

# Political Affairs Brief

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

## SCoJeC

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## Home Affairs

### Communities and Local Government

#### **Ministers talk Big Society with Faith leaders**

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and Minister for Decentralisation, Greg Clark, attended a meeting of religious leaders to discuss the ways in which faith communities can get involved in building the Big Society. Hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the meeting at Lambeth Palace on Friday was an opportunity for the leaders of the main faiths to discuss with government ministers the role of faith groups in helping to strengthen communities.

Mr Pickles said: "We see the Big Society as a very practical way to put people in control of the decisions that affect them and to encourage everyone to take an active part in civic life. For years, faith communities have been quietly making a huge difference day-in and day-out, to every single neighbourhood in the country - something that has not been sufficiently recognised by central Government. Today has been an opportunity to do so and to explore how, in realising our ambitions for a Big Society, we can together build on the huge amount of experience faith groups have in getting out into the community.

"Some see religion as a problem that needs to be solved. The new Government sees it as part of the solution. I want to send an important signal that we value the role of religion and faith in public life. The days of the state trying to suppress Christianity and other faiths are over."

Dr Clark commented: "Faith communities make a vital contribution to national life: guiding the moral outlook of many, inspiring great numbers of people to public service, providing support to those in need. A 'community of communities', they often have the experience, volunteers and connections that can put them at the heart of their neighbourhood. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/newsstories/communities/1643068>

### Scottish Parliamentary Questions

#### **Scottish Government Consultation**

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it is participating in the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Antisemitism. (S3W-34778)

**Alex Neil MSP:** The Interdepartmental Working Group on Anti-Semitism was established by the UK Government and does not include the Scottish Government.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/PQA/default.aspx?pg=S3W-34778>

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will implement the recommendations of the UK Parliament's All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism (S3W-34779)

**Alex Neil MSP:** Implementation of these recommendations is a matter for the UK Government. The Scottish Government is committed to tackling all forms of prejudice and discrimination and to creating the One Scotland of many cultures that we all aspire to. We have a positive on-going dialogue with the Jewish community in Scotland and as recently as 25 May the First Minister acknowledged the positive contribution this community has made to Scotland's multi-cultural society, and heard from members of the community first hand, at a public meeting organised by the Glasgow Jewish Education Forum. We are fully committed to continuing this dialogue and ensuring that issues raised by Scotland's Jewish community, including anti-Semitism, are being properly and appropriately addressed.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/PQA/default.aspx?pg=S3W-34779>

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### European Union

#### **Remarks made by High Representative Catherine Ashton after meeting Prime Minister Fayyad**

... Our meetings are a sign of the strong political and financial commitment of the European Union to the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Fayyad's leadership in building a democratic and viable Palestinian state. Palestinian statehood is critical for any peaceful, workable and lasting solution. We discussed his state-building plan and our strong support for it. I am also happy to announce that the EU will allocate an additional 40 million euros to the Palestinian Authority as direct financial support. And in the autumn, we will explore possibilities for further financial support. ...

We have discussed the situation in Gaza. ... Improving the economic situation in the Gaza Strip is not simply a matter of letting in aid - it is a matter of revitalizing the local economy. For a fundamental change, private sector development and commercial activity, including exports, will be crucial. ... The Palestinians must overcome their differences in order to build a state. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/NewsWord/EN/foraff/115854.doc>

#### **Remarks made by High Representative Catherine Ashton after meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman**

... There are three main objectives for my visit in Israel: First, to discuss the situation in Gaza. I have welcomed the new policy of the Israeli government as an important step forward. ... I fully agree that Israel's security is of paramount importance in moving ahead. I was in Sderot today and tomorrow morning I will meet the family of Gilad Shalit and share with them my deepest sympathy. ...

Second, we have discussed the peace process. I have listened carefully to the positions of both sides and hope a satisfactory way can be found to proceed to direct talks asap ... I have to express my deep concern about recent settlement activity in East Jerusalem.

My third objective was to emphasize the strong bond between the EU and Israel. We have a solid and vibrant partnership in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy across an extensive range of sectors. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/NewsWord/EN/foraff/115856.doc>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* New or updated

### UK Parliament

#### **\*\* Academies Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/057/amend/psc0571607a.59-60.html>

#### **Daylight Saving Bill**

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

#### **Face Coverings (Regulation) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/facecoveringsregulation.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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## Consultations \*\* new or updated

**Taking action on rights, support and protection of victims of crime and violence**  
(closing date 30 September 2010)

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/news/consulting\\_public/news\\_consulting\\_0053\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_0053_en.htm)

**Data protection legislative framework** (closes 6 October 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/dpa-call-evidence-02-07-2010.pdf>

**Guidance on Concessionary Schemes for Surface Water Drainage Charges**

*Applies in England only* (closes 22 October 2010)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/surface-charges/index.htm>

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