

July Radio Update: Bunkering, CUTW and Epid Study

We would like to make use of this weeks' broadcast with an update on 3 key areas of activity by the Environmental Safety Group:-

Although these hot days make it harder to think about our environmental problems or their importance, the ESG continues to develop and work on its campaigns as best it can.

1) I would like to firstly talk a little about our forthcoming "**Clean up the World**" event, taking place the weekend of Saturday 16th September. As many of you know last years' event was very successful and saw the participation of hundreds of Gibraltarians. Participation took various forms: via an exhibition, a green parade, and of course, the clean ups themselves which were widespread and enthusiastically tackled by our volunteers.

This years **Clean up the World theme** is "don't desert our dry lands" which although not directly related to Gibraltar's environment, nevertheless highlights the need to conserve and protect our green areas. Not too far from us in North Africa encroaching desertification is a reality with Andalucia also in danger of similar consequences seeing temperatures soar to 50° in the last few days. This makes our available wild areas and habitats even more vital to sustain existing biodiversity.

On the litter front the ESG would like to see littering and dumping of rubble and other construction materials to be stopped altogether and for fines and enforcement to play a more active role; Also for recycling facilities to be introduced on the Rock this year; the lack of such an important facility in a busy community like Gibraltar is striking in its absence and unforgivable and must be addressed by Govt and related agencies; it is hoped that renewed pressure through the Clean up Event will help Gibraltar take the next step and set up bins in 2006.

Materials promoting litter awareness and invitations to schools and organisations to participate in the Clean up event will be sent out during the month of August.
Please call 43156/71020 or 74467 to sign up for this year's event.

2) The ESG has also made public its ongoing participation in the cross border **Plataforma por El Estudio Epidemiológico** which has been calling for a long awaited, independent and accountable study to determine impacts from the Bay industries on the health of the communities. As many of us know there is serious concern that the past twenty years of unacceptably high levels of industrial pollution has and is contributing towards high rates of cancers and others diseases.

The Plataforma which contains unions, social, medical and environmental groups has held several meetings in the past few months and a protest and has also obtained some information from La Junta – however the quality of the information has been utterly rejected by the groups who will now be meeting in Gibraltar this coming Monday to review its strategy; it is expected that an important announcement will be made then.

3) Finally, some of you may have caught our media statements and interviews on the ongoing issue of bunkering fumes. It is an important environmental issue in Gibraltar affecting many residents and the ESG believes that technologies exist to eliminate the fugitive fumes which escape on fuel transfers, that the technology of vapour recovery or vapour combustion is mature and in light of the massive profits made by the fuel industry, also affordable. It is sincerely hoped that 2006 will see concrete steps taken towards introducing such technologies without which this activity will be making itself increasingly unpopular and potentially having an adverse effect on the health of our community.

There are many other issues we could raise but I think we have covered three main areas of our activities. I hope you will find the information of interest and that you do contact us for the next Community environmental project in September, Clean up the World.