



EU Live issues

European Elections 2009
UEPG extends EU network

Swedish Presidency
New priorities for the EU

Biodiversity and Climate Change
UEPG at Countdown 2010 Partners' Assembly and Green Week

Environmental Outlook
European debates on Environment

Safer by Design
Meeting with Ian Fraser, Team Leader in DG Enterprise & Industry

UEPG News

Sectoral Social Dialogue
UEPG contributes as Social Partner

MPA Showcase 2009 and launch
Official launch of the Mineral Products Association (MPA)

UEPG enlargement
Bulgarian Aggregates Association applies for UEPG membership

Synergies in promoting Biodiversity
UEPG initiates cooperation with Cem-bureau and the World Business Council

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EU Live Issues

European Parliament Elections

Elections to the European Parliament were held in the 27 member states of the European Union between 4 and 7 June 2009.



Some 736 members of the European Parliament (MEPs), to represent 500 million people, have been elected for a five-year term. Voters chose representatives mainly from their own national parties, many of which now join EU-wide groupings with similarly-minded parties from other countries.

The centre-right Group of the European People's Party (EPP-ED) has retained its place as the largest grouping, securing an estimated 264 seats out of 736. The centre-left European Socialists (PES) is on around 161, while the liberal Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) has an estimated 80 seats.

After the EPP-ED, PES and ALDE, the group of European Conservatives and Reformists is likely to be the fourth largest bloc.

Political Group leaders are Joseph Daul (France) for the EPP-ED, Martin Schulz (Germany) for the Socialist Group, Graham Watson (United Kingdom) for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats.

The new Parliament will meet for the first time on 14 July in Strasbourg.

The provisional results of the European Parliament Elections can be found on [here](#).

President of the European Commission

Representatives from the European Council seem in favor of the reelection of José Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission, while MEPs are still divided. A large majority

of deputies is asking to delay the vote of 15 July to reach a consensus. Among MEPs there is a growing support for Guy Verhofstadt to replace Barroso.

President of the European Parliament

EPP-ED leader Joseph Daul says, he has not ruled out the possibility of ALDE sharing parliament's presidency with his group. So far, there are two EPP-ED candidates: Jerzy Buzek, a former Polish prime minister, and Mario Mauro, whose name was put forward by Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi.

Swedish Presidency

The Presidency of the EU Council rotates on a half-yearly basis between the Member States. Sweden will hold the Presidency from 1 July to 31 December 2009. Which important EU issues does Sweden wish to move forward? Which are the priorities that Stockholm will choose to lead the EU's work in those difficult times?

Mårten Wierup, from the Swedish Permanent Representation, explained that Sweden has to face two challenges.

The first one is the economic and financial crisis, which will have a strong impact on the agenda. The EU Swedish Presidency will do its utmost to restore confidence and to obtain an agreement for the proposal on financial regulation.



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The second one is institutional: Sweden will have to draw the road map to the full ratification of the Lisbon Treaty with a new European Parliament and a new European Commission.

Sweden also wants to make a success of the negotiations around the climate and energy targets and to renew the Lisbon Strategy, which aimed at making the European Union the most competitive economy in the world and achieving full employment by 2010.

Swedish focus on the environment

The **Eco-efficiency** could be a solution to the credit crunch. Greater competitiveness and growth are to be achieved while creating a sustainable energy supply, making efficient use of resources and meeting our climate targets and environmental objectives. This is a trans-horizontal policy issue.

A global policy for **biodiversity** post-2010 should be implementable in EU policy and involve individual actors and stakeholders. The highlight will be on the value of ecosystem services, the synergy between biodiversity and climate and the negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2009–2010 on an international regime for access and benefit-sharing (ABS) with regard to genetic resources.

The aim of the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive**, which came into force in July 2008, is to achieve or conserve good environmental status in the EU's marine waters by 2020. Marine strategies shall be developed and implemented on the national and regional level. The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region will be a high priority. The **Helcom Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)** plan calls on the countries to develop national programmes of measures by 2010 within four priority areas: eutrophication, hazardous substances, biodiversity and environmentally friendly maritime activities.

Next steps

UEPG and its Swedish member association SBMI will brief the Swedish EU Presidency on the industry's position and on progress made to date in these areas.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

Committed to biodiversity and its partnership with IUCN/Countdown 2010, UEPG attended several key events.

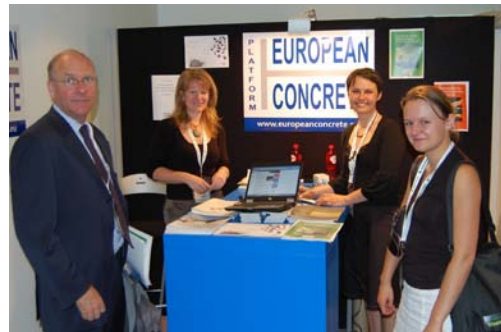
Countdown 2010 Partners Assembly



On 24 June, UEPG attended Countdown 2010 Partners Assembly in Brussels. The event was an opportunity to discuss tools and strategies to effectively communicate biodiversity and to shaping the post-2010 framework in specific working group sessions. Ashok Khosla, President of IUCN, closed the Partners' Assembly.

Green Week 2009

On 23 June, the European Commission launched the European Green Week Conference 2009: "Climate change: act and adapt", in Brussels. The three-day event, gathering high-level speakers from all over the world and participants from different levels of (inter)national institutions and the public, aims to provide a forum to share knowledge and experience with regards to different aspects in combating climate change. Commission President José Manuel Barroso presented his closing speech on 26 June, in anticipation of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen at the end of this year.



Contributing to the European Concrete Platform

From left: Arnaud Colson, Chairman of the UEPG Environment Committee, Jessica Johnson (Cembureau), Cécile Moreau (HeidelbergCement) and Sandrine Devos, UEPG Public Affairs Officer.

For the first time, the European Concrete Platform (ECP) held a stand during the week's exhibition. UEPG, the European Ready Mix Concrete Organisation, the European Federation for Precast Concrete, Cembureau and the European Federation of Concrete Admixtures presented the concrete industry to visitors.

Ecosystem goods and services

The EU Council decided on 25 June that consideration of "ecosystem goods and services" should be better integrated into policies and programmes for the relevant sectors at national as well as EU level helping to measure the drivers of biodiversity loss relevant to specific sectors.

Environmental Outlook

In the latest edition of the French magazine, Arnaud Colson, Chair of the UEPG Environment Committee gave an outlook on major European debates on environment policy involving the industry. EU Insight presents some of the key issues for UEPG.

Sustainable Development Awards 2010

Among the initiatives the most recognised by the European Commission, the UEPG Sustainable Development Awards 2010 is a great example as a tool for progress as well as an excellent vector of communication, Mr. Colson said. All UEPG country members should devote themselves to it. In fact, we cannot defend our industry without this kind of tool, he underlined.

The next UEPG Sustainable Development Awards will take place on 27 May 2010 in Munich, Germany.

A leader on biodiversity

Arnaud Colson underlined the leading role of the aggregate industry in the biodiversity protection. UEPG communicates best practices, is in dialogue with national and European institutions as well as with NGOs, promotes the partnership with Countdown 2010 and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). These milestones are evidence of our willingness to contribute to the protection of biodiversity.

Safer by Design

Under leadership of Martin Isles, the Mineral Products Association (MPA) in the United Kingdom, continues to work on a project called 'Safer by Design'. This is to achieve a significant improvement in the safe operation and efficiency of minerals operations by the development of a voluntary Code of Best Practice guidance for quarry operators and manufacturers of mobile plant.

Support from DG Enterprise & Industry

On 18 June, Martin Isles, Chair of UEPG Health & Safety Committee and Rory Graham, Integrated Management & Solutions presented the project to Ian Fraser, Team Leader in DG Enterprise & Industry and in charge of the Machinery Directive.



Presenting the project 'Safer by Design' to the European Commission.

Martin Isles (left) and Rory Graham (right) with Ian Fraser in the UEPG office.

The discussion included the need to improve the harmonized standards of the Machinery Directive and the possibility to raise awareness for the project in the Standing Working Party for the Mining and other Extractive Industries (SWEIP) and in the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee Extractive Industry (SSDCEI). Ian Fraser assured support by the European Commission for the objectives of the project.

The results will feed in the 6th Atlantic Alliance meeting that will take place on 20-21 October 2010 in Brussels. It will gather representatives from Europe, the American Aggregates Association NSSGA and health and safety experts from other stakeholder groups to discuss issues, in particular the "Safer by Design" project.

Next steps

UEPG will arrange a meeting taking place in September with the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), the European Occupational Safety and Health Network (EUROSHNET) and DG Employment and Social Affairs to discuss further the project.

UEPG News

Sectoral Social Dialogue

Becoming a social partner is to get more involved to social dialogue at European level referring to discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions on European issues and policies involving organisations representing the two sides of industry (employers and workers) and public authorities.

UEPG objectives as a Social Partner are to contribute to:

- Better risk management
- Reinforcement of health protection
- EU environmental policy common positions
- Current accident project survey
- Reducing accidents/incidents at work sites as a key commitment between employers and unions

On 4 June, UEPG was accepted as a Social Partner at the Sectoral Social Dialogue "Extractive Industry" Committee. The Committee now comprises European Association of Potash Producers; Euromines; Euracoal; IMA-Europe and UEPG for the Employer's side, EMCEF for the Employees, and the European Commission.



Driving forward Social Dialogue

From left: Antony Fell (UEPG), Corina Hebestreit and Peter Schallert (Euromines).

On 25 June, UEPG was invited to participate in the Liaison Forum of the Sectoral Social Dialogue to be informed about European Commission activities and events for 2009-2010. Jean-Pierre Tricart, Head of Unit of Social Dialogue, Industrial Relation, with other Unit Heads, presented the European Social Dialogue commitments for 2009 including the European Transparency Initiative and the preparation of the next Sectoral Social Dialogue Communication. The next Liaison Forum will take place on 21 September 2009.

On 26 June, UEPG participated in the first meeting of the Sectoral Social Dialogue "Extractive Industry" Committee which reviewed current and potential future issues.

MPA Showcase and Launch

A record number of 550 participants attended the Minerals Products Association (MPA) Showcase 2009, which took place on 4 June in London.



Acknowledging restoration in UK quarry sites

Lord Smith, Chairman of the Environment Agency (2nd from left) awards the winner from Lafarge Aggregates Ltd and the National Memorial Arboretum Co. Ltd.

The event celebrated the official launch of MPA, announced by Chairman Lynda Chase-Gardener, the affiliation of British Precast with the MPA, the 40th anniversary of the Restoration Awards and the announcement of a new Biodiversity Award sponsored by Natural England.

UEPG enlargement

Under the leadership of Thomas Guillot, Aggregates & Readymix Director from Holcim Bulgaria, aggregates producing companies established the Bulgarian Association of Producers of Inert Materials (BAPIM).

Thomas Guillot and Ivan Bogdanov, co-Presidents of BAPIM, invited Jim O'Brien, UEPG President and Antony Fell, UEPG Secretary General, to support the new association for its official launch on 15 July in Sofia, Bulgaria.



Welcoming Bulgaria as a future UEPG member

Thomas Guillot at the UEPG Committee meeting in March 2009 in Istanbul.

BAPIM has applied for UEPG membership. Subject to the approval of the UEPG extraordinary Delegates Assembly on 30 October, the Bulgarian association will become member of the European Aggregates Association. This constitutes a major opportunity to enlarge the representativeness of the aggregates industry and to reach out to Bulgarian MEPS.

Synergies in promoting Biodiversity

UEPG has initiated cooperation with Cembureau, the European Cement Association, and the World Business Council-Cement Sustainability Initiative on biodiversity. Cement and aggregates face the same challenges as regard to biodiversity, and will thus maintain and develop dialogue.

Cembureau and UEPG will insert links in their respective biodiversity case studies on their websites. The UEPG database offers now 48 biodiversity case and will expand throughout the summer. See on www.uepg.eu

Pierre de Prémare, Chair of the UEPG led UNEP toolkit and Chair of the World Business Council-Cement Sustainability Initiative Biodiversity Working Group and Michael Rademacher, Chair of the biodiversity Task Force of Cembureau agreed both to contribute to the UNEP Toolkit case studies.