



### HEADLINES

#### **EU / Social Affairs: MEPs vote against EU-wide rules on sunlight radiation**

On Wednesday 7 September the European Parliament adopted a second reading report by Csaba Öry (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”.

Following a heated debate MEPs rejected the inclusion of sunlight radiation into the scope of the Optical Radiation Directive. A key amendment backed by 397 in favour and 260 against stipulates that member States will decide whether employers will have to take measures to assess the risk of exposure and protect employees from sunlight.

This shows that MEPs have not lost common sense, a Liz Lynne MEP (Liberals, UK) indicated after the vote. The original draft backed by the Commission and the Council would have imposed huge costs on small firms, and employers would have been obliged to assess exposure to sunlight or buy sunglasses for employees.

See the report as adopted: [http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PROG=TA&L=EN& amp; amp; REF\\_P=P6\\_TA-2005-0329](http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PROG=TA&L=EN& amp; amp; REF_P=P6_TA-2005-0329)

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#### **EU / Lisbon Process : EU More employment rate below expectations**

In spite of growing employment rates in most EU countries, more efforts will be needed to reach the objectives of the Lisbon Agenda in 2010. As the last EU Labour Force Survey shows, the employment rate in the EU (share of employed people in the population aged 15 to 64 years), stood at 63.3% in 2004 in the EU-25, 3.7 points below the European Council target for 2005.

The findings show that in 2004 163.6 million of the 15 - 64 age group were economically inactive, against 194.5 million who had a job or a business activity. Also, 19.4 million were registered as unemployed. Although the employment rate is slightly higher in the “old” EU countries than in the 10 new Member States, a higher percentage is unemployed in the EU-10.

In July the European Commission presented 8 new measures to boost growth and employment in the EU, promote knowledge and innovation and make Europe an attractive place to invest and work.

See the Eurostat survey on EU workforce:

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-NK-05-009/EN/KS-NK-05-009-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NK-05-009/EN/KS-NK-05-009-EN.PDF)

More info on the 8 measures:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/973&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### IN BRIEF

#### **EU / Environment: Vote on REACH proposal expected in three Committees**

The debate in first reading on the proposal for a new EU Chemical Policy has reached its final phase. If they follow their respective timetable, the three lead parliamentary committees working on REACH will have adopted their opinions by early October. The Industry and Internal Market Committees will vote on their draft opinion on 13 September. The vote in the Environment Committee is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> October. This should allow for the plenary vote in first reading to take place in November. The UK presidency hopes to reach a political agreement by December.

Read more on the REACH proposal: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/reach/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/reach/index_en.htm)

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#### **EU / Enterprise Policy : MAP programme extended for one year**

Following the adoption of the Commission Proposal to extend the Multiannual Programme (MAP) for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, (2001-2005) without substantial change and along the same budgetary lines, the current MAP will run until the end of 2006. In 2007 it will be succeeded by the new Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

For more information : [http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/mult\\_entr\\_programme/programme\\_2001\\_2005.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/mult_entr_programme/programme_2001_2005.htm)

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#### **EU / R&D : FP7 working document to be debated in Industry Committee**

The proposal for the 7<sup>th</sup> Research and Development Framework Programme is currently being discussed in first reading. A working document drafted by Jerzy Buzek (EPP-ED, Poland, Rapporteur), which underlines the need to create the right conditions for a real SME participation, will be further debated during the Industry Committee meeting Monday 12 September. The adoption of Parliament's first reading is foreseen for December 2005 and the Council Common Position for early 2006. Second reading could start in March 2006, allowing for a final adoption of the Framework Programme before summer 2006.

Read Buzek's Working Document: [http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/dt/572/572051/572051en.pdf](http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dt/572/572051/572051en.pdf)

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#### **EU / R&D : Eurostat survey shows highest investment in manufacturing sector**

The last Eurostat survey "Sciences, technology and Innovation" clearly shows that manufacturing firms invest more in research and development than businesses in the services sector. The EU average investment by services firms in R&D ranges between 1.8% in Slovakia and 0.3% in Hungary. The survey also shows that Iceland and Finland have the highest shares of researchers (respectively 2% and 1.9%) in relation to the active population.

According to another Eurostat analysis published, the EU R&D intensity is low and almost stagnating. In the US 2.59% of the GDP is devoted to R&D, in Japan 3.15%.

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Read more [http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-NS-05-008/EN/KS-NS-05-008-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NS-05-008/EN/KS-NS-05-008-EN.PDF)

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### 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>

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#### **Customs and security: draft implementing provisions concerning new security and safety measures**

The Commission has published a preliminary draft of implementing provisions consequent to Regulation 648/2005 that introduces measures to improve security at external borders. These proposals are open to discussion and change before adoption. The Commission invites all interested parties to comment on these proposals, particularly in respect of those aspects where options exist or where variable conditions, such as time limits, will apply. Some of these aspects are indicated by the enclosure of text in square brackets

*Closes 16 September 2005*

More information : [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/taxation\\_customs/common/consultations/customs/article\\_2057\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/common/consultations/customs/article_2057_en.htm)

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### COMING UP

#### **EU Institutions: Important Dates**

- 9-10 Sept. Informal Economic and Financial Affairs Council
- 26-29 Sept. European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg
- 3 Oct General Affairs and External relation Council
- 4 Oct. Vote on REACH in Environment Committee (possibly)

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- 11 Oct Competitiveness Council
- 17 Oct Environment Council
- 24-27 Oct European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg

### Other SME related Events

- 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](http://www.theepc.be/en/default.asp?TYP=Calendar%20of%20Events&LV=229&PG=COE/en/listing_open&see=y)
- 19 September DG Trade Conference - To Lisbon ... and beyond: Market Access and External aspect of Competitiveness” , Brussels, Belgium, full day event. More info and registration: <http://mkaccdb.eu.int/madb2/symposium2005/index.htm>
- 23-24 Sept. Business Cooperation meeting – organised by yes for Europe, Palma de Majorca – More information : [www.yes.be](http://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>
- 4-5 Oct The Risk Capital Summit 2005 – Investing for Growth and Competitiveness in Europe. Conference to debate and make recommendations on how risk capital should support the innovation, growth and competitiveness of European SMEs. Jointly organised by the DG Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission, and the UK Presidency.  
Venue: The Renaissance Chancery Court Hotel, London (United Kingdom)  
More information : <http://www.riskcap2005.com/>
- 6 October “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](mailto:helena.ericsson@fsf.se)
- 14 October World Standards Day 2005: “International Cooperation in Standardisation” Conference organised by the Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General – Brussels, Belgium  
More info & registration : [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/standards\\_policy/international/world\\_standards\\_day/2005\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/standards_policy/international/world_standards_day/2005_en.htm)
- 1-3 November Small Business & Entrepreneurship 28th National Conference – Blackpool, UK - Further information: [www.isbe2005.org](http://www.isbe2005.org)
- 9 November “Fail Forward – is failure victory?” FSF, ITPS and NUTEK Entrepreneurship Seminars in Brussels - For more information and registration please contact [helena.ericsson@fsf.se](mailto:helena.ericsson@fsf.se)
- 30 November 20<sup>th</sup> 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](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](mailto:helena.ericsson@fsf.se)