

Statement by the Spokesperson on the so-called Presidential elections and the referendum on amending the name of the Georgian

The European Union does not recognise the framework in which the so-called Presidential elections and the referendum on amending the name of the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia are due to take place on 9 April.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia, including through its co-chairmanship of the Geneva International Discussions and the EU Monitoring Mission.

The European Union reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders.

Tibet reports first H7N9 case

A human infection of H7N9 bird flu has been reported in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, the local health authority said Saturday.

The patient, a 41-year-old migrant worker from neighboring Sichuan Province, was diagnosed on April 3 and is in quarantine at Tibet's Third People's Hospital in Lhasa, the regional health and family planning commission said on its website.

The man had been involved in the trade of live poultry since arriving in Lhasa in February.

His symptoms were reported to the regional disease prevention and control center on April 2, and his condition was confirmed on April 3. He is the first human infection of H7N9 bird flu in Tibet.

Following the diagnosis, live poultry trading has been suspended across the region. All those who had been in close contact with the patient are under medical observation.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in China in March 2013. Infections are most likely to strike in winter and spring.

[West End Community Council – next meeting](#)

The next West End Community Council is next Tuesday – details and agenda below – all welcome!



**WEST END COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY 11TH APRIL 2017 AT 7.00PM
IN LOGIE AND ST JOHN'S (CROSS) PARISH CHURCH HALLS
(ENTER FROM SHAFTESBURY TERRACE – OFF BLACKNESS AVENUE)**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION
2. APOLOGIES
3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 14TH MARCH AND MATTERS ARISING
4. POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE
5. PLANNING UPDATE
6. CORRESPONDENCE
7. OTHER MEETINGS ATTENDED ON BEHALF OF WECC
8. AOCB – MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC INPUT
9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 9th May 2017

Light refreshments will be provided.

[Five seized in cross-border heroin trafficking](#)

Police in southwest China's Yunnan Province have arrested five suspects and

seized 41 kg of heroin in the latest crackdown on drug trafficking.

The men and drug were seized in Ruili City in Dai-Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture of Dehong on March 31, the public security bureau of Longling County said in a statement Saturday.

The bureau received reports in February that an overseas drug trafficking ring were planning to ship narcotics to China.

Police detected the two suspects from Myanmar as soon as they crossed the border into China at 4 p.m. on March 31. They then followed them to a hotel in Ruili City, where the suspects met their three Chinese collaborators. All five were arrested.

From the trunk of their SUV, police found 120 blocks of heroin, which weighed 41.785 kg.

The two suspects from Myanmar said they had been promised 5,000 yuan (725 U.S. dollars).

The investigation continues.

Dehong prefecture is close to the opium-growing Golden Triangle. Last year, border police in Dehong seized 1.6 tonnes of narcotics, completed investigations into 668 drug-related crimes and arrested 662 suspects.

[Rail capacity](#)

The modern railway is based on a cruel paradox. Some of its routes into the main cities are too popular at peak times, with overcrowding. The commuters are made to pay premium prices for what can be an inferior service. Many other routes have too few passengers, and those who do travel often benefit from heavily discounted or off peak prices well below the costs of running those trains.

We need to solve the problem of too little capacity for some, and too much capacity and too little revenue from others. What should be done? Commuters naturally think it unfair that they have to provide a disproportionate part of the fare revenue in what remains overall a heavily loss making or subsidised business. Other travellers often do not appreciate just how large a gap there is between what they pay to travel and the costs of providing the train they use.

The problem of capacity may be easier to solve than many think. According to the railway management they can typically only run 20 mainline trains an hour on any given line. At peaks there are still large gaps between trains on uni direction track. Poor signals, poor brakes and heavy trains mean the safety

margin required to stop a train in time leaves much of the track empty. Modern digital signalling could alter that. If a train is equipped with on board signals and sensors, and automatic braking where needed, it is possible according to railway experts to run 30 trains a hour safely. That is a massive increase of 50% in capacity. It also means a service which at best is one train every three minutes becomes one train every two minutes, more like the tube. If new trains are built out of lighter though strong materials, and equipped with better brakes, there could be further improvements.

I have been urging the government and railway to get on with digital signal investment. They have now established a larger fund to tackle the five most overcrowded routes into London. I am asking them to do more, as so many commuter routes into major cities are afflicted.

Getting more people to use the trains off peak and on longer routes does not have such an easy fix. There needs to be more analysis of why people travel and what they want to get out of it. We need timetables that offer good services more geared to the pattern of passenger needs, and sensible pricing which offers a discount for off peak but does not simply dump seats at prices well below marginal costs.