

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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British Veterinary Association

Vets welcome European Parliament vote for better welfare labelling

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) has welcomed the European Parliament vote to improve the labelling of food, including new country of origin labelling and a requirement to label meat from animals slaughtered without stunning (according to certain religious traditions). ... The BVA believes that all animals should be effectively stunned before slaughter to improve the welfare of these animals at slaughter. However, as long as slaughter without stunning is permitted the BVA has argued for any meat from this source to be clearly labelled to enable all consumers to fully understand the choice they are making when purchasing such products. Meat from slaughter without stunning currently enters the mainstream food chain without being labelled as such, leaving consumers unaware.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.bva.co.uk/1840.aspx>

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement on plans to ease Gaza restrictions

Foreign Secretary William Hague has welcomed today's announcement on Israel's intentions to ease restrictions on Gaza. [He] said: "I welcome today's announcement on Israel's intentions to ease restrictions on Gaza. This evening I spoke to Quartet Representative Tony Blair. We both agreed that this marks an important step in the right direction. These changes must now be implemented swiftly to allow the necessary movement of people, aid and goods in and out of Gaza, and revive Gaza's economy, while continuing to meet Israel's legitimate security concerns. Israel's long-term interests lie in creating an environment where Gaza's economy can flourish. The test now is how the new policy will be carried out. An important step will be the full reopening of the Karni crossing to ensure a free flow of humanitarian, commercial and reconstruction supplies. We also continue to call for the release of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier who has been held hostage in the Gaza strip since June 2006."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22399516>

Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee

Consideration of PE1324: Israel (Scottish Parliament Exhibition)

includes:

... **John Wilson:** ... at First Minister's question time the First Minister raised concerns—he indicated that he hoped he was raising them on behalf of the whole Parliament—about the Israeli Government's intervention in relation to the aid convoys for Gaza. ...

Robin Harper: I do not think that we have any option other than to close the petition. However, there are other opportunities for MSPs to make their feelings known, such as through the Parliament's motions system and by approaching the corporate body. It is important for us to separate the issue that occasioned the dispute with the SPCB and the broader issue, which is much bigger than our quarrel with the SPCB. MSPs have made their views on that issue very clear in a number of ways, especially through the cross-party group on Palestine. ...

The Convener: I do not think that there is any simple course of action. I have a specific concern about the letter that we received from the corporate body, which states that it "firmly believes that it would be to the detriment of Members in carrying out their Parliamentary duties, were it to sit in judgement on what issues a Member could or could not raise through exhibitions." All I can say is that there will be a set of circumstances—the example that we are talking about was very close to this, if not already there—where members will be troubled if such judgment is not exercised. ... I urge members who feel strongly about the issue to continue to pursue it through the avenues that have been identified and to test it on the basis of the letter. I say with great reluctance that we have to close the petition, because of the procedural formalities under which we operate. ...

To read the full transcript see

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/or-10/pu10-1002.htm#Col2726>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

Academies Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/academieshl.html>

Identity Documents Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/identitydocuments.html>

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

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

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Other Relevant Information

Free video-making service for charities

Students from the University of Westminster are offering to make free videos for charities in their spare time this summer. The students, who specialise in TV production and have taken a course on how to make campaigning and fundraising films for charities and voluntary groups, will produce films lasting between 30 seconds and six minutes for small charities that could not otherwise afford to make promotional videos. ... the students would prefer to work with London-based charities, and are free between now and August. Charities interested in taking up the offer should contact g.maguire@westminster.ac.uk.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/News/DailyBulletin/1010171/Free-video-making-service-charities/248FFF21A65E7B648F557F181216A265/?DCMP=EMC-DailyBulletin>

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Consultations

** new or updated

Reform of the coroner system (closes 1 July 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/reform-coroner-system.htm>

Identity Documents Bill (Committee consideration to be completed by 8 July)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/06/identity-documents-bill-committee-issues-call-for-evidence/>

Equality Act: obtaining information in potential discrimination and equality of term cases (closes 13 July 2010)

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/news/new_streamlined_procedure_for.aspx

Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 (closes 15 July 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2010-pathogens-toxins/consultation-paper2835.pdf?view=Binary>

Welsh Assembly Review of Standing Orders (closes 16 July 2010)

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-bc-home/bus-committees-third-bc-comm/bc3_inq_so.htm

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charity SCO29438