

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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UK Parliamentary Questions

UK-Israeli Co-operation

Mr Michael McCann (East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) (Lab): What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UK-Israeli co-operation on international development. [16519]

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Mr Alan Duncan): Israel's international development agency, Mashav, which is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has a small programme focusing on sharing technical knowledge and humanitarian aid. Mashav operates in a number of countries, including, within the region, Jordan and Egypt, but not in the occupied Palestinian territories. The UK currently has no direct co-operation with Israel on international development. We hope that Israel, having recently become a member of the OECD, will consider joining the OECD's development assistance committee, which verifies the validity of its aid.

Mr McCann: Given the Israeli President's offer at the United Nations to share its scientific innovations to help to tackle global poverty, as well as its recent membership of the OECD, will the Government be sending a delegate to the forthcoming OECD conference in Jerusalem? If not, why not?

Mr Duncan: We will certainly, in the normal way, consider the suggestion that the hon. Gentleman has made, and look at it very seriously indeed.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101013/debtext/101013-0001.htm#10101328000026>

Gaza

Stephen Phillips (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con): What steps he is taking to ensure that people in Gaza receive the humanitarian aid allocated by his Department. [16518]

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Mr Alan Duncan): The humanitarian aid we provided to Gaza following Israel's Operation Cast Lead was disbursed through United Nations agencies and reputable non-governmental organisations with a proven track record of delivery. DFID officials regularly visit Gaza to monitor projects and we will carry out a formal assessment of what those projects have achieved early next year.

Stephen Phillips: I thank the Minister for that answer. The whole House is aware of the plight of the people of Gaza, who have effectively been imprisoned in their country by successive Israeli Governments in breach of United Nations resolutions. For that reason, aid is particularly important to the people in Gaza, but at the turn of the year we learned

from the head of the United States mission to the United Nations that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency will be underfunded this year to the tune of \$140 million. We are paying our share and the United States is paying hers; what steps is he taking to ensure that our other partners pay theirs?

Mr Duncan: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. UNRWA is facing a serious shortfall in its funding this year: our estimate is that it is currently about \$80 million. I met Filippo Grandi, the head of UNRWA in New York, two weeks ago. We are doing our best to urge people to contribute and we will do our bit as well. We hope also to talk to potential Arab donors to assist in making good the shortfall.

Mrs Louise Ellman (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab/Co-op): The very welcome increase in aid and economic activity in Gaza is due partly to the co-operation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Is Hamas jeopardising further progress?

Mr Duncan: The hon. Lady will know that we have no dealings with Hamas, but I am afraid that her interpretation of what is going on in Gaza is not entirely accurate. There are still very severe restrictions in the movement of goods, and we are doing our utmost to urge the Israelis to make more and simpler access possible, especially for products that are necessary for the long overdue reconstruction.

Dr Julian Huppert (Cambridge) (LD): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Gaza blockade is currently preventing UNRWA from building eight urgently needed schools in order to teach thousands of children? Money for the schools has already been provided by international donors and the plans are there, but access to cement and steel bars is not. Will he take urgent steps to make sure that those schools can go ahead for the new school year?

Mr Duncan: My hon. Friend is largely correct. Although it is true that some building materials are getting through to multilateral organisations, they certainly are not getting through to private citizens—for the building of houses for example. Schools must be rebuilt, and we certainly urge the Israelis to ensure that any materials that can be used for the essential reconstruction of schools and the like can be allowed through.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101013/debtext/101013-0001.htm#10101328000025>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

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>

Fixed Term Parliaments Bill

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

Identity Documents Bill

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

**** Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill**

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

Oral Questions: House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101013-0001.htm#10101355000026>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/063/amend/pbc0631310a.369-372.html>

Scottish Parliament

Certification of Death Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/58-CertDeath/index.htm>

End of Life Assistance Bill

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

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Other Relevant Information

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Education to Combat Anti-Semitism: Meeting for Representatives of Ministries of Education

7-8 November 2010 in Vienna

... meeting for representatives of ministries of education across the OSCE region to review experiences in the field of combating anti-Semitism through education. The aim of the meeting is to identify successful approaches, share good practices, and to discuss challenges in this field. ...

For more details see.

http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_6_47076.html

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Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes tomorrow**

General Medical Council (GMC) Equality Scheme 2011 – 2014 (closes 15 October 2010)

https://gmc.e-consultation.net/econsult/consultation_Dtl.aspx?consult_Id=140&status=2&criteria=l

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>

Consultation on the change to policy direction for the Big Lottery Fund (closes 29 October 2010)

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/7313.aspx>

Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality Duty: Promoting equality through transparency (closing date 10 November 2010)

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/402461_GEO_EqualityAct2010ThePublicSectorEqualityDuty_acc.pdf

Certification of Death (Scotland) Bill (closes 18 November 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/hs/inquiries/CertificationOfDeathBill/CallForEvidence.htm>

Equality Duty: Detailed Proposals - Consultation on Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order (Scotland) (closes 26 November 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/324431/0104438.pdf>

Charity Commission: Proposed withdrawal of paper forms for Annual Returns, Registration applications, and forthcoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations (closes 2 December 2010)

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/About_the_Commission/ols_consultation_intro.aspx

Equality Act 2010 - Performance of the Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales (closes 17 December 2010)

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/equalityact2010/?lang=en>

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Draft Code of Practice on Further and Higher Education (closes 31 December 2010)

http://live.ehrc.precedenthost.co.uk/cgi-bin/generate.pl?page_id= sx0666i4b&save=screen

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