Commission en direct

#20 - Mars 2015

EUROPE & BEYOND
Tackling youth joblessness

OUR STORIES
New series of Citizens’ Dialogues

FREIZEIT
Pilsen 2015

DOSSIER
Expo Milano 2015
Feeding the planet
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2015 is a year with a number of very important strategic decisions on both the European and global agendas. At the same time, there is a lot of potential congruence between taking action to tackle climate change, working on Sustainable Development Goals, and endeavouring to ensure that we can feed the planet in an intelligent and sustainable manner.

Given its theme of ‘Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life’, the 2015 World’s Fair, which will open in Milan, Italy, on 1 May and run for six months, provides an amazing opportunity for the EU to promote what it is doing to encourage a safe, nutritious and reliable food supply – from farm to fork – and to find ways – through scientific research and innovation – to meet the world’s needs in a sustainable manner.

In this month’s Dossier (pages 32-45), get a foretaste of what the EU will be presenting to the world at Expo Milano, which will hopefully serve as a platform for lasting change. With the Joint Research Centre (JRC) coordinating the EU contribution, David Wilkinson, the EU’s Commissioner-General for Expo Milano, explains what visitors can expect to see and experience (pages 34-35), and Vladimir Šucha, the JRC’s Director-General, discusses what science has to contribute (pages 36-37). Meet also the cartoon characters Alex, the farmer, and Sylvia, the scientist, and discover the story they have to tell about how global food security can be achieved through cooperation (pages 40-41). We also look at how key EU policies are contributing.

All in all, some food for thought – and action! Bon appétit!
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I’ve noted in your special dossier on climate action that food choices were not mentioned, which is quite surprising – given the figures. Meat and milk production is the second cause of global warming, accounting for 14.5% to 18% of greenhouse gas emissions, which is more than all modes of transport. Worldwide, 40% of grain crops are used to feed livestock. This sector also accounts for 85% of the deforestation of the Amazonian rainforest, while 30% of global biodiversity loss can be attributed to livestock production.

You might be interested by the on-going debate at DEVCO and more widely on Yammer (‘All company’), regarding how we can concretely contribute to sustainable development.

Thanks for your attention and please contribute to disseminate this important information.

Josick van Dromme, DG DEVCO

For your information, in the article “Protéger l’environnement – les gestes de la vie quotidienne” on pages 46-47 of the CEND Dossier on Climate Action (CEND #19), there is a reference and link to our web page where you can find more tips on what we can all do to contribute to save energy and money, while helping to protect the environment. These tips are available under several headings – office, home, reuse and recycle, on the road, water, etc. – and if you click on the links below there is more information and tips available, including on ‘shopping and eating’.

Anna Johansson, Head of DG CLIMA’s Communication Team

- http://europa.eu/!Mt33fw

Thanks, Josick, for your feedback.

Given the importance of raising awareness of the various ways all of us can contribute to countering climate change, we would be delighted to publish an article on the important topic of our food choices in an upcoming edition of Commission en direct, in collaboration with our colleagues in DG CLIMA.

By the way, I am sure you and likeminded readers will be interested to see what we can do as consumers to help ensure sustainable fishing practices – have a read of DG MARE’s article on pages 12-13 of this edition.

Zach Hester, Editor-in-Chief, CEND
This morning I took a very close look at the list of participants and I was struck by its diversity.

Maroš Šefčovič, speaking at the Energy Union Conference in Riga
▶ http://europa.eu/IRv49KT

None of the work in TTIP on existing EU and US regulation will affect our high standards. And none of work in TTIP to cooperate on future regulation will affect our high standards.

Cecilia Malmström
▶ http://europa.eu/IWy64gt

At a time when some try to revive arguments about a “clash of civilizations”, the Summit in Istanbul sends a strong and clear message: the international humanitarian community rejects cultural wars.

Christos Stylianides
▶ http://europa.eu/ImX468W

Tackling food waste requires a thorough re-think of how we produce, market and consume food at each step in the food chain.

Vytenis Andriukaitis
▶ http://europa.eu/IRF76pU
EUROPE & BEYOND

Kick-start for Capital Markets Union

The Commission launched its landmark project to unlock funding for Europe’s businesses and to boost growth in the EU’s 28 Member States with the creation of a true single market for capital. On 18 February 2015, the Commission published a Green Paper aimed at kick-starting an Action Plan to help unlock non-bank funding, so that start-ups can thrive and larger companies can expand further. Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: “Capital Markets Union is the first structural initiative that the Commission puts forward under the Investment Plan. It will contribute to ensuring that the Investment Plan is more than a one-off push and has a durable positive impact on economic conditions in Europe.” The Capital Markets Union aims to break down the barriers that are blocking cross-border investments in the EU and preventing businesses from getting access to finance. The current environment is tough for businesses that remain heavily reliant on banks and relatively less on capital markets. If EU venture capital markets were as deep as the US, as much as €90 billion more in funds would have been available to companies between 2008 and 2013.

Low oil prices and cheaper euro help EU’s economy

For the first time since 2007, the economies of all EU Member States are expected to grow again this year, according to the Commission’s latest winter forecast, published on 5 February. Over the course of this year, economic activity is expected to pick up moderately in the EU and in the euro area, before accelerating further in 2016. Growth this year is forecast to rise to 1.7% for the EU as a whole and to 1.3% for the euro area. In 2016, annual growth should reach 2.1% and 1.9% respectively. These improved growth prospects across Europe are still limited by a weak investment environment and high unemployment. Commenting on the updated figures, Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, stated: “The right economic conditions are in place for sustained growth and job creation. Following the difficult policy choices governments have made due to the crisis, the effects of reforms are emerging. We have to step up the reform momentum to strengthen the recovery and make sure it translates into money in people’s pockets.” Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: “Europe’s economic outlook is a little brighter today than when we presented our last forecasts. The fall in oil prices and the cheaper euro are providing a welcome shot in the arm for the EU economy.”

Winter Economic Forecast

http://europa.eu/lRj64bR
Michel Barnier, conseiller spécial pour la politique de défense et de sécurité européenne

Le président de la Commission Jean-Claude Juncker a désigné, le 17 février, Michel Barnier comme conseiller spécial pour la politique de défense et de sécurité européenne. «Lorsque la nouvelle Commission a pris ses fonctions, nous avons indiqué que nous devions construire une Europe plus forte sur les questions de sécurité et de défense», a rappelé le président.


L’état d’urgence au Sahel


Le Royaume-Uni contribue à hauteur de 45 millions d’euros à ce financement de l’UE en faveur du Sahel, qui doit permettre de relever les défis humanitaires dans la région.


■ http://europa.eu/!cq46YT

http://europa.eu/!fC89BN

© EU
The Commission has sent out a strong signal that youth employment remains high on the political agenda by proposing to make €1 billion available already this year for the Youth Employment Initiative. The aim is to speed up the rate at which Member States use this funding.

Jobs and growth are top priorities for the Commission. President Juncker has presented an ambitious Investment Plan for Europe, mobilising more than €315 billion of additional financing in strategic areas (CEND #19, pages 12-13). A significant amount should be channelled towards projects that can help get the younger generation back to work in decent jobs, further complementing the efforts of the Youth Guarantee scheme. The Commission is also supporting structural reforms at national level that can unlock job creation.

A big increase in pre-financing proposed
This newest initiative, presented on 4 February, will increase by up to 30 times the pre-financing Member States receive to boost youth employment – reaching up to 650,000 young people and helping them get into work faster. Following a Commission proposal from December 2012, the Member States in 2013 made a commitment to ensure young people’s successful transition into work by establishing Youth Guarantee schemes (see Dossier, CEND #07). All 28 Member States have submitted their Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans and are putting in place concrete measures.

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is an additional financing tool to support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. With a budget worth €3.2 billion, the YEI requires no co-financing at national level, and will even be doubled with money from the European Social Fund allocations to the Member States for the 2014-20 programming period. Given the immensity of the challenge, with over seven million young Europeans without a job and not in education or training, the Commission has now decided to speed up the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative by increasing the pre-financing to 30%. That means that almost €1 billion will be immediately available to the Member States for youth employment projects.

The Commission monitors implementation of national Youth Guarantee schemes within the framework of the European Semester. Accelerating the implementa-
It is unacceptable that today more than one young person out of five on the labour market cannot find a job.

tion of the Youth Guarantee was identified as a key priority in President Juncker’s Political Guidelines.

“We will advance around €1 billion to support the work of Member States in helping to get young people back into work, to return to education or get a traineeship,” stated Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue. “In doing so, they are not only able to contribute to the economy and society through their skills and dynamism, but they also regain their dignity.”

Young people need jobs now

“Our young people need jobs and they need them now,” insisted Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. “It is unacceptable that today more than one young person out of five on the labour market cannot find a job. By making more funding available sooner, we can get more young people back to work – I am determined to make this happen.”

The G20 considers the Youth Guarantee a new major reform for youth employment. A meeting of G20 Labour Ministers in Melbourne in September 2014 decided that more should be done to implement G20 strategies, notably the Youth Guarantees, and committed themselves to taking concrete actions to place young people in education, training, and jobs.

Around five million young people (under 25) were unemployed in the EU in December 2014, of whom over 3.2 million were in the euro area. This represents an unemployment rate of 21.4% in the EU (23% in the euro area). More than one in five young Europeans on the labour market cannot find a job – in Greece and Spain, it is one in two. Some 7.5 million young Europeans between 15 and 24 are not employed, not in education, and not in training (NEETs). In the last four years, the overall employment rates for young people fell three times as much as for adults.

One of the reasons companies cannot employ more youngsters is that young people’s skills and experience often fail to match companies’ requirements. Another reason is that even if young people do have the relevant skills and experience sought by employers, public employment services in many Member States are not effective at matching them with companies looking for people with those skills and experience. Supporting companies to create jobs for young people is, of course, very important, and many initiatives have been put in place by the Commission, such as the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) Programme and business development support from the European Structural and Investment Funds, and by the European Investment Bank Group.

Big differences in youth jobless rates

There is a gap of over 44 percentage points between the Member State with the lowest youth unemployment rate – Germany at 7.2% in December 2014 – and the Member State with the highest rate – Spain at 51.4% in December 2014. Spain is followed by Greece (50.6% in October 2014), Croatia (44.8% in the fourth quarter 2014), and Italy (42% in December 2014).

The International Labour Organisation has estimated the cost of setting up Youth Guarantees in the eurozone at €21 billion per year. However, the costs of NOT acting are far higher. The European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) has estimated the economic loss in the EU of having millions of young people out of work, education or training at over €150 billion in 2011 (1.2% of EU GDP), in terms of benefits paid out and lost output.

The Commission estimates that the accelerated pre-financing could speed up immediate support and reach out to between 350,000 and 650,000 young people this year – at the current pre-financing rate, this figure would be between just 14,000 and 22,000 young people.

The European Parliament and Council must now discuss and adopt this legislative proposal before it can enter into force.

€1 billion for youth employment

http://europa.eu/!cq64NR

Youth employment

http://europa.eu/!xV79NW
EUROPE & BEYOND

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD
TAKING THE PLUNGE
by Olivier Smith, DG MARE

To ensure fish stocks’ sustainability and our oceans’ health, the EU radically reformed the Common Fisheries Policy. But sustainability involves everyone from the fishing net to the plate. As consumers, we have a key role to play through the choices we make in the supermarket, at the fishmonger’s or in the restaurant.

Sustainable seafood is an issue our customers expect us to tackle. As Julien Mahieu, Delhaize’s Seafood Manager, would testify, modern day consumers have a voracious appetite for information about their food. They want to know where it comes from, when they should eat it, and how it was caught, farmed, or produced. Most of all they want to know if it’s healthy and sustainable.

Nowhere is this truer than when it comes to seafood. That’s partly because of fear – there has been no shortage of graphic documentaries or reports lifting the lid on unsustainable practices in other parts of the world. But it’s also because fish is a wild food source which needs protecting. It is no secret that we are overfishing our seas. If that continues, we risk not being able to eat our favourite fish in the future. The EU is doing its part with the radical reform of the Common Fisheries Policy that entered into force on 1 January 2014 (see box) and the careful management of fishing quotas. But that alone is not enough. There is still plenty of work to do, despite the recent increase in the number of stocks fished sustainably. As consumers, we have the power – and the responsibility – to change things.

A plethora of advice
With so much information out there about what sustainable seafood is, it’s hard to know what you should eat and what you should avoid. That’s where the Commission’s ‘Inseparable’ campaign comes in – by offering quick, simple and practical advice on what you should look out for in the supermarket, at the fishmonger or at your local restaurant (see box).

Unfortunately, there is no one size fits all answer, as sustainability means something different for every fish in every sea. What ‘Inseparable’ offers is access to all the best resources in every EU country to help consumers make more informed decisions. Even a simple step like reading the label on your fish can make a difference. Under new EU food labelling rules, you can now see when, where and how your fish was caught or farmed, how it was stored, and when you should eat it by. Or you could choose to diversify what you eat based on which fish are most at risk. You could choose North Sea plaice, saithe or haddock over cod or try an aquaculture product such as pikeperch or farmed sole or cod.

Making sustainability count at home and abroad
The shift towards sustainability is already having an effect on demand and a knock-on incentive for fishermen. Nicolas Guichoux from the Marine Stewardship Council, a certification body for sustainable seafood, explains: “The demand from companies such as McDonalds, Iglo and Findus for sustainable white fish like cod, hake, pollock and so on, prompted fisheries like Eastern Baltic cod to gain certification to keep on selling to those big customers. And, if you look at the stocks in that particular fishery, from terrible levels ten years ago compared to now, the ecosystem’s health is greatly improved.”

Contrary to popular belief, two thirds of the fish we eat in Europe is imported from abroad. Many consumers avoid eating all fish out of scepticism at fishing methods in other parts of the world. The EU has stringent rules in place about the fish which can be imported into Europe. It is the world leader in fighting illegal fishing, and has even banned imports from those countries that don’t comply with international rules. But, of course, buying local gives you more peace of mind as to where your fish comes from, and it also supports the fishermen and economies of Europe’s coastal communities.
experts and mirrors EU legislation when it comes to the fish it serves. The contractors are also responsible for providing healthy choices and respecting nutritional and environmental standards when purchasing ingredients.

So remember to think sustainable – to make sure that our seas and fishermen’s nets stay as full as our plates this lunchtime!

DG MARE
> [http://europa.eu/!nd37uX](http://europa.eu/!nd37uX)

'Inseparable’ website
> [http://europa.eu/!Vn89hP](http://europa.eu/!Vn89hP)

The new Common Fisheries Policy

First introduced in the 1970s, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is a set of rules for managing European fishing fleets and conserving fish stocks. The most recent reform took effect from 1 January 2014, its overall objective being to make fishing sustainable – environmentally, economically, and socially.

- Fishing quotas will now be set at levels that do not endanger the reproduction of stocks and, at the same time, maximise catches for fishermen.
- Discarding, the practice of throwing unwanted fish overboard – dead or alive – will be phased out completely by 2019.
- New rules on labelling and traceability will give consumers clearer information.
- Regional multiannual management of stocks will give long-term stability to fishermen and take decision-making away from Brussels.
- Dedicated support for small-scale fishermen and coastal communities will be available.
- Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements with other countries will help ensure responsibility is taken internationally.

Six simple steps to sustainable seafood

- Always check the label or ask your fishmonger or waiter about how your fish was caught.
- Look out for one of the certification logos, such as MSC (Marine Stewardship Council), on the packaging.
- Check that the fish on your plate is bigger than the minimum legal size. You can ask DG MARE for your special EU fish-size ruler.
- Make different choices and experiment with lesser known species like leerfish or bonito.
- Include sustainably farmed seafood in your diet, such as rainbow trout or clams.
- Check out the ‘Inseparable’ website for all the information for your country or holiday destination.
Although no new enlargement is envisaged within the next five years, there is plenty of work to do over the coming years, as Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, explains.

How will the Commission continue to maintain the European perspective for the Western Balkans?

No candidate country will have completed its preparations for EU membership within the next five years. It’s a fact. Does it mean that the enlargement process has stopped? No, quite the contrary – we have a lot of work ahead of us! We have to use this time to consolidate reforms and to achieve concrete, irreversible results on the ground.

The European perspective for the enlargement countries remains as valid as ever. It is a unique tool for mobilising the necessary reforms and ensuring stability in the region. We have a well-structured framework in place, with a system of benchmarking to guide reforms, so that the countries know exactly what is expected from them. This should help keep the focus.

Don’t forget it is a process – the candidate countries are implementing reforms and getting ready step by step for future EU membership. This process drives transformation in the Western Balkans and Turkey by consolidating democratic principles and institutions, improving the rule of law, and building bridges between neighbours.

Why is it particularly important for the EU to embrace Serbia as a future EU member?

Enlargement Policy in general works for our own European interest. This is about a whole range of issues – from security and upholding universal values on the one hand, to creating a climate conducive to investment on the other, bringing benefits to businesses in the EU Member States as well as in candidate and potential candidate countries. Serbia’s leading role in the Western Balkans region is key for peace and stability in Europe as a whole. After the successful accession of Croatia last year, the construction of a unified Europe would not be complete without Serbia.

I am impressed by progress achieved so far. EU accession negotiations with Serbia were launched one year ago and are now underway. This is well-deserved, as Serbia has committed to difficult reforms and has come a long way on the normalisation of its relations with Kosovo. Now Serbia needs to deliver on its reform agenda. The pace of negotiations will depend on progress in key areas, including the rule of law and implementation of the agreements reached in the EU-facilitated dialogue with Kosovo.

What can the Commission do to counter wide-spread enlargement fatigue among European citizens?

As I said, the current candidate countries are not at this moment ready to join, so asking now EU citizens if they are ready for a new enlargement is premature. The best way to alleviate any concerns EU citizens might have is to deliver on reforms and results. This is as much about reaching readiness for future membership as it is about improving the lives of citizens in the candidate countries today.

Commissioner Johannes Hahn’s website

http://europa.eu/lbq34hT
Serbia and the Western Balkan countries are united in their wish to one day become full-fledged EU members. Despite a certain enlargement fatigue in Europe, the applicants have a firm European perspective. But crucial reforms are needed.

With the Ukraine conflict continuing, the financial and economic crisis not over and a wide-spread lack of public support for any further EU enlargement, the topic of future EU membership for Serbia and other Western Balkan candidate or potential candidate countries has become a difficult one.

“Although times and circumstances are difficult, there is a very strong consensus in the Western Balkans to speed up their EU integration,” said Tanja Miščević, Serbia’s Chief Negotiator, on February 4 during a conference organised by the Hanns Seidel Stiftung in Brussels. Given Serbia’s major role in the region, the statement given by one of the key players in the negotiation process was highly welcomed by conference participants.

Within the Commission, there is broad agreement that there will be no enlargement during the next five years, as Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker had already declared before the European Parliament in mid-July 2014. However, enlargement negotiations continue with the same sense of priority, Christos Makridis, DG NEAR’s Deputy Head of Unit for Serbia, stated. And, of course, Serbia has a firm European perspective. It is up to Serbia to set the pace of reforms that will prepare the country for membership and influence the timing of its accession.

Serbian public support for reforms

While the Commission has nearly completed the screening process, Serbia, in addition to accession negotiations, will need to focus efforts on three fundamentals – namely, the rule of law, the reform of public administration, and economic reform. And, of course, Serbia’s progress in the normalisation of its relations with Kosovo will influence progress in negotiations.

So, at technical levels, work is continuing. This is important enough for Serbia, Tanja Miščević pointed out, for the country to have already spent €6 billion on measures required to comply with the Community acquis. She also promised further reforms in highly important fields like tax collection, implementation of Structural Funds, administration capacity, transparency, and the fight against corruption and organised crime.

According to a recent survey, public opinion in Serbia about EU membership is still split almost evenly – with 46% in favour and 44% against. But, at the same time, 73% of Serbs are in favour of serious reforms. “Why should we not use this momentum?” Serbia’s Chief Negotiator asked.

Candidate countries and potential candidates

► http://europa.eu/luH89hY
20 ans de service
Les médaillés 2014 à l’honneur

Comme chaque année, les membres du personnel ayant accompli 20 ans de service se sont vu décerner une médaille. Le millésime 2014 compte 900 médaillés qui ont également reçu, pour la première fois cette année, un certificat nominatif accompagnant la médaille.

Le 21 janvier dernier, une réception en l’honneur des médaillés affectés à Bruxelles s’est déroulée dans le complexe de l’Autoworld au parc du Cinquantenaire. Le président Jean-Claude Juncker et la vice-présidente Kristalina Georgieva ont accueilli plus de 500 médaillés et leurs invités. Les commissaires et directeurs généraux ainsi que les supérieurs hiérarchiques directs étaient également conviés.

Le président Juncker s’est adressé au personnel en rappelant les grandes étapes de la construction européenne depuis vingt ans et les défis majeurs qui attendent l’Union européenne à l’avenir. La vice-présidente Georgieva a exprimé sa fierté et la reconnaissance de l’institution quant à l’engagement et à la compétence des fonctionnaires de la Commission.

A Luxembourg, la cérémonie de la remise des médailles 2014 a eu lieu le 19 janvier, au bâtiment Jean-Monnet. La cérémonie a rassemblé environ 250 personnes: les médaillés de 11 directions générales et des Offices, et leurs invités, ainsi que leurs supérieurs hiérarchiques.

La vice-présidente Kristalina Georgieva a ouvert la cérémonie par un discours chaleureux.

Outre les 86 collègues ayant accompli 20 années de service, 4 personnes totalisant 40 ans de service ont été aussi félicitées pour leur engagement en faveur de la construction européenne.

A l’issue de la cérémonie, à Bruxelles comme à Luxembourg, les invités se sont réunis autour d’un cocktail dînatoire, dans une ambiance festive et musicale.

Félicitations à tous les médaillés et à toute l’équipe des organisateurs de la DG HR qui, aux dires des participants, ont fait de ces événements un grand succès!

Les médaillés 2014 à Bruxelles
▷ http://europa.eu/ttH77Yf

Les médaillés 2014 à Luxembourg
▷ http://europa.eu/iyk99jQ
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
COMMISSION’S VISION FOR NEW GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

by Michael Scheerer, CEND

2015 is a pivotal year for global sustainable development and poverty eradication. This year the UN’s Millennium Development Goals expire. The international community is also due to follow-up on the agreements made at the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20). On 5 February, as its contribution, the Commission presented a Communication on a ‘Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015’.

A series of high-level international meetings, in Addis Ababa in July 2015 and at the UN Summit in New York City in September 2015, are aimed at agreeing a post-2015 development agenda which enables us to respond to the twin challenges of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Agreement on the post-2015 agenda will also have important implications for negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Europe has consistently been an important global actor on international development and, on 5 February, the Commission issued a Communication on a ‘Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015’. This Communication sets out the Commission’s views on the global efforts that will be needed to eradicate poverty and boost sustainable development.

“2015 will be a critical year for the global community,” commented Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. “Eradicating poverty and putting the world on a path of sustainable development are common challenges. Fulfilling these objectives is also in our common interest. The EU will continue to engage constructively with its partners during the upcoming negotiations and stands ready to play its full part in the implementation of this agenda.”

The Communication has been jointly prepared by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini, Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, and Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. It has also been agreed with First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, who holds horizontal responsibility for sustainable development.

Overarching principles for the global partnership

Through the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda, the international community will respond to challenges facing the world today – eradicating poverty, achieving inclusive and sustainable development for present and future generations and ensuring the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental values as the basis for peaceful and prosperous societies.

According to the Commission’s Communication, the framework should be universal and apply to all, on the basis of a partnership between all countries, as well as with civil society and the private sector. All countries should contribute their fair share towards reaching the global goals, and should be held to account by their citizens and the international community. Political commitment at the highest level will be critical, and countries at all stages of development must engage with and take responsibility for the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

The partnership should be based on universal values such as human rights, good governance, and the rule of law, support for democratic institutions, inclusiveness, non-discrimination, and gender equality. The Communication puts forward the key components that should form part of the global partnership.
Key components

While putting forward proposals on how the international community should organise its action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Commission Communication also shows how the EU and its Member States could contribute to the international effort. It includes proposals to:

- **promote an enabling and conducive policy environment** – both internationally, and in individual countries, a coherent mix of effective policies, practices, institutions and resources is needed to create the right conditions for implementing the post-2015 agenda
- **develop capacity to deliver the agenda** – the post-2015 agenda can only be successful if all partners have effective institutions and the necessary human skills and capacities to eradicate poverty and deliver sustainable development
- **mobilise an effective use of domestic public finance** – national governments have the main responsibility for carrying out sustainable economic policies
- **mobilise an effective use of international public finance** – the Communication confirms the Commission’s support for the UN Secretary-General’s call for all developed countries to meet the UN Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% of donor’s gross national income and for upper-middle-income countries and emerging economies to increase their contribution to international public financing and set specific targets and timelines for doing so
- **stimulate trade to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development** – trade is a key factor for sustainable inclusive growth and sustainable development
- **drive transformative change through science, technology, and innovation** – science, technology, and innovation, including digitisation, can generate profound changes in a relatively short period of time
- **mobilise the domestic and international private sector** – business and consumers have a key role to play in achieving sustainable development. The private sector – from small and medium-sized enterprises to major multinationals – is an important engine for innovation, sustainable growth, job creation, trade, and poverty reduction
- **harness the positive effects of migration** – for individuals, migration can be one of the most powerful and immediate strategies for poverty reduction. People move to escape poverty and conflict, adapt to climate change, environmental and economic shocks, seek protection from persecution or serious harm, and improve the income, health, and education of their families.

A strong monitoring, accountability and review framework should be an integral part of the agenda and be underpinned by the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness.

Communication ‘Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015’

► [http://europa.eu/#!vW83rq](http://europa.eu/#!vW83rq)
lower my eyes. I scan Halima’s hijab for a protruding belly. Almost as an afterthought, she mentions being six-months pregnant as we are about to wrap up our conversation. In the oppressive heat of the tent, her two-year old twin girls hang listlessly onto their mother’s rail-thin frame. I ask her if she has been eating well. She says she hasn’t but that “it’s normal when you’ve lost a dear one.”

When Boko Haram insurgents shot her husband and neighbour, after finding them hidden under the bed in her home, she fainted. Someone poured water over her face to help her regain consciousness. Her husband of 14 years was a good man, a devout Muslim too, a mechanic who hadn’t done anything to deserve this. And when it seemed things couldn’t get any worse, they took her two eldest daughters, aged 11 and 12, and led them away. Not so much pleading as plain desperate, she asks: “What am I going to do?”

Travelling through the region of Diffa, in the far east of Niger, I have heard many stories like Halima’s – one more atrocious than the other. A string of attacks perpetrated along the border has left tens of thousands of people destitute and in a state of utter shock. The attacks all seem to follow a similar pattern. Heavily armed insurgents unexpectedly barge into villages and towns, sending security forces running, arbitrarily killing the men, recruiting the boys, and separating the women with children from those without children. Those with children are made to cook and clean, while the younger girls are taken away “to either become their wives or their slaves.”

Threatening Nigeria’s neighbours
In times of escalating violence, Boko Haram’s mounting attacks generally seem to get little coverage on the world news. But like the ‘Charlie Hebdo’ massacre, the resurgence of the conflict in Ukraine and the sadistic murders of ISIS, Boko Haram’s attack on the townspeople of Baga and Doron Baga did make world headlines. The brutal assault prompted thousands of inhabitants to flee onto islands in Lake Chad or across to mainland Chad, where they were able to tell their story. But many other attacks, like the one on Halima’s village of Damassak, go unreported or only surface weeks, if not months, later.

“These people have lost absolutely everything,” says Wim Fransen, ECHO’s Head of Office in Niger, as we visit the makeshift camp of Gagamari where 16,000 refugees settled overnight. “Emergency aid is being organised and ECHO is supporting the World Food Programme to deliver food rations to the refugees, but also to the host population. Food insecurity and malnutrition were already a huge problem in this region before the latest influx of refugees.”

The region around Lake Chad – which connects Nigeria with Niger, Chad and Cameroon – is one of the poorest in the world. Professing their intention to create an Islamic caliphate, Boko Haram is taking its fight across borders. Even if the region’s leaders have agreed to cooperate to avoid a further expansion of the insurgency, it may prove difficult to put the genie back into the bottle.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of people are in urgent need of assistance. Despite logistical and security constraints, aid to Nigerian refugees is being stepped up. Save The Children, one of ECHO’s partners in the fight against malnutrition, has bought dug-out canoes to reach the people who took refuge on the fishing islands of Lake Chad. Another ECHO partner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), continues to provide
emergency assistance and protection and helps with the reunification of families.

**Survivors traumatised and lives shattered**
Azidatou Issa Assane, the IRC’s Base Chief in Diffa, where refugees and returning migrants now make up one fifth of the population, takes us to a compound in town. We meet Yassinou who tells us about her lucky escape. Together with hundreds of other women, she was held captive. After a week, she decided to escape at night with her children and two-week-old baby. She learnt that her husband survived the attack on Damassak, but is in another town looking for work. She hopes to join him soon because Diffa, at just 4/uni00A0km from the border “is still too close to those people.” Still, she worries she will never again be happy, the way she used to be. She cannot erase the images from her mind of men’s throats being slit, having to push carts to dump bodies in the river only to be killed themselves.

She was reunited with her 9-year-old niece Mariama and nephews Ali and Abdou. The children’s father was shot moments after he had managed to hide Mariama and Ali under a lemon tree on the banks of the River Komadougou. Older brother Abdou, at school when the attack happened, ran to the river and swam across to Niger. When we spoke, their mother was still being detained.

Providing aid to the 150,000 refugees is a challenge in this remote and volatile region. But the real conundrum is helping the hundreds of thousands of people displaced within Nigeria itself. According to Yassine Gaba, ECHO’s Head of Office in Nigeria, who has visited several informal settlements in Adamawa State, “many arrived with nothing but their clothes on.” But when asked about their needs, people are much more worried about those left behind – those beyond the reach of aid organisations. “ECHO is supporting partners who are willing to work in these volatile circumstances, but far from all the needs are being covered,” says Yassine, who fears a further deterioration of the security situation.

As they would rather be destitute than return home to possibly face more savagery, the Halimas, Yassinous and Abdous of this world need our support.

**Life after Boko Haram**

[http://europa.eu/1WD73Gn](http://europa.eu/1WD73Gn)
CITIZENS’ DIALOGUES
HELPING THE EU GET CLOSER TO PEOPLE

by Maria Kokkonen, DG COMM

On a snowy winter day in early January, Riga, still in its Christmas dress, hosted not only the College’s inaugural meeting with the Latvian Presidency but also the first of the new Commission’s series of Citizens’ Dialogues, focusing on jobs, growth, and investment.

While the Commissioners were gathered with the Latvian Presidency in Riga’s National Library on 8 January, the historical Latvian Society House opened its doors to 430 citizens who wanted to “talk with a Commissioner”. They were then joined by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, and Corina Creţu, Commissioner for Regional Policy.

With 80 citizens travelling from Lithuania and Estonia to take part, live web streaming provided in 10 languages and an intense Twitter activity going on throughout the debate, this Dialogue became a real Baltic event with a pan-European dimension. The discussion focused on the Commission’s priorities, its Investment Plan for Europe, fiscal discipline, the euro, energy independence and security issues.

Citizens’ Dialogues will be a key strategic pan-European communication tool for this Commission in reaching out to citizens (see box, page 24).

Frans Timmermans, Valdis Dombrovskis and Corina Creţu share their thoughts with Commission en direct about their experience.

Is the success of the Citizens’ Dialogues from 2012-14 the reason why the new Commission is continuing the concept?

Frans Timmermans: I can’t speak for the success of the past Dialogues, but my fellow Commissioners and I believe strongly in the importance of talking directly to citizens at every possible opportunity. We know that many people have lost trust in the EU, which is part of a wider crisis of confidence in general. Everything seems very far away, and incomprehensible. Listening to Europeans in towns, cities and villages reminds us what they expect from us. And it also gives us a chance to explain to them what we are doing and why we are doing it.

What are the plans for this year?

F.T.: We want to organise these Dialogues as widely as possible. Whenever I plan a trip to a Member State, I ask my team to try and find time in my diary, if possible, for a town hall meeting. And I know many of my colleagues will do the same. In Riga, I was joined by my colleagues Valdis Dombrovskis and Corina Creţu – three Commissioners at one event, because we were all keen to be involved in the first of this new series of Dialogues! The full programme will develop over time, as Commissioners plan their work for the months ahead. With Vice-President Katainen taking part in Bilbao, Spain, on 26 February, that makes six debates in the first two months of this year.

This year I want to talk primarily about the 2015 Work Programme, and how this Commission is putting in place a new set of priorities and a new way of working. I want us to let citizens know that we have heard their concerns. During the European election campaigns in 2014, all the major parties promised to reform the way Brussels works. We said that we would act on ‘big issues’ where there is a clear added value in acting at EU level – and this is what we are doing with the Investment Plan for Europe, the Single Digital Market, the Energy Union, the measures foreseen on
taxation, and the agendas we are preparing on security and on migration. This new sense of priorities is how we have started, and this is how we mean to go on. I want people to get that message, including on the importance of better regulation for this Commission.

What are you first impressions?

F. T.: I have now taken part in four Citizens’ Dialogues, in Riga, Copenhagen, Tallinn, and Paris. Each time I have met with passionate and engaged citizens, who want to be heard, and rightly so. People have a strong interest in the European Union, and they also have high expectations and demands. We have a challenge to meet their expectations and to change their impression of us. But I believe that we can achieve this. I came away from all these Dialogues with the same feeling – the feeling that I’m looking forward to the next one.

How did the audience in Riga react to the Investment Plan?

Valdis Dombrovskis: Latvians have a saying similar to “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”, which means they usually prefer to stick to what they already have and are initially sceptical about big plans. Nevertheless, a poll conducted in the audience during the event showed that more than one third were convinced the Investment Plan for Europe would benefit the economies of the Baltic States. About 40% said they needed more information. So, in total, more than 75% were cautiously optimistic – I think it is a good result if you consider the Investment Plan was launched in December 2014.

How hard is it going to be to sell the Investment Plan?

V. D.: The idea behind the Investment Plan is to unlock the potential we already have in Europe and create new jobs. I don’t think new jobs are hard to sell, with employment being one of the main concerns of Europeans in any country. We have been talking about €315 billion in investments the plan could unlock, but recently the International Labour Organisation announced the Plan could create 2.1 million new jobs, lowering the EU’s jobless rate by 1% by 2018. This figure doesn’t need any selling – it is compelling to anyone. Obviously, the share of investment or new jobs created in each country will depend on the quality of projects and reforms implemented. Creating the link between reforms and jobs is something we will have to work on and ‘sell’.

How can such Citizens’ Dialogues help raise awareness of how Regional Policy impacts and changes citizens’ lives?

Corina Crețu: I was very happy to have participated in the first Citizens’ Dialogue of this new series. This is a great initiative, which helps us get closer to the people,
These Citizens’ Dialogues are a great answer to the decline in trust in the EU we have been witnessing the past years, because of the crisis.

Given some of the false accusations, I felt the need to set the record straight about the way we manage EU funds and to explain how Regional Policy, through its multiannual programmes, has become a major source of public investment in many Member States, thus cushioning the effects of the crisis and ensuring that investments essential for jobs and growth could continue. The session in Riga was also the occasion to describe how the Structural Funds can make a significant contribution to the objectives of the new Investment Plan for Europe.

What reactions did you pick up in Riga to specific projects in the region?

C. C.: The Baltic States have Europe’s best absorption rates of the Structural Funds, which means EU money is spent in a fast and efficient way. There is real enthusiasm for what Regional Policy can help achieve in the region, especially in terms of infrastructures, such as the liquefied natural gas terminal in Lithuania and our investments in the electricity grids. So I was thrilled to hear people talk about how Regional Policy had changed their daily lives and what tangible impact EU funds are having on the ground.

**Citizens’ Dialogues**

**A strategic pan-European communication tool**

Citizens’ Dialogues are a strategic pan-European communication tool that was first tested between September 2012 and March 2014. Based on the positive feedback and the popularity of the events, the Juncker Commission has made the Dialogues one of its priority communication actions for the current mandate. Between 2012-14, 51 Citizens’ Dialogues took place, involving some 17,000 citizens in person and over 105,000 people via webstreaming and social media.

Under the Juncker Commission, the Dialogues will focus on one to three of the Commission’s Political Priorities in two formats:

- **Dialogues with pan-European visibility**, with a Vice-President or a Commissioner, 500 participating citizens from the host country and neighbouring countries, with regional or national MEPs and possibly with a national MP or national politician
- **Dialogues with a national scope**, for instance, in the context of a Commissioner’s visit to a Member State.

In his Mission Letters, President Juncker asked all College Members “to be politically active in the Member States and in dialogues with citizens, by presenting and communicating the common agenda, listening to ideas and engaging with stakeholders.” The Commission Representations play a crucial role in helping the Commissioners to fulfil this communication task. DG COMM’s ‘Citizens’ Dialogues’ Unit coordinates the initiative (see contacts below).

So far this year, Citizens’ Dialogues have taken place in Riga (8 January), Maribor (23 January), Copenhagen (29 January), Tallinn (3 February), Paris (16 February) and Bilbao (26 February).

Follow upcoming Dialogues on our website and use the #EUdialogues hashtag.

➤ [http://europa.eu/lbV34xj](http://europa.eu/lbV34xj)

**Contacts**

Sophie Beernaerts and Joachim Ott (DG COMM)
On 27 January 2015, the Commission hosted a special commemoration to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, with two survivors paying witness to their experiences.

"They stole a part of my childhood and most of my adolescence," recalled Elie Buzyn, who was ten years old at the time of the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939. He and Dagmar Lieblová, two Holocaust survivors, were special guests at the ceremony held by the Commission in the Charlemagne building to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January. Dagmar Lieblová, President of the Terezín Initiative, was detained in Theresienstadt/Terezín, and Elie Buzyn was held in the Litzmannstadt/Lódź ghetto before being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Sole survivors from their families, they both became successful professionals and have dedicated the past two decades to providing testimonies on the Holocaust.

"There is not much time left, the youngest of us are almost eighty," stressed Dagmar Lieblová and underlined that it will be up to those "who listen to us today" to keep the memory alive. It took Elie Buzyn several decades before he was able to speak in public about his experience during the Holocaust. Yet he considers it essential to raise awareness amongst young people of the tragic past, as "it can all happen again and nothing can be taken for granted."

The commemoration ceremony was organised by DG HOME through its ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme (see box), in cooperation with the Paris-based Shoah Memorial, which provided an important part of the commemoration with its exhibition ‘The Holocaust in Europe’.

Dagmar Lieblová, on the left, and Elie Buzyn, on the right, both survivors of the Holocaust.
Opening the event, Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, stressed that the Holocaust is not a closed chapter in European history. "It poses a question that each new generation will have to come to terms with. How is it that, in the age of progress, technological and scientific advancement, six million Europeans were reduced to ashes?" He underlined that the best way we can honour the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust is to remain committed to the values upon which modern Europe is built – human dignity, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, the respect for human rights, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and non-discrimination. "We need to ensure that our society is inclusive, that young Europeans understand the past and that they become sensitive to any new forms of discrimination and racial hatred." He also emphasised the importance of both implementing EU legislation to combat hate speech and hate crime and facilitating interreligious dialogue.

Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, were also present.

Ronen Gil-Or, the Deputy Head of the Israeli Mission to the European Union, referred to worrying incidents of anti-Semitism in Europe and the need to support the European Shoah Legacy Institute. He also invited the Commission to participate in the Jewish Forum in Israel in June 2015.

The event was concluded by Michal Frankl, Deputy-Director of the Jewish Museum in Prague, who spoke about passing the memory of the Holocaust on to younger generations. He stressed that teaching about the Holocaust cannot be a passive undertaking of providing facts and information – it must include an essential element of re-interpretation and should lead to the development of critical thinking and analytic skills that can be applied to critical issues of contemporary society.

We need to ensure that young Europeans understand the past and become sensitive to new forms of discrimination and racial hatred

The ceremony was followed by a concert produced by the Forum Voix Etouffées, based in Strasbourg, one of the major organisations of study and circulation of works from composers banned under European dictatorships, especially Nazism.

Testimonies of Dagmar Lieblová and Elie Buzyn (video) ➤ [http://europa.eu/!Xh39qn](http://europa.eu/!Xh39qn)

Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos’s opening speech (video) ➤ [http://europa.eu/!Qh39Bp](http://europa.eu/!Qh39Bp)

The Shoah Memorial ➤ [www.memorialdelashoah.org](http://www.memorialdelashoah.org)

Forum Voix Etouffées ➤ [www.voixetouffees.org/](http://www.voixetouffees.org/)

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme

The ‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme aims at encouraging EU citizens to play a greater role in the development of the EU and to bring Europe closer to its citizens. By funding projects in which citizens can participate, the Programme promotes Europe’s shared history and values, and a sense of ownership. It includes a ‘Remembrance’ strand which encourages initiatives to reflect on the causes – such as militant nationalism, xenophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism – of totalitarian regimes, including Nazism, which led to the Holocaust, Fascism, Stalinism and totalitarian Communist regimes in Europe’s modern history and to commemorate their victims. The ‘Remembrance’ strand also encompasses activities concerning other defining moments and reference points in European 20th century history.

For the current Europe for Citizens Programme (2014-2020), the proportion of the overall budget dedicated to ‘Remembrance’ increased to 20% – up from 4% in the 2007-2013 programme – thus manifesting the Commission’s commitment to keeping the memory of the past alive. Both organisations and projects can benefit from these funds.

Europe for Citizens Programme ➤ [http://europa.eu/!NP74rY](http://europa.eu/!NP74rY)
REMEMBRANCE PROJECTS
Under the ‘Remembrance’ strand of the Europe for Citizens Programme, projects up to €100,000 for a duration of 18 months can be funded. Here are some examples.

Neighbours who disappeared
This project of the Jewish Museum in Prague highlights the work of young people aged from 12 to 18 who have investigated the stories of the life of Jewish children who attended the same schools and lived in the same neighbourhoods. Students carried out research in local archives and gathered oral history from witnesses and survivors about children who disappeared from their neighbourhood during the Second World War. Their work resulted in small exhibitions of panels that were later merged to create a travelling exhibition.

[link]

Developing education at memorial sites
The Mauthausen Memorial in Austria has led the project on ‘The challenges of integration – developing education at memorial sites’ in cooperation with the Dachau Memorial in Germany and the Centre for Holocaust Education, University of London, with the aim of developing an effective pedagogical approach at the memorial site, so as to achieve a lasting learning effect for the visitors – especially schools – of the memorial site. The educational team, together with experts, came up with new theoretical concepts and practical methods to be implemented.

[link]

Train of commemoration
In order to preserve the individual and collective memory of children and young people deported to Nazi concentration camps, the project has taken the form of a travelling exhibition in Germany, the border regions of France, and the Netherlands. The exhibition, held within real train carriages drawn by a steam engine, displays the biographies of young victims from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the former Soviet Union. It also pays tribute to the aid provided by allied anti-Nazi forces, such as the transport of children to Great Britain, which saved the lives of approximately 10,000 children and young people.

[link]
With the Commission’s reorganisation under the new College (CEND #18, pages 49-50), some serious structural changes took place during the winter holidays, affecting 15 different DGs. DG DIGIT had to make sure that all data for 7,695 staff were updated and appropriately transferred in just two weeks.

Imagine, you move to a new apartment and everything is already there for you. Your boxes have been unpacked, items are back on the shelves, the washing machine has been connected, and your TV is working… Magic!

Internal reorganisation is a similar story, but there is no magic involved. While the process may have appeared simple and straightforward for end-users, the backstage work was complex and required serious planning, coordination, testing, and execution. On 5 January, the first day of work after the holidays, it had to be a normal day where SYSPER, MiPS, mailboxes, collaborative spaces and shared drives worked seamlessly.

DG DIGIT’s special task force of around 70 colleagues had to make sure this happened, in close cooperation with DG HR, the SG, and DG BUDG.

What made the IT part of the reorganisation successful?

Jérôme, IT Service Manager for customer account management: Collaboration! In all possible ways and at all levels. The process was coordinated by DG DIGIT and the IRM (Information Resource Manager) teams in the DGs. DGT and the Publications Office also had a lot on their plate. It required mutual understanding, trust and very fast reactions from all sides. The commitment of System Administrators was crucial for this operation. We needed to find immediate solutions and work on optimisation.

How do you know that it was a success?

Ann, IT Service Officer: There were no major incidents or technical glitches. The detailed preparation paid off, everybody knew what they had to do and when. Our
Director-General didn’t receive a single call of complaint about it – that’s also an indicator.

**Alberto, IT Service Manager for Front Office Operations:** To prepare for the worst-case scenario, additional support was foreseen in the first weeks of January. But it all went well. For example, on 5 January, only 15% of calls to the IT Helpdesk were related to the reorganisation, whereas twice as many people had forgotten their passwords!

**How did you manage to respect such a short deadline?**

**Dries, IT Service Manager for identity and access management:** Everybody had to go an extra mile. The additional hours put in by colleagues are counted in hundreds. On 31 December, we left the office at around 20:30. Some interventions needed continuous 24-hour monitoring. So we had to work in a smarter way, explore ways to automate processes, and find workarounds for existing procedures that were not adequate for the job.

**What’s next?**

**Vicky, IT Service Officer:** We can say that the reorganisation is completed, but some fine-tuning is still needed. This was, after all, an opportunity to improve and automate several technical processes. For example, for this reorganisation, special scripts were developed, so that users continued to have access to their virtual applications, while also maintaining their smartphone synchronisation.

**What was extraordinary about this reorganisation?**

**Alain, IT System Manager for HR IT systems:** Every reorganisation is special. In the course of one year, there are many reorganisations. They vary in scale and timing. This one was particularly intense because of the very short time frame and the many DGs involved. It put us all to the test – can we all work together and achieve the set objective? Yes, we can. At the same time, we also have a long list of ‘lessons learnt’ for next time. We should not underestimate the time, resources, tools and good data quality involved, all of which are crucial for successful cooperation in such a cross-DG task force. We had to develop quickly some ad-hoc workaround tools to be able to manually move some exceptional data with a minimum of manual interventions. Next time we will know how to approach these kinds of issues better and faster. We also have enough material to discuss with DG HR, so as to improve our standard tools and procedures in the future.
How is the Welcome Office structured?
It is made up of two sectors – one dealing with special identity cards, VAT exemptions, and vehicle registrations. The other one, which is my team, deals with integration, information, and advice.

What are the Welcome Office team’s main objectives?
As the name suggests, our team is here to ensure a warm welcome to all newly recruited staff and to help them and their families settle in – both into the EU Institutions and into their new life in Brussels. We are the first people they meet on the day they start work when we give our presentation at the ‘Welcome’ session.

The Welcome Office offers many useful services and activities, not only to newcomers but also to all other members of staff. Our service is interinstitutional too, available to staff of the Council, the European External Action Service, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Data Protection Supervisor, and all Executive Agencies and Joint Undertakings.

There are seven of us in the team and we are very versatile. We share all the tasks, whether that is giving presentations, answering questions in our Call Centre or organising events.

As a service that deals with colleagues from across the Commission and from most of the other Institutions as well, we are definitely very client-oriented and we are always trying to improve the service we offer. We will soon be launching an on-line survey reaching out to all the newcomers recruited in 2014, so that we can get a better idea of how integration went for them. It is important to see if our service actually meets the needs of newcomers.

What services are being offered to newcomers?
Among many other things, we can help them with finding accommodation. We have a list of properties to rent and we will also read through their rental contract making sure it is OK to sign. We organise a lot of events during the year that give newcomers a chance to get useful information, to meet other newcomers and to network. On 18 March 2015, we have our annual Info Day at the Berlaymont which is a big information fair, with about 80 stands representing useful services from both inside and outside the Institution. This event gets bigger every year and is always a great opportunity to collect information.

On another level, we offer guided walking tours of Brussels to give newcomers and their partners an ‘authentic’ tour of the city centre, away from the tourist areas, and give them insider information on getting the best out of Brussels.

And what about the integration of spouses and partners?
We also organise some activities for spouses and partners to help them integrate and find their place here in Brussels.

For those who are looking for employment, we offer a Job Hunting Seminar, which is designed and delivered by outside experts who are under contract with the Commission. This gives them valuable information on the job market in Belgium, but also, very importantly, an opportunity to network with others in the same situation as themselves.

Our Information Day for spouses and partners is a one-day seminar aimed at bringing them together and giving them useful information to help them find their way in a new country. We think it is important that they know that the Commission cares
about their integration too, especially those who have re-located with their partner and perhaps put their own career on hold.

You also offer a legal advice service. How can that help EU staff?
Well, we all come up against problems sometimes and it’s not always easy to know where to turn for good advice, which is why the Welcome Office indeed offers a free legal advice service for all staff.

We have three lawyers working in our offices who are there to give advice on problems related to your personal and private life (see page 50). They are experts in Belgian and European law and between them they cover a wide variety of areas – family law, consumer law, contractual problems, taxation, inheritance, questions on citizenship and labour law… To make an appointment, you just need to get in touch with us.

Additionally, they have produced an extensive collection of legal brochures on many subjects, which are available both at the Welcome Office and on our website. Very often you can already find the answer to your question in one or other of these brochures.

You also provide certified copies and authentication of signatures...
Yes, this is a service that perhaps not everyone is aware of. If you need certified copies of your original documents such as birth certificates, diplomas or passports, just bring along the originals and the copies and we will put on our stamp to certify them as true copies.

The same goes for authentication of your signature. For example, if your child is going on a school trip and you need to give your authorisation, you might need to have your signature authenticated – the Welcome Office can do this for you. For both these services, you can come along anytime – without an appointment.

What other services are on offer that staff might not be aware of?
We have our ‘Family Helpdesk’ which is, as you might expect, a help service for families, mainly those of newcomers. We can help them with any problems they might have setting into life in Belgium. We have also produced several brochures for newcomers that guide them step by step through the arrival process – before they arrive and when they get here – as well as an information brochure especially for spouses and partners. We also have a brochure about nurseries, schools and after-school care for children, as well as many useful guides about everyday life in Belgium. Come along and pick up a copy or we will be happy to send you one on request!

The Welcome Office

How to contact the Welcome Office?
The Welcome Desk is open from Monday to Thursday (8:30-16:30) and Friday (8:30-16:00).
Mezzanine, Rue Montoyer 34, Brussels
It is not necessary to make an appointment (except for the legal advisor).
You can also contact the Call Centre with your questions on 02 29 66600 (9:00-12:00 and 14:00-16:00) or write an e-mail to:

hr-B1-bureau-accueil@ec.europa.eu
From 1 May to 31 October, Milan will play host to the 2015 World Expo, which this year focuses on the challenge of feeding an ever-growing world population.

The EU Pavilion will be one of the main attractions, and will highlight the many innovative ways the EU is using science and other key policies to improve sustainable food production. Commission en direct pays a virtual visit to Milan to find out more.
DOSSI ER

The 2015 Universal Exhibition in Milan will focus on the pressing issue of food sustainability. David Wilkinson, Director at the Joint Research Centre and the EU’s Commissioner-General for Expo Milano, tells Commission en direct what visitors can expect, and how he hopes the Expo’s legacy will be one of lasting change.

What is Expo Milano 2015 and why is the EU taking part?
The Expo – or Universal Exhibition to give it its full name – will take place in Milan, Italy, from 1 May to 31 October 2015, the first time it has been hosted on European soil since Hannover in 2000. More than 140 countries will take part, including 20 EU Member States, alongside three international organisations – the UN, CERN and the EU – and a host of NGOs and business organisations.

This year’s theme is ‘Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life’, and it will be the biggest event on food and nutrition ever held anywhere in the world.

The Expo theme covers innovation, culture, traditions, creativity, and how they relate to food and diet. It cuts across the entire spectrum of EU policies – from agriculture and fisheries, through industry and trade, environment, energy and climate, health and safety, education and culture, international cooperation and development, to science, research and innovation.

The theme of the EU’s contribution to the Expo – ‘Growing Europe’s future together for a better world’ – tries to pull all these different threads together, emphasising the need to tackle the food challenge from all sides in order to ensure a safe and sustainable future for everyone.

Without wanting to highlight one aspect above all others, it is nonetheless worth noting that the Expo comes at a very important time for development. The UN is in the process of defining a post-2015 development agenda (see Dossier, CEND #18), as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reach their target date in September 2015. It is also the European Year for Development, which provides a unique opportunity to show how the EU has contributed to achieving the MDGs and its support for the proposed Sustainable Development Goals. It is also the mid-way point for the Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and jobs – and in all this food has a key role to play.

What are the main EU initiatives at the Expo?
In the EU Pavilion we are going to offer a real ‘visitor experience’ to more than a million people over the course of the Expo. The visit is framed by an original animated film that is meant to be both educational and
entertaining, featuring a farmer who falls in love with a scientist under unlikely circumstances – symbolising the link between human effort and technology. The message of the film is that, despite their many differences, when people work together they are more successful than when they act alone.

In addition, around 150 events will be organised by various Commission DGs and the European Parliament over the course of the Expo, focusing on key policy areas such as agriculture, industry, health and consumer protection, international development, energy and climate and environment, among others. The aim of these many events is to bring the EU Institutions, citizens and other interested parties together to discuss the issues and, hopefully, to find solutions to the food sustainability challenges.

Last but not least is the research and innovation agenda, set by the Scientific Steering Committee.

What can we expect to learn from the Expo?
Speaking personally, I see the Expo as a real opportunity to focus the world’s attention on the challenge of ‘feeding the planet’ and to provide a platform for real policy debates that could lead to concrete action in the future. I’m sure that the sheer number of countries and international bodies focusing on this theme over the six months will contribute to tackling food insecurity and problems associated with nutrition, as well as contributing significantly to the UN-led efforts to eradicate poverty and set new Sustainable Development Goals.

Last but not least, my personal hope and aim is that there is a legacy after the Expo, which could feed into future policy initiatives. The hope is that the theme continues to resonate with visitors and policy-makers alike long after the Expo is over, and that this will spur the world into concrete action. The Expo must be much more than just an exhibition – it should be a platform for change.

EU at Expo Milano website
▷ http://europa.eu/expo2015/

Expo Milano 2015 is an excellent opportunity for the European Union to showcase the many ways in which it is tackling the global challenges of food and nutrition security. And we can use the momentum around Expo to give our efforts a further boost. We should continue to promote – and enjoy – high-quality food and healthy lifestyles.

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
Finding innovative solutions to respond to the increased global demand for food is one of the EU’s top research priorities, which is why, as Vladimir Šucha, Director-General of the Joint Research Centre, tells Commission en direct, science will play such a major role in the EU’s contribution to Expo Milano.

Why has the Joint Research Centre been chosen to coordinate the EU’s presence at Expo Milano 2015?

There are a number of reasons why the JRC has been chosen to coordinate the EU’s participation in Expo 2015. Because of the nature of its work providing scientific and technical support for the creation and implementation of EU policies, the JRC already has close links with all Commission services, with the European Parliament, and with Member States. Furthermore, the JRC has a strong track record and expertise in a wide range of areas related to the main theme of Expo 2015. For example, we are working on monitoring crops and natural resources, forecasting crop yields, analysing food markets, and developing new foresight methods to help Europe respond more effectively to major food security challenges.

The JRC will also host a number of conferences and workshops organised by various DGs during the Expo. We will also invite school groups and members of the public to visit the JRC Visitors’ Centre and ‘Sylvia’s Lab’ at the site in Ispra, which is just 60 km from the Expo site. There they can get to know more about Alex and Sylvia, the two main characters from the film on show in the EU Pavilion (see pages 40-41), as well as learning more about science and food in an interactive and entertaining way.

Why will science be so important at Expo Milano, and what will be the EU’s scientific contribution?

I believe that science and innovation have a key role to play in supporting the global efforts to ensure access to safe and nutritious food, cultivated and produced in a sustainable way. As the world population grows, so does demand for food, and there is a clear need to tackle shortcomings in global food production. Yet the constraints posed by production methods, demand patterns, climate change and finite natural resources mean that feeding the world has become increasingly difficult. It is a priority for the EU to find innovative solutions that can help overcome scarcity and respond to the ever-increasing demand for food – for example, through new methods for increasing crop yields in a sustainable way.

During the Expo, the EU will host more than 35 scientific events around the broad theme of food and nutrition security (see page 38). The inspiration for these events comes from a Scientific Steering Committee, chaired by Franz Fischler, former Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, and
composed of internationally recognised scientists and
experts, including from the Organisation for Economic
Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the UN’s
Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). As well as
helping to frame the EU’s scientific contribution to the
Expo, the Committee is also looking at the wider role
of research in global food and nutrition security. It has
just launched a discussion paper on this issue, and an
on-line consultation on the paper will be opened on
3 March, inviting the scientific community, stakeholders
and the general public to make their voices heard in this
important debate. The results of the consultation will be
published ahead of World Food Day on 16 October. The
Committee will also be highly active during the Expo
itself, with a number of the experts taking part in various
events alongside JRC scientists. The aim is to ensure that
the EU comes away from the Expo with a real legacy,
including recommendations to policy makers for priority
actions in the field of research, development and innovation
in the area of food and nutrition security.

Why is it important that the EU is taking part
in the Expo?
I see the Expo as a platform for the Commission to
case its achievements and actively contribute to
the global discussion on sustainable food production.
The EU has the safest food production chain in the
world within its internal market and is at the forefront
when it comes to tackling global hunger and malnutri-
tion. The fact that in today’s world over 800 million
people are hungry and around 200 million are suffering
from micronutrient deficiencies clearly shows that we
have a long way to go towards eradicating extreme
poverty and hunger.

The main challenges for food security at the EU
and global level include increasing supply to meet
growing levels of demand. It is estimated that global
food production will have to increase by 60% if we are
to feed an increased global population of nine billion
people in 2050. To do this, we first need to close the
yield gaps that currently exist, by reducing food losses
and waste and promoting the exchange of innovative
technologies and best practices. Second, we need to
tackle the growing competition for natural resources.
Over-use of productive agricultural land has a cost,
and highly intensive agricultural systems have clear
environmental consequences. Finally, it is vital that
we are able to respond to the challenges of climate
change (see Dossier, CEND #19). Agricultural research
and development is one of the most effective tools for
increasing sustainable food production in the face of
all these challenges.

Expo Task Force

Organising the Commission’s participation at an event the size of Expo Milano is no easy matter,
as Giancarlo Caratti, Head of the JRC Expo Task Force, explains.

The Commission was invited by the Italian Prime Minister to take
part in the Expo at a very late stage – less than two years before
it was due to start. Given this tight timetable, the Expo Task Force
was created to guide the Commission’s contribution to the Expo
from conception to implementation, and, above all, to ensure that
everything was completed on time ahead of the 1 May deadline.
Coordinating such a complex interinstitutional project as this is a
challenging task. In addition to cooperating closely with other DGs,
we also have to coordinate with the other European Institutions,
the 20 Member States taking part, other Expo participants such
as the United Nations and civil society groups, and, of course, the
Expo organisers. As a result, we have to be inventive, resilient
and adaptable.

The way we work has to be responsive and, most importantly,
flexible, since we are trying to accomplish an extraordinary pro-
ject. The whole exercise is complex – but it is also very exciting,
with the rewarding feeling of being part of a global event that
will have a major impact not only on our Institution but also, and
most importantly, on citizens.
EU Pavilion

1,900 m²

divided into 3 floors:
• the Visitors’ Experience on the ground floor
• conference rooms and offices on the second floor
• a rooftop space for social events

EU Pavilion

1,900 m²

+20 million visitors

+800 volunteers

aged 18-30 from all over Europe will help support the EU’s presence at the Expo over the course of the six months

EU Member States

20
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, UK

+140 countries

94% of the world’s population

3 international organisations
(EU, UN, CERN)

13 non-governmental organisations

+20 million visitors

1,100,000 m² of exhibition space

Calendar of events and thematic weeks

In addition to the EU Pavilion, the participating EU Institutions will organise conferences and events in the framework of the EU scientific programme in order to launch a dialogue on specific issues. A calendar of events is being finalised in collaboration with the Expo inter-service working group, which includes members from the participating Institutions. Over 150 proposals have already been submitted for the EU scientific programme by the Commission DGs, the European Parliament and the EU Expo Scientific Steering Committee.

http://europa.eu/expo2015/events
‘Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life’
This year’s theme is ‘Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life’, reflecting the fact that over 800 million people in less economically developed countries are facing starvation, while the levels of obesity and other food-related diseases in developed countries continue to grow.

Clusters are one of the new attractions of Expo 2015 – for the first time communities are grouped not by geographical area but by a common theme and food group to which they belong.
The EU Pavilion will have a prime location at the Expo site – right in front of the Italian pavilion – the Palazzo Italia – and next to the Lake Arena, the largest outdoor space open to visitors where water games, firework performances and concerts will be hosted.

Covering a total of 1,900 m², the pavilion will be divided into three floors – the ground floor is the so-called Visitors’ Experience, the first floor features a conference room and offices and exhibition spaces, while the rooftop will be used for social events.

On the ground floor, visitors will be put at the centre of our narrative pavilion. They will be led through a story created jointly by all the DGs and European Institutions involved, designed to illustrate the EU food supply chain. It concentrates in particular on the example of wheat and bread, underlining the importance of these products in European culture and civilisation.

Two (fictional) characters – Alex, a farmer, and Sylvia, a scientific researcher – are the main protagonists of the story and through them the public, and especially younger visitors, will learn how global food security can be achieved through good cooperation between people, science, and agriculture – not only in Europe but all over the world. The story will also highlight how the implementation of EU initiatives has led to a better-functioning food supply chain.
The number seven is expected to feature heavily throughout Expo Milano. For example, the Expo is expected to sell seven times more tickets than the last World Cup in Brazil, welcome an average of seven times the number of visitors to Disneyland every day, and play host to 7,000 different events over the six months.

Expo Milano is also the first real ‘social media’ World Expo, and so here are the top seven reasons to follow the EU’s Expo Milano team on social media:

- **One voice** for the EU speaking on behalf of all the EU Institutions.
- **Dedicated social media thematic weeks** highlighting the EU’s achievements in the many different policy areas that affect food.
- **Facebook** is our eyes, ears and mouth on the pavilion, on the Expo, and on the visitors. It’s the best way to learn everything there is to know about Expo Milano and the EU, updated each and every day.
- **Twitter** keeps you in the loop, with access to our events, our guests and all the material shared by our digital network. Just follow @EUExpo2015 and #EUExpo2015.
- **Instagram** is our creativity, expressed in a diary made of images. Ours, yours, the community’s. Be part of it!
- **Google Plus** will be our real-time journal through the European Commission’s wider digital network.
- **LinkedIn** will be our microscope on global food and nutrition security.
OUR FOOD
FROM FARM TO FORK

by Tremeur Denigot, JRC

How can we ensure safe, nutritious, sufficient and sustainable food for all? The EU has a central role to play in tackling poverty and world hunger through ensuring the sustainability of our food systems. Expo Milano will showcase the EU’s achievements.

The food we eat to supply the energy required to live a healthy and happy life is central to the theme of Expo 2015. The EU guarantees some of the highest food safety standards in the world and seeks to inspire confidence in its citizens, as well as to ensure an economic and environmentally sustainable food system.

A body of EU legislation forms the cornerstone of the ‘from farm to fork’ concept. As a result, Europeans can enjoy safe and nutritious food produced from healthy plants and animals, whilst enabling the food industry to operate under the best possible conditions.

Promoting safe, sustainable farming

“DG AGRI has made Expo Milano a key priority this year, so as to highlight the EU’s added value regarding safe and sustainable food production and make a large audience of participants aware of the importance of farming and of the challenge of food security,” explains Tassos Haniotis, DG AGRI’s Director for ‘Economic analysis, perspectives and evaluation, and communication’. “EU farming is not only a sector with strong traditions but it is also an innovative sector, offering good opportunities for young people, playing, together with the agro-food sector, an important role in the economy by providing 46 million jobs in the EU. During the Expo, DG AGRI will offer a broad programme of pertinent stakeholder’s seminars, contributing to the debates and legacy on how we will contribute feeding the planet in the future.”

The EU is also working to address health risks such as harmful use of alcohol, smoking, unhealthy dietary habits and a lack of exercise. Taking into account the need to reduce health inequalities across the EU, the Commission is also working to encourage innovation in health and to increase the sustainability of health systems.

“Expo Milano will be an excellent occasion to debate with a wide ranging audience on how to shape the future, ensuring safe and healthy food produced through innovative and sustainable food systems,” states Ladislav Miko, DG SANTE’s acting Director-General.

Farmers play a unique role in producing safe, high-quality food. Much more than this, they also look after the natural landscape, help tackle climate change and preserve agricultural diversity. The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy was created to help Europe’s farmers deliver and maintain these public goods, and it helps protect the future of farming and rural life in Europe.

With global demand for food steadily increasing, it is ever more important to produce food in a sustainable way and reduce waste. Dedicated to promoting a sustainable European model, the EU seeks to make the most of its resources and mitigate the impacts of climate change and pollution on our planet, thereby safeguarding resources for future generations.
The food and drink industry is Europe’s largest manufacturing and employment sector. It employs more than 4 million people and has an annual turnover of €1,000 billion, giving Europe the title of largest food exporter worldwide (20.8%) and second largest importer (18.1%).

International trade in food, including Europe’s world-renowned food products and agricultural technology and machinery, encourages and secures job creation in Europe and those countries which trade with Europe. Europe also accounts for around one third of the global market for environmental goods and services.

Europe’s agro-food industries and ‘green jobs’

To achieve and maintain these positive results in spite of the economic crisis, the Commission developed successful initiatives aimed at promoting growth and jobs such as the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain or the Enterprise Europe Network. It strongly encourages the use of innovative solutions in order to assist the development of further high-tech agriculture.

Moreover, farming and the agro-food industries today represent 46 million jobs and 6% of European GDP. The Common Agricultural Policy stimulates employment, entrepreneurship and local food supply, supports rural business, and helps farmers to modernise their farms and invest beyond food production.

In addition to that, a 20% increase in the number of ‘green jobs’ has enhanced Europe’s competitiveness – even during these very challenging years of recession.

The Expo will also serve as a platform for business opportunities, giving European companies to promote themselves and find potential business partners. During the course of the six months of Expo, DG GROW will invite European companies to a set of business-to-business meetings.

“At the World Expo Milano we will showcase the EU food model, where food safety and industrial competitiveness are successfully integrated,” explains Salvatore D’Acunto, Head of DG GROW’s ‘Food and Healthcare Industries, and Biotechnology’ Unit. “The initiatives of DG GROW will focus on strengths and future challenges – such as innovation, food fraud, SMEs, and sustainability – of our dynamic industry within, and outside the EU, as well as the benefits for our consumers in their everyday lives.”

Through such events, companies will be able to meet different potential business partners from various countries and identify concrete business opportunities and partnership agreements, such as technology transfers or innovation partnerships, and conclude business cooperation.
Expo Milano also coincides with the deadline for meeting the UN’s Millennium Development Goals and putting in place the post-2015 framework to achieve sustainable development (see pages 18-19).

‘Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life’ is one of today’s biggest challenges in the world. Today, more than 800 million people are suffering from hunger and more than 3 million children die every year due to undernutrition. 70% of the world’s poor live in rural areas – agriculture (including livestock), aquaculture and fisheries are therefore key economic sectors in developing countries and hold great potential in stimulating broad-based income growth.

Agriculture and fisheries – keys for development

This is why food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture are key EU priorities to support developing countries’ efforts to sustainably grow and develop.

“Despite the fact that we live on an increasingly interconnected planet, a very significant part of the population still lives in the isolation of extreme poverty,” points out Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director-General, DG DEVCO. “One quarter of the world’s children, 161 million, are suffering from chronic undernutrition today. This is a tragedy, with children dying or not developing fully their mental and physical capacities. But it’s also an irreparable loss to the economy of the countries they live in. To achieve sustainable inclusive growth for all, we must fight undernutrition.”

The EU is the biggest development and humanitarian actor in food security, providing significant financial and political support, and a major contributor to global food and nutrition security governance. Improving food and nutrition security and increasing agricultural production sustainably are EU priorities over the period 2014-20, and the focus of EU development assistance in 60 developing countries, especially in Africa, with more than €8 billion allocated.

EU seeks to maximise agriculture’s contribution to economic growth and jobs creation, promote agricultural sustainability – including for livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and agroforestry – and reduce chronic malnutrition.

With increasing evidence of the cost linked to child undernutrition, the EU is also pushing hard the issue of nutrition, and is committed to helping partner countries reduce the number of children suffering from undernutrition by 7 million by 2025.

Managing food crises and enhancing resilience is another important component of the EU external actions. Both EU Humanitarian and Development funds are working – through a coordinated and synergic approach – to enhance the most vulnerable people’s longer-term resilience to food crises by addressing food crises’ structural causes and driving inclusive and sustainable growth to help ease dependence on crisis management.

#EYD2015

With 2015 being the European Year for Development (see Dossier, CEND #18), Expo Milano provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of development issues across Europe and highlight the benefits of development activities in some of the world’s poorest countries.
At EU level, ensuring that all people have access to sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious food has also a crucial economic importance. **Research and innovation have an important role to play.**

Efforts in research could help achieve a 20% gain in resource use efficiency, help reverse a diminishing trend of productivity gains in primary production, enable a continual adjustment of food safety policy in light of new scientific evidence, and provide the integrated EU approach needed for reducing ill health due to poor nutrition and obesity.

As far as Research and Innovation Policy is concerned, the Expo will be an important forum for presenting and debating possible systemic – rather than sectoral – solutions to the issues at stake in the sectors producing and transforming biomass. In particular, the issue of using our land and water resources more efficiently and sustainably – or issues such as the ‘food versus fuel’ debate, concerns about land use change and alternative uses of biomass – will be more effectively resolved by looking at the broader picture.

**Sustainable, systemic solutions needed**

DG RTD will contribute to the debate by promoting the Horizon 2020 challenge-based approach, helping participants to consider the issues surrounding agriculture, consumers’ perceptions, nutrition and health, and the nexus among food, water and energy.

“There is no greater challenge than the global provision of a safe secure and sustainable bioeconomy,” explains John Bell, Director of DG RTD’s Bioeconomy Directorate. “A major entity and objective of Horizon 2020 is in providing better quality food, viable industrial products, and thriving rural and coastal communities. This is fully compliant with the EU Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change, along with global food security, climate and resource efficiency commitments. Horizon 2020 will strive to better coordinate and focus these objectives with other global players through high quality research, innovation, and targeted investments.”

On 8 May 2015, a series of discussions will be officially launched, which the EU Scientific Steering Committee for Expo will follow. A high-level conference entitled ‘Towards a Research Agenda for Global Food and Nutrition Security’ will focus on how to feed the planet, and the role research, development and innovation can play to achieve this goal. Commissioners Tibor Navracsics, Phil Hogan and Carlos Moedas are expected to attend, along with distinguished scientific experts and high-level representatives from international institutions.

Research and innovation can stimulate international cooperation and promote coherent European policies in order to increase the impact of agriculture and fisheries research on poverty reduction, food security, and sustainable management of natural resources in developing countries. The final objective of the series of events at Expo will be to explore with participants win-win solutions to the challenge of feeding tomorrow’s planet.
Following a record response rate, the 2014 Staff Survey results are now available. Despite a small decrease in staff engagement, the Commission remains an attractive and appreciated employer. Future policies on Well-Being and Talent Management will address staff’s most burning concerns.

With a record participation of around 19,500 people – 49% of Commission staff – the Staff Survey 2014 has yielded its results. The feedback provided by our colleagues to the organisation’s top management provides – in the words of Vice-President for Budget and Human Resources Kristalina Georgieva – “a clear picture of what works well in our Institution and what needs improvement”. The high level of participation gives the survey results even more strength – so thanks to all those of you who have contributed to such a result!

Positive results
The overall staff satisfaction with the Commission as an employer stays stable and high, at 72%, recording even a small increase compared to 2013 (70%). The Commission compares favourably to other public organisations, and the survey provides a picture of a committed and proud workforce, willing to go the extra mile when needed.

The vast majority of us consider that working relations with our colleagues and managers are good – and are getting better. There is also a clear improvement in staff perceptions of senior management, in particular, in encouraging collaboration and innovation and in demonstrating the importance of listening to staff.

Areas for improvement
However, there are clear areas of concern. Staff do not consider that the organisation seems to care about their well-being. Only half of staff feel that they have an appropriate workload and many experience difficulties in achieving an appropriate work-life balance.

“An clear picture of what works well in our Institution and what needs improvement”
Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva

Staff responses to questions on their involvement in the organisation and whether or not they perceive that their opinion is valued have also shown a noticeable drop in 2014, as well as staff perceptions of their professional future and the support provided by management on learning and development issues.
The overall downward trend in results – some 5% overall – can be explained by the fact that 2014 was a year of transition, with the implementation of new Staff Regulations and, for some, a reorganisation involving an adjustment to change. The Staff Engagement Index – which is calculated on the basis of staff responses to seven key questions in the survey, has also decreased slightly compared to 2013, from 70.9% to 65.3%. Younger staff (under 29) seem to be more engaged than the average, along with middle and senior managers, recent recruits, and staff over 60. The least engaged are staff aged 50-59, staff with 6-15 years’ experience in the Institution, AST staff, and Contract Agents.

Still, despite this decrease, the Commission – benchmarked against data coming from other public administrations (including the UK Civil Service, the US and Canadian Governments) – comes out as an attractive workplace, in particular, compared to the US Government and global data.

**Actions**
With these precious results in hand, both DG HR and local management teams will examine and discuss the results and take the appropriate follow-up action at central and local levels. Work on a number of new corporate policies is already underway to address the issues of Well-Being and Talent Management and Directors-General have been asked to oversee follow-up action on local areas of concern. News on specific follow-up actions will appear on My IntraComm and in Commission en Direct later this year.

**Staff Survey results**
* http://europa.eu/_wG66Vj
A new version of the EU Transparency Register was launched on 27 January 2015, following joint work by the Commission and European Parliament. Martin Kroeger (SG) explains the wider context of the changes and new features available.

How does the new version of the Transparency Register fit in with the Commission’s wider commitment to transparency?

The Transparency Register is a key tool for implementing the Commission’s commitment to transparency. It sheds light on those seeking to influence policy-making in the EU Institutions – the issues they follow and the human and financial resources they have. Transparency is important for the public legitimacy of the EU decision-making process. In November 2014, the College committed itself to publishing information on meetings of the Commissioners, Cabinet members and Directors-General, and providing greater access to documents relating to the negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US.

What is new?

A number of improvements have been made – both to the content and at the technical level. The new system changes the way human resources invested in lobbying are declared and requires additional information about registrants’ involvement in committees, forums, intergroups or similar structures and the legislative files they are following. All registrants are now required to declare estimated costs related to lobbying. A streamlined ‘alerts & complaints’ procedure allows for greater scrutiny and more efficient treatment of allegedly misleading information. There are new incentives to increase the added value of registering – all those wanting to meet with Commissioners, their staff or heads of departments or to speak at hearings organised by the European Parliament are now required to register.

The new website also has a modern design and improved structure – with a straightforward registration process accompanied by comprehensive guidelines, a quicker search function for registered entities, a helpdesk, and useful links. It is available in all official EU languages and for smartphones/tablets.

How can the Register be useful to colleagues?

The Register helps staff be better aware of the profile, mission and activities of the organisations with which they are in contact, and the resources behind them. Moreover, all organisations that join the Register sign up to its Code of Conduct. In this way, interlocutors commit to a set of ethical and integrity principles governing their relations with the EU Institutions. We count on colleagues regularly in touch with external stakeholders to actively use and promote the Register.

Contact

Martin Ohridski, Policy Officer, SG Transparency Unit

We could do the best possible work but it will be worth nothing if we do not earn the support and trust of the citizens we are working for. So let us be more transparent, because in fact we have nothing to hide.

Jean-Claude Juncker
eTENDERING – A QUICK AND EASY WAY TO MANAGE YOUR CALLS FOR TENDERS

by Anca Breana, PUBLICATIONS OFFICE

eTendering is a platform that helps manage calls for tenders. It is a cost-effective way to provide free public access to all documents related to a call for tenders. It can be used by EU Institutions and Agencies. Being an extension of TED (Tenders Electronic Daily), it enables the procedures to be conducted efficiently, within a secure environment.

What are the benefits?
eTendering offers EU Institutions and Agencies (contracting authorities) a collaborative, user-friendly way of:
• managing calls for tenders
• publishing documents (contractual documentation, technical specifications, annexes)
• answering questions
• synchronising with notices submitted through eNotices and published on the TED website
• publishing calls for tenders for all types of procedures (above/below the legal thresholds) and calls for expression of interest
• making statistics and reports related to the calls for tenders accessible.

There are also significant benefits for your partners. For economic operators, eTendering gives:
• a central point of access to calls for tenders from the EU Institutions
• information about the calls for tenders available in all EU official languages
• access to all publicly available documents
• the opportunity to submit questions in any EU official language and to view other questions and answers
• real-time notifications related to updates in selected calls for tenders.

How does it work?
The platform is made up of two parts:
• the private, back-office site – for the contracting authorities to prepare calls for tenders, data, documents and process questions and answers
• the public site – accessible to the economic operators to download documents, ask questions, etc.

Registration and use of eTendering are absolutely free of charge.

Who is currently using eTendering?
The platform is already used by many DGs of the Commission and of the European Parliament, the Court of Auditors, and several EU Agencies.

Any EU Institution or Agency using ECAS authentication can access eTendering.
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OP-ETENDERING-HELPDESK@publications.europa.eu

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http://europa.eu/!jM94MR
eTendering public site
http://europa.eu/IDCG9vH

Evolution of eTendering use

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WELCOME OFFICE’S LEGAL ASSISTANCE
SOCIAL SECURITY AND DOMESTIC WORKERS

by Jacques Buekenhoudt, DG HR

A Royal Decree of 13 July 2014 (Belgian Official Gazette of 28 July 2014) has drastically modified the legislation applicable to domestic workers in order to comply with the International Labour Organisation’s Convention n°189 in relation to domestic housework.

Convention n°189 aims at securing a decent situation for household workers, including granting them protection equivalent to that of other workers in relation to social security (sickness and invalidity coverage, retirement pension schemes).

In practice and to sum up, until October/2014, domestic workers whose total hours worked did not exceed 24 hours per week with one or more employers were exempted from social security contributions.

Since 1/October 2014, the only workers exempted from social security contributions are domestic workers providing services of an intellectual nature (babysitter, nurse, home carer…) if the services are provided occasionally, with a limited payment (indemnisation limitée/beperkte vergoeding) and do not exceed 8 hours a week with one or more employers.

Since 1/October 2014, all domestic workers providing household services of a manual nature – including cleaning, washing, laundering, ironing, cooking, gardening, and shopping – are subject to social security contributions with no exception and without regard to the number of hours worked.

Domestic workers are now treated as ordinary workers with social security contributions rising up to 43.96%.

In addition, considering that domestic workers are now subject to social security contributions, they cannot, in principle, be employed for less than 4 hours per day.

As a consequence, since 1 October 2014, anyone using the services of a ‘cleaning person’ must:
- be identified as an employer
- fill in a DIMONA declaration
- fill in every quarter a declaration – a Déclaration multi-fonctionnelle/multifunctionele Aangifte (DmfA) – to the National Social Security Office (ONSS/RSZ)
- pay the social security contributions.

ONSS – Instructions administratives

ONSS – Personnel de maison

Welcome Office’s legal advice service
- http://europa.eu/!yq88VB

Legal brochures
- http://europa.eu/!VP87uJ

Legal assistance
The Welcome Office (see pages 30-31) offers to staff and members of their families a first-line lawyer service providing legal assistance in matters related to their private life. (This excludes legal assistance with any issue or dispute involving the Commission or in connection with your working environment and professional activity.)

The lawyers working in-house are Jacques Buekenhoudt, Emmanuelle Cugnon, and Alessandra Franchi, all members of the Brussels Bar. They are supported by a back-office team of lawyers, in Brussels and in other cities of the EU, who feed them with information and feedback on specific issues or specialised matters. The team provides more than 7,000 consultations per year through personal meetings, phone consultations or e-mails. Due to the increasing number of questions sent by e-mail, priority is given to responding to emergencies.

The lawyers have also drafted informative legal brochures on various subjects related to consumer protection, citizenship, labour law, family and tax matters, which are available online (see link below).

Rental contracts
The legal advisors do not check rental contracts which have not yet been signed. Members of the Welcome Office team have been trained to read and comment on rental contract proposals under the supervision of the lawyers. Please send your request to:
- HR B1 BUREAU ACCUEIL.

Consultations
By appointment only. Call the Welcome Office at 02 29 66600 to arrange a personal meeting or a telephone call.
Leon Brittan (1939-2015)
Energy, intellect and commitment
by Jonathan Faull, Director-General of DG FISMA and Brittan Cabinet member (1989-1992)

Leon Brittan was a European Commissioner from 1989 to 1999. In his first term he was responsible for competition and financial services. In his second term he took on external relations and trade policies. Delivering the EU’s first Merger Regulation, guiding the Uruguay Trade Round to a successful conclusion and the transformation of the GATT into the WTO were just a few of his many major contributions to the EU we know and benefit from today.

He brought energy, intellect and commitment to his work, mastering complex briefs and showing the debating skills honed during his university studies at Cambridge and Yale, in court as a barrister and in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament between 1974 and 1988.

He arrived in Brussels in 1989 at a time of renewed optimism that Europe was moving forward again. It was a year of revolution and transformation. The Single Market was on course for completion in 1992. Leon Brittan, soon to be Sir Leon, later Lord Brittan, settled quickly into his new role as Commissioner. He read everything, commented on nearly all of it, and relished the battles of ideas into which his portfolios thrust him.

In those pre-e-mail days, papers piled up every working day on a chair outside his office. Whatever his diary said about dinners, flights or late meetings, all those papers came back the following morning with copious handwritten comments in his inimitable scrawl. Meetings were challenging, often fun, sometimes chastening, as the Commissioner turned his mind to the issues of the day. He listened politely to everyone, from junior officials to Directors-General, and made up his mind when he had seen the evidence and heard the arguments.

He was neither the first nor the last British Commissioner to be accused at home of “going native”. He enjoyed fighting back in the media and through his books – ‘Europe – The Europe We Need’ (1994) and ‘A Diet of Brussels – The Changing Face of Europe’ (2000). He liked to point out that opening markets and keeping them competitive were in the interests of all Member States, including his own. He spoke good French and German and had a sound grasp of European politics and where the European project was going.

His legal background and grasp of detail made him formidable in an argument. In an early discussion, a specific Treaty article was raised. A junior cabinet member embarked on a lengthy explanation, but didn’t get very far. The Commissioner interrupted politely, saying he knew what it said and meant. He had, after all, read the Treaties before taking office, as subsequent years proved beyond doubt. The young cabinet member swallowed hard and could not help wondering how many other Commissioners had prepared for their high office by reading the Treaties from beginning to end.

He had great personal charm, and he and wife Diana were popular in Commission and wider Brussels circles. His cabinets included a future Commission Secretary-General, several British Ambassadors, Permanent Secretaries and Representatives, not to mention a Deputy Prime Minister and several Directors-General. Various reunions took place over the years, and plans were afoot last year to celebrate his 75th birthday in Brussels when he was taken ill. He died in London where he had been born in 1939 – in a very different Europe.


Narjes blieb seiner ordnungspolitischen Linie auch treu, als es um das Stahlquotensystem ging, das sein Vorgänger Etienne Graf Davignon eingeführt hatte. Narjes ließ sich auf keine Kompromisse ein und schaffte es ersatzlos ab.

Beim Bierreinheitsgebot trafen ebenfalls protetionistische Tendenzen auf den Marktwirtschaftler Narjes. Er ließ das Reinheitsgebot als solches bestehen, was in der emotional aufgeladenen Debatte häufig übersehen wurde, und beseitigte lediglich die damit verbundene Einfuhrbeschränkung.

Karl-Heinz Narjes hatte zahlreiche menschliche Qualitäten: Er war ein freundlicher Gesprächspartner, der die Diskussion liebte und sie mit wacher Intelligenz vorantrieb, der Mut bewies und Standfestigkeit gegenüber Lobbyisten besaß. Dabei war er ein Mann, der für seine europäischen Überzeugungen mit Zähigkeit und Nachdruck kämpfte, aber ohne andere zu verletzen.

Mit einem Wort: ein großer Europäer, den wir schmerzlich vermissen werden.
After some sixteen years spent in various countries in Africa, Pamela O’Cuneen recounts in her latest book ‘Hummingbirds in my Hair’ her continuing adventures as an EU diplomat’s wife in Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Your first book ‘Culture Shock and Canapés’ (CEND 632, page 6) covers the years you spent in Africa. What was it like to pack up and move to Suriname?

Changing countries is hard to do. The benefit of having done university studies in ‘culture shock’ was that when it occurred once more, I was able to recognise it more quickly, regain a sense of humour, and start living again. The fact that one has studied culture shock does not make one immune to its effects, and no one is immune from the trauma of losing friends, a familiar lifestyle, and surroundings.

Once I took action, the country had many discoveries and surprises in store – Paramaribo, Suriname’s capital, being like no other city I had ever seen. Suriname, former Dutch Guiana, was a Dutch-speaking enclave in the Caribbean – the ‘Land of Seven Peoples’, where we found Caribs, Creoles, Maroons, Chinese, Indians (called locally ‘Hindustanis’), Javanese, and Dutch living together in harmony. In Suriname, the different people’s festivities tended to be celebrated within each group. When we moved to Trinidad, the surprise was that in the ‘Rainbow Nation’ everyone joined in each group’s festivals – from Carnival to Diwali.

How did your experiences in Suriname and then Trinidad and Tobago compare with those in sub-Saharan Africa?

My experience in sub-Saharan Africa prepared me well for the Caribbean region, since so much of the population has African roots as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade. I learned that the traumatic history of both Suriname and Trinidad still influences the thinking of the population – indeed sometimes it seems as if an awareness of slavery is in the DNA, and can affect cross-cultural relationships. One needs to be particularly careful not to criticise, or belittle people in any way, since in many cases people seem ultrasensitive.

Despite the label ‘Caribbean’, no two countries have the same history. In Suriname, there is a long history of extreme brutality, and a Maroon population descended from escaped slaves who live in the forest to this day. In Trinidad, where slavery existed for a shorter time, some slaves were brought directly from West Africa, while others already cowed or ‘seasoned’ came from French islands such as Martinique and plantations in America. Trinidad is a ‘rainbow culture’, and, because many groups were able to retain their cultural identity,
they also retained strength and self-worth. Trinidadians, by and large, are strong and proud people.

Angola, one of our previous postings, was from where some four million slaves were taken to the New World. While development is happening there, there is also a sense of darkness and defeat which may in part be due to 400 years of war and human abuse in the region.

What function does the cocktail and reception circuit have in the life of a Head of Delegation and his wife?
The cocktail and reception circuit might seem to be a frivolous and superficial activity in the life of the Head of Delegation and his wife. One day a friend, looking at my wardrobe said: “But you don’t have any work clothes!” What she didn’t realise was that the ‘little black dresses’ were in fact my working clothes. When office hours were over, our job was to don evening clothes and go out to work, to network, and to create harmonious relationships, so that the day job could proceed smoothly. The Diplomatic Corps did not go out in the evenings to enjoy themselves, but to exchange information and meet with Ministers and local VIPs, to ensure that aid projects could advance easily and that the next encounter with government officials would be a meeting of friends rather than adversaries. I saw the role of the Head of Mission’s wife to be that of a facilitator, creating events and functions in which good relations with the host country could be advanced.

How did you manage to capture so much colour and vivid detail in the book?
When writing ‘Culture Shock and Canapés’, I was able to consult 20 years of letters written to a friend. By the time we arrived in Suriname in 1994, e-mail had arrived and there were fewer documents to refer to, but I did have the habit of writing amusing bulletins to friends a few times per year, and fortunately I have good recall. Historical research required study. Had we known, when we went to the Caribbean, as much as we do now about the dark history of that region, our stay would have been still richer.

What is it like to have spent 25 years of your life moving every few years from one country to another?
As I say in the introduction to the book, it has been “a mixture of discovery and surprise, delight, fear and sadness”. One is pushed out of one’s comfort zone with each move. Friends, familiar surroundings and possessions are lost and abandoned and, in the end, we lose all sense of ‘home’. We live, like snails, with our house on our back. And yet, if we spend time hankering after the imagined comforts of our home culture, we risk ignoring the richness of the moment. Every country we have lived in has yielded a rich harvest of colourful and challenging experiences and warm friendships which we would otherwise have missed.

To anyone embarking on the adventure of an overseas posting I would say – don’t miss the chance. Go with an open mind, learn all you can about your new country before you go, study the language, resolve to understand and love the people, and remember that they love their country too. Be warned that there will be a period of adjustment and bad days – particularly in the beginning, when you will feel alien – but if you wear a smile and keep your sense of humour in all situations, your years in overseas postings will leave you with wonderful memories.

Is there another book in the making about the adjustment to ‘retirement’ and the return to England?
You never know!

To anyone embarking on the adventure of an overseas posting I would say – don’t miss the chance
Bon anniversaire!

par Monique Théâtre, DG HR

Une ancienne collègue de la Commission, Marie-Louise Vinamont-Hallet, a fêté son 100e anniversaire le 21 décembre 2014.

Engagée en 1961 à l’Euratom auprès de la Direction VII, elle a travaillé comme assistante au Centre d’information et de documentation (CID), service « Diffusion des connaissances ». Elle sera ensuite affectée à la DG XIII de la Commission, d’abord à la Bibliothèque scientifique, ensuite au service des acquisitions de la Bibliothèque centrale. Chargée plus spécifiquement du contrôle des commandes de publications de la Bibliothèque et des programmes mécanographiques, elle y restera jusqu’à son départ en pension en 1979.

Marie-Louise Vinamont-Hallet conserve un excellent souvenir de sa carrière au sein de la Bibliothèque et de l’esprit de solidarité qui régnait entre les collègues. Elle a d’ailleurs gardé jusqu’à ce jour des contacts avec certains d’entre eux. Tout ce qui touche à la culture l’intéresse: théâtre, cinéma, art mais elle est surtout restée passionnée de lecture – "je ne peux pas vivre sans lire" – et dévore romans, essais sur l’Europe et le monde et, notamment, Commission en direct qu’elle parcourt avec grand intérêt.

Marie-Louise Vinamont-Hallet vit de manière autonome dans son appartement et a des contacts permanents avec ses enfants, petits-enfants et arrière-petits-enfants. Le secret de sa longévité: être optimiste, ne jamais s’endormir sur ses lauriers, rester actif et, surtout, aider les plus malheureux que soi. Une belle leçon…

Selon l’usage pour nos centenaires, Marie-Louise Vinamont-Hallet a reçu à l’occasion de son anniversaire un petit cadeau de la part de l’unité « Politique sociale » de la DG HR, ainsi qu’une lettre de félicitations signée par le président Jean-Claude Juncker.

Accompagner les anciens collègues bénévoles

par Monique Théâtre, DG HR

A Bruxelles, le service social propose aux bénévoles sociaux de l’AIACE un accompagnement.

Au sein du service social à Bruxelles, trois assistants sociaux voient leurs tâches dévolues aux pensionnés. Ils reçoivent quotidiennement de nombreuses demandes d’aide pour des problèmes très diversifiés, allant d’un simple conseil sur le choix d’une maison de retraite à la question sensible d’une mise sous tutelle. Une enquête bimensuelle, en coopération avec les autres institutions, permet d’identifier les situations de grande difficulté.

La dispersion géographique des pensionnés ne facilite pas le travail des assistants sociaux, malgré la présence de services sociaux également à Luxembourg et dans les Centres communs de recherche. L’accord de partenariat signé en 2008 entre la Commission et l’AIACE (Association internationale des anciens de l’UE) constitue un atout précieux. Les 15 sections nationales de l’Association comptent en effet de nombreux bénévoles, tous anciens fonctionnaires, qui consacrent une partie de leur temps libre à aider les collègues en difficulté. Cet engagement dans le bénévolat consiste à soutenir des personnes en souffrance et représente un investissement émotionnel important.


Le service social pensionnés
http://europa.eu/!rm46Uq
AIACE
www.aiace-europa.eu/fr/
Le marionnettiste, illustrateur et réalisateur de dessins animés Jiří Trnka (1912-1969), en haut à gauche.


Rewi Manga Maniapoto, de Gottfried Lindauer (1882), à gauche.

Venus – Now and in the future, de Ladislav Sutnar, ci-dessus.
PILSEN 2015
CAPITALE EUROPEENNE DE LA CULTURE
par Hélène Bouche, CEND

Situated to the west of the Czech Republic, Pilsen was designated European Capital of Culture 2015. New circus, exhibitions, spectacles, celebrations: the cultural manifestations will not fail to animate the city and its region.

Depuis janvier 2015, Pilsen (Plzeň en tchèque), ville industrielle d’environ 165 000 habitants, partage le titre de Capitale européenne de la culture avec la ville belge de Mons (voir CEND #19, pages 56-58). La ville tchèque a choisi comme slogan «Pilsen, Open Up!» – symbole de l’ouverture aux nouvelles idées et aux courants artistiques novateurs, de son ouverture sur l’Europe, mais aussi clin d’œil à sa célèbre marque de bière locale Pilsner.

La saison du nouveau cirque
Pilsen a choisi de miser une grande partie de son programme culturel sur le nouveau cirque. Tout au long de l’année, de multiples chapiteaux s’installeront en ville pour mettre en scène des spectacles composés par des grandes troupes venues du monde entier. La ville accueillera, entre autres, le spectacle «Sonnet pour un clown» de la jeune troupe du MagdaClan, le duo d’acrobaties franco-finlandais du cirque Aïtal ou encore les acrobates, danseurs et acteurs du cirque tchèque La Putyka qui présenteront «Family», un projet intergénérationnel qui allie cirque traditionnel et nouveau cirque. Parallèlement à ces festivals et performances, une politique d’aide à la formation et au financement des projets des artistes circassiens a été mise en place sur le long terme.

Les commémorations à l’honneur
Pour cette année culturelle, la ville de Pilsen a tenu à rendre hommage à ses natifs célèbres. Une exposition dédiée au marionnettiste, illustrateur et réalisateur de dessins animés Jiří Trnka est programmée jusqu’au 10 mai; elle sera suivie d’une exposition interactive inspirée de son livre Zahradu (Le Jardin, 1962).

Pour sa part, la galerie de la Bohême de l’Ouest (Západočeská galerie) abriterà cet été les portraits ma- rks du peintre Gottfried Lindauer (1839-1926), devenu une figure emblématique de l’art néo-zélandais. Cette série unique de quarante peintures sera montrée pour la première fois en Europe. En complément, d’avril à juin, le projet «Mud, Misery and Bohemians» (Boue, misère et Bohémiens) retracera en particulier l’histoire et le long péripole des 83 habitants de Stod, ville voisine de Pilsen, qui en 1883 émigrèrent vers la Nouvelle-Zélande et fondèrent un nouveau village dans une région sauvage.

L’œuvre de Ladislav Sutnar (1897-1976), l’un des pionniers du design de l’information, fera également l’objet d’une série d’expositions s’intéressant aux prix qui lui ont été décernés après son installation aux États-Unis en 1939, notamment la médaille AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts).

Dans un autre registre, Pilsen ne manquera pas l’opportunité de célébrer le 70e anniversaire de la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et de la libération de la ville par l’armée américaine. La première semaine de mai, la ville retrouvera l’atmosphère de 1945 avec notamment un Convoi de liberté qui réunira plus de 300 véhicules militaires.

Des infrastructures novatrices
Certaines manifestations culturelles se dérouleront dans cinq zones industrielles réaménagées en lieux d’art, mettant ainsi en valeur l’héritage industriel de la ville: des concerts à la brasserie Pilsner Urquell, un planetarium dans les bâtiments de Škoda ou encore un centre culturel sur le site de Papírna (le moulin à papier).

D’autres événements auront lieu au Nouveau Théâtre, conçu pour cette année particulière dans un style contemporain: l’édifice se démarque par sa façade en béton «à bulles», représentation architecturale d’un rideau de scène séparant la réalité quotidienne de l’atmosphère illusoire du théâtre.
De plus, Pilsen s’est lancée dans la création d’un quartier multiculturel dédié au design et aux artistes amateurs, ainsi que dans la conception d’un nouveau bâtiment pour la Faculté d’Arts de l’Université de Bohême de l’Ouest qui a activement soutenu la candidature de la ville. Le Centre des sciences Techmania, un espace expérimental ayant pour but de familiariser enfants et adultes aux sciences et aux nouvelles technologies à travers des expériences ludiques et interactives, illustre lui aussi la créativité et l’innovation de la ville.

**Tourisme en Bohême de l’Ouest**

Comme toute capitale européenne de la culture, Pilsen compte stimuler le tourisme local en attirant des visiteurs de toute l’Europe. Ils pourront grimper les 301 marches de la Cathédrale Saint-Barthélémy pour se voir offrir un panorama remarquable sur la ville, découvrir la Grande Synagogue, mais aussi s’aventurer dans les galeries souterraines de la ville, dont certaines datent du XIVe siècle. Pour les amateurs de bière, la brasserie Pilsner Urquell et son musée de la bière levent le voile sur les techniques de fabrication de la boisson locale.

Les activités touristiques s’étendront dans toute la région de la Bohême de l’Ouest célèbre pour ses villes d’eau, qui ont attiré au fil des siècles des personnalités telles que Bach, Pierre le Grand, Freud, Goethe, Marx ou encore des célébrités hollywoodiennes. Au cœur d’une vallée boisée, la station thermale la plus visitée de République tchèque, Karlovy Vary (sous son nom allemand Karlsbad), célébrera, dans la première quinzaine de juillet, la 50e édition de son festival annuel de cinéma international. Le mois suivant, comme chaque année, la ville de Domažlice, au sud-ouest de Pilsen, réveillera les traditions locales pendant les Fêtes de Chodsko au son des cornemuses et au rythme des danses traditionnelles.

Enfin, cet été, la programmation «9 weeks of Baroque: Experience Baroque with all your senses» permettra de découvrir chaque semaine une nouvelle partie de la région de Pilsen au fil de nuits baroques avec concerts, feux d’artifice et gastronomie tchèque.

> www.plzen2015.cz/
Concert
5th European Blues Challenge

12-14 mars, Ancienne Belgique, Bruxelles
L’European Blues Union – composée de membres actifs dans 22 pays de l’UE et 3 pays hors UE (Géorgie, Russie, Suisse) – organise pour la 5e année, et pour la 1e fois en Belgique, le European Blues Challenge. A l’Ancienne Belgique (AB), chaque pays membre présentera des musiciens de blues qui concourront pour le titre de Best European Blues, en quelque sorte une Eurovision du blues, mais complètement live.
Le jeudi soir, après un concert inaugural des plus grands artistes blues and roots belges à l’AB, les jeunes talents locaux se produiront dans des cafés du centre ville. Vendredi et samedi, une dizaine de pays seront en compétition chaque soir pour remporter le titre de l’édition 2015.
> www.brusselsblues.eu
> www.europeanbluesunion.com

Jazz et world
Printemps Musical

Du 4 mars au 27 mai, diverses salles, Luxembourg
Pour sa 33e édition, le festival de musique jazz et world Printemps Musical propose onze concerts, de la salle d’ambiance de Neumünster à la prestigieuse Philharmonie.
> www.printempsmusical.lu

Exposition
Trésors d’architecture

Jusqu’au 19 avril, CIVA (Centre International pour la Ville, l’Architecture et le Paysage), Bruxelles
L’exposition «Trésors d’architecture: de l’Art nouveau à l’Expo 58», réalisée par les Archives d’Architecture Moderne (AAM), propose un parcours didactique, à la découverte de pièces rares ou inédites telles que des plans de Victor Horta que l’on croyait disparus ou des projets inconnus de Henry van de Velde. À l’occasion du 50e anniversaire de la disparition de Le Corbusier, plusieurs de ses œuvres sont présentées, notamment la cuisine dessinée par Charlotte Perriand pour sa Cité radieuse (1952) à Marseille. L’exposition rappelle aussi le chemin parcouru depuis la démolition de la Maison du Peuple de Horta en 1964 jusqu’aux politiques de protection du patrimoine menées aujourd’hui.
> http://aam.be/
> www.civa.be
ACROSS
03 The most popular British hard cheese
07 Tuberous American crop that conquered the world
08 Nutritious gluten-free seed, often considered wrongly as a cereal
10 It’s di bufala when made with water buffalo milk
13 Gives beer its bitterness
16 Gordon, the devil in the Hell’s Kitchen
17 Boiled cornmeal porridge of Northern Italian origin
18 Wiener fried veal dish
19 Hot and spicy relish typical of the Balkans
20 International movement promoting alternatives to fast food

DOWN
01 Red berry often associated with pasta or pizza
02 Portuguese archipelago famous for its fortified wine
04 The scientific name of drinking alcohol
05 French duck delicacy
06 City in the Netherlands lending its name to a cheese
07 Pest that plagued most European vineyards in the late 19th century
09 Macronutrient providing 9 calories per gram consumed
11 Some say they will become our main future source of proteins
12 English name of soup or stew originating from the Kingdom of Hungary
14 Rice dish coming from Valencia
15 Spanish ham, whose name means ’coming from the sierra’

ANSWERS TO DECEMBER-JANUARY’S CROSSWORD
ACROSS: 03 BLUEWHALE - 05 GREENPEACE - 08 SULPHUR - 09 CANETE - 11 SEVESO - 17 COPENHAGEN - 18 KRILL - 19 BAikal - 20 PATAGONIA
DOWN: 01 KATRINA - 02 METHANE - 04 USA - 06 RUSSIA - 07 GLACIER - 10 AMAZONIA - 12 OZONE - 13 FRACKING - 14 PANDA - 15 TAIGA - 16 POLDER
Answers in next month’s edition. Send your suggestions for clues and keys to matteo.manzonetto@ec.europa.eu, with ‘crosswords’ in the subject line.
01 According to ISTAT (2013), how many people live in the Metropolitan City of Milan (former Provincia di Milano)?
   a. around 4.1 million
   b. around 3.2 million
   c. around 1.9 million

02 Which ancient civilisation founded Milan?
   a. the Celts
   b. the Lombards/Langobards
   c. the Romans

03 Which one is Milan’s main stadium?
   a. Giuseppe Meazza (San Siro)
   b. Olimpico
   c. Stadio Delle Alpi

04 Milan is part of the Italian ‘industrial triangle’, along with...
   a. Genoa and Verona
   b. Monza and Varese
   c. Turin and Genoa

05 One of the city’s most known symbols is the...
   a. Arena, an ancient Roman amphitheatre
   b. Madunina, a golden statue of Saint Mary
   c. Mole, a dome with a very high pinnacle

06 Compared to the rest of the Christian world, Milan celebrates the end of its own Carnival (Carnevale Ambrosiano)...
   a. one week earlier
   b. four days later
   c. on the same day

07 The risotto alla Milanese usually contains:
   a. seafood
   b. pancetta
   c. saffron

08 Which one of these paintings by Leonardo da Vinci is located in Milan?
   a. The Last Supper
   b. St. John the Baptist
   c. The Adoration of the Magi

09 What are Milan’s canals called?
   a. Navigli
   b. Fossi
   c. Canali

10 Milan hosted a previous Expo (officially recognised by the Bureau International des Expositions) with a focus on transport in:
   a. 1934
   b. 1906
   c. 1958
The first World’s Fair recognised by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) was organised in London, in a temporary structure built in Hyde Park – the Crystal Palace. The ‘Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations’ was organised by Henry Cole and Prince Albert, husband of the reigning monarch, Queen Victoria, and showcased the most advanced examples of technology and industrial processes. It was attended by a number of personalities, including Charles Darwin, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and Lewis Carroll.

At the Brussels World’s Fair – or Expo 58 – the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was for the first time present with a pavilion (see photo). It was the first major world exhibition after World War II. The Atomium is the main legacy of the Fair held on the Heysel plateau. The ECSC pavilion architecture wanted to underline the supranational and communitarian spirit of the recently born organisation. The building was characterised by six big arches representing the six Member States of the time. Its 8,000-m² were used to display the Community’s political, social and economic achievements.

The European Economic Community first participated in an Expo at the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair.

This year’s Expo in Milan has ‘Feeding the planet – Energy for life’ as its theme – a topic of central importance for the EU (see Dossier, pages 32-45). Three international organisations – including the EU – and 20 EU Member States will be present with national pavilions among the over 140 countries participating.

The 1,900-m² EU Pavilion is built around a narrative structure which conducts visitors through the different aspects of the EU food supply chain. Through two fictional characters, the farmer Alex and the scientist Sylvia, visitors will learn how a sustainable global food chain can be achieved through cooperation between people, science, and agriculture.
Info day
Wednesday, 18 March, 12:00-15:00,
Berlaymont Piazza, Brussels

The Info Day is an annual event organised by DG HR’s Welcome Office. The big information fair – with lots of different stands representing many services, both internal and external – can be of help to newcomers and their families settling down in Brussels.

Open to all interested staff, the stands deal many aspects of life in Brussels, life in the Commission, children, culture, sports, leisure, health, etc. The Brussels Europe Liaison Office, many Brussels Communes, the sports and leisure clubs, the OIB, the PMO, the EC AST Network, Afiliatys, Eu Can Aid, Give Eur-Hope, Cancer Support, the Learning Centre, the crèches and the European Schools are just some of the many services who will be present to give information and answer any questions you may have.

hr-b1-event@ec.europa.eu
lina.cuccovia@ec.europa.eu

Lunchtime conference
Want to know more about the European Year for Development 2015?
Friday, 27 March, 13.00-14.30, PLB3, Room 01, Brussels

Join Fernando Frutuoso de Melo, Director-General of DG DEVCO, to find out all you ever wanted to know about the ‘European Year for Development 2015’ in one hour. Commission staff will have many opportunities to support and contribute to this unique European Year, given what is on the world’s agenda this year.

With global decisions foreseen on ‘Financing for Development’ in Addis Ababa in July, on ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ in New York in September and on ‘Climate Action’ in Paris in December, Europe has to exercise its leadership to bring about the positive results that people expect. Come find out how you can get involved.

Enrol in Syslog: code CTO_MML_EYD2015
http://europa.eu/lMr77XW

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All staff can apply, with priority given to officials with grade AD6 and above. Please note the new application form no longer requires the approval of your COFO but will not be accepted without the approval of your line manager.

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