

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Joint Committee on Human Rights

... Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Human Rights raises concerns about the human rights work and leadership of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

The Committee considers the short human rights strategy published in November 2009 by the ERHC to be "too vague" and recommends that a more detailed version should be published later in 2010, after public consultation. Although the JCHR notes that the EHRC is now approaching its human rights work more systematically, the Committee concludes that the Commission is not yet fulfilling the human rights mandate set out in the Equality Act.

The Committee was concerned to hear of criticisms made by a number of former commissioners, some of whom resigned in 2009, about the way the body was led by Trevor Phillips. These included;

- the board of commissioners was not functioning as a corporate body
- commissioners felt intimidated if they held the Chair to account for his actions
- there were perceived conflicts of interest between Mr Phillips' involvement with a private consultancy firm and his position as Chair of the EHRC

These allegations are contested by continuing commissioners. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://news.parliament.uk/2010/03/concerns-raised-over-equality-and-human-rights-commission/>

Report on the Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200910/jtselect/jtright/72/72.pdf>

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Israel

European Union

Visit of HR/VP Ashton to the Middle East

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission will visit Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories from 14 to 18 March 2010. In the region Ms Ashton

will meet with political leaders, civil society representatives, hold a key note speech in Egypt and meet with representatives of the EUBAM Rafah and the EU POL COPPS Missions. ...

To read the full press release see

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/274&format=HTML&age_d=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

Quartet

Statement

The Quartet condemns Israel's decision to advance planning for new housing units in East Jerusalem. The Quartet has agreed to closely monitor developments in Jerusalem and to keep under consideration additional steps that may be required to address the situation on the ground.

The Quartet re-affirms that unilateral actions taken by either party cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community. The Quartet reiterates that Arab-Israeli peace and the establishment of an independent, contiguous and viable state of Palestine is in the fundamental interests of the parties, of all states in the region, and of the international community. In this regard, the Quartet calls on all concerned to support the urgent resumption of dialogue between the parties and to promote an atmosphere that is conducive to successful negotiations to resolve all outstanding issues of the conflict, including the status of Jerusalem.

The Quartet will take full stock of the situation at its meeting in Moscow on March 19.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/113343.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

Children, Schools and Families Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/constitutionalreformandgovernance.html>

Crime and Security Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/crimeandsecurity.html>

Equality Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

**** Flood and Water Management Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html>

proposed amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/028/amend/am028-d.htm>

Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/prosecutionoffencesact1985amendment.html>

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

** Draft Census Order

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2010/draft/pdf/sdsi_9780111007907_en.pdf

The above draft Order has been withdrawn and replaced with

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2010/draft/pdf/sdsi_9780111008379_en.pdf

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/eet/or-10/ee10-0902.htm#Col3279>

Motion for partial approval

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=18587>

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Other Relevant Information

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Amended BNP constitution ruled indirectly discriminatory

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has won its enforcement case against the BNP, after a ruling today that the party's new revised constitution is indirectly racially discriminatory. ...The judge found that, while it is not unlawful to hold discriminatory views, it is unlawful for such principles to be used to control entry to a political party. Accordingly the BNP would be acting unlawfully if they operated membership criteria as set out in the 12th Constitution. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/amended-bnp-constitution-ruled-indirectly-discriminatory/>

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Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes today**

Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010

(closes 15 March 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6605.aspx

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (England and Wales) (closes 26 March 2010)

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/consultations/open-consultations/2011-output-consultation---main-statistical-outputs/index.html>

Equality Bill: Draft Codes of Conduct (closes 2 April 2010)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/#1>

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (closes 16 April 2010)

<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Death Certification, Burial, and Cremation (Scotland) (closes 21 April 2010)
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300112/0093686.pdf>

Call for Evidence on the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (12 May 2010)
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/currentInquiries.htm>

Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Guidance (closes 14 May)
http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultations/HA_strategic_guide_draft.pdf

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (Scotland) (closes 14 May 2010)
<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/preparations/consultation-and-research/formal-consultations/spring-10-consultation.html>

Reform of the coroner system (closes 1 July 2010)
Includes questions as to when it may be appropriate to carry out a non-invasive post-mortem examination, for example by means of MRI scan.
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/reform-coroner-system.htm>

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