



HEADLINES

EU / ENTREPRENEURSHIP Växjö 19/03/2001: Policy report presented at SME Forum

During the SME Forum "Entrepreneurship for the future", organised in Växjö, Sweden, the Swedish Foundation for Small Business Research presented the report "Entrepreneurship policy for the future". It examines existing SME policy in ten different countries, explores the movement from SME policy to entrepreneurship policy and describes good practices. The report is likely to influence future policy-making.

The report can be found on the web at:

http://eu2001.se/industry/eng/docs/entrepreneurship_policy_report.pdf

EU / TELEWORK Brussels 19/03/2001: Commission proposes guidelines for social partners

Currently, some seven million employees in Europe, making up about 4.5% of the labour market, telework on a regular basis. Projections indicate that the number of teleworkers as a share of the total labour force in the EU could reach 11% by 2005. To clarify the legal status of teleworkers, the European Commission submitted a set of proposed guidelines to form the practical framework for possible formal negotiations between European employers and trade unions on teleworking. It is up to the two sides of industry to indicate whether they prefer a Commission initiative on the matter or to start a negotiation process among the social partners, drafting up EU labour laws and agreements themselves. ETUC has informed the Commission that it would like to see a regulation at EU level, either by legislation or by agreement between the social partners. However, as indicated in ESBA WEEKLY Vol. 3 - N. 14, UNICE has recently proposed negotiations on a non-legally binding agreement on telework to ETUC. If the social partners do not agree on a draft rules to cover teleworkers, the Commission may decide to draw up proposals itself, if considered necessary. The proposed guidelines by the Commission are: voluntary basis, with right to return; guaranteed retention of employee status; guarantee of equal treatment; information to be given to teleworkers; employer to bear the costs involved; guarantee that suitable training will be given; protection in respect of health and safety; working hours; protection of private life and personal data; maintenance of contact with company; and teleworkers' collective rights.

EU / INTERNAL MARKET Brussels 19/03/2001: Outline of upcoming Internal Market Strategy review

After the adoption of the Internal Market Strategy by the Commission in 1999 and the first review (analyse of progress and setting priorities) in 2000, Commissioner Frits Bolkestein outlined this week the details of the upcoming review (April 2001) to the European Parliament. The Commission is likely to propose four priority themes: - Pursuing the Lisbon agenda: the continuation of last year's priority actions, but also regulatory simplification and improvement (including improved consultations); - Improving the functioning of the Internal Market: mutual recognition, standardisation, transposition and enforcement; - The experiences of citizens, consumers and SMEs: improve information on rights and opportunities; and - Strengthening the external dimension: enlargement.

EU / TRANSPARENCY Brussels 20/03/2001: Council makes more documents available to the public

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The Council of the European Union took a decision today to the effect that as of 1 May this year certain categories of Council documents will be automatically published on the Internet (without waiting for prior requests from the public). However, the decision will also give Member States the veto right to deny public access to documents. Furthermore the document classification code will become more restrictive, introduced by the so-called 'Solana Decision' in July 2000, to all EU policy areas.

OECD / EDUCATION Brussels 20/03/2001: OECD's new publication: Education Policy Analysis

The OECD's Education Policy Analysis, out on 27 March 2001, will review achievements, in particular progress in implementing lifelong learning programmes, over the past five years and look forward to some of the challenges that will shape schooling systems in the 21st century. The report's conclusions will serve as a basis for discussions at a meeting of OECD Education Ministers in Paris on 2-4 April with the theme "Investing in competencies for all". The publication indicates a difference in approaches in relation to lifelong learning, with some countries stressing employability and competitiveness (e.g. Korea, Austria, the Netherlands) while others concentrate on personal development and the need to generally enhance the level of education (e.g. Czech Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom).

EU / FISHERIES Brussels 20/03/2001: Green Paper on management of Community fisheries

The Commission presented this week a Green Paper on the future of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Green Paper, including environmental, food safety and development co-operation issues, suggests a fundamental reform of the Common Fisheries Policy in an attempt to deal with all problems related to overfishing. The Green Paper will form the basis of consultations with industry and NGOs over the next six months. The Commission wants to publish concrete reform proposals in 2002 which should enter into force on 1 January 2003.

For more information:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc_et_publ/green1_en.htm

EU / ENTERPRISE Brussels 21/03/2001: DG Enterprise puts work programme 2001 online

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/enterprise/work_programme_2001.htm

EU / STATE AID Brussels 22/03/2001: EU state aid register online and updated regularly

A new EU state aid register came available this week on the internet, providing a summary of all EU state aid cases examined after 1 January 2000, plus links to information on state aid policy, decisions and legislation. The register in fact brings together effectively existing information on the Commission's State aid decisions. The site includes search facilities which allows users to access information for example by aid instrument (soft loan, subsidy,.) , by primary objective (aid to SMEs, regions, R&D,.) or sector/activity.

The register can be consulted via: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/competition/state_aid/register/

EU / UPCOMING EVENTS Brussels 06/04/2001: GoDigital official launch; Theme: E-commerce & SMEs Info: <http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ecommerce/godigital/kickoff.html> Brussels 23&24/04/2001: E-marketplaces: enterprise policy, competition and standardization; Theme: E-commerce, SMEs & Standardization

Info: <http://www.europa.eu.int/Commission/enterprise/ict/e-marketplace.htm>