



HEADLINES

EU / Social Affairs: Employment Committee against EU-wide rules for sun light radiation

The Employment and Social Affairs Committee adopted on 12 July a second reading report by Csaba Ory (EPP-ED, Hungary) on the exposure of workers to risks from optical radiation. This proposal is the last of a series of four directives designed to protect workers from the dangers of “physical agents”, i.e. noise, vibrations, and electromagnetic fields.

The directive aims at ensuring early diagnosis of damage to the eyes and prevention long-term health dangers resulting from optical radiations. Employers will have to respect exposure limit values and carry out risk assessments. Workers will have rights to information, training and health checks.

MEPs agreed on EU-wide rules for radiation from artificial sources. However, unlike the Council, they decided to leave it up to the Member States to assess and take appropriate measures regarding the risks of natural radiations from the suns. Some MEPs qualified the proposal as a reasonable attempt to protect workers from artificial radiation, which could have been ruined by the proposal to legislate on sunlight. In the same ways, craft and SMEs of the construction sector expressed fierce opposition to the sun light risk inclusion in the scope of the directive, saying that it would bring more and disproportionate administrative burden on small firms

The original proposal introduced additional obligations (action plans and evaluation procedure) on small firms that may have deterred employers from recruiting. Employers could have been held responsible in cases where illnesses related to sun exposure appear, even in cases in which it is not be possible to determine the exclusive origin or time of exposure.

The directive will now be voted on by the European Parliament in September.

The report by Csaba Ory is available on the following webpage:

http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/PR/565/565459/565459en.pdf

EU / Environment : More attention to small business in REACH debates

Exchanges of views within the Parliamentary Committees on the new EU chemicals policy REACH demonstrated that more attention has being put on the impact of the proposal on SMEs.

On 14 of July the Rapporteur Guido Sacconi (PSE, Italy, Environment Committe) presented new proposals that he claims would reconcile the Commission's initial proposal to test chemicals based on the volumes produced or imported (volume-based approach) with the industry's risk-based approach. Under Sacconi's proposal, data registered for small volume chemicals (1-10 tonnes of a chemical produced or imported per year) would be made available free of charge to SMEs 13 years after REACH comes into force instead of eleven.

ESBA Bulletin of 27 July 2005 – Volume 7 – Number 13

In the Industry Committee the rapporteur for opinion Lena Ek (Liberals, Sweden) or Edit Herczorg (Socialists, Hungary), raised the issue of administrative burden for small businesses. The Internal Market Committee, which focuses on pre-registration and risk prioritisation, and supports the Malta-Slovenia proposal (1-10 tonnes/year), has also expressed strong concerns regarding the workability of the proposal for SMEs.

However, the reinforced awareness on small businesses' concerns expressed in the EP Committees will have to be supported by the Council to become reality. Mrs Beckett, Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs recently stressed that the OSOR proposal (One substance one registration), although supported by several Member States, would need a clear majority.

The vote on the REACH proposal is foreseen for the October Plenary and the UK Presidency aims to reach an agreement at the Competitiveness Council of November.

Meanwhile, two comprehensive studies on REACH have recently been published. The Commission, industry and member state representatives have suggested modifications to the draft European chemicals law after concluding a simulation exercise named SPORT (Strategic Partnership on REACH Testing). It was launched on the demand of the European chemicals industry association (CEFIC).

A business impact assessment study of REACH initiated by the European Commission and industry UNICE/CEFIC and published in mid-July examines the mechanisms of business decisions under REACH throughout the value chain in four sectors.

Find the two studies on:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/reach/sport/sport_en.htm and

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/reach/docs/reach/kpmg_final_report.pdf

EU / Internal Market: UK Presidency struggles to take FP7 forward

The UK Presidency is trying to make the 7th Framework Programme live up to its expectations in a time of insecurity as regards the EU's overall budget. In a situation where the Commission repeatedly calls for increased research spending, Member States are seen as dragging their feet.

Last week the Commission urged governments to increase spending or face being out-paced by competitors such as China. The UK Presidency is trying to build on this view by emphasising the need to increase EU funds for research and to make the EU more attractive to business research and innovation.

Accordingly, the UK has underlined the importance of turning more research into innovation, as well as emphasising the role of security-related R&D in promoting leading-edge technologies and bringing forward the Computer implemented inventions Directive and other improvements to the intellectual property regime in the EU.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament's rapporteur on FP7, Jerzy Buzek, has called on politicians, regional representatives and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to lobby their national governments, in particular science and finance ministers, on the FP7 budget issue. Failure to secure a doubling of the EU research budget could necessitate a reassessment of the FP7 proposals. This could place initiatives such as the European Research Council (ERC) in doubt.

ESBA Bulletin of 27 July 2005 – Volume 7 – Number 13

Find the European Commission's thematic priorities in FP7 on:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/themes/index_en.cfm

IN BRIEF

EU / Finances & SMEs: Parliament Committee endorses Basel II

The European Union looks set to implement Basel II bank safety rules. On July 13 European Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee approved the draft of the Capital Requirements Directive (CRD), albeit with certain amendments.

The committee's vote means that the directive is now well on track for approval by the Parliament followed by approval by Europe's Council of Ministers in October or November.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has published a guide called "How to deal with the new rating culture: A practical guide to loan financing for small and medium-sized enterprises". It provides advice for small businesses on basic rules when applying for a loan and on how to manage their relationship with the bank.

The guide can be downloaded from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/financing/basel_2.htm

EU / Internal Market : Debate on European social model hampers progress on services

The European Commissioner for the Internal Market, Charlie McCreevy, fears that the services directive could become a victim of an ideological battle between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'social Europe' economic models for the EU. McCreevy recently acknowledged that the legislation had become bound up with arguments over the two Europes: social versus economically liberal.

Several commentators have speculated that the question of liberalisation of services played a key part in the French referendum rejection of the EU constitution. This has prompted some to claim that the services directive is dead after the emphatic French 'non'.

Adoption of the Evelyne Gebhardt's report (PES, Germany) in the Internal Market Committee is scheduled for 13th September, with a vote in plenary in October.

[The European Parliament report on services as well as proposed amendments:](#)

EU / Lisbon Process: Commission presents 8 measures to create more growth and jobs

On 20 July the European Commission has launched an 8-point plan of EU measures it hopes will stimulate growth and create more jobs. With this plan it sets out further open markets, cut red tape and invest in modern infrastructure ensuring that enterprises can grow, innovate and create new jobs.

Further, the Commission pledges to prop up the development of a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce –partly through support for education and lifelong learning to help more people achieve their full personal and professional potential and encourage entrepreneurship.

ESBA Bulletin of 27 July 2005 – Volume 7 – Number 13

Please find the press release presenting the 8 points [here](#):

CONSULTATIONS

Improving the EU business environment

Unnecessary rules and red tape stand in the way of sustainable growth deter business investment and hinder job creation. In mid-March, the Commission announced further steps in its Communication on “Better Regulation for Growth and Jobs”. This includes the launch of a major new simplification programme by October, 2005. In order to ensure that the programme responds to real concerns, the European Commission is keen to hear from businesses and other interested parties which rules need to be simplified.

The European Commission has now launched a public online consultation to ask business how they feel the business environment in the EU can be improved and the administrative burden reduced. Through an online questionnaire, the Commission asks companies and other interested parties to identify particularly burdensome rules and make suggestions as to how best to simplify them. The information gathered will be compiled and examined in the Commission’s ‘Red Tape Observatory’ and individually analysed by the responsible Commission services.

Closes 31 December 2005

The online form entitled ‘Ten minutes to improve the business environment in the EU’ is to be found on: <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/forms/dispatch?form=418&lang=EN>

Cross border mergers and acquisitions

A survey has been launched by the Commission to find out why there is little cross-border consolidation in the financial sector and what the obstacles are to EU cross-border mergers and acquisitions. The consultation is open to all interested stakeholders in the financial sector. The results will serve as an input for a report expected from the Commission in September.

On-line questionnaire: <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/forms/dispatch?form=405>

[Q&A](#) :

Emission trading survey

The European Commission has launched a stakeholder web survey to help it prepare for an official review of the EU's carbon emission trading system due in a year's time. Although the Commission recently has expressed caution with regard to changes of the system, the review may lead to a revision of the emission trading directive, including an extension to new sectors and gases.

Closes 16 August 2005

Find the on-line survey on: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/emission.htm>

ESBA Bulletin of 27 July 2005 – Volume 7 – Number 13

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important Dates

- 29 August End of summer break for the European Parliament
- 5 September EU-China Summit
- 5-8 Sept. European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg
- 9-10 Sept. Informal Economic and Financial Affairs
- 15 Sept. Consumer Competition Conference, London
- 26-29 Sept. European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg

Other SME related Events

- 28 August 2nd International Conference on SMEs - Lefkada, Greece – Further information: www.atiner.gr/index.php?section=3&subsection=30
- 2 September Business Innovation for SMEs 2005 – Brighton, UK – Further information: www.brighton.ac.uk/ktp/
- 8 September ICT Lunch meeting with John Bacon on how to manage SME networks – Brussels, Belgium
Further information: www.britcham.be/content/events/registration.asp?EventID=377
- 14 September "Flexicurity" on the labour market: Are the EU-25 speaking the same language? – Brussels, Belgium
Further information: www.theepc.be/en/default.asp?TYP=Calendar%20of%20Events&LV=229&PG=COE/en/listing_open&see=y
- 23-24 Sept. Business Cooperation meeting – organised by yes for Europe, Palma de Majorca
More information : www.yes.be
- 27 September SME access to finance: a better understanding, UNICE seminar – Brussels, Belgium - Further information: <http://www.sme-union.org/viewdoc.php?LAN=en&FILE=doc&ID=69>
- October 6 "Innovations and Entrepreneurship – missing links?" , organised by FSF, ITPS and NUTEK "Entrepreneurship" Seminars in Brussels
For more information and registration please contact helena.ericsson@fsf.se
- 1-3 November Small Business & Entrepreneurship 28th National Conference – Blackpool, UK
Further information: www.isbe2005.org
- November 9 "Fail Forward – is failure victory?" FSF, ITPS and NUTEK Entrepreneurship Seminars in Brussels
For more information and registration please contact helena.ericsson@fsf.se
- 30 November 20th Anniversary of the New Approach, Organised by the European Commission, Brussels
Further information will be posted at the end of August 05 at the following website : http://europa.eu;int/enterprise/newapproach/index_en.htm
- December 7 "The Art of Survival" - FSF, ITPS and NUTEK Entrepreneurship Seminars in Brussels
For more information and registration please contact helena.ericsson@fsf.se