

Friends of Wighton update ...

From Sheena Wellington :

Lunchtime Recital – Feis Rois Ceilidh Trail
Wighton Heritage Centre, Central Library
Tuesday 18th July



Enjoy the traditional music from our stars of the future.

This event usually turns into a session so times will be advised later!

Admission Free, but donations for the Ceilidh Trail welcomed.

Beijing pilots illegal-honking detectors



A system of detectors is installed along the road near Peking Union Medical College Hospital in Beijing. [Photo/chinanews.com]

Drivers who indiscriminately use their car horns in future could find themselves being booked thanks to a system of detectors being installed along the Chinese capital's key areas by the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau, according to Beijing Youth Daily.

"The detectors consist of three parts, namely, a microphone array acquisition device, an electronic capture and a LED prompt system. Combining the three systems, we can distinguish between the sounds of horns, brakes and engine noise, etc.," said Li Jianfeng, deputy director of the Scientific and Technical Information Department of the bureau.

"The detectors can accurately collect honks." Li said. "Even parallel vehicles can also be identified based on their position in each lane; the recognition locator feature can reflect the direction the honks are coming from, so there will be no misjudgment."

The system photographs the number plate of the offending vehicle so that the driver can be tracked down and prosecuted.

Honking horns have long been an irritating contributor to Beijing's noise pollution levels.

According to The Measures of Beijing on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Road Traffic Safety, violation of the provisions in regard to indiscriminate honking will incur a fine of 100 yuan (US\$14.76).

[Owning a home](#)

Today I have been granted a debate on how more people can become homeowners.

A large number of people who rent their homes would like to be owners. Over a lifetime it is much cheaper to buy and hold a home of your own than to rent one. A person can be free of the mortgage to buy after say 25 years, leaving them without mortgage payment or rent for the rest of their lives. There are maintenance costs still to pay, but no rent rises and service charges.

A home owner has other advantages. Homes often go up in value, giving the owner an appreciating asset. This can help raise finance for other purposes, leaves something to pass on to another generation on death, or helps pay the care home bills in a home of their choice if the individual has to go into a care home at the end of their lives. There is more flexibility in switching between homes if you need to move areas or alter the amount of accommodation you have, than if you rent from a social landlord.

The issue today I want to encourage is how can we help more people into home ownership? I will of course state again that better controls on the numbers

of people coming in to the UK will ease the demand pressure on our housing market. I will consider ways of more homes being built.

It still leaves open the question how can we assist all those first time buyers who do not have access to the bank of Mum and Dad?

Western Balkans: Regional Economic Area

The Western Balkans Regional Economic Area aims at developing an area where goods, services, investments and skilled workers can move without obstacles. It will scale up the market available to potential investors in the region: access to almost 20 million consumers from a single base, and opportunities to create value chains across borders will boost Western Balkans economic attractiveness, also taking advantage of trade relations with the EU.

What is the European Commission's position on the Western Balkans Regional Economic Area? Is it a Commission proposal?

The European Commission is responding to calls from the region itself for deepening cooperation to increase growth and create more jobs.

For a number of years, the Commission has made proposals to develop the 'connectivity' of transport and energy systems, as a flagship policy to promote regional co-operation and underpin economic growth in the Western Balkans. Consequently, the Commission fully supports the Western Balkans partners' own ambition for deeper regional economic integration and is very keen to lend its political, technical and financial support. But it will be up to the countries themselves to take the necessary steps to accelerate regional economic integration.

Is the Regional Economic Area a substitute for EU membership or will it replace the enlargement process?

No, it is not an alternative to EU integration.

On the contrary, the progressive deepening of the economic integration in the region should be based on EU rules and principles. Such an approach will secure both integration within the region and with the EU. In this way, this initiative will be an important milestone for preparation for EU accession.

How will it be put into practice?

The concept will be put into operation through a multiannual **action plan**, endorsed by the Western Balkans leaders at the Trieste Summit on 12 July 2017. The action plan comprises four dimensions: trade, investment, mobility

and digital market.

On **trade**, the parties agree to mobilise their efforts to implement successfully CEFTA additional protocols on trade facilitation, to swiftly conclude the adoption of Additional Protocol on trade in services and start without delay its implementation (in particular for key services such as finance, insurance, and transport), and to launch negotiations of a new protocol on dispute settlement. Provisions for eCommerce and external tariffs are also included.

On **investment**, the parties agree to establish a regional investment agenda, which will include exchanges of information and best practices on investment policies and identify policies that could be harmonised. The parties also agree to stimulate private sector development in order to maximise the benefit of the Regional Economic Area to the local economies.

On **mobility**, the parties agree to removing obstacles to mobility of professionals, through regional mutual recognition agreements of professional qualifications and removing obstacles to mobility of students, researchers and academics.

The **digital dimension** covers roaming and broadband deployment, cybersecurity and data protection, and will address the needs of digital skills over the region.

What is the timeframe?

That will depend on the region's ambition! The timeframe for the establishment of the Regional Economic Area should not be set by the EU but by the parties themselves. The European Commission will support the parties in this process.

What benefits will it bring to the Western Balkans and to the EU?

Greater economic integration will make the region more attractive and competitive. Engaging in a regional economic area sends a powerful message that the Western Balkans is a market of some 20 million consumers with enormous untapped potential. This will attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and lead to higher economic growth and job creation. For the EU, such an area would also open new opportunities for EU and Western Balkans companies by developing value chains over the region. It would secure both integration within the region and with the EU and at the same time also foster the region's approximation to the European Union.

[Der westliche Balkan: ein integrierter](#)

Wirtschaftsraum

Roaming charges ended in the European Union on 15 June 2017. Europeans travelling within EU countries will 'Roam Like at Home' and pay domestic prices for roaming calls, SMS and data. ...

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017, ...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. Overview...

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty, ...