

THE WEEK IN EUROPE

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Public opinion in EU and Candidate countries supports enlargement

The importance of enlargement is widely acknowledged among the peoples of the European Union and the positive global consequences of this new step in the EU are well understood, according to a [Eurobarometer survey](#) published on 23 October. Moreover, the latest [Candidate countries Eurobarometer survey](#) shows that among the populations of these countries, general support for EU membership has risen to 60%. This is the first of four Eurobarometer surveys commissioned by Directorate-General Enlargement which are designed to track the evolution of public attitudes to the enlargement of the European Union over a crucial period, from before the publication of the 2002 [Regular Reports](#) through the period of ratification of the Nice Treaty. [\[IP/02/1543\]](#)
[Click here](#) for further information on Eurobarometer and [here](#) for more information on enlargement.

Eurobarometer survey of young people's attitudes to drugs

A [report](#) analysing the poll on "the attitudes and opinions of young people in the European Union on drugs", carried out for the European Commission, reached, amongst others, the following conclusions: rates of exposure to and personal use of drugs are higher for cannabis than other drugs. Over a third of those questioned regularly smoke cigarettes, and a quarter regularly drink alcohol. Rates of use of cannabis and other drugs are higher among young men than women. The age of leaving full-time education is a defining criterion: all types of drug use diminishes as the length of time spent in education increases. Rates of use of all types of drug, particularly drugs other than cannabis, are higher in large towns than rural areas. Curiosity, followed by peer pressure and thrill seeking are the most common reasons for trying drugs. Dependence is cited as the main reason why people find it difficult to stop using drugs, followed by lack of willpower and the "beneficial" effects of drugs. Dependence, problems with the law and mental and physical health problems are seen as the three most likely consequences of drug use. Heroin is viewed by young people as very dangerous. Cannabis is seen as the least dangerous, apart from cigarettes and alcohol. Young people are most likely to consult a specialised drugs centre as a possible source of information. As provided for in the European Union's [Action Plan on Drugs](#) (2000-2004), the public opinion poll ([Eurobarometer 57.2](#)) on the attitudes of young people to drugs was carried out in the 15 Member States of the European Union between 27 April and 10 June 2002, at the request of the European Commission. A representative sample of the national population aged 15 to 24 was asked to complete a questionnaire in each Member State. A total of 16 129 people were questioned, or an average of roughly 1 000 people per Member State. The Commission will carry out a similar poll in 2004 to analyse changes in the situation in this area between now and the end of the Action Plan on Drugs. [\[IP/02/1532\]](#)

Commission asks Member States to comply with EU waste legislation

The European Commission has formally requested that France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Finland adopt national laws concerning end-of-life vehicles. The Member States cited have failed to meet the agreed April 2002 deadline for transposing an EU waste law into their national legislation. The Commission's request takes the form of a Reasoned Opinion, the second step in the legal procedure under Article 226 of the Treaty. The Commission is concerned that, by not implementing these laws correctly and in time, Member States will face problems such as rising mountains of waste and inadequately controlled waste disposal and recovery activities, thereby creating risks to human health and the environment. Commenting on the decisions, Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström said: "It was a major advance when, in 2000, EU countries agreed to significantly strengthen rules on the waste generated by end-of-life motor vehicles. Member States must now live up to their responsibilities and translate their political will into action and finalise the national legislation needed to make these new rules effective. This directive as well as our other legislation dealing with waste are designed to protect both citizens, and the environment in which we all live. I therefore urge Member States to correctly implement these directives rapidly."

The [End-of-Life Vehicles Directive](#) lays down measures with a dual aim: to prevent waste from motor vehicles and vehicle components that have reached the end of their life-cycle and to promote vehicle reuse, recycling and other forms of recovery. Among other things, the directive sets out to reduce the extent of hazardous chemicals

contained in vehicles that act to impede safe disposal and recovery. It also provides for collection systems to ensure that end-of-life vehicles are effectively and safely disposed of so as not to damage the environment. France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, United Kingdom, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Finland have all missed the 21 April 2002 deadline for transposing the directive into national law, and since then, have not communicated all the necessary measures. [\[IP/02/1526\]](#)

EU and USA co-sponsor international measurement campaign on Arctic ozone loss

The ozone layer is thinning and it is not yet known to what extent future ozone losses will be affected by climate change, or what impact this will have on human health. For this reason, the European Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin welcomed the start of the first phase of the [VINTERSOL](#) (Validation of International Satellites and Study of Ozone Loss) campaign, composed of national and EU projects. VINTERSOL will be closely co-ordinated with the [SAGE III](#) Ozone Loss and Validation Experiment (SOLVE II), a US NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) sponsored campaign. Aircraft, large and small balloons, ground-based instruments and satellites will be used to measure ozone and other atmospheric gases and particles. The project aims to improve understanding of Arctic ozone depletion, and at upgrading satellite observation of the ozone layer. "This joint project is in the spirit of the 1998 European Union-United States Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement, which fosters joint scientific endeavours," said Commissioner Busquin. "It brings together researchers from around the world and aids better understanding of what happens in the ozone layer over the Arctic region, and therefore addresses global climate change and the effects on human health of overexposure to sun radiation. It will help us to meet the requirements of the [Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer](#), fine-tune our policies with sound scientific evidence and upgrade Europe's role in the international scientific arena." VINTERSOL will run from 2002 until mid 2004. It consists of a core of 9 major EU funded projects. The research funded by the EU in VINTERSOL is closely co-ordinated with and substantially increased by national research programmes. [\[IP/02/1546\]](#)

[Click here](#) for further information and [here](#) for the Research Directorate-General.

Commission proposes more modern and simple rules to ensure clean bathing water across the EU

The European Commission has presented a [proposal](#) for a revised Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the Quality of Bathing Water. This Commission proposal is to replace the existing [Council Directive 1976/160/EEC](#), which has been in force for more than 25 years. The new proposal is intended to deliver three clear benefits: improved health standards, more efficient management including the active involvement of the public and, finally, allowing Member States greater flexibility in the way they implement the directive. Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström said that her priority was to improve the level of protection for bathers at the same time as modernising the management of bathing waters: "This new proposal puts the emphasis on the proactive management of beaches, not just the regular monitoring of water quality. Public authorities should put in place management plans in consultation with the users of beaches. We also need to make more use of modern communication methods such as the internet to inform the public about the quality of bathing waters." The Commission is proposing that the new standards and procedures should come into force two years after the adoption of the directive. This lead-in time will give the authorities and operators concerned the opportunity to make the necessary investment in sewage treatment and other remedial measures. [\[IP/02/1551\]](#)

Diary dates

WE/35/2002

[Extraordinary European Council](#)

24-25 October

Brussels

The President of the [European Convention](#), Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, will be available for an [internet chat](#) on Monday 28 October 2002. At this crucial point in the work of the Convention there should be direct dialogue with the people of Europe. It will be possible to put forward views and ask questions on the institutional and legal structures of the European Union. [Click here](#) for further information on how to take part in the chat. On the day the lines will be open from 20.00 to 21.30 CET (Central European Time). See also the [Futurum site](#), about the debate on the Future of the European Union.

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