

The Society for the Protection of Urban Green Space

Newsletter – January 2011

Regulations Governing European Citizens' Initiatives

On 15 December 2010 the European Parliament agreed a set of rules to govern the implementation of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) that will be formally adopted in a few weeks time. The legislation on the European Citizens' Initiative will come into force one year after it has been published in the Official Journal. The launch of the first citizens' initiatives will probably be possible from the beginning of 2012.

The new regulations allow more than one million citizens from at least seven member states to invite the European Commission to submit a legislative proposal to the European Parliament. Any proposal must be within the 'framework of its powers' and 'for the purpose of implementing the Treaties'.

The organisers of a Citizens' Initiative must be a committee composed of at least seven citizens who are residents of at least seven different Member States. The organisers will have one year to collect signatures and the Commission will have three months to examine an initiative and decide how to act on it.

The member states now have one year to transpose the ECI regulation into national legislation. The Commission will come under practical pressure since it will now have to check every single initiative before it can be registered. The Commission could be confronted with a large number of initiatives and a substantially increased workload.

Further information on the regulations that will govern ECIs is available on the websites listed below:

http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1203_the_european_citizens_initiative.pdf

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/pa/european-citizens-initiative-next-step-implementation-analysis-500714>

<http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/politics-laws.7o2/>

www.citizens-initiative.eu.

European Atlantic Movement study tour to Brussels (12-15 April 2011)



The European Atlantic Movement is organising a Study Tour to Brussels for lecturers, teachers and other professional and business people. The party will visit the European Parliament, European Commission, and Council of the European Union, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, UK Permanent Representation to the EU, and other institutions of international cooperation.

Travel will be by Eurostar from St Pancras and accommodation will be in the 4* Hotel Carrefour de l'Europe which is in the centre of Brussels . The cost for those in shared accommodation will be £219 and for those in single accommodation will be £349. Arrangements can be made for those who wish to stay Friday and Saturday nights and return on Sunday.

There are 30 places available for the Study Tour and bursaries of £120 funded by The Financial Times will be available for UK serving teachers and lecturers. This enables TEAM to provide a Study Tour for £99.

TEAM is an independent educational foundation which aims to promote understanding and discussion of World Affairs and of the Institutions of International Cooperation by young people, educators, opinion formers and other interested adults.

The programme of the study tour we organised in April this year will be sent on request. An application form and brochure may be obtained from Antony Frost, details below:

Study tour leader:

Antony J Frost

42B, Eastern Avenue, Reading , Berks, RG1 5RY.

Telephone: 0118-926-2858. Mobile: 07977-415201.

Email: a_j_frost@yahoo.com

Amendments to SPUGS Constitution made at the 2010 AGM

The implications of the Green Paper outlining the proposed regulations to govern European Citizens' Initiatives were discussed and as a consequence of these proposals and the probable outcome of the Plenary Session of the European Parliament to be held at the end of November 2010 it was unanimously agreed to amend paragraphs 2, 3a and 3b of the Constitution of The Society for the Protection of Urban Green Space to read as follows:

2. MAIN OBJECTIVE:

To obtain legislation to protect all urban green space including public parks and gardens, sports fields, allotments, children's playgrounds and playing fields and also to guarantee continued public access to these areas.

3. SUBSIDIARY OBJECTIVES AND ENDORSEMENTS:

In furtherance exclusively of the foregoing main objective, the group has the following subsidiary objectives:

- a. To organise and effect a campaign to obtain legislation to protect all urban green space.*
- b. To bring the campaign to the attention of the elected Members of the British Government and the European Parliament and lobby for the support of all political parties.*

Urban Green Space Policies

A Comparative Study on Performance and Success Conditions in European Cities

Peter Nijkamp (Amsterdam University)

Abstract:

Urban green spaces play a key role in improving the liveability of our towns and cities. The quality and viability of cities depend largely on the design, management and maintenance of urban green as well as on open and public spaces that make up an important social constellation and offer a visual representation of urban quality. Actually, urban green spaces may be seen as an important contribution to a sustainable development of cities.

However, the full potential of green spaces is not always realized, so that current management practices are sometimes sub-optimal. From a policy perspective, the results of several case studies have highlighted critical policy needs and priorities for the development and management of urban green spaces. It is, therefore, of strategic importance to compare and evaluate urban green space policies for identifying the best practices with a view to proper policy recommendations and guidance for urban society and planning authorities in order to improve the quality of life in modern cities. Against this background, the present study investigates urban green spaces from a policy evaluation perspective and analyses in a comparative sense European cities in order to obtain strategic and policy relevant information on the key features of urban green. The study aims to compare and evaluate the current management practices in various European cities on the basis of the actual performance of urban green space policies. The data and information used for comparison and evaluation are based on extensive survey questionnaires filled out by relevant departments or experts of municipalities in European cities which aim to share their experience in innovative green space policies and strategies. As a rather novel methodological contribution, a recently developed artificial intelligence method, i.e. rough set analysis, is deployed to assess and identify the most important factors that are responsible for successes and failures of urban green space policies. Our approach is able to reveal the most critical policy variables. (<http://ideas.repec.org/p/dgr/vuarem/2004-22.html>)

Public petitions in the UK could become Bills under Coalition plans

The coalition government is planning to allow petitions with a large number of statements of support to be drafted as bills and put before MPs. At present only brief details have been made public, but this is certainly a development that merits our close attention.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/politics/8227599/Public-petitions-to-become-Bills-under-plans-to-give-voters-more-power.html>

Citizenship and the Lisbon Treaty – can the British ever be European citizens? (20 January 2011)



Mary Sumner House, 24 Tutfon Street, London SW1P 3RB
2.00 – 5.30 pm followed by a drinks reception

This fourth conference in a series undertaken jointly with the Global Policy Institute and co-funded by the European Commission Representation in the UK, examines citizenship in the light of the Lisbon Treaty and whether the British, given their long history of separation, physical and political, from the European continent can ever be European citizens in a real sense.

Under the Coalition Government, with its mixture of differing attitudes towards Europe, can the British be persuaded to move on from their historic position of isolation and play the leading part in the centre of the European community that the major European nations would like them to take on? Can the British be persuaded to stop worrying and learn to love the European Union?

Difficult decisions will need to be taken in the European context over the coming years, which will play an important part in the European Union's further development. Britain's traditional role in the world would seem to imply that she should play a leading part in any forthcoming European developments. But how true is this in reality? To discuss the question, we are assembling a distinguished panel and confirmed speakers to date are as follows :

Georgia Georgiadou, Policy Officer, Citizenship Unit, DG Justice, European Commission
Richard Laming, Chairman, Federal Union
John Palmer, former Political Director, European Policy Centre
Professor Jo Shaw, Salvesen Chair of European Institutions, University of Edinburgh
Chaired by **Brendan Donnelly**, Director of the Federal Trust

If you would like to attend this event, please reply to alison.sutherland@fedtrust.co.uk.

Links to Recent Publications by the Sustainable Development Commission

A new report (October 2010) published by the Sustainable Development Commission calls on the Government and service providers to do more to help young people prepare for the green economy in order to tackle youth unemployment.

The report also highlights how young people can improve their health, behaviour and sense of personal responsibility through environmental activities and volunteering, with direct relevance to reducing youth offending.

Summary from Department of Education, UK Government - The Research Informed Practice Site (TRIPS): This report aimed to identify how supporting sustainable development could be used to improve the outcomes in life for young people in the areas of education, employability as well as health and behaviour. The study was based on a review of international research as well as case study examples of good practice drawn from local authorities.

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/>

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=1113>

Download full report at: http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/SDC_IYPL_report.pdf

Every Child Matters (ECM) aims to improve the daily experiences of all young people in England - from birth to nineteen - focusing on their wellbeing, personal development and future prosperity. This paper explores the influence of the environment on children's wellbeing and is written for everyone designing and delivering services that impact on children's lives.

SDC Education, Young People and Skills:

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/education.html>

includes: "Every Child's Future Matters"

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=578>

Evidence to the Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee– (SDC 20 October 2010)

"Sustainable Development principles are even more important in a time of austerity, when the size of the public sector is being reduced, than in one of plenty; because it forces thinking about the long term consequences of immediate policy decisions and their social, environmental and economic impacts."

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/news.php/388/main/sustainable-development-is-even-more-important-in-a-time-of-austerity-a-sdc>

DEFRA has announced that funding will be withdrawn from the Sustainable Development Commission next financial year

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/news.php?id=365>