

# Europe Direct Information Centre Outer Hebrides

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Issue 25



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## Eurozone

€1= £0.86  
€1= \$1.07  
Source:



The European  
Central Bank, as of 03  
February 2017

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Europe Direct Information  
Centre – Outer Hebrides  
opening hours are from 0900  
to 1300 each weekday

## EDIC VIDEO HIGHLIGHTING INFLUENCE OF THE EU LOCALLY

As part of our 2016 Action Plan outputs we decided to produce a video showing some examples of how the EU impacts on various sectors throughout the Outer Hebrides region.

Featured in the video are contributions from the Comhairle, NHS Western Isles, Lews Castle College (UHI), BASF, Scottish Euroquiz winners (Sgoil an Rubha), Brue Highlanders, Uist Wool, Cothrom, and Storas Uibhist. Please share the [video](#) with those who may be interested.



Image © Wee Studio

## COMHAIRLE CITES EU DIRECTIVE IN RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

Image © Global and  
General Nominees

The UK Government recently announced the cessation of subsidy for Onshore Wind projects but, in response to representations from the Scottish Islands, has now [consulted](#) on whether 'Non-Mainland GB Onshore Wind' ('Remote Island Wind') should be treated differently from regular mainland Onshore Wind and be given access to 'Contract for Difference' Price Support. The Scottish Islands are essentially Offshore generating platforms connected to National Grid by expensive subsea High Voltage Direct Current

(HVDC) Radial Connectors, a technology shared with Offshore Wind. Because the cost of these Radial Connectors, £800m in the case of the Outer Hebrides, is recovered in full from the handful of generators connected to these links, the Transmission Charges facing island generators are between five and seven times higher than the Transmission Charge for the North of Scotland Mainland.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has responded to the consultation, making the point that 'Remote Island Wind' is materially different from mainland Onshore Wind and will never be viable without access to a Price Support mechanism. The Comhairle also argues that higher Transmission Charges for the islands represent discrimination and has cited European Commission Directive 2009/28, Article 16(7) which states: "Member States shall ensure that the charging of transmission and distribution tariffs does not discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources, including in particular electricity from renewable energy sources produced in peripheral regions, such as island regions, and in regions of low population density". Through perpetuating this inequality by excluding 'Remote Island Wind' from an equalising incentive programme, the UK Government is leaving itself open to challenge.

If, following this consultation, the UK Government agrees that 'Remote Island Wind' should access the Price Support mechanism, the conditions will finally exist for construction of the proposed Western Isles Radial Connector and the associated Wind Farms in Lewis to commence.

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## PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY'S SPEECH ON BREXIT PRIORITIES

Mrs May in her [speech](#) on 17 January 2017 announced the UK's 12 priorities for Brexit negotiations, including: Maintaining the common travel area between the UK and Irish Republic; Tariff-free trade with the EU; a customs agreement with the EU; new trade agreements with countries outside the EU; continued "practical" sharing of intelligence and policing information; "control" of immigration rights for EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU; and, a "phased approach" to facilitate a smooth Brexit.

The Prime Minister promised to push for the "freest possible trade" with European countries and to sign new deals with others around the world. She also announced Parliament would get to vote on the final deal agreed between the UK and the EU. Following her speech the [Supreme Court ruled Parliament must vote on the triggering of Article 50](#) and this vote has taken place allowing the government to proceed (MPs backed the European Union Bill by 498 votes to 114). MPs also asked for a ['White Paper'](#) which has now been published and sets out the themes of the government goals for the future EU negotiations.



Theresa May delivering her speech, Image © PA

Theresa May delivering her speech, Image © PA

## PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS CALL OPEN



Image © Charles Macleod

The 2017 call for proposals for the promotion of agricultural products for simple and multi programmes is now open and organisations may apply by 20 April 2017.

Who can apply?

To receive EU financial support for a promotional programme the organisation needs to be legally established in one of the EU Member States.

The organisations have to be representative of the sector or product concerned by the proposal. For more information including intervention rates please see [here](#).

## MALTA TAKES OVER EU PRESIDENCY

Congratulations to our fellow islanders in Malta who for the first time have taken over the [Council of the European Union Presidency](#) from the 1 January 2017 until 30 June 2017!

The [priorities](#) of the Maltese presidency include: migration, the single market, security, social inclusion, Europe's Neighbourhood, and the maritime sector. The Maltese Presidency is also cognisant of the impact a potential triggering of Article 50 by the British government will have on the future of the EU, and is preparing for a potential start of negotiations on a British exit from the EU.

You can find out more about the programme of the Presidency [here](#).



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## NEW EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT



Image © European Union

Antonio Tajani (EPP, IT) won Parliament's presidential election with 351 votes in a final face-off with Gianni Pittella (S&D, IT), who secured 282 votes at the fourth ballot. No candidate won the required absolute majority of valid votes cast in the first three rounds of voting in Parliament's presidential election on Tuesday 17 January.

The election of the new European Parliament President began with three minute speeches by the six candidates, outlining their ideas on how to lead the chamber over the next two and half years. The speeches and the ballot results can be accessed [here](#). [Parliament's Vice-Presidents and Quaestors](#) were elected on Wednesday 18 January 2017.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION EVENT

A free public information event: 'Brexit: what next for the UK and Scotland?' is to be held on 28 February (6pm to 8pm) in Stornoway Town Hall. Dr. Eilidh Macphail from [Lews Castle College \(UHI\)](#) Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, and Professor Michael Keating, Director of [Centre on Constitutional Change](#) will provide a series of short presentations followed by a general discussion. Refreshments will be available from 5.30pm.