



The EU

What's in it for me?

Updated for 2008

**A NO-NONSENSE GUIDE FOR UK CITIZENS
TO WHAT THE EUROPEAN UNION DELIVERS**



© NTPL/AndrewButler

FOUNTAINS ABBEY
BUILT IN 1131

Over the centuries the river walls of the river Skell which flows beneath Fountains Abbey have been badly damaged via erosion and torrential flood waters. £370,000 from the EU funded Converting Sacred Spaces project will be used to repair the damaged river walls and do much needed conservation work in the abbey ruins at the high altar.

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union

Freephone number (*): 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*): Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00 800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>)

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GUIDE
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The EU

What's in it for me?

2008 Edition



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FOREWORD

The UK, as most of us know, is a net contributor to the EU budget. So it's understandable that people in this country expect something back for their investment. The trouble is that many of us are turned off by explanations about what the European Union does and how it does it – perhaps because we find it remote, complex or boring. In fact, in the biggest survey ever carried out by the European Commission in the UK, well over half of respondents said they knew only a bit about the EU, while three in ten said they knew nothing at all. That's a lot of people with little or no clue where their money is going or what benefits they enjoy in return.

But Britons do want the information deficit plugged. The same survey showed that 70% of respondents would like to know more about how the EU related directly to their daily lives.

So, in 2007, we produced a first edition of this booklet. In it, we set out the ways in which ordinary Britons do gain from our membership of the EU. Demand for the booklet was so high that we've now updated it to take account of new

developments in the EU designed to help you, the consumer and traveller.

Of course, not all the EU's benefits can be spelt out in purely financial terms and we should be wary of arguments that attempt this to the exclusion of all else. Taxpayers in the UK accept that the taxes they pay are spent on various ends for their collective benefit—defence, education, police and justice, general government, healthcare, etc.—and it is impossible to calculate the return to every individual, town or region. We all benefit materially and in less tangible ways from belonging to the EU.

Naturally, people need to keep a close eye on the way the money is spent and what it goes on. After all, it's your collective contribution and your European Union. We hope by the time you've read this booklet, you'll see just how much has come from our membership of the EU and what opportunities there are out there for networking, funding, travel, study and work.

We quote lots of facts and figures. Many of these come from the Commission itself, but we've also used other sources closer to home. If you want more details on any of the issues raised in the booklet, try consulting the Europa website, phoning the Europe Direct call centre or dropping in to one of the Europe Direct centres dotted around the UK. Details of all these information sources are listed at the back.

REIJO KEMPPINEN
Head of the Commission Representation in the UK



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LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD

You've probably seen TV programmes about buying second homes in southern Europe. But did you know it's the European Union that makes this feasible? In fact, agreements reached at EU level allow us all to live and work in any other member state. You can also retire abroad and arrange to have your pension paid there.

In 2006, a new law came into force, simplifying the formalities for people and their families to move or live anywhere on EU territory. (†) For instance, if you stay in another member state for under three months, all you need is your UK passport. If you are staying for longer, you will be registered in the host country as long as you have a job or enough money to keep you going and comprehensive sickness insurance. After five years of continuous residence, EU citizens are no longer subject to any conditions on residence and can only be deported in exceptional circumstances.

And when you go to another EU country on holiday, you can, as a UK citizen, get emergency health care too. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to reduced-cost and sometimes free medical treatment anywhere in the EU, Norway, Switzerland and some other countries. The card is valid for between three and five years and the quickest way to get one is to apply online:

<http://www.ehic.org/index.html>

Alternatively, you can apply by phone: 0845 606 2030 or pick up a form at your post office.

And don't forget: if you're travelling outside the EU and there is no UK embassy in that country, you are entitled to consular protection from the embassy of any other EU member state on the same terms as its own nationals (see chapter 5 for more on this subject).

(†) Directive 2004/38/EC – Official Journal of the EU, L229 of 29/6/04

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STUDYING ABROAD



It's also possible to study abroad and thousands of young people and lecturers have taken advantage of the ERASMUS scheme to do just that. ERASMUS (the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) was introduced in 1987 and rapidly became one of the EU's most popular programmes. It has now been extended to the EEA countries, along with Bulgaria, Rumania and Turkey. Over one million young people have studied in another country under the scheme.

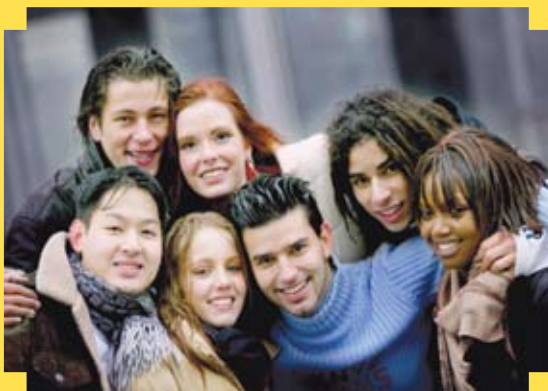
In 2006-07 alone, over 16,000 students came to complete part of their degree in the UK while over 7,000 UK students did likewise elsewhere in the EU. There are many more places for UK students to study in other European countries. The following website will help you take advantage of the scheme:

<http://www.erasmus.ac.uk/index.html>

Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC)

The CUC is the first collaborative higher education initiative in the UK with economic regeneration and business support at its heart. It aims to make studying and working in Cornwall more attractive for young people and graduates who would otherwise leave. It is a partnership of several higher education institutions, including: Exeter and Plymouth Universities, University College Falmouth, The Open University and several other colleges.

As of March 2006, 462 teaching and support posts had been created under the initiative, and an additional £4.57m of GDP achieved. It is estimated there will be 730 teaching and support jobs from 2012 and £175 million additional gross value-added for Cornwall by 2025. Under Phase One, the ERDF contributed £35.9 million to seven projects under the CUC initiative. Phase Two foresees ERDF grants of £29 million for a further eight projects. Total ERDF/ESF investment to date is £73.7 million.



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AIR SAFETY – BLACKLIST OF AIRLINES

Newquay Cornwall Airport



© Apex/Simon Burt

A total of £2,908,951 of Objective-One money from the European Regional Development Fund has been approved to help Newquay Cornwall International Airport accommodate forecast growth in passenger numbers over the next few years. Phase-one work included improvements to the existing terminal buildings and aprons to increase the airport's capacity from 300,000 to 400,000 passengers a year.

Air safety is of course the main concern for travellers and authorities alike. In 2005, the EU agreed joint rules for keeping European airspace free from airlines and aircraft considered to be unsafe. The Commission has to check and update the list at least every three months. If you want to consult the latest blacklist, go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air_portal/safety/black_list_en.htm

TRANSPARENT FLIGHT-TICKET PRICING

Ever seen a flight advertised for a few quid only to find out that the real price is much higher? Or heard about booking websites which offer customers in one country lower prices than you can get here for exactly the same journey? A proposed regulation, expected to be agreed by the end of 2008, will ban price differences based on the purchaser's place of residence or nationality and see that prices quoted are all-inclusive.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1831&format=HTML&aged=o&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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In 2007, the Commission conducted a sweep check to expose misleading advertising and unfair practices on websites selling airline tickets in 16 countries. One in three of them was found to have some kind of irregularity. The offending airlines, tour operators and price comparison sites were asked to put their house in order and a mid-term report issued in May 2008, showed that over half of them had done so. The Commission intends to step up enforcement and will issue a further report in mid-2009.

If you want to see how enforcement of the rules is going, check out the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/enforcement/sweep/index_en.htm

CHARTER OF AIR PASSENGER RIGHTS

Most of us have suffered the frustration of long delays or even cancellations at airports. Since February 2005, new EU laws have laid down common rules on assistance and information for stranded passengers. Compensation may be due if you are denied boarding or your flight is cancelled under certain circumstances.

Further information is available from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) web-site at:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=306&pagetype=68&gid=355>

If you want full details about your rights as a passenger, you can read the charter, which comes as a poster and is displayed in all airports. You can download a copy from:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air_portal/passenger_rights/information_en.htm

The rules are administered by national enforcement bodies. Here in the UK, complaints need to be made to:

AIR TRANSPORT USERS' COUNCIL

Room K705 - CAA House 45-59 Kingsway - London WC2B 6TE

☎ 020 7240 6061 E-mail: complaints@auc.org.uk 🌐 www.auc.org.uk



Although the national body is the first port of call, the Commission still receives 500 complaints every month—about four times as many as before the new rules came in. So people are obviously more aware of their rights and willing to seek redress. In addition, Europe Direct (the EU contact point for the public through e-mail or a single free telephone number) received around 13,000 questions on air passenger rights during 2005.

For the one in ten people in the EU with impaired mobility, an EU Regulation passed in 2006 seeks to ensure that they get fair treatment and free assistance at all EU airports and on board.

These new rules have been applied since July 26th 2008.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air_portal/passenger_rights/prm/index_en.htm

MOVING AROUND WITHOUT PASSPORT CHECKS

24 countries in Europe (including EEA members, Norway and Iceland) have signed up to what's known as the Schengen Agreement. The UK is not a full member of this agreement, which means that you'll still need to show your passport when entering the Schengen area. But once inside, you're generally free to travel from one country to another without passport control or customs checks.

http://europa.eu/abc/travel/doc/index_en.htm

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2 GIVING CONSUMERS A FAIR DEAL AT HOME AND AWAY



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THE SINGLE MARKET'S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

The single market is not just about ensuring the public can travel hassle-free. It's also about generating wealth and ensuring the customer is king (or queen). In 2002, the Commission conducted a ten-year review of how the single market was doing. It identified the following benefits:

- an increase in EU GDP in 2002 of 1.8% or € 164,5 billion
- the creation of some 2.5 million jobs in the EU since 1992 that would not have been generated without the opening up of borders



© Getty Image

- extra prosperity amounting to €877 billion—calculated by adding together the additional annual GDP generated by the single market since 1992. This is equivalent to roughly £3,850 (€5,700) for an average household

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/10years/docs/workingdoc/workingdoc_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/10years/background_en.htm

A recent paper by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that British companies exported almost £150 billion worth of goods to EU countries in 2006. That's 62% of our total and a rise of 25% on the year before. (2)

Incidentally, within the single market, the EU also provides money to help disadvantaged areas tackle poverty, joblessness and poor infrastructure. Over the seven years from 2007 to 2013, over £8 billion (€10.6 billion at 2006 levels) will be channelled via the EU to devolved or regional authorities in the UK – in ▶

(2) "The Reform Treaty: The British Approach to the EU Intergovernmental Conference", July 2007

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(3) Source: "Guide to the European Union", Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2006.

places like West Wales and the Valleys, and Cornwall. All parts of the UK will be eligible for some expenditure.

Money has already helped launch the highly successful Eden Project in the South West of England (see inside back cover), which received over £26 million in EU funds, while £30 million has gone on ferry and airport terminals linking the Scottish mainland to the Hebrides. (3)

St Helens Rail Station

The Merseyside Objective 1 Programme has invested £1.7 million of EU funding in a £4.8 million project to create a new gateway into St Helens town centre and encourage more workers and visitors to travel by train. It is also hoped that the project will help improve the image of the area and help attract more new investment.



© Merseytravel (2)



SHOPPING ABROAD

Napoleon may have called us a nation of shopkeepers, but there are plenty of retailers in other parts of Europe too. Competition generated by the EU frontier-free market has driven quality up and prices down. This is good news for consumers. EU nationals and residents can shop in another member state where goods are cheaper without paying additional taxes so long as they are for their personal use. Furthermore, you have full consumer rights when shopping outside your own country thanks to safeguards and redress introduced by the EU:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress/index_en.htm



© O'Carroll/PhotoAlto

PHONING WHILE ABROAD: ROAMING AND THE GSM STANDARD

While we're away stocking our cellar for Christmas, many of us take our mobiles with us. But traditionally, many others haven't done so because until last year the cost of keeping in touch with home was so high. This was a real problem for Brits, who tend to travel abroad a lot. In fact, very high mobile roaming charges affected at least 147 million people in the EU (37 million tourists and 110 million business customers). And Eurobarometer found that 72% of us in this country wanted the EU to act to curb high prices. So we did. In 2006, the Commission proposed new rules to ensure that roaming charges are not unjustifiably higher than those at home. And just ten months later, in May 2007 an agreement was reached between the European Parliament and national governments, bringing in substantial savings within a few months:

- The cost of using mobile phones abroad will be cut by up to 70% (a recent Commission report shows that consumers are now already making savings of around 60% on roaming calls).
- Calling home from abroad will cost customers no more than 31p per minute (falling to 29p per minute in 2009).
- Receiving a call, the retail price will be no more than 15p per minute (falling to 13p per minute in 2009). ▶

	SUMMER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Maximum limit for the Eurotariff for calls made abroad	31 pence	29 pence
Maximum limit for the Eurotariff for calls received abroad	15 pence	13 pence
Maximum Inter-Operator tariff	19 pence	18 pence

All tariffs per minute and without VAT

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/roaming_regulation/index_en.htm

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For the Eurobarometer survey, conducted in November 2006, please go to

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=2971

The EU is going to do something about the cost of text-roaming too, which is still pricey. A UK tourist in Spain can pay up to €0.63 to send an SMS home - that's 50p at the going exchange rate!

In fact, the 2.5 billion text messages sent every year by roaming customers in the EU are over 10 times as dear as domestic ones. The average cost between October 2007 and March 2008 was €0.29 according to the European Regulators' Group (ERG). As mobile operators have not answered calls to lower prices voluntarily, the Commission decided in July 2008 to step in to ensure that consumers benefit from a proper single market for texting. It will also seek to put an end to bill shocks that can hit roaming customers using their mobile to surf the Internet. If all goes to plan, new measures could be proposed by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council in early autumn 2008.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1144&format=HTML&aged=o&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The Commission already monitors mobile costs and has devised a table to help you see which networks offer the best deal while you are roaming. It's very simple to use. Just click on the map of your home country to display a sample of tariffs applicable to domestic operators while you're in other countries. Go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/tariffs/index_en.htm

And on the subject of mobile phones, did you know the EU helped make sure your handset can be used on all the other networks of fellow EU countries thanks to the GSM standard? GSM allows interoperability between networks, handsets and services, which means suppliers have been able to develop products for a 'home market' of hundreds of millions of people. Well over 2 billion people use GSM and by 2005 this standard had amassed more consumers than for all other cellular technologies in the world put together. Competition and EU-wide deregulation of the telecoms sector have driven hardware prices down.

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/doc/factsheets/023-mobile-policy-en.pdf

LIBERALIZATION OF TELECOMS

Until the 1980s, traditional monopolies controlled all voice and data telecommunications, and nearly all equipment attached to the networks. They also had the right to dictate the terms for others to use their networks.

In the ten years to 1998, the EU liberalized all telecoms goods and services. The number of fixed-line telecoms operators doubled between 1998 and 2003. New entrants invested in new services and infrastructure, and consumers got a better deal all round.

Between 1996 and 2002, EU telecommunications services grew much cheaper. On average, for the same telecoms services, consumers spent about 30% less of their income in 2002 than they did in 1996, and the affordability index for average income users in all EU member states sank to a record low in 2002.

Since 2000, the EU weighted average charge of a three-minute call has fallen by 65% and the cost of a ten minute call by 74%.

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/ecomm/doc/implementation_enforcement/annualreports/factsheets/retail_charges.pdf

In November 2007, the Commission put forward a further review of the rules governing the telecoms sector to ensure that its regulatory framework continues to serve the best interests of consumers and industry in today's marketplace.

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecomm/tomorrow/index_en.htm

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PREVENTING MARKET STITCH-UPS: THE CAR MARKET

Travelling abroad has made many Britons wise up to the fact that we pay more for some consumer goods than people in other EU mem- ▶

ber states (though, to be fair, we get a cheaper deal on others). EU rules are there to stop European businesses colluding in order to fix prices or carve up markets between them.

As a result, differences in car prices, for example, long the bugbear of many in the UK, are monitored every six months by the Commission, which produces a report. As a result of the new rules, closer scrutiny and greater consumer awareness, these differences have started to narrow across the European Union and prices have begun to fall. During the second half of 2007, the on-the-road price index for cars was 0.2% against a headline inflation rate of 3.4%. The figure for the UK was even better: a decrease of 1.1%.

A list of contact points has also been set up by car manufacturers to help consumers who encounter difficulties when trying to buy a vehicle. See these links.

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/sectors/motor_vehicles/prices/report.html

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/sectors/motor_vehicles/car_hotlines_en.pdf

MONITORING CONSUMER MARKETS

In January 2008, the Commission launched its “Consumer Market Watch” to investigate how well various markets are serving consumers across the EU. First, retail markets are screened against 5 key indicators: prices, complaints, switching rates, satisfaction and safety. Any irregularities - which may indicate practices which distort consumer choice and hinder retail competition - can then trigger an in-depth, targeted investigation and corrective action.



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Initial screening results underscored the lack of comprehensive, EU-wide comparable data in key areas and the Commission wants more work done on this over the next year. But from evidence available in more than 20 sectors, the Commission has said it will target retail financial services and in particular the conditions faced by consumers in retail banking, as the priority sector for 2008.

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/facts_en.htm



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MP3 DOWNLOADS

By 2007, lots of people had noticed that the prices we paid in the UK for downloading tunes to our MP3 players were in some cases higher than those on the continent. The discrepancy was taken up by Which?, the UK consumer protection organisation, which filed a formal complaint with the Commission. At the beginning of 2007, the Commission made an official objection to Apple, as a result of which Apple announced in January 2008 that it would equalize prices for downloads from iTunes online store in Europe within six months.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/22&format=HTML&aged=o&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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3 MAKING OUR FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT SAFER

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- ★ CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
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- ★ WATCHDOGS
THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY, AND THE FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE
- ★ PROTECTING CONSUMER SAFETY: RAPEX



© Brand X Pictures

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

It's the biggest political and economic challenge of our era. At their meeting in spring 2007, EU leaders agreed to a set of headline targets to combat global warming and ways of reaching them. On climate change, they gave a unilateral EU commitment to cut greenhouse gases by at least 20% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels, plus a commitment to extend this reduction to 30% if other developed countries did likewise. On renewable energies, they agreed a binding target of 20% by 2020 with a minimum of 10% for the share of biofuels in overall EU transport petrol and diesel consumption. In January 2008, the Commission tabled proposals for allocating and monitoring the national contributions to achieve the overall EU targets. National action plans to reach them will be agreed by the Commission with each Member State (the UK's proposed renewables target is 15% of total domestic energy demand).

Additionally, the EU leaders called for a saving of 20% of the EU's energy consumption compared to projections for 2020 and are seeking a change in consumers' habits and energy saving in a number of areas, including office, street and domestic lighting.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/93135.pdf

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/o8/8o&format=HTML&aged=o&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

BATHING WATER

One of the most popular and well known laws to be decided on at EU level concerns the quality of our bathing water. Rules have been in force for over 30 years to improve our beaches. And the good news is that, out of a total of 573 coastal bathing areas ▶

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monitored around the UK in 2007, 96.5% met the EU's mandatory water quality criteria established in the EU bathing water directive.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/report2008/uk_comments.pdf

An updated EU law, passed in February 2006, establishes 4 new levels of classification: poor, sufficient, good and excellent. On this website:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/mapviewers/bathing>

you can check whether the water on any beach has passed the strict quality standards, which include monitoring for E. Coli and Intestinal Enterococci contamination, the main health threat to bathers. So now you'll always know what you and your kids are swimming in.

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European Commission
Directorate-General for Environment

North Berwick beach,
Scotland

WASTE

Clearly, the environment is one area where people see the added value of joint EU action. As well as bathing water, there are EU rules on how to manage hazardous waste and incinerate rubbish.

<http://www.europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/s15002.htm>

The EU is also actively involved in the drive to improve recycling. In 2002, a huge 368 lbs (167 kg) of packaging was discarded by each Briton. While this compares favourably with the EU average of 388 lbs (176 kg)/head, our environment could be even better protected if our collection (50%) and recycling (44%) rates matched or exceeded the EU averages of 62% and 54% respectively. We still landfill three quarters of our domestic waste, so the increased EU recycling target of a minimum of 55% of overall packaging waste, to be reached by the end of 2008, can make a major contribution to protecting our environment.

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/o6/st12/st12059-ado1.eno6.pdf>

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

The global production of chemicals is now over 400 million tonnes annually. The chemicals industry is the third-largest EU manufacturing branch, covering 31,000 companies with 1.9 million employees. Internationally, the EU is the leading chemicals producing area. In 2004, it accounted for a third (€580 million or about £390 million) of global sales.

At the same time, the number of incidents of allergies, asthma, some types of cancer, and reproductive disorders in Europe is increasing. Chemicals may be one of the causes for this trend but we know very little about 99% of them and their effects, uses and safe handling.

Now, thanks to rules agreed by the member states, new controls have been put in place that will help protect us from dangerous chemical substances while ensuring our competitive edge in this field is not blunted. A new simplified set of rules known as "REACH" obliges European companies themselves (rather than the public authorities) to assess and manage any risks arising from chemicals they manufacture, import or use.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/factsheets/reach.pdf>

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LIFE

The EU provides co-funding for a range of environmental initiatives through its LIFE programme. LIFE demonstration projects help to improve the development of clean technologies, manage water and waste more effectively, enhance planning and land use and preserve or restore natural habitats of protected species of plants and wildlife. Additionally, under the new Life+ Programme, support is available for awareness-raising and communication activities.

176 Projects have been co-financed in the UK over the last 15 years, with the EU contribution amounting to € 108 million (about £85 million at May 2008 exchange rate) over this period.

Among the 21 ongoing projects currently being co-financed in this country are schemes to:

- test whether the environmental impact of greenhouse horticulture can be significantly reduced. As part of the 'Living Rainforest' in Berkshire, this demonstration project involves construction of an innovative new glasshouse and associated buildings (visitors centre, education rooms & animal husbandry facilities) integrated via a renewable energy heating system.
- improve the quality of blanket bog within two special conservation areas in Wales, to help protect upland birds' breeding grounds (with the RSPB)

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>

Active Blanket Bog in Wales

Heather bales are carried over to construct a dam to block moorland drains. These drains cause the world-famous blanket bog habitat to dry out, making it unsuitable for the plant and animal species that depend upon it. This drying can also cause large amounts of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide to be emitted. The LIFE Blanket Bog in Wales project has employed local contractors to carry out the majority of the restoration work, bringing much needed employment and income to the rural economy.

Within weeks of the drain being dammed, shallow pools develop as the water table begins to recover after decades of drainage. Sphagnum mosses and other bog species will quickly respond to this change, colonising the pools and slowly enclosing them. The EU LIFE-Nature Programme is funding 75% of this £2.57 million project.



© LIFE Project (Gorgon@symbio@rspb.org.uk) (2)



© Food Standards Agency

ANIMAL HEALTH

The latest UK case of avian flu is still fresh in our memories, as is the foot-and-mouth emergency in 2001. As you'd expect, the EU has stringent measures in place to contain the spread of animal viruses, which are oblivious to borders. There are strict rules to contain outbreaks of periodic disease and to eradicate others which are already established. For example, member states have to notify the Commission of any outbreaks so that it can inform other countries.

It's also important for supermarkets and consumers to know where their meat is coming from, so they can be sure the animals are disease-free and how far they have been transported. The EU has introduced a number of ways to identify animals, including eartags, tattoos, registers and passports.

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/index_en.htm

FOOD LABELLING

EU rules are in place on the labelling of foodstuffs to enable you to get proper information on what your food contains. All ingredients have to be mentioned and manufacturers must point out any, such as nuts, which can cause allergic reactions.

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/comm_legisl_en.htm

MAKING
OUR FOOD
AND
ENVIRONMENT
SAFER



WATCHDOGS THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY, AND THE FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE

The EFSA was set up to provide independent scientific advice on anything with a direct or indirect impact on food safety (including animal health and welfare and plant protection). It is also consulted on the relevant Community laws. The FVO meanwhile ensures that EU laws on food safety, animal health, plant health and animal welfare are properly implemented and enforced.

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en.html>

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.htm



GMOs

Most of us know about GMOs – plants, animals or micro-organisms whose genetic make-up has been artificially altered to increase yields, resistance to disease or tolerance of herbicides. There have been EU laws on GMOs since the early 1990s to protect health and the environment and to ensure they can be moved safely around the EU.

The entire set of rules has recently been amended in response to public and government concerns. It lays down the conditions which a company or university research department must satisfy before being allowed to develop, use or market a GMO or food derived from one. GMOs or food and feed products derived from them and placed on the market must also satisfy labelling and traceability conditions.

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biotechnology/gmfood/index_en.htm

PROTECTING CONSUMER SAFETY: RAPEX

Thirty European countries and the European Commission have joined forces to create the rapid alert RAPEX network, which lets them notify each other of consumer products that pose a risk to consumers' health and safety (food and medicines are covered by their own Rapid Alert Systems).⁽⁴⁾ The system prevents the offending products from being marketed in the first place, or recalled if already on the shelves. The latest annual report "Keeping European Consumers Safe" issued in spring 2008 reveals that 1355 goods were taken off the

Teddy bears can easily turn out to be deadly if children can take them apart and choke on the filling or cut themselves on a sharp internal part. Recently released figures show a rapid rise in the number of dangerous goods withdrawn from sale across the European Union thanks to the EU-wide alert system to protect consumers. New member states which have joined the EU since 2004 are now also notifying Rapex about products on sale on their markets. Toys now form the biggest category of hazardous goods on sale.



The CE label on toys means that they comply with European safety rules.

shelves across the EU in 2007. Almost a quarter of them were targeted at children – from teddy bears with dangerous metal spikes to a Chinese-made Superman doll coated with poisonous lead paint. Others included hair-dryers, mini motorbikes, cleaning sprays and even wigs.

In 2007, 37% of notified products were toys, children's equipment and childcare articles, with electrical appliances and lighting equipment accounting for 18% of the total. 52% (a 3% increase on the previous year) originated in China. As a result, the Chinese authorities have been granted access to the system on a read-only basis and have made significant efforts to improve controls (including the setting-up of a domestic alert system modelled on RAPEX) and corrective action (tracing manufacturers, stopping products prior to export, withdrawal of export licences etc). The EU is currently reviewing its own safety standards for toys, including restricting chemical substances used in products and better technical information availability, from manufactures and importers, to help surveillance authorities to spot any potential defects more rapidly. A weekly online bulletin of products found to be sub-standard can be accessed at:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex_archives_en.cfm

⁽⁴⁾ For foodstuffs and animal feed, the RASFF network:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/rapidalert/index_en.htm.
Pharmaceutical quality alerts:
http://www.emea.europa.eu/Inspections/docs/CoCP/CoCP_RapidAlertProc.pdf

4 FIGHTING CRIME AND POLICING BORDERS



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1 2 3 **4** 5

- ★ THE EUROPEAN ARREST WARRANT
- ★ FIGHT AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING
- ★ COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY
- ★ EXTERNAL BORDERS AGENCY

THE EUROPEAN ARREST WARRANT

The EAW allows criminals to be arrested in any one Member State and transferred for trial or detention in any other. The EAW is designed to increase the speed of extradition.

The handover of an individual to another member state now takes on average between only 13 and 43 days, compared with extradition, which previously took more than nine months.

In summer 2005, the EAW was invoked to allow the extradition of one of the suspects in the 21 July London bombing, from Italy back to Britain.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33167.htm>

FIGHT AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING

We all know how important the City of London and financial services are to the UK economy. We also know that the banking system is targeted by money laundering outfits and groups seeking to fund terrorism. A new, tougher EU Directive ⁽⁵⁾ on preventing these crimes replaced existing rules in December 2007. The “know your customer” requirements apply to a broad range of service providers from the financial sector to estate agents, from lawyers to casinos. Any cash payment exceeding €15,000 for goods will now also be covered. Obligations include verifying the customer’s identity and that of anyone they may be acting on behalf of, reporting any suspicious activity to national authorities and ensuring adequate training of staff.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l24016a.htm>

⁽⁵⁾ Directive 2005/60/EC – Official Journal of the EU, L309 of 25/11/05

FIGHTING
CRIME
AND POLICING
BORDERS



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Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection

COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY

Counterfeiting and piracy are no longer confined to luxury items but increasingly affect mass-produced goods like food, cosmetics, toys, medicines and car parts.

Counterfeiting and piracy are often linked to organized crime, which is why member states have to apply tough penalties against anyone engaged in them. Failure to respect intellectual property rights means there is less investment in innovative industries, research and cultural promotion. Counterfeiters may even threaten the health and safety of EU citizens by producing fake medicines, toys, cosmetics, food and drinks and vehicle spare parts.

A 2004 report put the loss to UK businesses from counterfeiting and piracy as high as £1,414 million each year. Another in 2000 by the Centre for Economics and Business Research estimated that counterfeiting within the EU costs over 17,000 jobs every year and reduces annual GDP by €8bn (over £5 billion). Across Europe, it's a growing and increasingly dangerous phenomenon, often linked to organized crime and money laundering. 2007 figures show that counterfeiting and piracy remains a significant problem for EU manufacturers.

- The seizure of 79 million counterfeit and pirated goods represents a significant drop from the 128 million recorded in 2006 - a reflection of fewer seizures of cigarettes and CDs/DVDs.
- The number of customs operations reached 43,600, a 17% increase on 2006.

- Over 6 million personal care and cosmetic items were intercepted in 2007 - up 264% on the 2006 figures. Seizures of false medicine products were up 51% to over 4 million.
- 4.6 million toys were seized, almost double the number the year before.
- Customs intercepted more than 27 million packets of counterfeit cigarettes, 63% down on 2006 (but still over a third of total confiscations for 2007)

An EU directive, effective from April 2006, gives rights holders and their representatives much stronger defences against counterfeiting and piracy of their products. A common level of redress against counterfeiters is introduced across the EU and if evidence is found of trading in fake goods, national courts have the power to impose injunctions to cease the trade, order the destruction of the illegal consignments and to find that the materials and equipment used to manufacture them are removed from circulation. The directive doesn't create a minimum level of criminal penalty for infringement of the legal manufacturer's rights, but a proposal currently being discussed aims to do this.

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l26057a.htm>

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_controls/counterfeit_piracy/index_en.htm

EXTERNAL BORDERS AGENCY

Since 2005, a European agency, FRONTEX, has been coordinating cooperation between the member states on the management of external borders. Based in Warsaw, it helps train border guards, exchanges intelligence between countries, analyses threats of illegal immigration and helps arrange the return of illegal immigrants.

<http://www.fronTEX.europa.eu/>

FIGHTING
CRIME
AND POLICING
BORDERS



5 SOME THINGS THE EU DOESN'T DO

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1 2 3 4 5

The EU is doing away with 999 as our emergency number

The EU wants to stop pub-goers calling bar staff 'love'

The EU wants to drop the Queen from our passports

SOME THINGS THE EU DOESN'T DO.

The EU is trying to wipe England off the map and merge us into continental regions

The EU has got rid of lbs and ozs and will soon force us to use km on the road

The Lisbon Treaty would force the UK to give up its seat on the UN Security Council

We've outlined a good many ways in which the European Union matters to our everyday lives here in the UK. In some British newspapers, however, you hear less about these things and more about far-fetched claims which politicians or reporters make about the EU. Often the stories are untrue or distorted and so give the public the impression of time-wasting, pen-pushing and undue interference in our everyday lives. Here are just a few reports from 2007-2008 that we in the UK Representation would like to correct.

The EU is doing away with 999 as our emergency number

No, it isn't. You are still perfectly free to dial 999. What member states have agreed to is a second number, 112, which also puts you through to the police, ambulance and fire brigade in ANY EU country. And that could be life-saving next time you're on the continent. Just remember $1 + 1 = 2$.

The EU is trying to wipe England off the map and merge us into continental regions

The EU doesn't have anything like the power to get rid of countries, however big or small. In fact, without nation states, the EU couldn't operate in its current form.

The story behind the hype is that the UK has been taking part since the mid 1990s in groups made up of cross-border regions. These groupings exist purely to give regions with similar needs and goals collective access to EU funding for development, or to help them address other common interests such as environment, transport or tourism. The plans for making this money available have been quite transparent and involve the UK authorities at all relevant levels. ▶

SOME THINGS THE EU DOESN'T DO

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In case you thought these regional groupings were overseen by new Big Brother-style governments, rest assured: there are no transnational regional assemblies – only managing authorities to administer specific projects over a defined time period.



© Getty image

The EU has got rid of lbs and ozs and will soon force us to use km on the road

The truth is a bit less alarming. The UK Government supported a gradual change to metrication as far back as 1965 – long before we joined the EU - and set up the Metrication Board in 1969 to facilitate the transition. Once we'd become part of the Union, the UK agreed to EU rules on metrication in the 1980s. Miles for our roads, pints for draught beer and milk in returnable containers were excluded from these rules and so it will be up to the UK government of the day to decide if and when to phase out these measurements or keep them as they are. The EU laws did cover pounds and ounces but the Commission said in early 2008 that it would not object if market traders and shopkeepers wanted to keep these weights as supplementary indications for customers who prefer imperial to metric.

The EU wants to stop pub-goers calling bar staff 'love'

According to some papers, all pub landlords are now required under EU law to prevent customers from chatting up bar staff or calling them 'love' or 'darling' and will face unlimited damages if they don't.

Actually, EU rules (which were in fact based on UK equality law) exist to protect us all from discrimination or sexual harassment, not to dictate how friends and acquaintances address each other. It is up to the UK government to define the specific rules for different places of employment.

The EU wants to drop the Queen from our passports

This is another thing the EU doesn't have the power to do.

If you're travelling outside the EU and the UK has no embassy in the country you're visiting, you can now ask the embassy of any Member State which does have a diplomatic presence there to give you consular protection. And we hope you agree this is rather useful.

What the Commission has done is to issue a recommendation that passports mention this right, so you aren't left stranded without help while abroad. The recommendation will not lead to replacing current national texts or symbols in anyone's passport.

SOME THINGS
THE EU
DOESN'T DO



The Lisbon Treaty would force the UK to give up its seat on the UN Security Council

Sorry to sound repetitive but the EU simply cannot do this, without the say-so of the UK government. The British seat on the Security Council remains as long as the government here wants it to.

And finally, in case you were wondering...

Just over 1% of our GDP – no more - is channelled via the EU. The UK's net contribution is dwarfed by the amount our national authorities spend on things like health, defence and education, over which they retain political control. The EU doesn't have the power to raise or harmonize income tax. It can't enforce conscription or declare war. It doesn't dictate school curricula or award exams (though there are agreed rules for member states to recognize each other's qualifications to help us move around, if we want to, for work). It doesn't issue passports, birth certificates or driving licences. And it doesn't have its own police force.

If you'd like to read more about these and other euomyths, why not consult our website?

http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/euomyths/index_en.htm



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EUROPE ON YOUR DOORSTEP!



Europe Direct is a network of drop-in information centres spread across the UK. From Plymouth to

Preston, Cardiff to County Tyrone, you can access up-to-date information on the EU and feed back your comments direct to the European institutions. Typically located in local authorities, libraries or chambers of commerce, the centres offer an information service, lots of literature on the EU and computers with access to the EU's Europa website.

- How can I go about studying or teaching in another Member State?*
- Is there funding available to get work experience in another EU country?*
- I want to do a gap year on the continent – is there help on hand?*
- What if I want to arrange an exchange with another European school?*
- How can I organize a study visit to the European institutions?*
- What teaching and learning material can I get about the EU for free?*

You will be able to find answers to all these questions at your local centre, or by calling the freephone number 00800 6 7 8 9 10 11.

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EDEN PROJECT

*EU funds helped build
the Eden Project and boost
the local Cornish economy*

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The European Union has invested over £2.5 billion in economic development and peace building in Northern Ireland over the last twenty years. EU regional funds assisted the regeneration of Belfast.

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