



HEADLINES

EU/Presidency: Sneak peek at Hungarian Presidency priorities

On 18 November, at the first European SME summit, Hungarian Minister Zoltan Csefalvay revealed a number of policy priorities for the upcoming Hungarian EU Presidency. A clear emphasis will be put on the Small Business Act and SMEs in general. Pertaining problems such as the lack of access to finance, high taxes and administrative burdens will be addressed. Furthermore efforts will be made towards entrepreneurial mobility, internationalisation of SMEs and increased competitiveness.

ESBA Opinion

The European Small Business Alliance welcomes this SME oriented approach and supports Hungary's emphasis on the importance of the Small Business Act and the recognition of obstacles such as access to finance and administrative burdens, which are still very much alive for SMEs. ESBA recommends the upcoming Presidency not only to start new initiatives but to take a close look at the significant number of good proposals designed to tackle exactly these obstacles, but which are currently stuck in Parliament or Council. With this in mind, ESBA urges the Hungarian Presidency to finally put the proposal to exempt micro enterprises from certain EU accounting burdens, which was adopted by a large majority in Parliament, on the Council's agenda.

IN BRIEF

EU/CAP: Commission lays out EU's future agricultural policy

On 18 November, the European Commission revealed its plans for the future of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU. The main objective of the new strategy will focus on reforming the obsolete system of distribution criteria for subsidies to favour more the farmers from the Central and Eastern European Member States. Furthermore the European Commission implies supporting various agricultural activities that emphasise environmental protection. The blueprint does not outline the intended share of the CAP on the EU's budget, which currently accounts for more than 42%. In July 2011 the Commission is expected to table its official proposal.

To read the Communication on the CAP towards 2020, please click [here](#)

EU/Single Market: EU-wide debate on single market raises concerns

On 18 November, a public debate with the EU Commissioner for the Internal Market Michel Barnier on the Single Market Act discussed revitalisation of the European single market. The forum was part of a four-month EU-wide public debate which should serve as a means to prioritise the 50 proposals published on 27 October, to be implemented within the next two years. A broad discontent was raised at the forum regarding the lengthy process of public hearings and criticism was directed towards the absence of concrete measures. A next step in this public debate will be the Single Market Act Conference at the Committee of the Regions on 30 November.

To read the Communication on 'A Single Market Act', please click [here](#)

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EU/Patents: EU-wide patent continues to be blocked due to language disputes

On 11 November, the Competitiveness Council held an extraordinary meeting aimed at reaching a deal on the translation arrangements of the EU patent. In spite of efforts of the Belgian presidency to strike a compromise among Member States by proposing new concessions, the European industry ministers did not succeed at finding common ground on the matter. Spain and Italy continued to contest the proposal which would require each patent to be completed in English, German or French, thereby calling the debate to a halt. During two additional meetings of the Competitiveness Council in November and December, enhanced co-operation among the supportive Member States is likely to be discussed.

To read the European Commission's proposal on the Translation Arrangement for the European Union patent, please click [here](#)

EU/Digital Agenda: Commission publishes results of net neutrality consultation

On 9 November, the European Commission revealed the results of a three-month public consultation on open internet and net neutrality. The outcome of the consultation unveiled concern about new internet business models among a number of stakeholders and called on the Commission to ensure transparency by means of differentiating between 'managed service' and neutral providers. This would allow consumers to select an internet provider according to their preferences. The outcome of a consultation and a summit on net neutrality held in the Parliament on 11 November serves as the basis of a forthcoming report on the matter, scheduled for adoption by the Commission by the end of the year.

To learn more about the results of the public consultation on net neutrality, please click [here](#)

EU/Energy: Commission discloses new energy strategy for next decade

On 10 November, the European Commission laid down its strategy for a single EU energy network, which sets the priorities in the European energy sector for the next decade. Energy efficiency lies at the heart of the strategy 'Energy 2020' which presents a package of measures to achieve a competitive, secure and sustainable energy market. It focuses mainly on energy savings in transport and buildings, and points out the need for energy efficiency in industrial and public sector. The strategy foresees the accomplishment of an internal energy market by 2015 and strives to create a common EU energy policy towards third countries. Based on this communication, the Commission will adopt concrete legislative proposals within the next 18 months. A first EU Energy Summit will be held on 4 February 2011.

To learn more about the Energy Strategy 2020, please click [here](#)

EU/Trade: Commission reveals its plans for future trade policy

On 9 November, the European Commission presented an outline of its EU trade policy for the next five years in its communication paper 'Trade, Growth and World Affairs'. It sets out a plan to intensify trade with existing partners and accelerate negotiations at WTO level with prospective trading partners such as India. The paper lays down a strategy to assist EU businesses to operate beyond the European borders and highlights the importance of fair trade. The objective of this strategy is to boost Europe's economy, overcome the crisis, provide new jobs for EU citizens and ensure that consumers get a wider choice of products for a lower price. The communication is based on the findings of a consultation on EU trade policy.

To read the discussion paper 'Trade, Growth and World Affairs', please click [here](#)

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EU/Chinese market: EU launches Centre for European SMEs in China

On 5 November, the EU Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship Antonio Tajani opened the Centre for European Union Small and Medium Enterprises in Beijing. Its aim is to strengthen the position of European SMEs that wish to establish themselves on the Chinese market. This centre represents an important step in the process of internationalisation of European businesses, which is decisive for increasing of the European competitiveness. It will offer essential information on business opportunities and training and assistance to small companies, making it easier for them to enter the Chinese market. The EU SME Centre in Beijing, funded by the European Union, is expected to start providing its services from January 2011.

PUBLICATIONS

European Commission: ‘Trade, Growth and World affairs’

The European Commission issued a publication on a future trade policy of the European Union, including how a new strategy could boost the Europe’s economy. Suggestions include eliminating trade barriers and simplifying cross-border business for small and medium companies.

To download this publication, please click [here](#)

OECD: ‘Tax Co-operation 2010’

This publication by the OECD provides information regarding tax co-operation and exchange of data in this field in more than 90 countries. It offers an annual assessment and comparison of legal and regulatory systems in these countries.

To download this publication, please click [here](#)

European Commission: ‘Investing in well-being at work – addressing psychosocial risks in times of change’

The European Commission has published a report dealing with the effects of restructuring and constant changes at the workplace on the health of employees and their families. It also examines the impact of job insecurity on workers’ well-being and suggests steps to be taken in order to improve the situation.

To download this publication, please click [here](#)

CONSULTATIONS

NEW:

Public consultation on a possible successor to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

Closes: 4 February 2011

The European Commission has launched a public consultation which aims to identify the key issues for the CIP II Programme. It strives to find ways to better support SMEs, reinforce competitiveness and innovation, and stimulate wider utilisation of ICT tools across the EU.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

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ONGOING:

Public consultation on a Roadmap for a low carbon economy by 2050

Closes: 8 December 2010

The Commission has issued a public consultation which intends to explore ways to decarbonise energy and transport sectors in the European Union and to promote low carbon innovation for future the economy. The Commission aims to collect ideas from citizens, businesses, institutions, NGOs, public authorities and stakeholders.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

Consultation on the Green Paper on expanding the use of e-Procurement in the EU

Closes: 31 January 2011

The Commission has launched a consultation on how e-procurement could be used more extensively in order to simplify the process of public procurement and enable parties from different Member States to take part in the procedure. The aim is to find possible ways which would facilitate faster introduction of e-procurement enhancing transparency and efficiency.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

Green Paper from the Commission on policy options for progress towards a European Contract Law for consumers and businesses

Closes: 31 January 2011

The European Commission has issued a green paper on how the internal market could be strengthened by making progress in the area of European Contract Law. The Commission is interested in collecting opinions and suggestions from citizens, organizations and public authorities.

To access the consultation please click [here](#)

Consultation on the Single Market Act

Closes: 28 February 2011

The European Commission has launched a consultation on 50 proposals included in the Single Market Act which was published on 27 October. The main objective of the consultation is to gather opinions from citizens and organisations in order to identify priorities for implementation.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

Online consultation on administrative burdens reduction

Ongoing

The European Commission has launched an online consultation on the reduction of administrative burdens. Inspired by examples of Best Practice in Belgium and the Netherlands, the consultation invites entrepreneurs to identify unnecessary red tape in order to help the EU improve the quality of its legislation. The consultation is part of the Action Programme to reduce admin burdens on businesses in the EU by 25% in 2012.

To access this consultation, please click [here](#)

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COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

22 November 2010 – General Affairs Council

22 – 25 November 2010 – European Parliament Committee Meetings

22 – 25 November 2010 – European Parliament Plenary Session

25 – 26 November 2010 – Competitiveness Council

29 November – 2 December 2010 – European Parliament Committee Meetings

1 December – Weekly meeting of College of Commissioners

Other SME related events

Information and Networking Day ‘SME Initiative on Digital Content’

22 November 2010

Frankfurt am Mein, Germany

The European Commission is organising an event to gather proposals for a Call on ‘SME Initiative on Digital Content’. The aim of the event is to provide opportunity for the participants to meet their potential partners, acquire information and get feedback on ideas from the European Commission.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/content-knowledge/events-201011-12-ict-callsme-infodays_en.html

Employment Week - The European Employment Forum 2010

24 – 25 November 2010

Brussels, Belgium

An annual conference organised in cooperation of the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee will focus on the key social and employment themes and analyse major issues and challenges for the year 2010 and 2011, especially in relation to tackling social exclusion and poverty in the EU.

http://www.employmentweek.com/cms.php?page=64&cms_menu_path=64

9th European Forum on Eco-Innovation: Financing Eco-Innovators

Brussels, Belgium

29-30 November 2010

The 9th Forum on financing eco-innovation is organised by the European Commission in collaboration with the Belgian presidency of the EU. The event will focus on the needs of SMEs and it will investigate possibilities of financing eco-innovation.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoinnovation2010/2nd_forum/index_en.htm

Internationalisation of SMEs – iSME

Pau, France

1 – 3 December 2010

A conference organised by the Group ESC Pau, with the support of the French Secretary of State for Foreign Trade, is set to discuss internationalisation of small and medium businesses.

<http://www.esc-pau.com/ismes.htm>

Small Business Act – Happy Birthday?

Brussels, Belgium

2 December

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The European Economic and Social Committee's Employers Group is organising a seminar which aims to examine the progress made regarding the implementation of the SBA since 2008 and analyse how the access to finance and innovation can be improved for SMEs.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-small-business-act-2010>

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