



New president at spirits lobby

BRUSSELS: CEPS, THE EUROPEAN SPIRITS ORGANISATION, has appointed Scotch whisky sector veteran Gavin Hewitt as its new president. Hewitt, who has been chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association for more than eight years, is a former British ambassador to Croatia, Finland and Belgium.



Hewitt: whisky champion

Hewitt is expected to use his wide experience of European affairs to drive home to policymakers the economic importance of the spirits sector, and to increase the level of understanding

within the EU institutions of the industry's commitment to social responsibility and responsible consumption.

The move follows the poaching last month of Paul Skehan from the European Retail Round Table as CEPS' new director - general. Skehan told *PAN* that he was "delighted" that Hewitt had accepted the two-year term as president. "His knowledge of Brussels, of the industry itself, and of how national spirits associations work, will be enormously helpful."

Three new members for Finance Watch

BRUSSELS: FINANCE WATCH HAS ANNOUNCED the appointment of three new members to its team. Sylvie Delassus has been made head of operations while Benoît Lallemand and Frédéric Hache become senior research analysts.



Hot time in eurozone for Finance Watch

Delassus boasts more than 20 years' experience including work in start-up structures and 11 years in senior operations, working within various environments and raising funds for the Institut Pasteur in Paris. Lallemand has 10 years' experience in the clearing and settlement industry, and as a steer-

ing committee coordinator and senior internal consultant for Euroclear. He is a specialist in asset servicing and data reporting and an expert in market infrastructure. Lallemand is also founding member of NGO ATTAC Bruxelles.

Hache joins the non-profit public interest association directly from BNP Paribas, where he was a specialist in structured transactions. He has 12 years' investment and commercial banking experience and previously worked for Credit Suisse in London and KBC bank in Paris.

EU Parliament agrees new code

MEPS LAST MONTH VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR of a new code of conduct. The code is designed to increase transparency about MEPs' financial interests and introduce rules to avoid conflicts of interest. EU deputies will, in future, have to provide 'clear declarations' of all paid activities outside Parliament. They will also have to refrain from accepting 'gifts' valued at more than €150. The new code will come into effect on 1 January and comes in the wake of revelations by the *Sunday Times* on the illegal financial activities of some MEPs.

UK Liberal deputy and Parliament vice-president for transparency Diana Wallis admitted that the disclosures had acted as a "spur" for the new code. Wallis said that sanctions would be imposed on any members found to contravene the new rules, saying, "They will find their names in big red lights flashing up on Parliament's website."

The code was also welcomed by the Brussels-based lobbying transparency group, Alter-EU.

Brussels move for Faithfull Kent

MELANIE FAITHFULL KENT HAS MOVED FROM HER POSITION as Hill & Knowlton's director for corporate practice in the Middle East, where she was country director for the United Arab Emirates and headed up a team covering a broad range of sectors including financial services, technology, aviation, industrial, retail and hospitality.

Faithfull Kent has moved to Hill & Knowlton Brussels to take up the position of managing director for communications, where she heads up the firm's non-public affairs consulting for clients, with a particular consulting focus on corporate and financial communications, change management and issues management in sectors including finance, energy, industrial and government. Boasting 15 years' of public affairs experience, eight years of which were spent in the UAE, Faithfull Kent also held the position of associate director for Harrison Cowley, the UK's largest regional PR network, for six years, and was an account director for Golley Slater.



VIEW FROM BRUSSELS



JAMES STEVENS
Senior vice-president
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Why Brussels is better than DC

With the euro in crisis and the EU in a flap, it is tempting to look across the Atlantic and wish that we had the politics and public affairs they have in Washington.

The 2012 US Presidential elections will cause our political envy to peak, as it offers the clear choices and media frenzy that Brussels can only dream of. But while there is much to commend the US system of government, I would venture three points that make Brussels better at policymaking and public affairs.

First, the slowness of building consensus may cause anguish, but if you are ever surprised by some latest proposal from the European Commission, you have not been paying attention. Public affairs programmes can be planned in Brussels in a way that is uncommon in the US.

Secondly, access and influence largely depend on the insights you bring and your ability to communicate

them in a compelling way, rather than any financial contribution made to an election campaign. Brussels is a battle of ideas rather than cheque-books.

Finally, we may have elections every five years but a weak link to public opinion ensures that decent long-term policy outcomes are still possible. It's debatable whether a system of elections every two years to the House of Representatives and 24-hour news cycles are capable of producing legislation that tackles issues such as climate change.

There are things we can learn from how public affairs is practised in the US. As governments assert their influence in Brussels, public affairs will increasingly need to be conducted at the state level and through media in a way reminiscent of the US. Brussels will become as much about managing networks of PA specialists across Europe as it is about walking the corridors of the European Parliament.

Finally, lobbying regulation in Europe should reflect the differences in how public affairs is conducted in Brussels and Washington DC if it is not to damage transparency and democracy.

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