demonstrated in our latest publication "NWE, the story so far …" It shows that all projects are doing their own bits to help meet these ambitious EU-wide targets, but they are at the same time contributing to the priorities and targets set within local, regional and national development plans. The global in harmony with the local.

But why do we need transnational cooperation on these matters? To quote Dr. Dirk Ahner, Director General Regional Policy,: "We are convinced of the added value of doing things together. We can avoid duplication, we can speed up developments, we do things more cheaply and with greater impact. Above all we can address issues at the territorial level where they occur; dealing with issues that matter most."

INTERREG IVB NWE is one of the 80 European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. They all are financial instrument of the EU's Cohesion Policy 2007 – 2013 for their own cooperation zone.

They fund projects which support transnational cooperation. The aim is to find innovative ways to make the most of territorial assets and tackle shared problems of authorities such as Member States, regions and cities, and private organisations. To enhance the sense of belonging of citizens to the EU (i.e. cohesion) it tackles major issues (4 priorities) such as innovation, environmental challenges, connectivity and the development of strong & prosperous communities. NWE promotes concrete measures to improve daily lives of people through actions on the local, regional, national and transnational level.

NWE consists of eight countries:
4 EU member States entirely (Ireland, UK, Belgium and Luxembourg),
3 EU member States partly (Germany, France and the Netherlands) and
1 non member State (Switzerland).

Tramstore21 Project

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GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

EU Health Special

'Tackling Clinical Trials in Europe'

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Contributors

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European Commissioner for Health and Consumers

John Dalli served as a Cabinet Minister in the Maltese Government since 1987 having been first elected to the House of Representatives of Malta on behalf of the Nationalist Party in 1987. He has served as Parliamentary Secretary for Industry (1987-1990), Minister of Economic Affairs (1990-92), Minister of Finance (1992-1996, 1998-2003) Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion (2004). Between March 2008 and February 2010, John Dalli served as Minister for Social Policy which includes the Health, housing, employment and industrial relations portfolio.

As a qualified accountant, Dalli has also worked in the private sector in Malta and abroad, both in industry and as an independent consultant. In February 2010 John Dalli was appointed as European Commissioner for Health and Consumers. John Dalli was born on 5th October 1948. He is married and has two daughters.

Dr. Richard John Beale

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Dr. Beale received his Medical degree from St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, in 1984. He undertook his General Professional Training in Anaesthetics at Guy's Hospital, London and was accordingly admitted to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists in 1990.

Having registered as a specialist in anaesthetics and intensive care, he held the posts of Clinical Research Fellow and Honorary Senior Registrar in Intensive Care at Guy's Hospital, London, until 1992 when he embarked on his Higher Professional Training in Anaesthesia at the Royal London Hospital. He became a consultant in Intensive Care at Guy's & St. Thomas Hospital Trust in 1995, becoming Head of Service for Adult Intensive Care Unit in 2000. In March 2005 he was made Head of Preoperative, Critical Care and Pain Services (now Clinical Director) across the Trust and continues to hold this post.

He has acted as principle investigator in a large number of multicentre research studies in the fields of sepsis, ARDS and clinical nutrition. He maintains up to date training in ICH GCP and the EU Clinical Trials Directive. He was one of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine's representatives on the Steering Committee of the Surviving Sepsis Campaign, and remains on the Publications Committee.

Prof Jean-Daniel Chiche

Prof Jean-Daniel Chiche, of French nationality, acquired his medical training in Paris and Liège Universities, where he specialised in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine. He also spent 3 years as a Research Fellow at the Cardiovascular Research Centre of the Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard Medical School) in Boston Hospital. His research interest lies in the clinical and cellular aspects of acute lung injury and sepsis. Prof Chiche is currently Associate Professor of Critical Care Medicine at the Cochin Hospital, Paris, and a Co- Director of Research at the Department of Cell Biology of Institute Cochin (INSERM U567) where he is currently developing an independent research program spanning various aspects of genetics and innate immunity in Critical Care Medicine. He is also a member of the Société de Réanimation de Langue Francaise, of the Collège National des Enseignants de Réanimation Médicale, and of the American Thoracic Society.

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The overwhelming importance of clinical trials

By Commissioner John Dalli

Clinical trials are an indispensable part of clinical research which, in turn, is essential to develop medicinal products, and to develop and improve medical treatment. Whether aimed at improving the use of existing medicines, or at developing new medicinal products, clinical trials are key to strengthening knowledge, innovation and public health.

In the present context of public budget constraints, major demographic changes and increasing global competition, clinical trials can not only lead to medical breakthroughs but can help address major societal challenges such as age related diseases affecting the ageing population whilst at the same time contribute to economic growth and a healthy labour market.

Indeed, innovation is central to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, published in March 2010 and approved by the European Council in June 2010: One of the seven flagship initiatives announced as part of the Europe 2020 strategy is the Innovation Union aiming to improve the conditions and access to finance for research and innovation, to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs. By spending three per cent of GDP on research and development by 2020, it is projected that the EU could create 3.7 million jobs and increase GPD by close to €800 billion by 2025.

The Innovation Union proposes the creation of a series of European Innovation Partnerships to test a new approach to accelerating EU research and innovation. A pilot European Innovation Partnership in the field of active and healthy ageing aims to improve the quality of life of an ageing population, for example, by developing new innovative solutions, clinical tests, diagnostics and treatments for age-related diseases, deploying new innovative ICT-based solutions and introducing products, appliances and services tailored to the elderly. By fostering these innovations, the Partnership seeks to increase healthy life years by two.

Research, resulting in new medicines for the elderly, new treatments or diagnostic tools, and new solutions allowing for better quality of life is central to better ageing. Europe has no shortage of potential for achieving this. We have world leading researchers, entrepreneurs and companies and unique strengths in our values, traditions, creativity and diversity. However, unsatisfactory framework conditions, such as disproportionate administrative requirements present serious handicaps to companies choosing where to invest and conduct research around the world. The time has come to set the correct framework conditions; improving the regulatory framework for clinical trials is fundamental to this.

Since 2004, clinical trials performed in the EU have been regulated by the Clinical Trials Directive. The primary purpose of this Directive and its implementing measures is the reliability of data generated in trials, and the protection of the health, safety, rights and wellbeing of clinical trial participants.

In part, the Directive has been successful in fulfilling this purpose. It is now well established that the Clinical Trials Directive has brought about important improvements in safety and ethical soundness of clinical trials in the EU, as well as in the reliability of clinical trials data. For example, at a Commission/European Medicines Agency clinical trials conference in October 2007, a large majority of attendees acknowledged that the Clinical Trials Directive had resulted, overall, in better protection of clinical trial participants.

However, achievements have been accompanied by considerable criticism that the Clinical Trials Directive has hindered the attractiveness of patient-oriented research in the EU, which greatly reduces Europe's competitiveness in the field of clinical research and in turn hampers the development of new and innovative treatments and medicines. In particular, the harmonising effect of EU-legislation in the field of clinical trials has been insufficient. Today, the regulatory frameworks throughout the

EU are similar, but not harmonised. This makes the conduct of clinical trials in the EU expensive and burdensome, without corresponding benefits in terms of patient safety, patient availability and data robustness.

Indeed, while, in 2007, there were approx. 5.000 requests for authorisations of clinical trials (involving approx. 530.000 participants), this figure has dropped, in 2009, to approx. 4.500 requests (involving approx. 350.000 participants). This is not a reassuring trend and we have to assess how a review of the Clinical Trials Directive can help to reverse this trend and make a better contribution to the attractiveness of Europe for pharmaceutical clinical research.

The European Commission is thus planning to adopt, in 2012, a proposal for a review of the rules governing clinical trials. The objective is to revise the Clinical Trials Directive to address the shortcomings identified in evaluations conducted by the Commission in previous years. To this end, a number of consultations in different fora are ongoing and planned. Extensive consultation is particularly crucial in this file, as it does not only concern industry-driven research, but all clinical trials conducted in the EU. There are also a considerable number of patients groups that have solid experience on this issue and that will certainly enrich the process of consultation. Given the range of stakeholders, it is therefore crucial to the success of the consultations that all stakeholders make their voice heard.

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Clinical Trials in Critical Care – the European Dimension

Richard Beale and Jean-Daniel Chiche on behalf of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine

Intensive Care Medicine (also often known as Critical Care) is an ever increasing component of the healthcare budget in advanced societies, although with wide variations in provision seen across Europe, consistent with overall difference in healthcare funding between different EU countries. Given the high cost of providing this level of medical care, in terms of infrastructure and staff, and the funding challenges all health systems face, it is not surprising that the validity of the evidence-base for common interventions used within the intensive care unit (ICU) is becoming much more closely scrutinised. It is against this background that the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) has launched its new Clinical Trials Group.

ESICM is the professional and scientific organisation that represents medical, nursing and allied healthcare practitioners working within ICUs across Europe, with over 5000 members, and close links with national societies in Intensive Care and related fields. The Society, which was formed in 1982, is organised around Sections, each of which pursues activities within specific areas of critical care practice (e.g. infection, respiratory failure and trauma), but also runs an active educational programme, which includes a Diploma qualification (the European Diploma in Intensive Care) that serves as an exit-level qualification in a number of European countries. The Sections, and indeed the Society itself also have a major research interest, encouraged through annual research awards, the presentation of scientific work at the very successful annual congress, and collaboration with other Societies to produce practice guidelines and recommendations.

Most notable amongst these has been the formation of the international Surviving Sepsis Campaign, in partnership with the Society of Critical Care Medicine in the United States. The Surviving Sepsis Campaign was launched in 2002 in Barcelona at the ESICM's Annual Congress to address the continuing high mortality seen in patients suffering from severe sepsis (severe sepsis is the body's response to severe infection and is a major cause of admission to ICUs; it is characterised by multiple organ failure, and results in death in about 40% of cases.) As a consequence of this initiative, authoritative practice guidelines have been produced and translated into care bundles, resulting in a 20% relative risk reduction in mortality when applied to over 15,000 patients worldwide, and these are currently being updated once more

The treatments and care processes recommended by the Campaign, and indeed within other areas of critical care practice, should of course be based upon the best available evidence. Some of this evidence, especially in the case of new pharmaceutical interventions, may result from industry-sponsored studies, often for licensing purposes. In other equally important areas though, key questions are often only addressed by academic researchers coming together with grant-providing bodies (governments, charities etc). Moreover, in order to achieve reliable answers to these important questions, large numbers of patients need to be studied across many ICUs and across different countries. Important recent examples of trials of this type include studies examining the use of albumin solutions as intravenous fluids in critically ill patients, and the effect of aiming for tight blood sugar targets in the ICU. The first of these two studies was performed by the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Clinical Trials Group, and the second by the same group working in collaboration with the Canadian Critical Care Clinical Trials Group. These researchers, alongside others such as the NIH-supported ARDSNet in the United States, have been extremely influential in establishing the evidence-base to support new standards of care in ICU practice.

Within Europe, there are a number of established or developing groups functioning at the national level, including the German Sepsis Society and a number of ad hoc groups formed around specific trials in Spain, France, Italy and the UK. There has not however, until now, been a pan-European Clinical Trials Group to bring the European perspective to bear in this important area, and it is this deficit that the ESICM is seeking to redress.

Why is this so important? After all, large non-European studies can generate important results, and modern critical care and medical practice more generally is increasingly similar in developed countries, so results derived in Australia and New Zealand or North America are certainly relevant to European practice. The answer has a number of components. Firstly, there are specific areas of practice that are different in Europe, and especially between different European countries. Having high quality information about this, and especially about areas of inequity between countries or regions, will provide important information for policy makers at the European level, as well as allowing effective sharing of knowledge and best practice. Secondly, the size and variation of the population cared for within ICUs in Europe provides an excellent environment for clinical research, both observational and interventional, with its associated benefits for the standards of care delivered and for prioritising new treatments for the future. Thirdly, given the importance of biomedical research to the economy within the EU (pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and devices), it is crucial that EU-based industrial partners can access an effective and timely evaluation structure relevant to critically-ill patients, and that non-EU partners are attracted to the European environment. The increasing trend of clinical research moving outside Europe is one that ESICM seeks to help reverse. Moreover, research conducted within Europe has the additional benefit of ensuring that appropriate, timely and relevant data to support licensing and reimbursement decisions are available to European authorities.

Although it is a new initiative, and its initial focus is on investigator-led academic research, the ESICM Clinical Trials Group aims to provide a platform that will encourage investigators to work effectively across Europe in addressing important questions of critical care practice. In particular, we aim to help investigators produce research of the highest quality and relevance, whilst successfully navigating the clinical trials governance structure within Europe, as well as providing feedback to law-makers on how these processes might evolve. We also aim to develop effective but transparent links with industry in due course; enabling a dialogue to develop that will foster productive collaboration in areas of shared interest. Most crucial, though, will be to build partnerships with policy-makers to identify priorities and funding opportunities, and to ensure that the lessons we learn are communicated and implemented rapidly throughout Europe and within the wider healthcare community.

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Tackling Clinical Trials in Europe –Working towards a New Regulatory Framework

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In the past years, the European Union has directed much effort in the improvement of European clinical research, its regulation and infrastructures. But clinical research remains only harmonized in specific areas in Europe. Although the European Clinical Trials Directive 2001/20/EC was aimed at harmonizing clinical research, the situation still is very different in the single EU Member States. This leads to increasing difficulties in the conduct of multicenter clinical trials, and thus issues like the safety, rights and wellbeing of European patients are endangered.

Ethics Committees in Europe

Among the many examples for the different regulation of clinical research in Europe, Ethics Committees can be taken as a prime example. Ethics Committees are a key figure in the clinical research landscape, as no clinical trial is allowed to be started without the approval of the competent Ethics Committee. While a country like Germany, with a population of 82 Million has 53 Ethics Committees, Italy with roughly 62 Million inhabitants has more than 170 Ethics Committees or even more than 900 according to another source. Austria with a population of 8 Million has 27 Ethics Committees; in Sweden with 9 Million inhabitants are 8 Ethics Committees. In France there are 40 Ethics Committees for a population of 64 Million and in the United Kingdom with roughly the same size of population there are 117 Ethics Committees.

Furthermore there exists no guidance regarding the selection or nomination of a member of an Ethics Committee. Members are generally nominated by the institution which is responsible for the Ethics Committee. The requirements for members of adherence to a certain group (physician, nurse, lawyer, ethicist, etc) are given in the ICH-GCP Guidelines or in the various national laws, but there are no standards for further qualifications, neither transparent public application procedures.

There is only a very brief consideration of the extremely important fact of a possible "conflict of interest" in the pertinent law in so far as members are required to announce a conflict of interest and have to refrain from voting in a conflicted application, but are not actively questioned.

Another issue of diversity affecting Ethics Committees is the number of members which is heterogeneous within Europe; There is no regulation for education and training – initial and ongoing – for members: Training would be necessary in areas like ethics and laws of clinical research, methods of clinical research and the current Standard Operating Procedures of the specific Ethics Committees in regard to the meetings and to the obligations the members do have in order to observe their duties.

Gender considerations in Ethics Committees

A further issue of importance is the gender issue: This issue applies in two ways – the representation of women among the members of an Ethics Committee, the members are constituted from "men and women", but in the laws there are no quotas for gender representation and the recommendation for the inclusion of women in clinical research projects.

Insurance for clinical trials

Another example is the different European regulation regarding the obligation for sponsors to provide insurance for participants of clinical trials with medicinal products: The insurance for patients participating in one and the same EU wide clinical trial is completely different regulated within the EU Member States (no fault based/ fault based; policy accident/strict liability/ policy liability; different evaluation of risk within the same clinical trial within the different EU Member States etc.). It is ethically unacceptable that patients in the European Union participating in a multicentre trial are treated in such a diverse way directly affecting their rights.

Although the European Union has improved many fields of clinical research tremendously, the quoted examples still lead to diversities and delays in the review and approval procedures of clinical research projects and are finally affecting rights and safety of participants in clinical research resulting in a delay of new therapies for diseases.

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Comparative Effectiveness Research to Improve the Quality of the European Health Care System

By Prof. Konrad Reinhart

According to the US Institute of Medicine, comparative effectiveness is "the extent to which a specific intervention, procedure, regimen, or service does what it is intended to do when it is used under real world circumstances."

Thus, comparative effectiveness research aims to provide better evidence for thousands of health care decisions that are made daily despite the low levels of evidence about their effectiveness or safety.

Often, patients seen by different physicians or treated in different institutions get different treatments and unknowingly receive care which is less effective and sometimes harmful although safer and more cost-effective alternatives exist. Interestingly, many clinical practice guidelines like those of the International Surviving Sepsis Campaign on the treatment of sepsis consist of recommendations of which almost 90% are based only on expert opinion or low quality clinical studies. For example, systematic reviews and well performed clinical studies over years seriously questioned the cost effectiveness and safety of synthetic colloids, which nevertheless became the most widely used compounds throughout the world for the treatment of hypovolemia, a condition which requires to give fluid therapy to tens of thousands of affected patients daily in operation theatres, emergency departments and intensive care units.

There are numerous other medications for which usage is driven rather by marketing objectives than rigorous scientific data. Patient centred comparative effectiveness research intends to close the gaps in evidence so that clinicians and patients can make informed decisions based primarily on scientific evidence. Comparative effectiveness research should therefore be a high priority also for the EU.

Comparative effectiveness differs from efficacy research because it is directly applicable to real-world needs and helps to make the decisions faced by patients, clinicians, and other decision makers. By comparison, efficacy research, such as a drug trial for approval by agencies like the FDA and the EMEA, typically poses the question whether the treatment is efficacious under ideal, rather than real-world, settings. However, the results of such studies are therefore not necessarily generalizable to any given patient or situation But what patients and clinicians mostly need to know is which treatment is the best choice for a particular patient. In this way, comparative effectiveness is much more patient-centred. For this purpose the new US administration created a special "Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research" that recently issued a "Report to the President and the Congress" with an impressive long term research agenda. Overall this program is funded by 1.1 billion USD.

In the past, the EU and national authorities of European countries were primarily focused on clinical trials initiated by pharmaceutical and other health and diagnostic companies to achieve approval of innovative therapeutics and diagnostic tools. This of course is important, as medical progress for the patients heavily depends on new and more effective medications. Unfortunately, there are a lot of unsolved medical questions related to older drugs and compounds in which the pharmaceutical industry is no longer interested as patents have run out and prices are comparatively low. Many of these medications are commonly used in indications for which they were not originally approved and therefore their risk-benefit ratio remains unknown.

As an example, synthetic colloids for the treatment of hypovolemia were approved for clinical use in the 1950ies and 1960ies according to criteria that we today consider insufficient to evaluate their benefit or risk in comparison to potentially cheaper and safer alternatives. Interestingly, newer synthetic colloids that were brought to the market after adverse effects of older compounds had become known were approved based on studies of non-inferiority, i.e. showing equivalence of needed volume compared to the older compounds. There were no requirements to demonstrate effectiveness according to clinically relevant outcomes or proof of safety in comparison to cheap and safe alternatives.

This is why, in Europe and elsewhere, tens of thousands of critically ill patients, trauma victims and patients receiving surgery are treated daily with synthetic colloids although their safety has never been adequately addressed.

According to the Canadian Physician Sir William Osler (1849-1919) good clinical medicine will always blend the art of uncertainty with the science of probability. However, in 2011 the medical community and the European health authorities should do everything possible that the blend leans more heavily towards the science of evidence based medicine (EBM) which has developed rapidly over the last decades.

High quality clinical research is the crucial cornerstone for EBM and thus of utmost importance to the medical progress and cost effectiveness of the European public health system.

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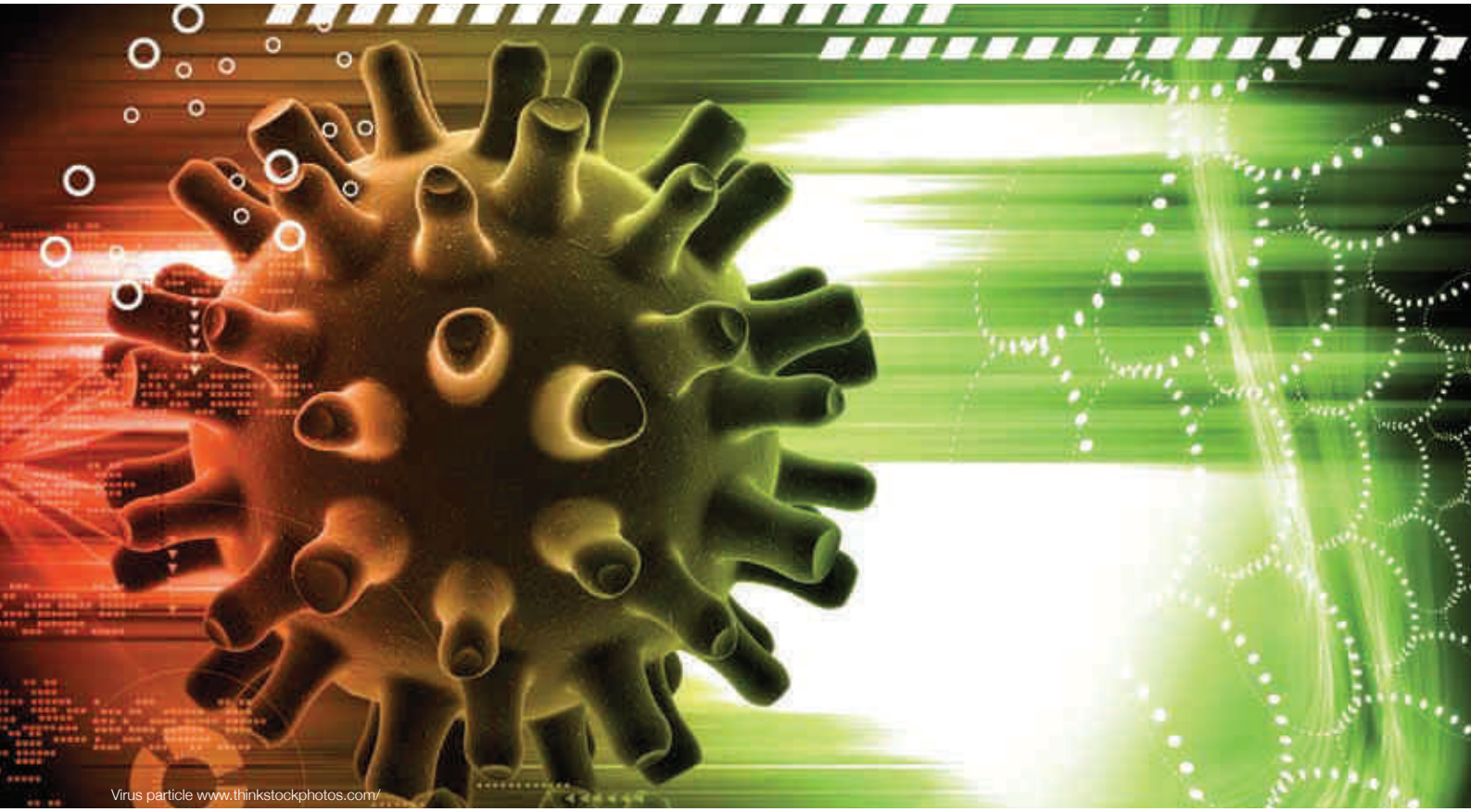

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Standing out at the Bar

Government Gazette's **Marcus Papadopoulos** spoke to Michael Mansfield QC about his career at the Bar

Prima facie, Michael Mansfield QC is an archetypal barrister–a white, middle-class, male, who speaks in an eloquent, sophisticated and confident manner. But as the old saying goes, never judge a book by its cover. Or in this case, never judge silk solely by its sheen.

In a face-to-face, on the record interview in his apartment in Wandsworth, Britain's most famous and boldest barrister described how his interest in the law and civil liberties came about, his motivating factors for taking on some of the country's most controversial cases, his feeling of isolation at the Bar, his concern about the current state of civil liberties in the UK and his love of animals.

For over forty years Michael Mansfield has been practising law, primarily defence work, earning himself the reputation as one of the finest advocates a client could possibly want to represent them in court. However, it is Michael Mansfield the man, as opposed to Michael Mansfield the barrister, that has made him stand out in one of the most conservative institutions in the country. As he said: "During my career at the Bar, I have done things my own way. I have never been a remote lawyer."

'I quickly felt the need to know more about my clients and to do more than just represent them'

Michael is no ordinary barrister. He is a rebel with a cause-a Tony Benn of the law - who has represented clients ranging from Irish republican terrorists to miners' leader Arthur Scargill and who holds a deep distrust of the police and their procedures for collecting evidence. A staunch Republican who has no time for the archaic and traditional ways of the Bar, Michael has aroused great support from many ordinary people from across the class divide, including middle England, who feel they have an "ally" in him; someone who has not lost the traditional British sense of "justice" and who is "not prepared to allow civil liberties, the British way of life to be eroded."

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But how did this crusading barrister's interest in the law and civil liberties come about? "I had no connections or knowledge of the law and so deciding to pursue a career in the law was a celluloid dream. The main influences on me were two different films: To Kill a Mocking Bird and an American television series called The Defenders. In the latter, a Father and son lawyer duo would give ordinary people an opportunity, who otherwise might not have been able to articulate themselves what the problem was. These ordinary people were represented by somebody who not only understood what their grievance was but who felt committed to it such that the lawyer was standing in the shoes of the individual. This was a great inspiration for me."

Michael has taken on some of Britain's most controversial cases in the last forty years. He represented 'Judith Ward, the 'Birmingham Six', the families of the victims of Bloody Sunday, the parents of Stephen Lawrence, Angela Cannings, Mohamed Al Fayed and, most recently, the family of Jean Charles de Menezes. Many of his colleagues at the Bar would have steered well clear of these cases, viewing them with contempt or as the plague.

So why did Michael take them on? In one word, empathy-something which is frowned upon at the Bar. "When I started out I was advised not to identify with a client. I was told that I should be like a surgeon who comes along and deals with a body and does not get involved. But I had learnt at university (Keele in the Potteries) that there were great social injustices out there and that many people had not enjoyed the privileges that I had when growing up.

"The first cases I took on as a young barrister were representing people, of my age, who had been charged with possession of cannabis or heroin. I quickly felt the need to know more about my clients and to do more than just represent them. So I volunteered to attend drug rehabilitation centres in London and so understand how the people there had ended up in the position they were in.

"This experience was an example of how my life progressed. I wasn't driven by some Marxist principle. I was driven by the fact that I had witnessed social injustice and I wanted to do something about it. To this day, I can't and won't detach myself emotionally from cases."

If representing drug users in the late 1960s provoked disdain from many barristers, it was nothing compared to the outrage which would be expressed from members of the Bar as a result of who Michael represented next.

Following the Old Bailey Bombing by the Provisional IRA in 1973, Michael was thrust into Irish politics when he chose to represent the people who had carried out this act. "To my Mother and to people I knew, for me to represent an Irish terrorist was treason. There was also a great deal of hostility towards me at the Bar because of who my defendants were and what they had done.

"But when I met my defendants (the Price Sisters) I recognised the fact that they and their families had struggled hard with the democratic process to get their voices heard but had been isolated, discriminated against and even bombed by the Protestant community simply because they wanted civil rights. I then said to myself that if I were in their shoes, if I had been brought up in Northern Ireland, what would I do? I would like to think I wouldn't go as far as taking up arms, but who knows when provoked to that extent. I certainly have never condoned violence.

"So I got into the shoes once again of clients who had suffered social injustice. Representing IRA men and women more than anything else confirmed the view of people at the Bar that I was some kind of armed revolutionary because the establishment identified me with the people I represented. Consequently I was made to feel an outcast at the Bar."

Given Michael's unofficial status as one of the country's leading protectors of civil rights, what is his view on the current state of freedom in Britain? "I am not alone in believing that the situation today is very bad, and thinking people on all sides of the political divide hold the same view. We are now living in a surveillance society.

"I'm not holding my breath but the Coalition Government has put forward a libertarian agenda and I hope they keep to this rolling back of draconian measures and not use the economic excuse as others have of putting civil rights on the backburner.

"The Labour government inflicted a great deal of damage to civil liberties in Britain and that's why I couldn't bring myself to vote Labour for the first time in my life at last year's general election, and I'm sorry it's come to that."

'I hope the Coalition Government keep to this rolling back of draconian measures and not use the economic excuse as others have of putting civil rights on the backburner'

An interesting observation that Michael made-and one which gives pause for thought-is that some of the "misdemeanours" concerning civil liberties performed by politicians over the years have been "perpetrated" by lawyers themselves. "The recent attack on legal aid has come from lawyers in the House of Commons; the attack on the Bar has come from lawyers in the House. Given that one of the largest lobbies in the House comes from the legal profession, the fact that members have allowed legislation to be passed without proper scrutiny, when many of them are lawyers, I find horrific."

The focus of the interview then shifted to a lifelong concern of Michael's: animal welfare.

As a vegetarian for over twenty years and a patron of Viva!, a UK-based vegan and animal welfare organisation, Michael expressed revulsion at how society exploits animals for food, cosmetics, clothes and medicine. Asked about whether being a vegetarian makes him feel (again) as an outsider in society, he replied : "Not exactly an outsider because I've spent my life trying to challenge things so for me it was really an extension of the challenge of life. But back in the 1980s it was a battle. Today however, it is less so because more and more people are converting to vegetarianism. One of the ways you make a major difference in life is through the example of what you do; hence I became a vegetarian."

The Government's promise to hold a free vote in the House of Commons on repealing the ban on hunting with dogs in England and Wales is of great concern to Michael. "Hunting, however its supporters dress it up, is about chasing animals across the countryside and tearing them to shreds. I am utterly opposed to activities of any kind where people get enjoyment from hunting.

Michael Mansfield's life has been about fighting for the underdog-be it of the human kind or the animal kind-in court and out of court. Despite his many achievements in life, he is a remarkably modest man who sees himself as one of the people. This is summed up by how he wants to be remembered in life: "Someone who really cared and hopefully made a difference." The people and causes he has championed during his life will, without question, answer his wish with a euphoric, "Yes!"

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HUIS VAN DE NEDERLANDSE PROVINCIES

In 2000 the twelve Dutch Provinces and the association of provincial authorities IPO established the House of the Dutch Provinces in Brussels. Strong positioning and an effective representation in Brussels require close cooperation between the provinces and proactivity. The House of the Dutch Provinces is the joint front office of the provinces and IPO in Brussels with the EU Institutions. Its main role consists of representing the joint interests of the provinces in Europe by looking ahead, liaising, and informing.

European policy affects a large number of provincial policy fields. The Dutch provinces make an important contribution to achieving European objectives.
The Dutch Provinces contribute to the European ambition by implementing their own core tasks. Based on that role, they wish to deliver added value in achieving the objectives arising from the Europe2020 strategy and European cohesion policy. As 'area directors' they are de facto an 'implementing body' for European policy. This approach must be financially anchored in European policy, for example in cohesion policy.

The Provinces thereby issue the following appeal to the European Institutions:
- involve provinces in determining new policy, revising existing policy (the so-called fitness check);
- give provinces access to the (new) funds due to be made available for tackling new challenges;
- relate the provision of European funds to the intended achievement of European targets;
- give provinces room within the regulations to facilitate an area-specific approach.

From within provincial agendas, an essential contribution is made to achieving European targets on a range of projects, using European financing:
- Innovation is encouraged.
- The marketing of education and research is underlined.
- Labour market policy is promoted.
- The organisational capacity of the regions is raised.

Over the past few years, a shift has therefore taken place in terms of content from compensatory policy to the powerful deployment of strong regions and strong sectors.
See the Dutch site http://www.europaomdehoek.nl/

For more information, please contact:
House of the Dutch Provinces / Huis van de Nederlandse Provincies
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Tel : +3227379957
Web site: www.nl-prov.eu

"We've never had it so good": tell that to Britain's poorest

The Coalition are gambling with the UK's economic growth, argues **Angela Eagle MP**, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury

October's Comprehensive Spending Review saw the Conservative-led Government reject Labour's sensible and balanced approach to reducing the deficit. Instead the government choose to take a risky gamble with growth and jobs by dogmatic pursuit of their economics of austerity.

The plans set out by the Chancellor in the CSR are not only dangerous they are more about politics than economics. He is gambling that deep and fast cuts will give him scope for tax giveaways in time for the next election. He is putting the fragile recovery at risk in uncertain and volatile times.

Yes, the deficit must come down and Labour had realistic plans to achieve that which were in line with actions being taken by the other G7 countries. The Government myth that the UK was at risk of a Greek style sovereign debt crisis is the excuse now cited by the Liberal Democrats for abandoning their pre- election economic pledges which agreed with Labour's approach. The truth is that this Government does not have an electoral mandate for the Irish-style economic shock treatment it is pursuing.

In government, we spent and invested money to keep people in work because we believe that ordinary people and families should not be forced to pay the price of a crisis that was made in the banks. This Conservative-led Government has chosen to make ordinary people shoulder the largest burden of deficit reduction. According to estimates, between 830, 000 and 1.6 million jobs could be lost as a direct result of the cuts. The VAT increase in January will cut GDP growth by 0.3% meaning further damage to job prospects.

Just endlessly asserting that "we're all in this together" doesn't make it true. The VAT increase is regressive and the Institute for Fiscal Studies' findings demonstrate that the poorest will bear the brunt of the cuts. It is women and children who will pay the most. The IFS points out that the tax and benefit changes as a result of the spending review are "regressive rather than progressive across most of the income distribution" It appears that this is now the definition of 'fair' in Government doublespeak.

In softening up the country for this age of austerity, Ministers have been anxious to establish a series of myths. They pretend they have no choices in order to try and evade responsibility for those they have quite deliberately made. They seek to blame 'Labour's wasteful public spending' for the deficit and the economic storm we must still navigate. The plain fact is that this was a private sector crisis in the global money markets which started in America. The fact is that the Tories and the Liberal Democrats both called for more public spending rather than less right up to the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. The fact is the Tories wanted more deregulation of the banks not less. Incredibly, they seek to deny there was ever a global financial crisis and give no credit for the robust and crucial actions of the Labour Government at a time when we really did stand on the brink of global financial meltdown.

The truth is that the Conservatives, with the Liberal Democrats, do not have a credible analysis of what caused the global credit crunch because they deny that there was one. Their laissez faire economic ideology means they are incapable of developing a coherent growth strategy to help rebalance our economy and reduce the deficit. Instead, we have their economic shock therapy inflicting needless pain and threatening social cohesion whilst they soft pedal on bank remuneration and Lord Young believes that we've never had it so good.

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Frankfurter Programm
Aktive Nachbarschaft

Kommunales „Frankfurter Programm – Aktive Nachbarschaft“
Active Neighbourhood

The municipal project „Frankfurter Programm – Aktive Nachbarschaft“ is working since ten years successfully in Frankfurt. Actually twelve different parts (quarters) of the town are involved. The major task of this social work consists in promoting the self-help possibilities of the inhabitants in waking up the engagement and the co-determination will for the part of town and in strengthening it. The activation of the inhabitants, the strengthening of the local economy as well and the improvement of the social and cultural life and the housing and living conditions are essential modules.

Mainpart of the work is to take up the interests of the people and to activate them. Besides, the personal, economic and social resources available in the accommodation are uncovered and integrated and it is entered on the different target groups meeting demand. Thus involved actors can be linked. Those are the housing companies, associations, initiatives, social facilities, churches up to the inhabitants.

The work in the quarter

Base of the work is a neighbourhood management. A staff as a part of the city administration, settled in the department for youth and social affairs, coordinates the whole process of the project. Local actors are linked by the neighbourhood managers who are coordinated by the staff. The initiated projects can be very different according to quarter: transformations of the residential sphere, playground reorganisations, construction of neighbourly helps, the equipment of meeting places or support of neighbourhood parties up to occupation projects, support of the local infrastructure or actions of the preventive health support are possible.

The experiences show that the readiness of the people rises on site to the engagement for their settlement and neighbourhood, if cooperation is offered to them in projects which were developed together with them. Who for example has helped actively in a playground reorganisation will in future take care, that the new formed place is not destroyed by pollutions or vandalism again. The participation in processes of development in the quarter leads therefore to a stronger identification with the neighbourhood and a lasting sense of responsibility for the environment of living.

Best of all practice: the energy savings check

A „best of all practice-example“ explains the work. With the project "Energy savings check” several targets can be reached immediately. Long time unemployed persons are trained to energy savings advisers. So their reintegration chances in the first job market substantially are increased. In the quarters these energy advisers offer a free consultation about possibilities to save water, heating and energy costs. Through this project all partners run into a "win-win-situation". The socially sub privileged households save yearly about 137 Euros in additional costs. The town itself which carries the water costs and heating costs on subscribers of unemployment benefit and social help profits by savings at the rate of 202 Euros per household. Also the environment is a winner: About 303 kg of CO^2 less per household load the climate.

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Growth is the answer

The unions are deeply concerned by the announcements made in the Government's Spending Review, says **Brendan Barber**, TUC General Secretary

Unions were not impressed with the Spending Review or with the emergency Budget; they commit this country to a deflationary strategy that will put the recovery at risk and make Britain a more unequal society. The Spending Review in particular makes the very poorest pay the most for the government's plans.

The March Budget planned for £72.4 billion of fiscal tightening by 2014-5, 70 per cent coming from spending cuts, nearly all them cuts in Departmental spending – just £0.3 billion of the cuts were to come from benefits.

The new government's plans increase overall tightening to £110.3 billion, 73 per cent from cuts. Over the four years of the Spending Review period, Departmental spending will come down by £35.7 billion and cuts in benefits and tax credits will now reach £17.7 billion by 2015. In addition, £1.8 billion will come from public sector workers whose pension contributions will increase by, on average, more than 3% of their salaries.

The cuts in services may not be as severe as was planned last June, but they are still very tough - roughly equal to those that were demanded by the IMF in the 1970s. Service cuts do hurt everyone, but they hurt the poor far more than they hurt the rich. The TUC commissioned economists Howard Reed and Tim Horton to calculate how different groups will be affected by the Spending Review cuts. Using official figures, they found that the poorest ten per cent of households, with incomes below £10,200, will suffer reductions in spending on services equivalent to 29.5 per cent of their annual income on average, or £1,913 a year. The richest ten per cent will lose services worth just two per cent of their net income, the equivalent of £1,506 a year.

This is inequitable, but the impact of the benefit cuts will be even worse. Taking the emergency Budget and the Spending Review together, these will include:

- Indexing benefits by the Consumer Price Index instead of the Retail Price Index, making recipients £5 billion a year worse off by 2015.
- A tougher test for Disability Living Allowance, disqualifying 20 per cent of claimants.
- Cuts to Housing Benefit, such as the arbitrary 10 per cent cut for people unemployed over a year.
- Time limiting contributory Employment and Support Allowance for most recipients.
- A three year freeze in Child Benefit.
- A ten per cent cut in Council Tax Benefit.

As the IFS has pointed out, the planned benefit cuts will especially hit families with young children and people of working age on low incomes. They will be the biggest losers from the cuts.

Unions believe that the cuts are unnecessary as well as unfair. The answer

to the deficit is growth – a growing economy provides higher tax revenues and has less need for spending on benefits and the other costs of economic decline.

But cuts on the scale planned under the Spending Review will slow down the economy, and reduce the tax take. The deficit will certainly be harder to eliminate, it might even be impossible – that is what is happening in Ireland.

Even organisations that agree with the government's strategy accept that the cuts will slow down the recovery. Europe is embarked on a remarkable exercise in co-ordinated fiscal tightening; this could slow down the recovery worldwide and leave countries like ours in a very exposed position.

These cuts are at best a risky route to recovery. At worst, they could kill that recovery before it is properly established.

Distributional impact of spending cuts in services set out in CSR by decile

Income decile	Impact of CSR (£/year)	Impact as a proportion of net income
1	-£1,913	-29.5%
2	-£2,164	-18.5%
3	-£2,124	-15.0%
4	-£2,019	-11.7%
5	-£1,914	-9.6%
6	-£1,865	-7.6%
7	-£1,727	-6.2%
8	-£1,627	-4.9%
9	-£1,560	-3.8%
10	-£1,506	-2.0%

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InTraDE
Intelligent Transportation for Dynamic Environment

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InTraDE : Intelligently increasing the competitiveness of North West Europe's port regions

www.intrade-nwe.eu

Seaborne trade has recently grown - mainly due to globalization and development of emerging countries, which influences the development of ports and maritime terminals. Despite the commercial importance of North West Europe's coastline, few of its ports can keep pace with this growth.

Internal traffic management and space optimisation in confined spaces are central to developing North West Europe's maritime terminals. Currently, intelligent transportation systems used in seaports cannot adapt to their infrastructure - the infrastructure must adapt to them. Having resolved some internal traffic issues using automatic guided vehicles (AGVs) to handle goods, several major ports (Rotterdam, Düsseldorf, Hamburg) encountered limitations. They had to adapt their infrastructure and transport management systems to using AGVs as well as to deal with increased pollution levels caused by the AGVs' engines.

Considering an increase in productivity and competitiveness in maritime trade, medium and long term practical solutions to manage the internal traffic in seaports must be found. Bringing together various skills, InTraDE is a multidisciplinary project that falls within the context of technology transfer in the area of control and supervision of intelligent transport systems as applied in the field of goods handling in seaports and maritime terminals.

InTraDE proposes to develop a clean, safe, intelligent and innovative transport system for internal port traffic. The system could be adapted to the specific environment requirements and transferred to maritime terminals of different sizes. The system operates in parallel with virtual simulation software of the automated site, allowing a robust and real-time supervision of handling goods.

Firstly, the project must understand the environment of each seaport to effect an accurate virtual reconstruction using advanced transport information systems and advanced traffic management systems. The next step is collecting the seaport specifications including the constraints related to the transport system operation, environment and safety, so the interoperability and intermodality of freight transport on land and sea improve. Finally, the project synthesises different operating scenarios to manage the faulty transportation traffic situations and increase the safety of the employees, transport systems and the infrastructure.

Building on a virtual model of a maritime terminal environment that helps the terminals to simulate the intelligent transportation system, InTraDE will develop an intelligent transport prototype and test it in the differing environment of each seaport participating in the project. InTraDE will then develop software to supervise the transportation system and analyse how the transportation system can be of economic benefit in maritime and extra maritime environments. Intrade aims to bridge the economic development gap between North West Europe's regions by increasing productivity and competitiveness of North West Europe's small and medium size ports. Also striving to improve the efficiency of short sea shipping in North West Europe, Intrade is working to increase operational safety and lessen the environmental impact of North West European container ports.

1. Project Leader: University of Science and Technology of Lille www.univ-lille1.fr (FR)
2. Institut National de Recherche et Informatique et Automatique www.loria.fr (FR)
3. South East England Development Agency (SEEDA): www.seeda.co.uk (UK)
4. Centre Régional d'Innovation et de Transfert de Technologie - Transport et Logistique www.critt-tl.fr (FR)
5. AG Port of Oostende www.portofoostende.be (BE)
6. National Institute for Transport and Logistics, Dublin Institute of Technology www.dit.ie (IRE)
7. Liverpool John Moores University www.ljmu.ac.uk (UK)

Gottwald Port Technology in Düsseldorf (Germany)

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A modest proposal for overcoming the Euro crisis

By Professor Yanis Varoufakis
Department of Economics, University of Athens

It is now abundantly clear that each and every response by the eurozone to the galloping sovereign debt crisis has been consistently underwhelming. The reason is simple: the eurozone is facing an escalating twin crisis but only seeks to address one of its two manifestations - the sovereign debt crisis afflicting many of its member states. The EU does this by confronting the debt crisis with huge, expensive loans to, effectively, insolvent states, and massive austerity drives.

Meanwhile, a second crisis, of equal significance, is spiralling out of control - that of Europe's private sector banks. Over-laden with worthless paper assets, they constitute black holes into which the European Central Bank (ECB) keeps pumping oceans of liquidity that, naturally, only occasion a trickle of extra loans to business. Moreover, the EU's policy mix against the sovereign debt crisis constrains economic activity further and fuels the expectation of future sovereign defaults. In a never ending circle, these bilaterally negotiated 'bail outs' (e.g. Greece, Ireland) pull the rug from under the bankers' already weakened legs. And so the crisis is reproducing itself.

Is there an alternative? Yes there is, and one such is sketched out below. It would attack both manifestations of the crisis head on, create the circumstances for Europe's recovery and, crucially, is immediately implementable under the eurozone's existing institutional framework (thus bypassing any need for substantial, politically infeasible, Treaty changes).The proposed resolution comes in three steps.

'A second crisis, of equal significance, is spiralling out of control - that of Europe's private sector banks'

The first step is for an invitation to be jointly issued by the ECB and the EU Commission to the heads of the fiscally-challenged member-states, and representatives of the European banks holding the former's bonds. In a meeting that would not need to last for more than an hour or two, a deal is brokered according to which the banks swap the existing bonds issued by debt stricken states for new ones with a much lower face value and longer maturity. In exchange, the ECB offers the banks guarantees of continued liquidity for at least five years. The mere announcement of this deal will signal to the bond markets that, while no bondholder will be taking a haircut (except for the participating banks), the European periphery's debt burden is immediately reduced. Spreads will fall and even banks will be boosted by the news that their liquidity lifeline will last well into the future.

The second step will deflate the debt burden further: the ECB takes on its books forthwith a tranche of the sovereign debt of all member states equal in face value to (the Maastricht-compliant) 60% of GDP. To finance this, it issues EU bonds that are its own liability (rather than by eurozone members in proportion to their GDP). Just like the US Treasury backs its bills, without reference to California or Ohio, so should the ECB back its own eurobonds. (It is high time Europeans were reminded that President Roosevelt did not fight the Great Depression by buying up the debt of California or Delaware, nor by asking them to guarantee Treasury Bills.) Member states thus continue to service their debts but at the lower rates secured by the eurobond issue.

The third and final step seeks to pave the ground for a future of growth with fiscal rectitude: empower the European Investment Bank to fund, drawing upon a mix of its own bonds and the new eurobonds, a pan-European large-scale eco-social investment-led program by which to put in place a permanent counter-force to the forces of recession in peripheries that keep dragging the rest of the currency union toward stagnation.

With this European Surplus Recycling Mechanism in place (without which no currency union can survive for long), it will then be possible to put in place (as the Germans are constantly requesting) mechanisms that enforce fiscal discipline at the member-state level.

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The Skagerrak-Kattegat CCS project – facing the challenge of regional CO2 handling

Industrial CO2 sources contributes approx. 25 % of total Scandinavian (N,DK,S) greenhouse gas emissions. The industry sources cover several branches, from petrochemicals, fertilizers, refineries, cement, pulp and paper as well as energy production thus facing different situations regarding competition and business challenges. The carbon emissions are both related to energy use and specific process sources.

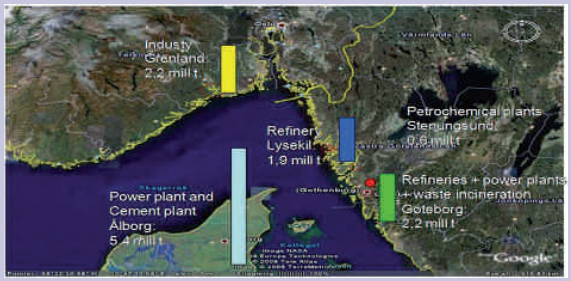
Industrial CCS – a key driver for low carbon production technologies

The industrial CO2 containing streams may vary in concentration, total pressure and are often distributed on several local point sources within each industrial site. In some cases there are business related drivers for separating the CO2 from the main product like in ammonia and fertilizer production, natural gas processing and conditioning etc, making more concentrated CO2 streams available. Carbon capture requires large quantities of energy, typically low quality steam for stripping as in post combustion technologies. Within large industrial sites there is still a considerable potential for waste heat recovery thus reducing the demand for import of energy to the CO2 capture plant.

The industry clusters typically form a significant part of the basis for local communities. This means long term employment, business for local sub suppliers and tax and fiscal incomes to the community as well as contributing to export values and the national GDPs. Facing a more demanding future, set by a low carbon regime, the industries need a common solution in order to minimize costs, find sustainable ways to carbon handling and avoid the threat of moving the whole industry to other locations in the third world.

The Skagerrak-Kattegat CCS project – a regional solution for southern Scandinavia

Within the Skagerrak-Kattegat basin several industrial clusters are located; and within a circle radius of 100 km approx. 13 mill tones of CO2 are emitted to the atmosphere from industry point sources larger than 500 kt CO2. There are further potential sources outside of this area which could be hooked up to a future CO2 transport system. There is thus a platform for looking into viable and cost effective transport systems, provided a safe CO2 storage site with sufficient storage capacity can be qualified. The catchable amount of CO2 from these sources will contribute with approx. 25 % of the national CO2 reduction targets in Scandinavia by 2020.



The project has a number of industrial partners and is linked with another CCS project ("Muligheter for lagring av CO2 I Skagerrak og østlige Nordsjø og på land i Danmark") aimed at looking more closely into storage alternatives within the Skagerrak-Kattegat region. These projects acknowledge the financial support from EU Interreg and Gassnova in addition to funding by industrial partners and local communities.

Typical for regional projects across national borders there will be several trans-boundary issues and legal matters that need to be analyzed, and this is properly addressed within the project. One of the targets in the project is to assess the access cost for the industries in this area for using the CO2 transport and storage infrastructure.

Addressing the whole carbon value chain and the framework for implementation

The Interreg IV A, KASK project address the whole CO2 value chain including capture at the industrial sites, finding an optimal CO2 transport infrastructure, using available geological and seismic data to identify the best located storage site and looking into the regulatory framework that must be in place to implement CCS in this region.

Further, communication is a separate work package within the project aimed at increasing the knowledge of CCS in the region and among the partners and trying to establish a Scandinavian forum for CCS in the region and prepare for what seems the next logic step on the road to CCS implementation.

The uniqueness of this project is to try and take a holistic view on CCS on a regional basis and come up with a viable carbon value chain to prepare industries in this area for a future low-carbon regime.

The main contributors within the project are Telemark Technology Centre in Porsgrunn, University of Oslo, Chalmers Technical University, Gothenburg and Gothenburg University.

Message to authorities and decision makers

The outcome of this project will contain several messages we hope will be helpful to all stakeholders and those who need to take decisions along the way to large scale CCS implementation.

First of all it is to acknowledge the value created by our industries and what needs to be done in order for them to prepare and survive in a future low-carbon regime where CCS probably will have a key role to play.

Secondly both national and regional authorities must ensure that the required framework and legal institutions will be in place and not be a barrier creating delays and uncertainty for industry players.

The intrinsic risk and uncertainty that is associated with all CCS projects must be acknowledged and the risks and burdens need to be balanced and shared with regard to future financing of the infrastructure and storage facilities that must be established.

For more project information please contact **dag.bjornsen@tel-tek.no**

DEN EUROPÆISKE UNION
Den Europæiske Fond for Regionaludvikling
Interreg IV A
ÖRESUND – KATTEGAT – SKAGERRAK
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We must protect the bond between society and our Forces

By Jim Murphy MP
Shadow Secretary of State for Defence

Defence is a subject too often defined by machinery and conflict, whereas it is in fact just as much about the welfare and reward we give to those prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country and their dependents who support them. The most important thing Governments can do to go some way to repaying the debt we owe them is to make sure those in service and their families are looked after during and after their time in the Forces.

The Government's decision to massively reduce the value of pensions for soldiers and war widows on a permanent basis flies in the face of this and has rightly been met with anger from Forces, families and charities. In the current climate there is a clear need for restraint in public sector pay and pensions, but Government plans to link public sector pension rises to the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index, a higher rate of inflation, will disproportionately affect members of the armed forces compared to people working in the rest of the public sector.

Many members of the armed forces' pensions start to pay out at a much earlier age compared to other public sector workers and, as a result of the change they will lose hundreds of thousands of pounds over the course of their lifetime. A corporal who has lost both legs in a bomb blast, for example, would miss out on about £500,000 in pension and benefit related payments. War widows, disproportionately reliant on their pension scheme, will also lose out enormously - a 34-year-old wife of a staff sergeant killed in Afghanistan would be almost £750,000 worse off.

Last December, the Government announced the new pension, benefit and compensation rates based on CPI. If this measure goes through, this year a severely injured member of the Forces who has been discharged will lose £120 from their pension. Compensation for specified minor injuries will be £110 less. A widow who has children will receive £94 less on their basic per annum pension. Under the Government's plans such losses would be felt each and every year from now on. This is nothing more than a breach of trust.

Minister claim uprating by RPI rather than CPI is about deficit reduction, but the impact will be felt long after the deficit has been paid down when the economy has returned to growth. People will find it hard to understand why men and women serving in Afghanistan now will receive poorer pensions in future and why war widows will have their entitlements hit year on year. A fairer alternative would be if the Government were to propose a time-limited change.

Armed forces need to know their government properly values and rewards them and their dependents. That is why, when this measure is brought before the House of Commons, I will be urging colleagues from all parties to oppose it and search for fairer alternatives. I hope the Government will listen. Their dogmatism threatens to weaken the bond between society and our Forces, but it must be protected.

"Many members of the armed forces' pensions start to pay out at a much earlier age compared to other public sector workers"

GG Jim Murphy.indd 44 01/02/2011 13:52:34

Armed Forces Pensions:

GOOD REASON TO BE UP IN ARMS

FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Armed Forces salaries have never been over-generous. And Armed Forces pensions have a greater significance than pensions elsewhere in the public sector. Armed Forces pensions are finely-balanced instruments which simultaneously facilitate recruitment, early departure, compensation for early career cessation and, indeed, retention or death in service.

At the Forces Pension Society we have calculated that the impact of a change in indexation from RPI to CPI will **devalue** a 40 year old Sergeant's pension by £212,000 by age 85 and a Major's by £319,000. **On average pensions will be devalued by 15%.** Can such a change legally affect assured rights?

And what of the Military Covenant in which ***"Armed Forces must always be able to expect fair treatment"*** when all publications from the MoD have promised RPI indexation?

In the same way, the unique nature of military service acknowledges that Armed Forces require special consideration for these reasons:

- the Armed Forces are required to implement Government policy anywhere, at any time, regardless of personal circumstances
- refusal to obey a lawful order or fail to turn up for work may result in military detention or imprisonment
- there is no right to overtime pay
- there are exemptions from aspects of equal opportunities legislation
- there is exemption from aspects of Health & Safety and minimum wage legislation
- there is no right of access to an employment tribunal on grounds of unfair or constructive dismissal or breach of contract generally
- no right to have a formally constituted professional association to safeguard an individual's interests
- no right to take an active part in political organisations, marches and demonstrations.

What the Armed Forces do have is unique demands placed on them to put their lives at risk and to take the lives of others.

SOUND FAMILIAR? OF COURSE NOT. These conditions only apply to the Armed Forces; that's why they deserve to be treated as a special group within the public sector, even in times of financial crisis.

FORCES PENSION SOCIETY

68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1RL

Tel: 020 7820 9988 email: memsec@forpen.co.uk www.forcespensionsociety.org

The Forces Pension Society is an independent not-for-profit organisation and is a member of the Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations

cobseo

FPS-GovGaz-A4.indd 1 19/10/2010 14:57

War pensions must reflect the uniqueness of military service

Marcus Papadopoulos talks to Forces Pension Society general secretary John Moore-Bick about his unease over the Coalition Government's attempts to reverse the commitments made by the last government to reforming the Armed Forces Pension Scheme

Major General John Moore-Bick devoted forty years of his life to serving in the British armed forces, in peacekeeping and in war as well as in the Ministry of Defence, and abroad, carrying out roles such as GOC UK Support Command, Germany, adviser to the international community's High Representative in Bosnia and adviser to the government of Serbia and Montenegro in Belgrade. He understands, perhaps more than anyone in Parliament, the injustices experienced by many members of the armed forces and their families as a result of unjust rules concerning war pensions.

"Overall, the current pension schemes are fundamentally good and among the best in the public sector. But there are some antiquated rules and lingering unfairness which the Forces Pension Society is very concerned about and is consequently lobbying the Government over."

What are these "concerns"?

"Lord Hutton's interim report on his independent review of public sector pensions highlights our principal concern and campaign at the moment-namely, that the vast majority of widows will lose their pension rights if they re-marry. This is an outdated rule that will last until the 2050s or so. Fairness is at the core of our argument to dispense with that rule and the previous Labour government agreed with us.

"What is unfair is that some widows who re-marry will not lose their pensions while others will. For example, a wife can re-marry and keep her pension if her husband is killed in action or during a live-firing exercise, something known as an attributable death. But a wife whose husband dies of pneumonia cannot re-marry without losing her pension.

"We are urging the government to replace this unfair rule and confine it to history. However, our view is that the officials who have been dealing with our correspondence have used the transition to try and roll back the level of agreement that we reached with the last government on the issue.

"The coalition government has committed itself to sacrificing everything to curing the deficit, including limiting how much it pays out on pensions. I think the government doesn't want to do anything that will look as if any part of any sector is being given special privileges. But our argument isn't about special pleading. It is about fairness. Suffice to say we are not very pleased at the moment with the government."

Major General Moore-Bick is also scathing about the government's changes to pension indexation which will affect how deferred pensions are revalued.

" "Government in a hurry with unintended consequences" is how I would describe the changes to indexation from Retail Price Index to Consumer Price Index. This will have a huge effect of reducing pension receipts for people who get a pension early in life. People in the armed forces get a pension early not because of their own choosing. For instance, I am dealing with the case of a 27 year old corporal who has lost both of his legs. He will lose half a million pounds over his life time.

"The majority of people in the armed forces don't do a life career; they do a full career over 22 years, for instance, so they receive an immediate pension at the age of 40. They then leave the forces to start a new life. They need this pension and yet the devaluation of that pension will be well over £200,000.

"I don't think this has been properly thought through for the armed forces because the forces are the one section of the public service allowed by law to pay pensions at a younger age."

The Military Covenant, an informal understanding between the state and the armed forces in which the former recognises the unique nature of military service, is being reviewed by the government. What are his thoughts on this?

"This is pure politics. Why is it necessary to repair the covenant when the previous government introduced Command 7424 (the nation's commitment to the armed forces and their families recognising that there are a lot of areas where the armed forces need to be paid special attention to, such as school admissions)? Repairing or reviewing the covenant doesn't pay respect to what we, in the third sector, have achieved with the previous government over the last three years.

"The government has set up a military covenant task force but it has not consulted widely. Professor Hew Strachan, who is heading the task force, has not been allowed any expenses to travel and fact find. I think Professor Strachan has been told by the government to produce quick wins at no cost. It would have been better to do nothing than treat the armed forces in such a hollow manner. The exercise is worthless unless some difficult issues like pensions are included with some full and broad consultation. The government is not aware of the problem areas and is not keen to find out."

What are his hopes and aspirations for forces pensions?

"Firstly, to (satisfactorily) resolve widows' pensions; and secondly, to ensure that Whitehall and Westminster realise that forces pension schemes are not just pension schemes but cover ill health, invaliding and life insurance; they bring you in, they get you out; they persuade you to stay and build a more senior career. In other words, they are very refined and should not be lumped in with others. Thankfully, and not due to any wisdom on the Government's part, Lord Hutton understands this very well."

GG Jan Agenda FPS pensions interview.indd 46 01/02/2011 13:55:30

The UK independent TV production sector contributes £4.3bn to the economy each year (GVA).[1]

It employs more people than the TV divisions of the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five put together.[2]

It has helped increase exports of UK TV shows by 39% since 2003.[3]

It is a bigger direct investor in UK production than BBC Worldwide.[4]

And it makes some great programmes too.

As the trade association for the independent production sector, Pact wants to build on this success to deliver a world-class UK production sector in the digital age – without spending a penny of additional public money.

For more information contact adam@pact.co.uk or telephone: 020 7380 8232

www.pact.co.uk

pact.

1. Deloitte report for the BBC; 2. Skillset annual census;
3. Pact/UKTI annual export survey; 4. Pact annual census/BBC accounts

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How TV changed the face of British politics

By Jon Craig
Chief Political Correspondent, Sky News

Last year was the year that changed the face of British politics, possibly forever, bringing in the first coalition government since the Second World War.

And, make no mistake, it was television that brought about that change. If it had not been for the three TV debates during the 2010 general election campaign, there probably would not be a coalition government now.

Nick Clegg would not have been transformed – in the space of just over six months – from the fresh face of British politics to Deputy Prime Minister and then to the hate figure of student protesters and hundreds of thousands of disillusioned Liberal Democrat voters.

In the months leading up to the beginning of the election campaign in April, the election on May 6 looked to be the Conservatives to lose. The Conservatives enjoyed big opinion poll leads while Gordon Brown had limped on after several coup attempts by members of his own party.

But all that changed on three consecutive Thursday evenings in April.

The first TV debate, staged by ITV at Granada, produced Cleggmania as Gordon Brown said again and again "I agree with Nick" and handed the LibDems a powerful election slogan. Nick Clegg had arrived in the big time. The LibDems' poll ratings soared and suddenly the election was a three-horse race.

In Bristol, after coming under fire from critics inside the Conservative Party for being too cautious in the first debate, David Cameron came out fighting in the Sky News debate. But Clegg was already in the game and no longer on the sidelines.

And by Birmingham, after his "that bigoted woman" nightmare with Labour supporter Gillian Duffy in Rochdale the day before, Gordon Brown had virtually thrown in the towel. In his final plea to voters in the final few minutes, he appeared to concede defeat.

By this time, Peter Mandelson was

already in what my colleague Adam Boutlon had dubbed "spin alley", spinning furiously for the beleagued Labour leader. In the middle of the melee in "spin alley", I remember thinking at the time that Mandy had given up too, since he didn't even wait until the end of the debate to try and influence the media coverage.

Did Brown and Cameron, in particular, blunder by allowing Clegg equal billing in the TV debates? Possibly. But it's difficult to see how the debates could have been staged in any other way.

There was one other reason why Cameron didn't get his overall majority, though. The launch of the Tory manifesto, at Battersea Power Station in south London, was glitzy but baffling. It was the launch of Cameron's "big society". Wavering voters were left confused and in many cases turned off.

After the election came the lengthy coalition negotiations. My personal recollection is of meetings of LibDem MPs lasting long into the night, of Gordon Brown "squatting" in Downing Street and then his graceful exit with his wife Sarah and two young sons.

So Labour began the process of electing its new leader. I always believed Ed Miliband would defeat his brother, ever since the former joint general secretary of the Unite super-union, Derek Simpson, became an extremely vocal cheerleader for Ed at the TUC conference in Liverpool in 2009.

On the eve of the result being declared in Manchester, I was in the Commons talking to MPs and then bumped into a very senior Labour figure in the Red Lion pub in Whitehall. "Ed's won, hasn't he?" I said. "Yes," was the the reply.

But after a promising start at his first Prime Minister's Questions, Ed had a difficult first few months. I was shocked at some of the venom and vitriol directed at him privately by many of the Labour MPs who had supported David. And by their determination to dump him!

Ed's "blank sheet of paper" gaffe, regarding Labour policy in a BBC interview, was damaging. And I'm not convinced hiring Times journalist Tom Baldwin – dubbed "Alastair Campbell's mouthpiece" by Greg Dyke and target for colourful allegations by his old foe Lord Ashcroft – as a strategy chief is a wise choice.

But autumn was dominated by the battles inside and outside Parliament on tuition fees. On the day of the first big demo, the day Tory HQ at Millbank Tower was trashed, I was struck by how Cameron and the Tories escaped the students anger and it was all directed at Clegg.

Although the Coalition won the Commons vote comfortably by 21 votes and two Lords votes by 68 and 73 votes a few days later, Cameron was guilty of barely lifting a finger to help Clegg during the difficult ordeal for the LibDems as they were slammed for their fees U-turn.

The whole ugly episode left the LibDems badly damaged. The poll ratings of both Clegg and his party – riding so high during the election campaign - have nosedived.

Can they recover in 2011? There are the elections for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and English town halls on May 5. And… yes, hold your breath… the referendum on changing the voting system from first past the post to the alternative vote.

A few weeks ago I asked David Cameron if he favoured TV debates on the AV referendum. He replied that he didn't think there was enough interest to sustain them.

In other words, he accepts that TV debates changed the face of British politics in 2010. And as a supporter of first past the post, he doesn't want that to happen again in 2011.

GG Jan Agenda Media Jon Craig.indd 48 01/02/2011 13:58:00

EUREGIONAL PACT II improving cancer treatment

www.euregionalpact.eu

Euregional PACT II is a cross-border collaboration between the Universities of Maastricht, Leuven, Antwerp, Ghent and Aachen. The mission of Euregional PACT II is to strengthen and speed up innovative research and development that aim to improve treatment of cancer patients. In order to achieve its goal Euregional PACT has established a Virtual Laboratory in which renowned scientists of the participating Universities combine their knowledge and expertise to generate innovative theranostics for diagnostic therapy of the individual cancer patient. The Virtual Laboratory of Euregional PACT II can employ a toolbox consisting of State of the Art infrastructure to conduct experiments in the fields of Molecular Biology, Cancer Biology, Biotechnology, Fermentation technology, Protein Chemistry, Radiochemistry, Molecular Imaging and Preclinical models for cancer. The toolbox can be viewed at www.euregionalpactii.eu.

Euregional PACT II's Virtual Laboratory is up and running since end of 2009 and it has generated its first innovative product through joined efforts of the University partners. The cytotoxic agent that is specifically targeted towards vascularized tumors was designed by Molecular Biology, produced by Bio- and Fermentation technology and assessed on biodistribution by Molecular Imaging. Preclinical evaluation of anti-cancer activity is expected to be concluded in the first half of 2011.

Establishment of the Virtual Laboratory is just a first but significant step for Euregional PACT II. Interactions with Industry are mandatory for translating basic concepts into marketable innovative products that are of benefit to the patient. Based on this vision Euregional PACT II partners with the non-profit organisations FlandersBio and LifetecZOne in order to interact with Biotech Industry and to initiate and facilitate collaborations between researchers from Universities and Industry. Euregional PACT II is currently establishing collaborations with several Biotech Industries to valorize its unique platform of theranostics.

In addition, Euregional PACT II functions as a portal through which Industry can approach a wealth of academic knowledge, expertise and infrastructure present at the five Universities of the Flanders-Netherlands region. On the other hand through Euregional PACT II Universities can enter into the rich network of Biotech Industries that has evolved in the Flanders-Netherlands region over the past decade.

Euregional PACT II's mission and goals corroborate the objectives of the Lisbon agenda and Europe 2020. Euregional PACT II is made possible thanks to financial support from the Interreg IV program of the Flanders-Netherlands region (IVA-VLANED-1.20), the Dutch and Flemish governments and the Provinces of Limburg, Noord-Brabant, Vlaams-Brabant, Anwerpen and Oost-Vlaanderen.

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Winter of Discontent?

By Paul Routledge
A columnist for the Daily Mirror and Tribune magazine

The winter is certainly upon us, but there are few signs of the discontent so confidently promised back last summer by the teenage scribblers, as Nigel Lawson once described the Fleet Street commentariat.

Scenes of student protest and violence unprecedented since the Poll Tax riots of 1990 make the headlines, without any comparable upsurge in strikes. Police chiefs, who predicted industrial unrest on a large scale when spending cuts began to bite, have been surprised by events. They were caught napping, looking for trouble in the wrong place.

In the days when strikes were ten a penny, my gut feeling was always to look for trouble where it was least expected. That instinct paid off in 1980, when steelworkers staged their first national stoppage since 1926. The game is different today. Thatcher's anti-strike laws make it difficult – sometimes well-nigh impossible – to stage lawful action.

So talk of a general strike is just that. In his first interview after being elected general secretary of the 1.6 million member Unite union, Len McLuskey refused to rule out a general call to arms. He knew, or should have known, that such action is unlawful. Judges would rule it an illegal political strike, or contrary to the ban on secondary action, since it would be impracticable to erect a common primary dispute across thousands of workplaces in both public and private sectors.

Rhetoric is fine. It comes cheap. Union leaders can beat their chests and feel a lot better. But at ground level the picture is very different. In the current crisis, workpeople have to cope with a panoply of "human resources" devices to cut jobs, especially in local government. Employers are giving notice to entire labour forces, then inviting staff to apply for a smaller number of jobs on lower pay and worse conditions. Workers are being "asked" to take voluntary redundancy, unpaid work breaks, or holidays, or fewer

hours or salary reductions. The rules are stretched, bent and broken to achieve the huge manpower reductions required by government spending cuts.

I call this the "stealth sack." Its impact was being felt right across the country, even before much-reduced local government spending levels were set. The GMB union, tracking town hall redundancies, counted more than 73,000 by the middle of last December. How can unions fight this tsunami of sackings?

Appetite for industrial action is weak. Leeds City Council, facing a 23 per cent cut - £76 million - in its budget to 2013, declared that 3,000 employees had to go. Despite five unemployed people chasing every job vacancy, within days they had 700 volunteers. It is very difficult to persuade workers to strike against a dollop of cash. The employers' divide and rule strategy works well in a recession.

That does not mean there isn't anger and frustration. There is. The only question is: where will it go? I attended a conference to campaign against the cuts organised by the construction union Ucatt for its activists in the north of England. Union officials made a powerful political case for resistance, but stopped short of urging strikes. When the TUC's national march for jobs this March was mentioned, a delegate sitting next to me – a man in his forties, probably with a family, from Barnsley – observed wryly : "I might be out of a job by March."

How can you ask a man in his position to risk what may be his only labour market asset – his job – in pursuit of political or even industrial ends? Only where there is irreconcilable anger, with workplace organisation to back it up, and that is not likely to be found frequently. Brendan Barber, general secretary of the TUC, predicted at the autumn Congress that there would be strikes. They have yet to materialise though refuse collectors belonging to Unite union in Birmingham have voted to ban overtime and walk out for 24 hours in a dispute over £4,000 a year pay cuts.

There are local elections in England and the devolved elections in Wales and Scotland this May. Nick Clegg's party looks certain to take a hiding, and the Conservatives are bracing themselves for heavy losses (though they will work for, and be very happy with, defeat in the referendum on change in the voting system to AV). The chief beneficiary is likely to be the sole nationwide Opposition party, Ed Miliband's Labour.

Regaining power in town halls across the country will be scant consolation if they are compelled to continue with government-imposed job and spending cuts. The Coalition is in a very strong position. The unions and their members know that. There will be no Scargill-style kamikaze attacks on Citadel Cameron. In the words of the late Len Murray, quoting Wellington, "we shall have to see who can pound the longest."

"Employers are giving notice to entire labour forces, then inviting staff to apply for a smaller number of jobs on lower pay and worse conditions"

GG Jan Agenda Media Paul Routledge.indd 50 01/02/2011 13:59:42

Opening Oysters. Lögstör, Denmark

Map of Her Majesty Dronningens Håndbibliotek København

IKON-Interregional Cultural Experience Network

Increased tourism in the area around Kattegat/Skagerrak.

Sweden, Norway, and Denmark lack strong traditions when it comes to working with cultural experiences across institutional barriers. The aim of IKON is to help to break down these barriers, both between institutions and between countries, by developing and marketing the culture and history they share. In the area around Kattegat/Skagerrak, the three countries have a long shared history. Vikings and pirates, kings and soldiers, have fought for this territory throughout history. The many historic events that have taken place here offer opportunities for a large number of exciting experiences. Through the creation of knowledge-based cultural experiences, in the shape of historic plays, dramatized guided tours of castles and fortresses, events with a focus on coastal culinary traditions, traditional music, and the use of new technology to make our sights more visually interesting, the project aims to, among other things, increase the number of visitors to these destinations by 350,000 persons per year.

Cross-border partnership for culture experience operators.

IKON's partnership consists of 47 participating organisations, which include municipalities, regions, tourism organisations, museums, castles and universities in the southeast of Norway, the northern part of Denmark and the west of Sweden. To achieve the project aims, as well as break down barriers between the various culture experience operators in the region, the project works with communication, shared activities, and a common, strong marketing strategy.

Lead partner.
Munkedal Town Council
Forum
S-455 80 Munkedal
Sweden
Contact: Jan Hognert / hognert@telia.com / +46 731 409395

Project period 01-06-2009 – 31-05-2012
Website: www.ikon-eu.org

Bohus Fortress. Kungalv. Sweden

Dramatized story. Fredrikstad. Norway

Historical drama in Munkedal

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IKON
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Legal Aid: one cut too far

Government Gazette's **Marcus Papadopoulos** interviews Des Hudson, Head of the Law Society of England and Wales, about the proposed cuts to legal aid as part of the CSR

One of the defining characteristics of the English legal system is its provision of access to justice. This fundamental, ingrained assurance is revered across the democratic world and is a source of inspiration for many countries within the Commonwealth, especially in Africa.

However, access to justice is today under threat as a result of the decision by the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to reduce the number of solicitor firms offering legal aid in England and Wales as part of the Government's comprehensive spending review.

The justice system faired badly under Chancellor George Osborne's spending review late last year, incurring cuts of around 30 per cent. Of that figure, £350 million will be slashed from the legal aid budget, prompting fears among legal practitioners in England and Wales that the most vulnerable people in society will now be at risk of being denied access to courts.

The Law Society has expressed concern over the legal aid cuts, going so far as to commence judicial review proceedings against the LSC over its decision.

Speaking to Government Gazette, Des Hudson, the chief executive of the Law Society, conveyed feelings of unease about the possible implications for justice as a consequence of the legal aid cuts and how these will affect the legal profession as a whole.

The scale of the changes to legal aid announced by the LSC came as a "very big surprise" to both the Law Society and general practitioners up and down the country, Des said.

As is usually the case when a Government takes a decision to significantly cut public funding, the most vulnerable are hit the hardest. According to Des, the one group of people who will be most affected by the legal aid cuts are those in relation to the provision of family law. He commented

GG Jan Agenda Law Society interview.indd 52 01/02/2011 14:01:38

Double Purpose Blue Breed in the heart of Europe

Against the current of a large intensification of dairy breeds, the Double Purpose Blue Breed (Bleue du Nord in France and double purpose Belgian White Blue in Belgium) really combines meat and milk. The Double Purpose Blue Breed relies on a proven breeding system and also an original cross-border breed management. From July 2008 the selection and valuation scheme of the Double Purpose Blue breed has been created within the framework of the Wallonia-France cross-border project BlueSel supported by the European Union within the INTERREG IV project and coordinated by the Walloon Breeding Association AWE.

The Double Purpose Blue breed is strongly defended by the breeders because it represents for them a profitable economical potential.

Double Purpose Blue Breed behind the borders

Double Purpose Blue breed's history is shared between the Belgian and French regions of Hainaut, with an approximate total population of 9000 cows (among which 4500 are controlled) spread in the region Nord Pas de Calais and in Belgium. The greatest strength of the breed : its perfect adaptation to the particularly cold and wet region enables long grazing periods with a maximum reduced feeding follow-up and the insurance of a quick weight increase when the winter diet begins.

Double Purpose Blue Breed, the double purpose goal reaffirmed

Double Purpose Blue logically has kept a bigger meat potential evolving with the position of the breeders concerning the use of the Mh double-muscled gene. Double Purpose breeders can therefore chose two different but complementary options:

Either they try to get a very typed animal, double-muscled (Mh/Mh) homozygote with an average herd dairy production under 4500 kg . Or they aim at a more dairy type by selecting animals non-carriers of the gene, or at least heterozygote (Mh/+). In this case the production goal is to reach at least 5000 kg for breeding and 7000 kg for the best old milking cows.

Building a breed project for the future

A very close technical cooperation between 5 partners and Belgian and French breeders has set the basis of a project for the future of the Double Purpose Blue Breed. The small size of the population is an advantage for the follow-up of this uncommun breed.

The partners take all the decisions in group and make of BlueSel an efficient tool for the development of Double Purpose Blue genetics which gives confidence to the breeders. The project is based on 5 actions :

- A selection and preservation system
- Joint testing of insemination bulls and a unique scoring system
- An evaluation of the technical and economical results of the herds
- Development of the breed products (cheese)
- Enhancing the advantages of the breed

Profitability and long-lasting development

French and Belgian Double Purpose Blue breeders militate in favour of a less consuming agriculture, asking for less work and enabling farms of reasonable size with good profitability.

This logic that goes against the current, that is in favour of a purely economical goal and a wish of long-lasting development, should be better known and popularized.

BLUESEL

Project financers:

Union européenne: Fonds Européen de Développement Régional

Wallonie

Conseil Général Département du Nord

INTERREG IV France - Wallonie - Vlaanderen

INTERREG efface les frontières

Région Nord-Pas de Calais

Project partners:

awe association wallonne de l'élevage

espaces naturels régionaux

UNION BLEUE DU NORD

gembloux agro bio tech

Université de Liège

Maison de l'élevage du Nord

INSTITUT DE L'ELEVAGE

that: "If you are a child that is subjected to care proceedings, or a parent or grandparent whose child is subject to care proceedings, you are going to be very much affected. If you're a wife and mother who's just been assaulted and has moved to a refuge with three children and you're looking for a solicitor to get court proceedings for domestic abuse, you will be very much affected."

But how will this affect take place? Des cited two ways: firstly, between 46-50 per cent of legal firms will have to stop taking on legal aid cases and so there could be the scenario in which mid-case your lawyer has to change; and secondly, there is a question mark as to whether the allocation by the LSC of contracts for legal aid across 134 listed areas in England and Wales is correct.

Expanding on the latter point, Des argued that if the allocation for legal aid across the 134 designated areas is not correct, then the consequences could be "quite severe". He said: "A mother and wife who has been assaulted, has had to leave home, is living in council accommodation in East Cornwall and has to travel 2-3 hours on a bus, with her children, to see a solicitor, is the sort of scenario we are concerned about. The Law Society has identified about half a dozen areas-East Cornwall, Cardiff, Northumberland, Lincolnshire, Hull and East Midlands-where we can point to specific examples which suggest that the allocation is imperfect.

"We are not saying this has been done maliciously or improperly by the LSC. But if 6 are wrong, then what about the other 128? We believe there is sufficient doubt that there are problems with the other areas. Therefore, we have asked the LSC to urgently undertake and publish a review of their allocation because at the moment what seems to be in question is whether the LSC is discharging its obligation to ensure access to justice, which is one of its statutory roles. Currently, we do not see a mechanism by which they will demonstrate that they are complying with that statutory obligation."

Should the Law Society's concerns materialise, the potential consequences for justice, according to Des, are "very serious indeed" and go to the heart of what sort of society we want to live in. "At risk is something we take for granted; namely that, if we suffer an injustice, we will have access to the courts. What could soon develop in society is the scenario in which if you are weak, if you are poor, if you find yourself in trouble, then the quality or access to justice that you may have could be dramatically different to that which the powerful and wealthy have at their disposal. That is the central issue of our argument to the LSC to conduct a review of its allocation."

In an attempt to offer the public more outlets offering legal advice and thereby create more competition in the legal market, the Government is set to introduce Alternative Business Structures (ABSs) perhaps as early as this October. For the first time in English legal history, lawyers will no longer have sole ownership of legal services. Anyone considered to be "fit or proper" will be permitted to offer legal advice, including supermarkets and insurance companies.

Just how effective ABSs will be is difficult to say, Des commented, because they are "very untried". However, he outlined three possible outcomes stemming from their introduction: firstly, they will be a "damp squib"; secondly, they will be a "radical force" which will introduce more competition; or thirdly, they will thrust the country into an experiment which could damage the legal profession "irrevocably" and deliver "no benefit" at all.

From a business perspective, Des noted that England and Wales will be put into a very exposed position as a result of ABSs because no other legal jurisdiction in the world has a comparable arrangement: "I expect no firm of solicitors involved in international law to touch ABSs with a barge pole because ABSs in many foreign jurisdictions are seen as being utterly wrong."

The affect of ABSs on the family solicitor and on legal training will be "pronounced", warned Des. "In five to ten years time, there will be fewer legal firms (those that we have will be bigger) while clients will have to travel further afield for face-to-face contact with their solicitors.

"As for training, things will become radically very different. When I was training as a solicitor, a lot of my work I did as an article clerk was offshore to Bangalore. I suspect people today will have to spend time as a paralegal or an executive before they get the opportunity to become a solicitor. Furthermore, given the current situation regarding student debt, I fear that we may have a far more exclusive group of people becoming solicitors, which is contrary to how the profession should actually be a meritocracy, where if you work hard, you get on."

The focus of the interview then shifted to the government's intention to appoint an uber-regulator to sit on top of the Law Society and the Bar Council. Des remarked worryingly on how such an appointment could damage the reputation of the English legal system abroad: "The number of people in Africa who have said to me that they look to the English model as a bulwark for protecting the rule of law but are now very concerned about what is happening in England is significant."

The twenty-first century has brought a raft of challenges to the legal profession, some of which will fundamentally change how solicitor and barrister work together. While acknowledging that the legal profession has been able to survive and thrive for hundreds of years, noting that there is no reason as to why it cannot continue to do so today, Des cited three issues which he believes warrants government attention: the trend for off shoring; the restrictions on immigration; and the way in which the UK uniquely applies money laundering legislation. He warned that: "All these conspire to make England and Wales, particularly London, a less attractive place to run a law firm from. At the moment, of the six largest law firms in the world, four are based in London. However, this could gradually change if the government does not afford serious attention to the issues threatening that status quo."

Housing magistrates' courts in shopping centres is currently being mooted by the Government. Put to Des was the question of how this would impact solicitors and justice. "There needs to be some degree of remoteness, some degree of authority when it comes to a court. Defendants and those testifying cannot be made to feel too comfortable in a court. The process of testing the truth requires authority. Courts need to be different. While I'm not dismissing the idea of putting a magistrates' court in, say, the Manchester Arndale as bad, I do believe that we need to think carefully about this."

Ensuring access to justice is an absolute necessity for those in our society who do not have the financial means themselves for going to court. However, access to justice is also a fundamental pillar of the English legal system and serves to enhance the UK's standing in the international arena. While the argument for the need to reduce government spending is irrefutable, this must be balanced with the need to ensure that justice is not compromised.

Justice, historically a guiding principle of the UK, is at stake today along with the reputation of the country abroad as a beacon of civilisation. The Government must take note.

(Additional material by Darryl Howe).

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La Route des Associations – a European project of exchange

Since 2008, “les maisons pour associations” of the towns of Charleroi, Mons, Tourcoing and Roubaix have worked closely together on a cross-border project which falls under the Interreg IV programme and which is called “Récits”, Réseau d’Echanges Citoyens et d’Initiatives Transfrontalières Solidaires (citizen exchange and united cross-border initiatives), but is also referred to as ‘La route des Associations”. The project revolves around three key themes: citizenship, discrimination and heritage reclaiming. These themes are explored through conferences and events, whose objectives are not only to connect French and Belgian associations, but to raise the profile of their four regions and the work of the association sector.

The collaboration between French and Belgian structures started after two key factors were acknowledged: first of all, the four regions share the same industrial past and the will to rebuild themselves after difficult economic times. Secondly, the community life in these regions is extremely rich: a large numbers of associations are involved in bringing these weakened regions back to the fore and they are major players in the cultural and social fields as well as in the field of sports and youth activities. This is an important task that will be honoured in the context of the “European year of volunteering 2011”, with many events being organised, including Association days, “Regards croisés” and a cross-border festival.

The Association days will be organised alternatively in Tourcoing, Mons, Roubaix and Charleroi and will be an opportunity for participants, association members and field specialists to discuss themes such as gender, youth, participative democracy, volunteering and disability. The idea is to focus on issues which affects all four regions, to exchange views on best practice, and to identify ways forward. These discussions will lead to the publication of small guidebooks.

Open to all associations and their beneficiaries, the “Regards croisés’ event will be an opportunity to discover the diversity of the regions, from the exploitation of their industrial heritage to the richness of their community life, exploring social issues such as immigration or local history.
Eager to fulfil their educational and logistic support duties, the ‘Maisons des associations’ are joining forces to highlight the work undertaken by hundreds of associations which are contributing to making their towns more vibrant. They will be using communication tools such as websites, web videos, and publications. They will also promote local activities on both sides of the border. Finally they will reaffirm their support by organising the first cross-border association festival on 4 June, in Mons – a day of celebration, discussion, discovery and solidarity which will help in creating new bonds in the context of this European initiative.

Finally, once Charleroi, Mons, Roubaix and Tourcoing are strongly linked, the objective of the “Route des Associations” is to get other neighbouring towns, such as Tournai and Mouscron, to come onboard. Privileged ties have already been made, especially through the youth association network, in order to share the knowledge gained by the key players of the project, in a bid to erase European borders to an even greater extent...

Annelise Detournay

« Regards Croisés » day in Charleroi : discovering industrial past and discussing immigration history

Maison pour Associations, what’s that?

The ‘Récits’ project sees the joint contributions of la Maison pour Associations de Charleroi (B), les Maisons des Associations de Roubaix et Tourcoing (F) and la Maison de la Vie Associative de Mons (B) .

These are structures established to support local associations and take them to a professional level. They offer logistical help (venues, vehicles or audio material hire), legal advice, financial expertise, as well as help with finding funding or promoting their activities.

Non-profit french and belgian associations celebrating together in the streets of Roubaix

A legal masqueraid

By Michael Mansfield QC

Provision and protection, within the law, for those substantial sections of our community who are vulnerable and fall below the average annual earnings of £25,000, are a thing of the past, consigned to the annals of history. The arena of political debate is dominated by a single theme of economic necessity in order to offset a crippling deficit. Despite Coalition promises that front-line services would be ring fenced, the Times headline on October 21 after Osborne's Spending Review read: 'Frontline Services Take Big Hit'.

It is clear that no corner will remain untouched, whether it be affordable social housing, an urgent school building and maintenance programme, NHS polyclinics, child welfare, tuition fees, or the provision of civil and criminal legal aid. None of these areas, and many more similar ones, are remotely responsible for the deficit in the first place. I am not, therefore, one of those prepared to swallow the swingeing policy of cuts without questioning the premise upon which they are based.

At the very moment that the Coalition party conferences were vying with each other to present the most robust axe men and women, the city slickers of the banking world chose to announce what they considered to be entirely appropriate end of year bonuses: amounting to a sum in the region of £7 billion. 'Almost back to pre-recession levels', they sighed with relief.

It's worth pausing for a moment to reflect on this discreditable microcosm of the current economic environment. This figure is more than treble the annual legal aid budget. Equally, it is more than treble the intended percentage cuts in the annual Ministry of Justice budget and more than treble the paltry proposed bank levy. If, as the Minister of Justice claims, the UK is on the brink of bankruptcy, no one seems to have told the bankers.

Many banks have been saved by public money, yet continue to stockpile and not redistribute that money and now it is that same public which is going to have to underwrite for a second or third time the excesses of a shadow economy which was poorly regulated, by the Government, the Bank of England and the FSA,

Photo: Sarah Booker

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effectively to the point of non-regulation. Furthermore, as a cross party committee of the House of Commons determined at an early stage of this debacle, it was the bonus culture which played a major contributory role. Where are the much vaunted exhortations of 'Fairness' and 'We are all in this together'? It's rather, 'Here we go again' and 'Women and Children First...'

There are a number of measures, way beyond pursuing the benefit scroungers, which need to be embraced:

Firstly, the bonus culture has to be dismantled wherever it rears its head.

Secondly, the implementation of a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT or Robin Hood Tax) has to be seriously embraced. This has been recognised by the World Bank, the German and French governments and has been detailed by Jeffrey D Sachs, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. Essentially such a tax on speculative banking transactions, bonds and derivatives, needs only to be microscopically small (0.05%) in order to raise significant sums of money: estimates vary between £20 billion a year in the UK to £100 billion worldwide (which is more than the Chancellor hopes to save over 4 years). The bank levy therefore is an extraordinarily poor substitute for the FTT and has already been shrugged off by the financial services industry.

Thirdly, billions can be raised by a clampdown on tax evasion. The Review describes a rather modest target of £7 billion instead of the estimated £70 billion owed.

Fourthly, there are, of course, the highly questionable priorities in the field of defence - namely unlawful foreign military adventures and the Trident project (now deferred until 2016 but not scrapped) all of which run into billions once again.

I felt it vital to rehearse these arguments before developing the disastrous impact of any further inroads on the provision of legal advice and representation. It is not just the Coalition who planned such cuts; the Labour government had something very similar in mind and both anticipated docking £350 million off the legal aid budget.

It is salutary to remind ourselves that at the end of the Second World War, when much of the infrastructure of the United Kingdom had been destroyed, when resources were scarce and rationed, when government debt reached 250% of GDP, it was still possible to have and construct a vision of social justice, namely the welfare state. Two of the main pillars upon which this construct was based were the National Health Service and a national legal welfare service. Since then the NHS has expanded massively with spending in the region of £100 billion (rightly so), whereas legal aid has lagged well behind on under £2 billion per annum.

The vision began with William Beveridge's 1942 report,' Social Insurance and Allied Services' which led to the establishment in 1944 of the Rushcliffe Committee on legal aid. One of the more interesting recommendations was that legal aid should not be limited to those people normally classed as poor but should also include those of small or moderate means.

During the time of the Atlee Labour government, eligibility for the scheme covered 80% of the population. Under the Blair/Brown Labour governments, we have witnessed the steepest decline since it began, particularly in the civil scheme, with only about one in three of us qualifying for help. The percentage has varied according to Ministry of Justice figures from between 29% and 36%.

Legal aid is not about lawyers making profits, but about access to justice for all. Those on the cutting edge of the problems most commonly encountered, are just not going to be able to survive in a market led environment in which contracts will be awarded to large consortia and where blanket 'One Case One Fee' (OCOF - although I can think of a different acronym for it) criteria are applied. Front line providers, neighbourhood law centres and the smaller firms of solicitors serving recognised communities are all going to be driven out of business. Given the overall cuts, their already overburdened caseload will be disproportionately magnified by the increase in indebtedness, unemployment, discrimination, and the diminution of adequate housing and welfare rights.

There is little point in the Coalition espousing the virtues of Civil Liberties in their Agreement if the ability of the ordinary person to access, implement and enforce them is destroyed. In the past, legal aid has funded some of the most important challenges in this field concerned with the scope of the DNA database, the right to protest under the anti-terrorist legislation, the use of torture by agents of the British state and unlawful deportation in asylum cases.

In the mid-1970s, I was part of a group that helped to set up the Tottenham neighbourhood law centre. This had been preceded by one in North Kensington. The idea was to establish a network throughout the UK that would provide easily accessed advice and representation in the areas of greatest need which one way or another touch the majority of the population. It took off rapidly and was extremely effective. At one time there were well over a hundred of these centres mostly in urban areas. Now the whole situation has been reversed and there are only about 54 left in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In 2008, the Law Centres Federation revealed that almost one in five of these law centres lived under the threat of closure and almost half were in serious debt. On a broader front, a recent National Audit Office report discovered that 16% of legal aid providers make zero profit whilst another 14% make only 1% to 5%. Two years ago I joined a cross-party initiative launched in the House of Commons to draw attention to this parlous situation in the hope that sense would prevail. So far it has not and there are vast areas of the UK which can only be regarded as legal aid deserts.

Legal aid is a prerequisite to protecting and enhancing our fundamental civil rights – and those of us who care will fight to the end to preserve it.

'I am not, therefore, one of those prepared to swallow the swingeing policy of cuts without questioning the premise upon which they are based'

Michael Mansfield's 'Memoirs of a Radical Lawyer', published by Bloomsbury, are now available in paperback.

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Cross border capital investment « A quality business support for successful projects »

The association WABAN (Wallonia Business Angel Network) and the chamber of commerce and industry of French Nord-Pas de Calais region, through the association "Business Angels Nord de France", work together to organize the first cross border private equity investment infrastructure between Wallonia and Nord-Pas de Calais. The goal of this European Interreg Program is to lead to cross border investments - French Business Angels investing funds in Belgian companies and vice-versa. "Business Angels are private individuals who invest their own money in high potential start-ups in exchange for a share in the company, and also contribute their expertise in business management and their personal network of contacts." (EBAN)

The cross border capital investment platform is an intermediary between small companies looking for financing, and Business Angels from Wallonia and Nord-Pas de Calais. To reach the Program's goal, we organize monthly, forums where French and Belgian start ups and enterprises can "pitch": they explain their business, in front of Business Angels in order to collect the funds needed for their development. After this forum if business angels are interested by the project one on one meetings with the manager can take place and, after negotiations that can last between 2 and 5 months, can lead to an investment. We also inform the managers about the interest of opening the capital of their enterprise to develop their business, and Business Angels about investments with high potentials.

To spread the information and achieve our goal we closely work with regional organization specialized in financing and coaching enterprises and start ups with high potential: incubators, Chambers of commerce and industry, capital development funds, European center for enterprises and innovation…

What is our specificity?

We launched three experts platforms dedicated to Business Angels, innovative start-ups and companies, and business coaches. The first one is Business Angels coaching: a few training workshop by investment experts will be proposed to Business Angels in 2011 to inform them about the specifics of cross border investment. The second platform, offers innovative start ups tools to prepare them to answer to Business Angels questions. The experts help these start ups to finalize their Business Plan after a thorough review, improve their oral presentation in front of Business Angels, negotiate and conclude a deal with Business Angels.

The third platform offers training workshops to business coaches to help them improve their knowledge about the investment process by Business Angels.

These platforms, cross border and innovative, lead to a better knowledge and understanding of cross border investment and contribute "to remove the border" (base line of INTERREG programs).

Further information on www.i-prives.eu
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Plateforme transfrontalière d'investissements privés

NORD DE FRANCE WALLONIE

Animé par : Les Business Angels Nord de France, WABAN

Avec le soutien de : Union européenne Fonds Européen de Développement Régional, Interreg efface les frontières INTERREG IV France - Wallonie - Vlaanderen, CCI Région Nord-Pas de Calais, Wallonie

Cross border collaboration on the redevelopment of train stations

The City of Turnhout, situated in the northeast of Flanders between Eindhoven and Antwerp, is lead partner in a project on cross border collaboration between Flanders and the Netherlands. The project focuses on the redevelopment of train stations. 9 cities are working together: Turnhout ,Tongeren, Hasselt, Sint-Truiden, Diest, Aarschot, Bergen op Zoom, Heerlen and Roosendaal. The last three cities are the partners from the Netherlands, the first six are Belgian cities.

Challenges and potential of station environments

Stations in modern cities are more than just a place to take the train. Stations are nowadays central and attractive places in the city where many people meet and activities come together. Currently, however, in the participating cities the station environment is suffering a lot of problems that have to be overcome. Desolated old industrial grounds along the railway lines need a proactive reconversion. In many cases the railway line is a physical barrier that divides neighbourhoods. Infrastructure is aged, the station is difficult to access, the surrounding area is unattractive and the station is perceived as being far outside the city centre. However due to their central location in the city, station environments have a great potential for redevelopment. Accessibility, proximity and an attractive urban climate are considered important factors of urban competitiveness, which are all combined in a railway station area.

Durable redevelopment

For this reason the cities in this project are working on or carrying out an integrated spatial vision for the durable development of the entire station environment. In the future the stations will function as a multimodal city gate, and the station environment will host a mix of activities like traveling, living, working and shopping. In order to be able to realize these potentials, large- and small-scale infrastructural works are planned during the project (2009-2012) : several new roads are constructed, buss stations, new squares and green zones are developed.

Sharing knowledge

The 9 cities are sharing knowledge and the experience on the redevelopment of the stations obtained during the project will be gathered in a book. A few times a year the cities meet and visit one of the 9 projects. On these occasions cities are learning from strong and weak points in the redevelopment process of the guest city. The book will contain three parts. The first part will focus on the broader context and challenges in station redevelopment. The second part brings together the spatial plans, ambitions and experience of the 9 cities. The last part will bring stories and anecdotes of citizens and users of the station environments.

No Peace Without Justice – the London Session of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine

By Michael Mansfield QC and Frank Barat, Coordinator of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine

Countless United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions have been passed and violated; The Goldstone Report has been attacked and dismissed and the recent UNHRC fact finding Mission on the Freedom Flotilla incident, condemning Israel's actions in the strongest possible terms, has been rejected as biased by Israel and was hardly mentioned in the higher spheres of the UN. The reason most often given to explain this lack of political action being that 'it will harm the peace process.'

We are made to believe that the Israel/Palestine conflict is a never ending one and that, when it comes to this issue, International Law is irrelevant.

But civil society knows better. This conflict is about International Law and nothing else. Not harming the peace process means not harming more than 17 years (from the Oslo agreement in 1993 until now) of settlement building, bombing, murder and assassination, Israeli army aggression, land grab, US vetoes, dispossessions and humiliation of the Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel.

Civil society also knows that under a facade of bland statements 'condemning' Israel's actions, the EU, the USA and the whole international community are in fact actively complicit in those crimes.

That's where the Russell Tribunal on Palestine (RToP) comes in.

The RToP is a popular tribunal that intends to expose third parties' complicity in Israel's violations of International Law. Its first session was held in Barcelona (1) and focused on EU complicity. After 3 days of testimonies and expert analyses, it was proven that the EU was not only passively complicit but also pro-active in supporting Israel. How else can we explain that the EU-Israel Association Agreement has still not been vitiated, that Israel is accepted by Europe in all major European sports and cultural activities denied to Palestinians?

The Second Session of the RToP, which took place in London last November at The Law Society, Chancery Lane (2), focused on corporate complicity in Israel's violations of International Law. A simple set of questions were asked to a prominent panel of Tribunal members including: the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Mairead Maguire, the Former UN Rapporteur to Palestine John Dugard, the Spanish judge Martin Pallin, the former ANC official & Minister Ronnie Kasrils, former US Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and the British barrister Michael Mansfield QC.

In 2004, the International Court of Justice in The Hague declared in unequivocal terms that the building of a 'Separation Wall' was illegal and that therefore those contributing to it were acting unlawfully. The Court went on to place an obligation on the international community to end this illegality and not participate in it. Therefore the kinds of questions that will be posed at the Tribunal are: 'how do corporations which have provided building materials for the Wall explain their actions?' and 'how can they be held to account on the basis of international legal liability?'

Over 2 days, experts and witnesses from all over the world (including Palestine and Israel) testified and gave powerful legal analyses about various corporations, including Alstom-Veolia and Caterpillar.

The RToP has a new dimension over all previous Russell Tribunals (on Vietnam 1967 and Latin America 1973) – and that is empowerment. Not only did it identify those complicit in Israel's illegalities but also ways in which citizens in their respective countries and in Palestine might initiate legal redress. Following the Freedom Flotilla incident, some legal actions have already been undertaken in Belgium, Greece and Turkey. Survivors of the attack have presented Luis Moreno Ocampo, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, with a comprehensive dossier, claiming that there is an "overwhelming" case for prosecution. Will the ICC respond favourably to this request? Will the US and the EU support such actions?

President Obama said last July, during an interview with the South African Broadcast Corporation (3), : "No peace without justice in Sudan" and he urged cooperation with the ICC. The day the same standards are applied to Israel and the Western powers, democracy will regain its original meaning and the oppressed around the world will finally be able to breathe a sigh of relief.

In the meantime, it is left to us, living in relative comfort and privilege, to fight for equal rights for those imprisoned in poverty and denied a voice; to demonstrate solidarity and above all, not to remain silent before injustice.

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Enthusiasm for learning and working

Building bridges between secondary and higher education and between higher education and the labour market.

The quality of higher education is crucial for economy. It is important that youngsters can build out their talents into competencies that are necessary in society and the working field. And that they can find work that matches their possibilities, motivation and ambitions. To reach this aim Plantijn University College launched the Interreg project Enthusiasm for Learning and Working, known as GoLeWe, which is short for 'Goesting in Leren en Werken'. 'Goesting' embodies a drive, that comes from heart and brains. It's a strong word to express that you enjoy it, that learning and working ought to be fun.

In this international project 14 partners are involved: 4 Flemish and 3 Dutch universities of applied sciences, 2 research centres of academic universities and 5 secondary schools. Plantijn University College is the coordinating institution. Together we carry out actions on 3 themes.

Within the first theme, the transition to higher education, we focus on discovering and strengthening learning competencies. Since we know by research which learning competencies are related to study success, we set up actions to strengthen these skills and attitudes. A tool of main importance is the 'Lemo', an online test on learning competencies and motivation, which we developed together with the University of Antwerp. Pupils and students immediately get appreciative feedback . Their individual reports contain short explanations, tips and links to tools they can use to improve their skills. The study counsellors of the schools and universities that use our web-based system get group reports on the learning and motivation characteristics of their students. And, they can make use of the manuals, tools and scripts we developed with the project partners.

The second theme contains several innovative actions to stimulate student learning. We especially believe in the possibilities of peer assisted learning. Linked to this we also promote a learning path for students, in which they can develop their coaching competencies and get a credit for this.

Enthusiasm for learning and for working go side by side. The new employee is a knowledge worker who develops himself continuously. With several actions we want to contribute to a better cooperation between education and the labour market, our third theme. The main idea is a transfer of knowledge and competencies between education and the labour market. Workplace learning, for example, is a specific action.

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Top right:
Peer assisted learning makes students enthusiastic

Bottom right:
Teachers of secondary and higher education of Belgium and The Netherlands working together and learning from each other.

Interreg Vlaanderen Nederland
Europa investeert in uw regio

GoLeWe

Plantijn Hogeschool

Parcour Sambre

Since 2003, five partners in France and Belgium – IGRETEC (a company encompassing several Belgian municipalities), Agglomeration de Maubeuge Val de Sambre (French community area), Communaute de communes Sambre-Avesnois (association of towns around Sambre-Avesnois, France), the municipality of Landrecies and INITIALITE (French public-private partnership company) as Lead Partner, have been collaborating to develop river tourism on and around the Sambre, in the INTERREG IV-A project ParcourSambre.

Like other rivers, Sambre dominated the landscape in our cross-border area and contributed to its economic development.

Today, the Sambre constitutes a 'foundation' which would inspire the development of tourism products and encourage economic growth through tourism to benefit tourists and the local population.

As the river is currently closed for navigation, our common goal is to revitalise the river by generating the infrastructure and equipment for all those wishing to use the Sambre (touring cyclists, yachtsmen, excursionists, holiday makers using motor-homes etc.) especially encouraging people to use it through organised events.

Each community (EscaleSambre) along the Sambre River plays a vital part in the project, which is structured around the same goal – creating a tourist experience to impress the tourists with the vast array of territories around the river, that together form the famous ParcourSambre.

A project in five actions

1 – detection and encouragement of new functionalities, with in particular the definition of a Plan Sambre, genuine framework of strategic reference to 20 years, transport, …

2 - variation of ParcourSambre in each EscaleSambre while betting on the interactivity of the NTIC,

3 – reception of new customers, by the creation of surfaces of motor home, surfaces of relaxation for the touring cyclists and a study on lodging in edge with water way,

4 - creation of animations, where the population is actress of the events,

5 - promotion of the river and the project ParcourSambre (ex: newsletter, calendar of the festivals, website…)

EVOLI ensures the coordination of the project until 2012 and takes care of the concretization of the five actions.

Other ambitious and Europeans projects on Sambre
- Watertruck – INTERREG IV-B, on the revival of goods transport by small waterways,
- Waterways Forward - INTERREG IV-C
- creation of a marina in Hautmont – North of France - in 2013

For more information,
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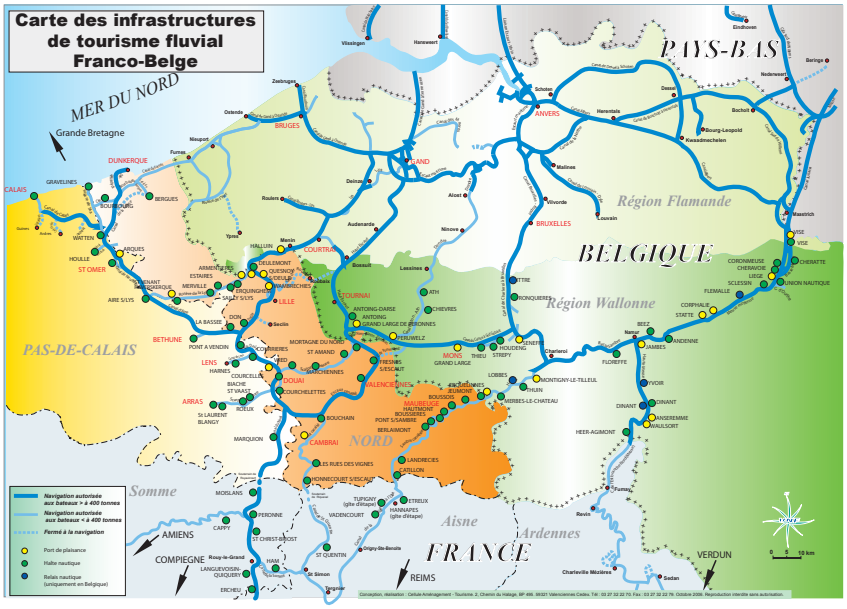

Sambre

Union européenne

INTERREG IV
France - Wallonie - Vlaanderen
Interreg efface les frontières

Once a jewel of Belgium's industry, the Grand-Hornu has undergone a major renovation programme, staggered over the last 4 decades. Today, it has become one of Belgium's most vibrant cultural centres – a live hub dedicated to contemporary creation, spread over 14 acres of land, which host a wide range of buildings offering 10,000 square metres of exhibition space.

Two separate cultural structures bring this amazing site to life and embody the spirit in which it was developed.

The first one is **Grand-Hornu Images**, which was created in 1984 and is managed by the Hainaut province, under the direction of Ms Françoise Foulon. It explores the complex relationships between art, industry, design, industrial innovation and applied arts.

The second one is **MAC's**, the Contemporary Arts Museum of the French Community. It is managed by the French Community of Belgium and was inaugurated in 2002. Fully dedicated to contemporary arts, this exhibition space revolves around a poetical approach, respectful of human heritage. It has been under the direction of Mr Laurent Busine, since it was created.

Eager to broaden the impact of their activities and to deliver a vision for the future, both associations are driven by a common objective: to make contemporary culture accessible to everyone. To this aim, the Grand-Hornu organises each year a dozen temporary exhibitions, which are both of high quality and of international scope. Throughout the year, its Education department also offers a wide range of activities for children, adults and people with disabilities or special needs.

In a bid to further reinforce the relationships originated by the inter-regional partnership which links MAC's to LaM (Lille Métropole's museum of modern art, contemporary art and raw art), to Louvre-Lens and to the Dr Guislain Museum (Gent), the Grand-Hornu has recently organised two major activities. The first one is "the arts shuttles", a newly created bus network which allows communities from both sides of the border to come and discover these cultural sites. The second activity is called "Museums and Gardens" and links six museums located on both sides of the border which, just like the Grand-Hornu, are surrounded by a park.

The Grand-Hornu is currently on Belgium's tentative list for nomination as a World Heritage site by the **UNESCO**.

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www.grand-hornu-images.be

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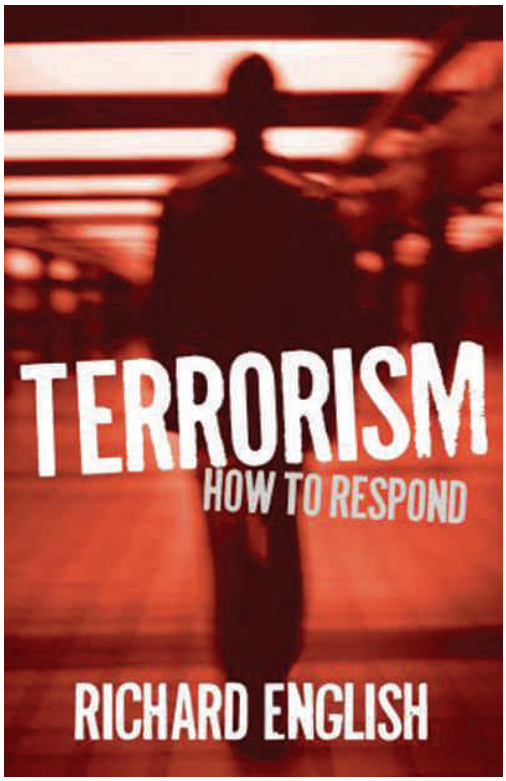
History is key in the fight against terrorism



Terrorism: How to Respond
By Richard English
Oxford University Press, 2010
£8.99

In the summer of 1999, two men from Northern Ireland played with Prime Minister Tony Blair's children in the garden of 10 Downing Street. The two men, Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams, had been members of the Irish Republican Army since the early 1970s and were still active members of the IRA's Army Council while they entertained Blair's children.

What brought these two men from plotting terrorist attacks against the United Kingdom to chaperoning the children of its highest political office? In Terrorism: How to Respond, Richard English, professor of politics at Queen's University, Belfast, attempts to explain how this dramatic change occurred within the UK and what the international community can learn from this in its fight with terrorism.

English is one of the leading experts on Irish terrorism and has published two books on the subject: Armed Struggle: the History of the IRA and Irish Freedom: The history of Nationalism in Ireland. English uses his Irish expertise to demystify the nature, causes and solutions to terrorism in this very readable yet highly academic book.

Terrorism has no clear definition; it is a word used by people on both sides in conflicts. But no successful policy against terrorism can be developed if a proper definition doesn't exist. English dismisses the notion that terrorism is distinctly the act of creating psychological terror and is perpetuated only by states. Terrorism's heterogeneity is the key to the definition that English eventually settles for. Terrorism comes in many different forms, it is exercised by many different organisations including many states, and terrorist groups are difficult to define because many encompass a much broader role than simply perpetrating acts of violence. But nearly all terrorists are united in waging political wars-all terrorists are political actors who are acting strategically to obtain their goals.

There is an imperative to learn from terrorism's history when trying to develop strategies to combat it. With historical perspective we can see that terrorism largely comes out of regions of contested political legitimacy where uneven power relations and a lack of political efficacy make violence a legitimate form of disobedience. Terrorism is sustained by the fuelling nature of state violence, a continued lack of political efficacy and uneven power relations, and the maintained legitimacy of violence. Terrorism in Northern Ireland, in Spain, and the American response to 9/11 all reinforce these historical reasons for the creation and sustaining value of terrorism.

While English believes that terrorism will always exist, he contends that it can be greatly reduced by policies which reflect what has historically worked. Only when we treat terrorists as rational and strategic political actors will we be able to mitigate their effects on our societies. We need to maintain credibility against our terrorist enemies by not infringing on the civil liberties that our nations are founded on and by not over-militarising conflicts against terrorists. Whenever possible we need to tackle the conditions that are producing terrorists, and not the terrorists themselves. Terrorists are symptoms of a societal disease; when we treat only the symptoms and not the disease we will never be able to greatly reduce terrorism.

English's greatest strength in Terrorism: How to Respond is his ability to create logical academic arguments without leaving the realm of practical politics behind. He realises that logic, not emotion, dominate national politics after a terrorist attack the size of, for instance, 9/11. But his ability to produce an accessible book with academic logic and historical hindsight make his work a valuable tool in finding a more productive way for the world to fight terrorism.

Lester Black

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DANUBE LIMES
UNESCO World Heritage Project

The Roman Empire used the Danube River as a natural barrier against the outside world and the Roman frontier structures have left their mark on today's landscape. From Bavaria to the Black Sea, their remains (of fortresses, fortlets and watchtowers), whether visible or not, are often in remarkable shape, well integrated into the landscape and without doubt deserve greater attention. Francesco Bandarin, the Director of the World Heritage Centre in Paris stated 'The frontier, once a great divide, now forms a unifying element in today's world'. The Roman Limes was the first fortified transportation corridor and gave rise to vibrant societies along its course, which is why it should survive as a historical witness for future generations.

This impressive archaeological landscape is part of the single largest monument of cultural heritage stretching across Europe and around the Mediterranean Sea. In 2005, the World Heritage Committee approved its inscription as a serial, trans-national World Heritage site entitled the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire'. This means that the individual countries that share sections of the Roman Limes can join step by step. Three significant artificial barriers in the United Kingdom and Germany are already inscribed as part of the World Heritage. This site will now be extended into the countries along the Danube, potentially including 10 more countries and covering a length of more than 2,800 kilometers.

The Hungarian National Office of Cultural Heritage (KOH), co-financed by the Central Europe Program, is a key player in initiating and leading the project for the sustainable preservation and protection of the joint heritage of the Danube Limes as part of the UNESCO World Heritage. Together with the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic (PUSR) and with partner institutions in Hungary (the University of Pecs [PTE] and the city of Paks), Germany (the German Limes Commission [DLK]), Austria (the Research Institute of Austrian History [IOG]) and Poland (the Antiquity of South Eastern Europe Research Centre, Warsaw University [CAR]), it is working towards a joint UNESCO nomination by both Hungary and Slovakia in 2012.

After defining a general concept of a Roman river frontier, identifying its main features and harmonizing various national aspirations, the nomination process started with selecting the most relevant sites in Hungary and Slovakia to include on the UNESCO Tentative List, accepted by the UNESCO Committee in July 2009. The coordination work concentrated on general mapping standards of sites and common solutions for the definition of core and buffer zones.

Fieldwork, aerial and geophysical surveys, archival work and excavations were performed in Hungary (on 44 sites) and Slovakia (on 2 sites) to close existing gaps in knowledge about the selected sites. Negotiations with local and regional stakeholders were supported by events to raise awareness, including exhibitions and public lectures. All of the partners are cooperating in developing the criteria for a long-term preservation concept. The up-dating of the Management Plan for the Upper German-Raetian Limes World Heritage site provided an excellent opportunity to discuss and develop a sustainable management structure for the future of the Danube Limes.

This transnational cooperation project is financed within the framework of the Culture and Tourism Priority of the CENTRAL EUROPE program.

For more details see: http://www.danube-limes.eu

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top right: Map of the Danube Limes
top left: Aquincum Municipium
middle left: Roman galley on the Danube
bottom left: Lussonium fort in Paks
bottom right: imitation of a Roman legion marching in Dunaszekcső

Nigel Nelson's Diary

This may come as a surprise to those not engaged in politics on a daily basis, but politicians really do bend over backwards not to lie. And the verbal somersaults which sometimes result are a wonder to behold; ex-Cabinet Secretary **Sir Robert Armstrong's** "economical with the truth", being the most famous. Even Australia's former Labour leader **Mark Latham** may not have used Parliamentary language when he called opponents "a conga-line of suckholes" but it had a ring of truth about it.

Which was why shadow Immigration minister **Phil Woolas** was so surprised when election judges found against him. He's an experienced and astute politician and never dreamed that what he thought of as in-your-face election leaflets would be considered such bare-faced lies they would cost him his career.

Politicians know they have to tell the truth, or a plausible version of it, if they are to convince electors to vote for them, so it is more than just parliamentary convention. I hope **London student leaders** who went on TV to denounce police violence after the tuition fee riots while refusing to acknowledge that of the demonstrators learned something from the derision with which they were greeted.

The nature of adversarial politics in this country, like our legal system, means that one side presents one set of facts to justify an argument while the other side presents another. Both sets of facts are true, but selective. And so they rarely tell the whole story. Which is where the political journalist comes in, sifting claim and counter claim to find the truth which lays somewhere in between.

You can cut unemployment by taking the jobless off the dole and putting them on sickness benefits as **Margaret Thatcher** did, or reduce NHS waiting lists by not putting patents on them. It will make certain official figures look better but it will not change the number of people who do not have work or are in need of surgery.

If I was to tell you that people who suffer from severe mental illness die on average 20 years sooner than those who do not and nothing more, you might assume that their higher mortality rate had something to do with their illness.

So I was interested to see how Health minister **Paul Burstow** told the whole story behind that statistic in a written answer.

"Seventy per cent of those resident in mental health units smoke compared to 21 per cent of the general population," he said. "And the majority of those deaths are smoking related."

I was once taken to task by shadow Education Secretary **Andy Burnham** when he was a Health minister for having a go at the way Labour was then running the NHS. He wrote to me pointing out that his target for patients to wait less than four hours in A&E was being met more than ninety per cent of the time. This was an impressive claim, and absolutely true. But it did not tell the full story. It turned out there was at least one hospital where emergency patients were simply moved to another part of it if they were likely to go over the four hour deadline. This allowed the hospital to tick Burnham's box, but had nothing to do with any improvement in patient care.

NHS Chief Executive **Sir David Nicholson** told Health Select Committee chairman **Stephen Dorrell** that his ?20 billion restructuring of the health service "does mean reducing the number of beds and it does mean reducing the number of staff in some organisations." It was an alarming statement, but he presented it as not necessarily a bad thing. So is there a wider truth here? The number of hospital beds has been steadily going down anyway since 1987 thanks to better surgical techniques and improved out-patient procedures, and the goal to have fewer long-term sick in hospitals and more being looked after at home must be right.

And if that is the aim of these reforms, the biggest reorganisation the NHS has ever seen and the most ambitious any health service in the world has so far attempted, then it should be welcomed. But **Dr Peter Carter**, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, and **Dr Hamish Meldrum**, boss of the British Medical Association, are suspicious because the changes are happening against a backdrop of the need for a quick fix to save money.

The question of whether we can move to a more mature, consensual politics in which common ground can be found will depend on whether there really is a new politics in town as **David Cameron**, **Nick Clegg** and latterly **Ed Miliband** contend. To this end the Labour leader's party conference speech in Manchester was significant.

"I will be a responsible Leader of the Opposition," he said. "When I disagree with the Government I will say so loud and clear. But when **Ken Clarke** says we need to look at short sentences in prison because of high re-offending rates, I'm not going to say he's soft on crime. When **Theresa May** says we should review stop and search laws to prevent excessive use of state power, I'm not going to say she is soft on terrorism."

I have never known a Labour leader praise government ministers in this way, particularly in front of an audience of party activists. And it's going to be hard work convincing MPs – and the media – that politicians from different parties really can work together in the national interest. Perhaps the PM and Mr Miliband should begin by letting their babies **Florence Rose Endellion** and **Samuel Stewart Thornton** get together in a kindergarten coalition. Now that really would be the politics of the playground.

Nigel Nelson is political editor of The People

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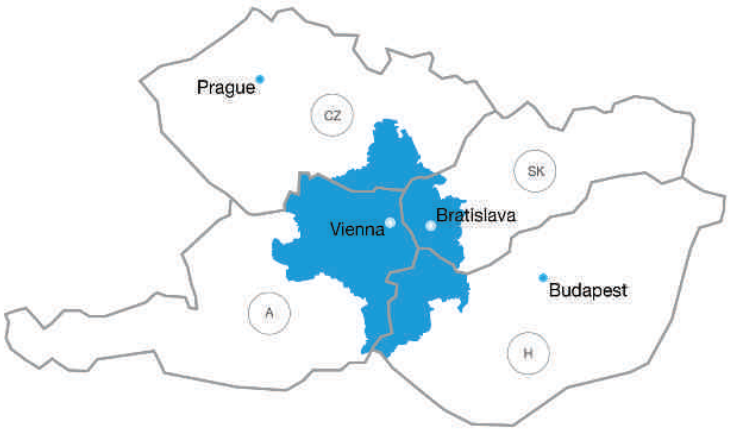

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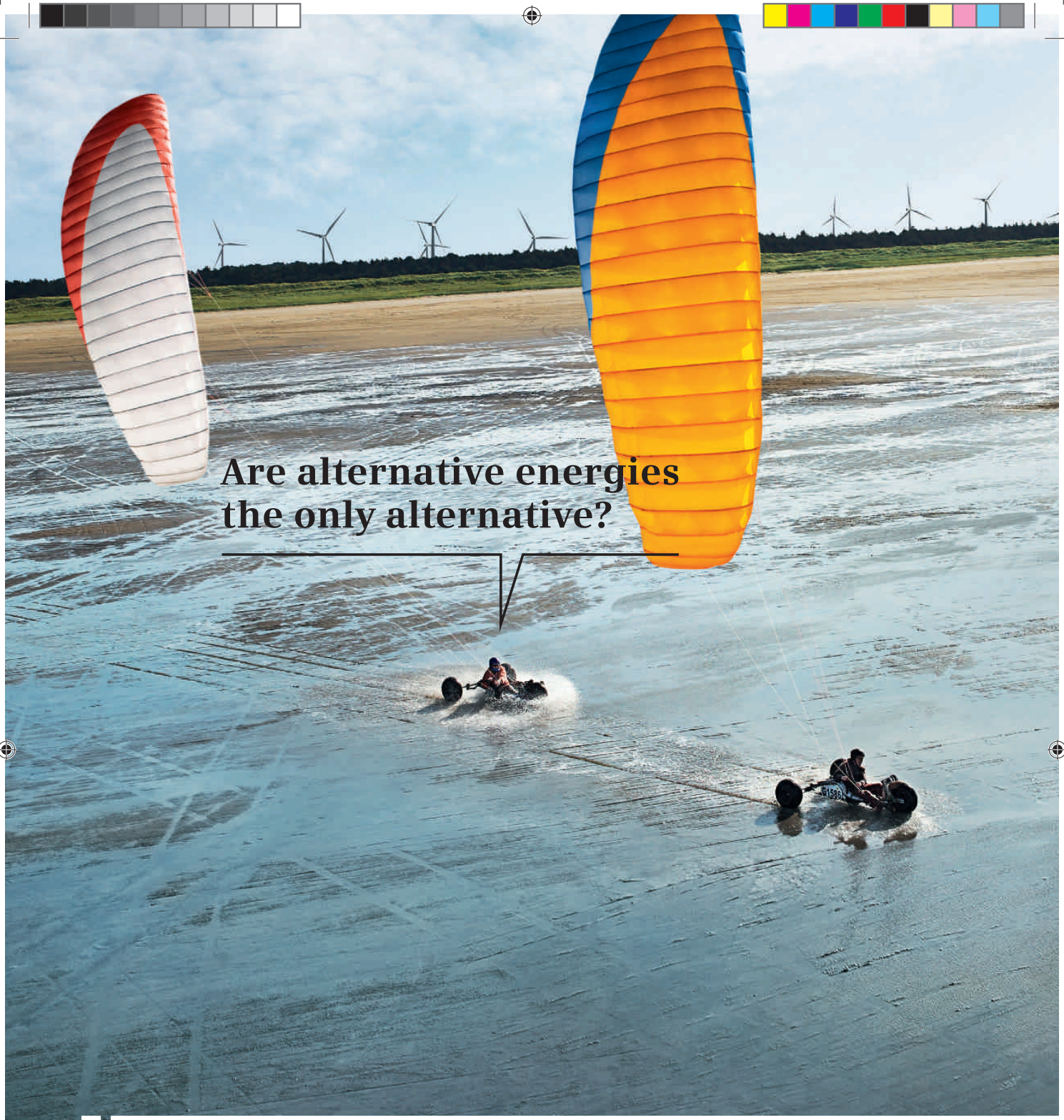

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