



HEADLINES

EU/MSEs: ESBA urges President Barroso to improve the regulatory environment for MSEs

On 21 June 2011, the European Small Business Alliance, by means of a letter, has urged Commission President Jose-Manuel Barroso to alleviate the heavy regulatory regime that is currently in place for micro (and small) companies. Stressing that micro businesses make up roughly 91% of all EU businesses and create more than two thirds of EU employment, ESBA requested for cutting red tape and tailoring legislation for MSEs to move back up on the EU agenda. ESBA members were pleased to learn of President Barroso's explicit statements in the conclusions of the EU Summit of 23-24 June, stating that "the regulatory burden on SMEs needs to be further reduced and where appropriate micro-enterprises should be exempted from certain future regulations or at least be subject to a lighter regime". The conclusions furthermore entail that the European Council welcomes the commitment of the Commission to assess the impact of future regulations on micro enterprises and to screen the acquis to identify existing obligations from which micro enterprises could be excluded. The Council will return to these issues at its December 2011 meeting

ESBA OPINION

ESBA welcomes these conclusions by the European Council. As important as it is to acknowledge the difference between SMEs and larger companies, and to adapt and 'tailor' legislation for SMEs accordingly, it is equally important to finally and fully accept that the same is true for the difference between micro-businesses and larger SMEs. The SME spectrum of 1 – 250 employees is still very large and where a company of 200 employees may be perfectly able to comply with a piece of EU legislation, a company of 3 employees may have great difficulties in terms of financial and other resources to comply and could ultimately go bust. The EU cannot afford their driving force and main creator of employment to fail. It is therefore evident that action is needed, and it is needed now.

To read ESBA's letter to president Barroso, please click [here](#)

IN BRIEFS

EU/SBA: Stakeholders request new measures

On 28 June 2011, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) organised a public hearing regarding the implementation of the "Review of the Small Business Act for Europe." Representative SME organisations pointed out the need for taking further measures such as reducing administrative procedures and supporting new businesses. The Rapporteur of EESC, Mr. Ronny Lannoo furthermore called for measures that take into account Micro and Small Businesses as they represent 91% of all businesses.

To learn more about the activities of EESC please click [here](#)

EU/Unitary Patent: Council decides on unitary patent protection

On 27 June 2011, an extraordinary Council meeting was held under regarding the issue of unitary patent protection. The EU Ministers agreed with the Hungarian Presidency's compromise proposal

ESBA Bulletin of 4 July 2011 – Volume 13 – Number 12

regarding enhanced cooperation and a new language regime. The agreed text is set to cut red tape and reduce costs for SMEs in an attempt to encourage innovation. Applications will be translated in English, French and German, an issue which at this time still prevents Italy and Spain from joining the scheme.

To learn more about the unitary patent protection scheme please click [here](#)

EU/ Public Procurement: 20 Billion Euros saved

On 24 June 2011, the European Commission announced the results of an evaluation of EU public procurement legislation. The study focused on the impact and the effectiveness of the legislation. At the same time, the Commission published the results of a Green Paper on the modernisation of EU public procurement legislation. The study highlights the fact that open and competitive public procurement generated savings of almost 20 billion euros. Yet, results of the green paper indicate a strong need for simplification of public procurement procedures towards SMEs.

To read about public procurement, please click [here](#)

EU/Consumer Rights: SMEs fear an unbalanced relation between consumers and traders

On 23 June 2011, the European Parliament has adopted the so-called “consumer rights directive” with an overwhelming majority (615 for, 16 against, 21 abstentions). The vote is the result of an agreement found between the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament on 6 June 2011. However, SMEs fear that this text would create an unbalanced relationship between consumers and traders. Some of the measures included in the text do not fit to the “think small first principle” and would put administrative burden on SMEs. The EU-wide 14 day withdrawal period for distance and off-premises sales and the right to be informed of the identity and address of the seller are points of concern. Positively, SMEs making only small day-to-day transactions are to be exempted from this information rule.

To read the compromise text voted in parliament, please click [here](#)

To learn more about the Consumer Rights directive, please click [here](#)

EU/Research and Innovation: “Horizon 2020”

On 21 June 2011, EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, announced that “Horizon 2020” will be the new name for the upcoming EU-funded programme which aims to boost research and innovation. The new programme is a combination of existing EU-funding programmes aiming at a reduction of bureaucratic procedures and requirements facilitating researchers and innovators.

To learn more about Research and Innovation, please click [here](#)

EU/Economic Crisis: Mario Monti on EU debts

On 20 June 2011, an interview with the former EU Commissioner for Internal Market and Competition, Professor Mario Monti, was published in which Mr Monti stressed the need for France and Germany to take on their responsibilities. In his view, the way to tackle the economic crisis is the implementation of strict rules and the enforcement of the Single Market. In 2009, the former Commissioner had drafted a report upon request of Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, outlining measures to be taken towards completion of the Single Market.

To access Mario Monti’s report, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

OECD/Business: Inequalities in funding for young entrepreneurs

On 29 June 2011 the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development published a report explaining why the level of funding for newly opened businesses differs between OECD countries. The economic crisis, bankruptcy and the national culture are amongst the factors influencing access to finance for young entrepreneurs.

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

Eurostat/Economy: Consumer Prices differ markedly among European countries for 2010

On 28 June 2011 the Statistical Office of the European Communities published a comparative analysis of price levels across Europe. The analysis includes statistical data derived from a survey of prices vis-a-vis 2500 consumer goods and services, conducted in all 27 EU Member States as well as three EFTA countries, four accession countries and three Western Balkan countries.

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

CONSULTATIONS

CURRENT:

Consultation: '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 better respond to the needs of the European single market.

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

Public Consultation: Small Business, Big World - A new partnership to help SMEs seize global opportunities

Closes: 12 July 2011

The European Commission has launched an online consultation which aims to support SMEs that are willing to have trade relations with non EU countries. In particular, the Commission plans to offer guidance to entrepreneurs during the process of making their business operate at an international level.

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

Consultation on the EU corporate governance framework

Closes: 22 July 2011

The European Commission has launched a consultation on relevant areas to corporate governance. These areas are the boards of directors, shareholders engagement and the “comply or explain” approach.

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

Consultation on a new European regime for venture capital

Closes: 10 August 2011

ESBA Bulletin of 4 July 2011 – Volume 13 – Number 12

The European Commission services have launched a consultation on a new European regime for venture capital. The new rules aim at facilitating cross-border fundraising and investments by venture capital funds. The initiative is one of the key actions to improve access to finance for innovative SMEs, as spelled out in the recently adopted Single Market Act.

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

Public Consultation on Cloud Computing

Closes: 31 August 2011

The European Commission launched a public consultation aiming at gathering opinions and recommendations from interested stakeholders, regarding the use of cloud computing. The feedback will be used to help shape a European Cloud Computing Strategy under the scope of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

To access the 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

04 to 07 July 2011 – European Parliament Plenary Session (Strasbourg)

04 to 07 July 2011 – European Parliament Committee Meetings (Strasbourg)

05 July 2011 – Weekly meeting of the College of the Commissioners

08 July 2011 - Meeting between the College of Commissioners and the Polish Council Presidency

11 to 14 July 2011 – European Parliament Committee Meetings (Brussels)

13 July 2011 – Weekly meeting of the College of the Commissioners

13 to 14 July 2011 - European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) July Plenary Session