



HEADLINES

EU/Single Market: Stakeholders welcome new actions to foster the Single Market

On 13 March 2011, after a consultation and four months of public debate, President José Manuel Barroso announced his twelve priorities to improve the Single Market for 2012. The priorities have been positively received by a wide array of stakeholders. Access to finance for SMEs and improved access to public procurement for SMEs are key priorities for small business.

ESBA opinion:

The European Small Business Alliance welcomed the priorities as set out by Commission Vice President Tajani, as the importance of small businesses in completing the Single Market is clearly reflected. However, ESBA regrets the absence of important issues such as accounting rules and the review of the Small Business Act did not make Tajani's 'top 12'. ESBA urges the Commission not to lose track of these important matters.

To read more about the single market, please click [here](#)

IN BRIEF

EU/Working Time Directive: New attempt to pick up the issue of working conditions

In 2009, for the first time no agreement could be found in a conciliation committee. Since 2004, the Commission has been attempting to launch a proposal revising the 1993 Working Time Directive. However, in 2009 negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council faced another deadlock. In response to this, the European Commission launched a consultation in December 2010, inquiring whether the social partners deem action at EU level to be appropriate, in response to which the social dialogue had been opened. A time limit of nine months is now foreseen by the Commission for the social partners to come to an agreement, Starting June 2011 at the very earliest. However, on employers as well as trade union's side, there is not much hope for a positive outcome.

For more information on the working time directive, please click [here](#)

EU/Energy: UK's carbon dioxide tax plan a burden for businesses

In March 2011, the UK government announced its plans to introduce a carbon tax including floor prices for EU permits, starting from 1 April 2013, in order to reduce carbon emissions and boost low-carbon technology. This measure will affect firms that fall under the scope of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS). The minimum cost of a ton of carbon will be £16 (€18) with a further increase to £30 (€33.8) by 2020. Analysts warn that the methods of calculation can be misleading. The costs of carbon purchased in the UK may rise up to €54/ton, higher than in the other EU ETS countries. As a result, UK businesses will have to pay an additional tax of £9.3(€10.5 billion). Although the measure is expected to have a positive effect on energy efficiency, it will come at great cost.

For the website of the UK Cabinet office, please click [here](#)

ESBA Bulletin of 29 April 2011 – Volume 13 – Number 8

EU/Economy: Eurozone inflation rate reaches the highest level in April

In April 2011, Eurozone inflation for goods and services reached its highest ever level. Since the 2008 oil peak price peak, there has not been a bigger increase from one month to the next. In the 17-state currency area, the overall increase of the 'composite Eurozone index for manufacturing and services output', as measured by Markit researchers, was only modest; from 57.6 to 57.8 points. France and Germany respectively are the main drivers behind the increase. Analysts expect a steeper increase of the European Central Bank's interest rates.

To learn more about the European Central bank, please click [here](#)

EU/Unemployment: OECD encourages reforms in employment policy

On 20 April 2011, the OECD published a report on the effect of the crisis on unemployment. The subject of unemployment closely corresponds with the targets premised in the EU 2020 strategy which had been agreed upon at EU level. Important targets are increasing the unemployment rate from 69% to 75% and reducing the number of people living in poverty by 20 million, by 2020. In its report, the OECD presents to the national governments recommendations on how to attain these targets. The OECD highlights issues such as the reduction of taxes on labour, reforming employment laws to secure workers protection and eliminating restrictive labour laws. The European Commission's spokesperson on employment, social affairs and inclusion recognises unemployment to be the number one problem for the EU in terms of economic and social challenges'.

For the OECD report, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat : Euro area and EU 27 Unemployment rates

On 29 April 2011, the Statistical Office of the European Communities published a study on "seasonally-adjusted" unemployment rates in the Euro area and the EU27. This document contains statistical data of unemployment for March 2011.

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

EU/OECD: Industrial production for OECD countries and Major Non-OECD Member Economies.

On 29 April 2011, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development issued a statistical table on the production of total industry for the period of 2008-2011, in OECD countries and Non-OECD members. The table shows figures of production in the fields of manufacturing, manufactured crude steel and manufactured intermediate and investment goods, energy, construction.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy

Closes: 18 April 2011

The European Commission has launched a consultation with the aim of updating the European public procurement legislation. The purpose of the consultation is to find ways to make the process of public procurement more effective, less bureaucratic and easier for small and medium sized companies to access. Another major target is to link the environmental and innovation objectives with obtaining a public contract.

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

European Small Business Alliance – Brussels Office

rue d'Idalie 9-13, B - 1050 Bruxelles

Tel. : +32 (2) 639 62 30 – Fax. : +32 (2) 644 90 17 – email : secretariat@esba-europe.org

ESBA Bulletin of 29 April 2011 – Volume 13 – Number 8

Towards a coherent European approach to Collective Redress

Closes: 30 April 2011

The European Commission has launched a consultation aimed at identifying common legal principles and examining different forms of collective redress in the EU. It also strives to evaluate the potential added value that common principles on collective redress could bring to the improvement of EU legislation enforcement.

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

Green Paper on a Common Strategic Framework for future EU Research and Innovation Funding

Closes: 20 May 2011

The European Commission issued a Green paper which aims at simplifying the complexity of EU research funding. The intention is to link the Seventh Framework Programme for research, Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology. The outcome of the consultation will serve as a basis for proposals to be adopted in June.

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

Consultation on the 'Green Paper on the future of VAT- Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system'

Closes: 31 May 2011

The European Commission has launched a consultation which aims to assess the current VAT system at the European and national level. The intention is to transform it into a more efficient and transparent system that would respond to the needs of the European single market.

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

ONGOING:

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](#)

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

- 2 May 2011 - European Parliament committee meetings (Brussels)
- 4 May 2011 - Weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners
- 5 May 2011 - European Parliament committee meetings (Brussels)
- 5 May 2011 - Governing Council of the European Central Bank
- 7 May 2011 – Festival of Europe – European Institutions Open Day
- 9 to 12 May 2011 - European Parliament committee meetings (Strasbourg)

European Small Business Alliance – Brussels Office

rue d'Idalie 9-13, B - 1050 Bruxelles

Tel. : +32 (2) 639 62 30 – Fax. : +32 (2) 644 90 17 – email : secretariat@esba-europe.org

ESBA Bulletin of 29 April 2011 – Volume 13 – Number 8

9 to 12 May 2011 - European Parliament plenary session (Strasbourg)

10 May 2011 - Weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners

Other SME-related events

Conference: Integrated and Stable Financial Markets

2 May 2011, 9.00 am

Brussels, Belgium

On 2 May 2011, a conference that aims at “Strengthening the Foundations of Integrated and Stable Financial Markets” is organised by the European Commission and the European Central Bank. A wide range of stakeholders are invited to share their views on the EU financial integration and stability.

To learn more about this event, please click [here](#)

European Business Summit 2011

18 and 19 May 2011

Brussels, Belgium

The European Business Summit will held is 9th edition on 18 and 19 May 2011. It is a key meeting place for business leaders and a good opportunity for SMEs to meet decision makers and to foster the visibility of their business. This edition will focus on the place of Europe in the global economy and how to help Europe to become an economic leader and reach better growth.

To learn more about the event, please click [here](#)