



### HEADLINES

#### EU / FISHERIES

##### **Brussels 28/05/2002: EC presents reform proposals**

The EC has published its proposals for the reform of the EU fishery policy following the Green Paper presented in March 2001 (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 3 - N 16). The Green Paper formed the basis of wide consultations with industry, governments and NGOs over the past year. As the current EU fishery policy comes to an end by the end of 2002, the new proposals should be adopted before 2003 still (Council decides, EP consulted).

The reform aims to promote a more sustainable fishing and to reduce the current over-fishing by 40%. Around 28.000 fishermen, representing 11% of the industry, could be affected by the plans (running from 2003 until 2006). Total estimated cost of the project: nearly 820 million euros. The EC proposes:

- stricter capacity rules;
- measures to the protection of young fish;
- measures to better protect certain species;
- measures to improve control, surveillance and sanctions;
- shift from public aid for new vessels and renovation of old ones to aid to help fishermen find jobs in other sectors

More info:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/02/764|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/02/764|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/reform/roadmap1\\_en.htm#](http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/reform/roadmap1_en.htm#)

[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/02/111|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/02/111|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

#### EU / EMPLOYMENT

##### **Brussels 28/05/2002: Further discussions on temporary workers**

The Employment Committee of the EP held a meeting with experts and representatives of employers and employees on improving the working conditions of temporary workers, as proposed earlier this year (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 4 - N 10-13). The EC proposal concerns the protection of temporary workers and the relationship between the agency and the worker.

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Although representatives of both sides of industry and MEPs agreed that some sort of rules on temporary work are essential and although all parties agreed on many issues, the EC proposal has not received unanimous support (which is not so strange considering the fact that the social partners themselves already were unable to find an agreement on the matter in an earlier stage). For example its plan for non-discrimination rules only to apply if a contract is longer than six weeks whereas most contracts are shorter. Others disagreed with the very idea of a directive, taking the view that national differences should be taken into account. Fears were also expressed that the directive would lead to a reduction in temporary work and the potential for growth in this sector would be hampered.

During the hearing also a report was presented on temporary agency work in the EU, on the basis of 15 national studies into the temporary work sector (both supported and heavily criticised).

More info: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/empl/20020527/463262EN.pdf>

<http://www.eurofound.ie/publications/EF0202.htm>

### EU / INFO SOCIETY

#### **Brussels 28/05/2002: EC presents eEurope 2005 Action Plan**

Following the Barcelona Council conclusions (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 4 - N 10-13) and the plans presented by the EC and the Spanish presidency (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 4 - N 6&7), the EC presented the eEurope 2005 action plan: an information society for all, to be adopted by upcoming European Council in Sevilla, June 2002.

The new Action Plan aims to provide a favourable environment for private investment and for the creation of new jobs, to boost productivity, to modernise public services and notably education, and to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the global information society.

By 2005 Europe should have: modern online public services (more e-government, e-learning services, e-health services), a dynamic e-business environment, widespread availability of broadband access at competitive prices and a secure information infrastructure.

These objectives are intended to be achieved by policy measures to review and adapt legislation at national and EU level, such as a cyber security task force, facilitation of the exchange of experience, policy measures to monitor and better focus (benchmarking) and an overall co-ordination of existing policies which will bring out synergies between proposed actions.

More info:

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/news\\_library/eeurope2005/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/news_library/eeurope2005/index_en.htm)

### EU / FINANCE

#### **Luxembourg 28/05/2002: EIB loan to Italian SMEs**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has advanced a 237 million euro global loan Italian SME banking groups. The financing will support projects in industry, services, infrastructure, energy and environmental protection promoted by SMEs throughout Italy.

The financing should contribute to increase the productivity and competitiveness of SMEs, promote investments leading to a more rational use of energy and support projects concerned with environmental protection and reduction of pollution.

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### EU / ENTERPRISE POLICY

#### Brussels 29/05/2002: ESBA on the EC business consultation meeting

This consultation meeting in the middle of the week covered a long list of EU topics affecting enterprises in Europe. All business organisations were represented. The following topics were discussed:

- The Barcelona European Council: DG Enterprise reported that the results of the last European Council were a success for enterprise policy in Europe and that the messages expressed by all business organisations regarding the lack of progress on the implementation of the Feira Charter have been heard at the highest political level. Also Competitiveness report 2002 was presented (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 4 - N 20), showing that Europe is still under-performing in productivity and ICT investment. ESBA asked whether the EC has taken any action to try to understand the entrepreneurial emigration over the past decade and how this contributed to the under-performance of Europe. M. Colasanti agreed that this would be interesting to understand but indicated that the Commission has no intention to carry out such survey.

- Green Paper on entrepreneurship: DG Enterprise explained that, further to the last informal SME council, European Member States asked the Commission to initiate a large consultation on entrepreneurship in the form of a green paper. The working process has just started within DG Enterprise and business organisation are invited to send informal comments on the matter until November 2002. The draft green paper should be available in October 2002. The aim is to understand how Europe could do better to foster entrepreneurship.

- Action Plan on Better regulation: The Action Plan of Better regulation will be ready very soon (June 2002) after the inter-service consultation within the EC and that an official consultation will be organised around the summertime.

- Basel II: The next consultation paper by the Basel Committee will be ready only in April 2003. Between April and November 2003, the European Commission will organise a study on the consequences of the new proposal for a Basel Agreement on European enterprises. We can expect a directive to implement a new capital adequacy framework and new set of rules on capital requirements not before 2006.

- The consultation meeting also dealt with a review of the Multi-Annual Programme for enterprises 2001-2005, the Statute of the European Co-operative enterprises, the new SME definition and the EU consequences of US measures on steel.

During the meeting, ESBA also suggested the European Commission to organise a BEST event on the issues faced by self-employed or un-incorporated entrepreneurs. Un-incorporated businesses represent over 50% of all businesses across Europe. Surprisingly, their specific characteristics problems have never been surveyed by DG Enterprise. The idea has been well noted by the SME envoy, Timo Summa. A full report of the meeting is available for ESBA members.

**ESBA CONGRATULATES DG ENTERPRISE FOR THIS EVENT. THE ORGANISATION HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED OVER THE PAST YEAR. THEY ARE EXCELLENT OCCASIONS FOR INFORMAL DEBATES ON ISSUES AFFECTING SMALL BUSINESSES. BUT TO EXERCE MORE INFLUENCE FOR IMPROVING THE LIFE OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP, MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE.**

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AT THE OCCASION OF THIS MEETING, OTHER BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR INTEREST IN THE EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURS FORUM TO IMPROVE THE COOPERATION BETWEEN ALL EUROPEAN BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS.

DG Enterprise also published its work programme for 2002, including a review of the main activities over 2001.

More info: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/enterprise/work\\_programme\\_2002.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/enterprise/work_programme_2002.htm)

### EU / EMPLOYMENT

#### **Brussels 29/05/2002: EU needs to combine immigration and reforms**

The European Commission has published a report which argues that immigration alone can never counterbalance the effects of an ageing population in Europe and cannot solve the EU's labour market problems. Immigration helps to a certain extent to fill gaps in EU labour market but above all a radical reform of the employment policy in Europe is needed, with a focus on increased participation rates for women and older workers, and enhancing the EU-wide mobility of the workforce.

The 'Social Situation Report 2002', published annually by the Commission, presents an overview of social trends in Europe and interprets what they may mean for policymaking. This year, the report focused on mobility trends within, into and out of the EU.

### EU / ENVIRONMENT

#### **Brussels 30/05/2002: EP tries to keep access to information to the max**

In its second reading, the EP has adopted several amendments to the Council's version of the directive on public access to environmental information in a bid to strengthen it after most of its first-reading amendments were ignored. The directive is intended to ensure that members of the public have access to environmental information held by public authorities.

Compared to the Council, the EP wishes to see reductions in the time limits that public authorities have to respond to requests for information, less exemptions where the public authority can refuse access to information, the pro-active dissemination of information and Member States transposing the directive into national legislation quicker.

The directive should bring EU legislation into line with the 1998 Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. The related proposal on public participation in plans and programmes is scheduled to be adopted in second reading in the EP in September 2002.

More info (page 15):

<http://www3.europarl.eu.int/omk/omnsapir.so/calendar?APP=PDF&TYPE=PV2&FILE=p0020530EN.pdf&LANGUE=EN>

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### EU / CSR

#### Brussels 30/05/2002: EP Green Paper response and SME CSR study

Following the Green Paper on Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 3 - N 32), the European Parliament has now given its opinion in the form of a resolution. The EC is now to follow-up the Green Paper following contributions of all stakeholders and plans to issue a communication on CSR with next steps in the weeks to come.

The EP favours the creation of an EU multi-stakeholder CSR platform made up of representatives of business, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, public authorities and representatives of non-EU countries.

Companies should be required to supply information on the social and environmental impact of their operations and report on their policy regarding social responsibility, human rights and environmental performance.

CSR is defined within the EU in general as a concept whereby companies decide to voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns in the enterprises' daily business operations and in the interaction with their stakeholders. The contributions of SMEs to the concept of CSR is often less clear than for large companies. In order to clarify the matter, the Observatory of European SMEs has conducted a study among 7,600 SMEs on how SMEs perceive their role to this regard and which instruments they use to interact with it.

The report shows that half of Europe's SMEs engage in socially beneficial activities (48% among micro enterprises (under 10 employees) to 65% and 70% for the small (10-49 employees) and medium-sized categories (50-249) respectively). While SMEs state mainly ethical motivations for their involvement (not related to business strategy), three-quarters are also able to identify business benefits derived from these activities. These include improved customer loyalty and better relations with the local community/authorities.

The proportion of European SMEs currently engaged in addressing their environmental problems beyond compliance with environmental rules is difficult to define (but awareness about important seems to be increasing). This is because the majority of SME are vulnerable compliant, in the sense that they do not know enough about environmental legislation to ensure that they are always compliant. Reasons to be engaged in environmentally responsible activities include market demands and the strategic choice. Ethical considerations do not appear to be a relevant driver for the environmental domain.

The main barriers to involvement in CSR activities are lack of awareness, followed by time or money constraints. Only 8% of European SMEs receive some form of public support when they participate in external socially responsible activities. The report calls for an additional effort by the public sector to promote the concept of CSR among SMEs (e.g. via surveys, provision of more information and through special prizes).

The study also concludes that further research is required on CSR activities amongst SMEs, as little attention has been paid to it compared to the CSR issue in large enterprises (e.g. research on impact of different cultural traditions and expectations, relationship between SMEs' CSR activities and reporting and access to external finance).

More info: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/library/lib-entrepreneurship/lib-entrepreneurship.html>

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### EU / DATA PROTECTION

#### Brussels 30/05/2002: EU agreement on data protection near

The EP plenary has adopted the draft directive concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector, only slightly amending the common position of the Council (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 3 - N 49). As the Council will probably accept the light changes proposed by the Parliament, the directive is likely to be adopted still before the summer break. The proposal is the last element of the new telecommunications regulatory package to be adopted. The rules should then be implemented in the Member States by the end of 2003.

The EP significantly changed its position between first and second reading (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 3 - N 45&46), especially on data retention, unsolicited commercial e-mails and cookies due to a compromise between the two main political groups in the Parliament (Socialists and Conservatives). The compromise was negotiated between the Spanish Presidency, the European Commission and (some parties of) the European Parliament during the past month.

Although it is clear that something should be undertaken on proper data protection and especially against e-mail spam, ESBA has already reported extensively in previous ESBA weeklies about the pitfalls and problems of the current upcoming agreement.

A similar opt-in solution, like for spam e-mails, has also been applied in the directive on distance marketing of consumer financial services, adopted last week by the Council.

More info (page 6):

<http://www3.europarl.eu.int/omk/omnsapir.so/calendar?APP=PDF&TYPE=PV2&FILE=p0020530EN.pdf&LANGUE=EN>

<http://www.euractiv.com/cgi-bin/cgint.exe/849692-968?1100=1&204&OIDN=1503516&temp=obj7prt>

[http://www.europa.eu.int/prelex/detail\\_dossier\\_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=134759](http://www.europa.eu.int/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=134759)

### EU / ENVI & EMPL

#### Brussels 30/05/2002: EP formally adopts 6EAP and equal treatment

Following compromise agreements between the Council and the EP in March on the adoption of the sixth Environmental Action Programme (see ESBA Weekly - Vol 4 - N 10-13) and the Directive on equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, the EP plenary has now formally adopted both.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Brussels (B): 6-8/06/2002: European Business Summit 2002; Theme: Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development, Enlargement. More info: <http://www.ebsummit.org>

Brussels (B): 12/06/2002: The SME Road to EU RTD - A challenge for federations and associations; Theme: R&D, FP6, SMEs.

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More info: [http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&SESSION=121352002-5-28&DOC=5&TBL=EN\\_NEWS&RCN=EN\\_RCN\\_ID:18450&CALLER=EN\\_NEWS](http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&SESSION=121352002-5-28&DOC=5&TBL=EN_NEWS&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:18450&CALLER=EN_NEWS)

Brussels (B): 14&15/06/2002: Enhancing small business organisation's representation; Theme: SMEs.

More info:

<http://www.esba-europe.org/default.asp?goto=ESBA-Event-2002>

Léon (E): 20/06/2002: Benchmarking national and regional policies in support of e-business for SMEs; Theme: E-commerce, SMEs.

More info: <http://www.setsi.mcyt.es/godigital/English.htm>

Brussels (B): 24/06/2002: Euro-label International Hearing; Theme: B2C trade, E-commerce.

More info: <http://www.euro-label.com>

Brussels (B): 26&27/06/2002: The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) - Benefits and Challenges of EMAS II; Theme: Audit, Environment.

More info: <http://www.ecologic.de/emas>