



HEADLINES

EU/ Enlargement: Treaty of Accession signed, acceding countries already taking part to EU daily life

The Act and Treaty of Accession was signed in Athenes on 16th April by the Heads of State and Government of the 15 Member States and the 10 candidates countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). At the signing ceremony, Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis underlined the fact that the enlarged EU should consider this enlargement as a "point of departure" towards greater integration. Whereas the Treaty will take effect on 1st may 2004 in a 25-Member EU, after ratification in the various national parliaments, the date of 16th April 2003 already has practical effects in terms of participation in Community life. The new States have now observer status within the Council and its bodies, and a significant number of their parliamentarians will also take part in the work of the EP (54 for Poland, 24 for Hungary, 24 for the Czech republic). Representatives of their regional authorities and "civil society" will also be able to participate in the work of the Committee of the Regions, and the European Economic and Social Committee.

More info :

<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/makeFrame.asp?MAX=&BID=76&DID=75475&LANG=1&File=/pressData/en/ec/75475.pdf&Picture=0>

EU/ Innovation: Key study published on how to update innovation policy in the context of the Lisbon process

The new study 'Innovation Tomorrow', an in-depth reflection on how to update innovation policy was published on 8th April. One of the main points of the study is that a successful innovation policy has to be flexible and responsive to adapt to a rapidly changing economic context. Not least, innovation should be placed at the heart of other policies shaping economic growth. European Commissioner responsible for Enterprise and Information Society Erkki Liikanen underlined the changing factor affecting innovation in a knowledge-economy, in that innovation is no longer based on research, sciences and technology, but also on a wide range of factors, such as "organisational or presentational innovation", where the focus is not necessarily on technological aspects of new products or services. A recent Communication on Innovation Policy recommended the adoption of a multidimensional and horizontal policy.

More info:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/514|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

EU/ Standardisation: New co-operation guidelines on standards

New co-operation guidelines on standards have been signed by the Commission, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the three major European standards bodies CEN (Committee for European Standardization), CENELEC (European Committee for Technical Standardization) and ETSI (European Telecommunication Standards' Institute). These new guidelines will replace the version of

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1984 to take into account the economic and technical changes, and especially the international dimension of standardisation. Over the last ten years, the number of European Standards available has risen from 2000 to more than 14000. The benefits of this harmonisation are first, to increase the compatibility and safety of product within the Internal Market, and second, to give Europe a stronger position in worldwide standardization.

More info:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/456|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

EU/ Legislation: New "Pink Book" available

An updated version of the "Pink Book" has been posted on the Commission's web pages. The 6th Pink Book includes a list of EU legislation managed by the Enterprise DG (over 475 directives), covering both "hard" law (legally binding) and "soft" law (implementing arrangements). The Pink Book is updated twice a year to take account of technical progress and additional implementing measures. The list also includes sections on EU enlargement, on the free movement of goods, processed agricultural products, industrial policy, and small and medium-sized enterprises. The hard copy will be available at the end of April.

More info: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/enterprise/acquis.htm>

EU/ R&D: Specific support actions for candidates countries

On 4th April, the Commission launched a call for project proposals aimed at facilitating the involvement and participation of the 13 future EU Member States in the EU 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development. These "specific support actions" amount euro 13 million. The call for projects proposals, open until 26/06/2003, is also open to Candidate Countries, which can be project leaders or create research consortia made up of partners from Candidate Countries. Candidate Countries associated with FP6 and eligible to apply for funding are Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

More info: http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls_accssa.cfm

EU/ Legislation: Online list of the "notified bodies" for the "New Approach" available

A list of the "notified bodies" responsible for the assessment of the conformity of products with the requirements laid down in EU "New approach" Directive is now available on DG Enterprise website. This new tool, called NANDO, will help the users of the 20 sectors covered by the directive to find information on notified body by country, directive and product. The New Approach to product regulation was launched in 1987 with the aim of limiting public intervention and leaving businesses and industry the largest margin of manoeuvre on how to meet their obligation. Some 20 directives have been adopted and come into force since 1987.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/regulation/index.htm>

EU/ e-business: First comprehensive survey on use of information technologies

The Commission published on 1st of April the "European e-Business Report", the first comprehensive survey underlining EU firm's success and failures in using information and communication

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technology. The report aimed at assessing the impact and maturity of e-commerce (buying and selling) and e-business (all business processes) in 15 sectors of the EU economy. Also, a handy pocketbook of e-business indicators is now available on the Enterprise DG web pages. It provides key figures on information and communication technology (ICT) and e-business use in the same 15 sectors. It compiles the answers of a questionnaire sent to 9,200 enterprises in July 2002. According to the figures, a third of all enterprises have engaged in on-line buying, that is more than twice as many as those selling on-line.

More info on the E-business Report:

http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/marketwatch/resources/SynthRep_2002-03.pdf

More info on the Pocketbook of e-business indicators:

http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/marketwatch/resources/Pocketbook_2003.pdf

IN BRIEF

EU/ Social Affairs: Composition of the new Employment Task Force unveiled

The members of the new body "European Employment Task Force", decided at the Brussels European Council on 20-21 March 2003, have been appointed by the Commission on 31st March. The task force under long-time Dutch Premier Mr Wim Kok, composed of eight members, will be in charge of carrying out an analysis of the main employment related challenges, and identify key measures to help Member States implement the revised European Employment Strategy. It will report in time for the Commission to draft the joint employment report to be submitted to the 2004 spring summit.

More info:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/469|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

EU/ Regional aid: Comprehensive reform announced for the period post 2006

The Commission announced on 2nd April that the rules for regional state aid need to be carefully reviewed for the period after 01/01/2007. The current criteria for determining the attribution of regional assistance will have to be adjusted in the light of the impending enlargement. Under the current rules, the scope of the regional development areas for state aid in the EU is 42,7% of the population of the 15 Member States for the period 200-2006. With the enlargement, both the guidelines for the demarcation of the individual assisted areas and the map of assisted areas need to be redrawn for after 2006.

More info:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/475|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

EU/ Professional Qualification: Court takes action against France and Greece

France was recently reminded its obligation to comply with EU rules concerning the free exercise of profession in another Member State in relation to two different cases. The first case concerns the obligation to comply with the EJC ruling on the establishment of lawyers. The second case, for which the Commission sent a reasoned opinion to France (second stage of infringement proceeding under article 226 EC Treaty) concerns the recognition of the professional qualification of tourist guides. Greece was referred to Court for its refusal to recognise certain diplomas, in particular opticians'

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diplomas obtained by Greek nationals on its territory but delivered by institutions which provide other Member States' courses on a franchise basis, under licence.

More info:

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/501|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=