



## HEADLINES

### **SMEs/ESBA delegation visits North Cypriot member KTTO**

In conjunction with its September Board meeting, a group of delegates from the European Small Business Alliance were part of an SME event, hosted by its North Cypriot member KTTO. Transcending political issues, the focal point of the event was to learn more about the country's economic structure and the problems that are being faced by its small business community, both locally and internationally in their relations with the EU. Although the most prevalent obstacles are - perhaps unsurprisingly - isolation and therewith a lack of direct trade, the Turkish Cypriot businesses face otherwise very similar problems to small companies within the EU such as administrative burden and access to finance. ESBA President Tina Sommer addressed local business owners and dignitaries on the issue of funding and other means of finance from an EU perspective.

To learn more about KTTO, please visit: <http://www.ktto.net/brussels/>

### **EU/Impact Assessments: European Parliament assesses implementation of the SME test**

On 14 September 2011, the European Parliament published its findings and recommendations on the SME Test application by the European Commission as well as the Member States. The purpose of such a test is to identify possible disproportionate administrative and fiscal burdens on SMEs, to be considered when proposing new legislation. The European Parliament recommends the introduction of an SME test-policy which makes the SME test mandatory, transparent and involves a quantification of burdens. In addition, Member States should formulate an integrated systemic approach to make the test a long-term objective and become an integral part of the impact assessment.

To read the Parliament's study on 'Barriers and Best Practices in SME Test Implementation', please click [here](#).

## **ESBA OPINION**

**The European Small Business Alliance welcomes the Parliament's findings as they reflect what ESBA members have been asking for years. An SME test is only useful if applied systematically and thoroughly in *all* impact assessments accompanying proposals which may have an effect on small businesses. In light of the on-going debate of better regulation, an SME test is absolutely essential to ensure no unnecessary burden will be placed on small businesses. Until today, the SME test has been applied fragmented at best. ESBA therefore urges Council and Commission to adhere to the Parliament's findings and implement them accordingly.**

### **ESBA Welcomes European Parliament Report on Better Legislation**

On 14 September 2011, the European Parliament adopted an own-initiative Report on 'Better legislation, subsidiarity and proportionality and smart regulation' by MEP Sajjad Karim. The European Small Business Alliance fully welcomes this report as it draws many parallels with ESBA's own 'Action, Not Words' campaign, including a Written Declaration on better regulation conducted in 2010/2011. Most notably calls for thorough and systematic application of the SME test in Impact Assessments, the proposal of a 'one-in, one-out rule' for EU legislation, and a closer post implementation follow-up procedure of this legislation are issues ESBA has been advocating passionately over the past years.

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### ESBA OPINION

The adoption of MEP Karim's report gives hope to small businesses across the EU as it indicates the Parliament's willingness to reduce red tape and to improve the regulatory environment for SMEs. However, in light of ESBA's on-going 'Action, Not Words' campaign, we urge both the European Parliament and Commission as well as the Member States to follow through on these commitments and not let it be reduced to well-intended but empty rhetoric.

To read the Parliament's report on better legislation, please click [here](#)

### IN BRIEF

#### **EU/Transport: Controversial 'Eurovignette Directive' adopted.**

On 12 September 2011, the Council of Ministers approved the European Parliament's amendments of the 'Directive on Road Use Charges for Heavy Goods Vehicles'. The Directive gives the Member States the right to charge external cost levies in addition to the already existing infrastructure charge. The aim of the additional charge is to reduce external costs such as air and noise pollution and will be depending on the vehicles' emissions, distance covered, and place and time of road use. Member States have two years from the date of publication to transpose the Directive into national legislation.

The press release of the Council can be consulted [here](#).

#### **EU/Entrepreneurship: Parliament in support of women entrepreneurs**

On 13 September 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on women entrepreneurship in SMEs, aiming to unlock the untapped potential of female entrepreneurship through improved financial and training support. The resolution calls on the Commission and the Member States to better publicise micro-loans and best practice exchange opportunities such as the "European Progress Microfinance Facility" and "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs". The resolution also stresses the necessity to support women who want to conciliate family and work introducing appropriate measures. Moreover, attention is given to women over the age of 50 whose return to the labour market should be promoted.

To access the resolution voted by the Parliament, please click [here](#)

To learn more about "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" Programme, please click [here](#)

To learn more about the "European Progress Microfinance Facility", please click [here](#)

#### **EU/Corporate Social Responsibility: Commission announces new, possibly binding, CSR legislation.**

On 13 September 2011, the European Commission announced a new Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility to be launched by October 2011. The new initiative would regulate how businesses report their social and environmental considerations and thereby aims at enhancing consumers' trust in the industry. The idea of legislation has caused a deadlock during the last 5 years, with the main point of disagreement between business and consumer groups to be the binding nature of such reporting standards. The Commission's initiative is supposed to bring a new impetus to European CSR legislation.

To read more about Corporate Social Responsibility, please click [here](#)

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### **EU/SME Envoys: Commissioner Tajani deems SMEs crucial for economic growth.**

On 14 September 2011, on the occasion of the first national SME Envoys meeting with business representatives in Brussels, European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani emphasised the crucial role SMEs play in the European economy. During the meeting the SME Envoys, nationally appointed delegates representing the interests of SMEs, expressed their dedication to important ESBA priorities such as the 'Think Small First' principle and the SME-test.

To find out more about the Network of SME Envoys, please click [here](#)

To find out more about the Commission's policy on SME's, please click [here](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **EU/Eurostat: Key figures on European business with a special feature on SMEs**

This study constitutes a summary and a general overview of the structural business statistics available, collected on an annual basis. Most notably, the 2011 edition includes a special feature section on SMEs. Other chapters focus on the structural overview of the business economy and sectorial analysis.

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

### **EU/European Commission: Business dynamics**

This report analyses the economic impact of three procedures: licensing, business transfers and bankruptcy, as well as how these administrative burdens can hamper entrepreneurship in Europe.

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

### **EU/Parliament: Barriers and best practices in SME test implementation**

This study presents the results of a survey carried out in the 27 EU Member States. It focuses on the implementation of the SME test, analysing the current state of play and provides best practice examples for further improvements.

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

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **NEW:**

#### **Public Consultation on a new Trade and Development Communication**

*Closes: 18 September 2011*

This online consultation provides a large range of international stakeholders with the opportunity to present their views and contribute to set the agenda for next year's European Trade and Development actions.

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

#### **Consultation on the review of the Professional Qualifications Directive**

*Closes: 20 September 2011*

The Green Paper is aimed at gathering stakeholders' views on a modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC). This Directive, adopted in 2005, sets the rules for mutual recognition of professional qualifications between Member States.

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

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### **Consultation on the Review of the Communication on short term export credit insurance**

*Closes: 23 September 2011*

The purpose is to invite Member States and stakeholders to provide feedback on the application of the Communication and more in general on export financing, with a view to determining whether the Communication (which is due to expire end of 2012) should be maintained, modified or expire.

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

### **Consultation on Clean Transport Systems (CTS) initiative**

*Closes: 06 October 2011*

In its Europe 2020 strategy, the European Commission proposes the Flagship Initiative 'Resource efficient Europe'. This states that the European Commission will work to present proposals to modernise and decarbonise the transport sector. In line with this strategy, the European Commission has recently adopted the White Paper 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area -Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system', which announced that the European Commission will develop "a sustainable alternative fuels strategy including also the appropriate infrastructure".

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

### **Consultation on the draft legal act on the harmonization and interoperability of environmental information**

*Closes: 21 October 2011*

The INSPIRE Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), Data Specifications Drafting Team and INSPIRE JRC Data Specifications Team have finalized the draft Data Specifications of the Spatial Data Themes referred to in Annex II and III of the INSPIRE Directive. Their work is now available for public view and consultation by the INSPIRE Stakeholder Community as draft Guidelines.

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

### **Consultation on the ERA Framework: Areas of untapped potential for the development of the European Research Area (ERA)**

*Closes: 30 November 2011*

This public consultation aims at gathering views and evidence from stakeholders on the key obstacles which have to be tackled to achieve a well-functioning ERA. Completing ERA will require the support and effort of all EU Member States and Associated Countries and their stakeholders (e.g. research performing organisations including universities, funding organisations, researchers, private sector and civil society). The consultation aims to reinforce the Commission analysis of the key issues to be addressed as well as to gather views on their importance: researchers' careers and mobility, research infrastructures, cross-border operation of research actors, knowledge circulation, international cooperation and cross-cutting governance issues.

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

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### **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 administrative burdens on businesses in the EU by 25% in 2012.

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

### **COMING UP**

#### **EU Institutions: Important dates**

19 and 22 September 2011 - European Parliament committee meetings (Brussels)  
21 September 2011 - Weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners  
21 and 22 September 2011 - EESC plenary session  
22 September 2011 - Governing Council of the European Central Bank  
26, 27, 28 and 29 September 2011 - European Parliament plenary session (Strasbourg)  
26, 27, 28 and 29 September 2011 - European Parliament committee meetings (Strasbourg)  
27 September 2011 - Weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners

#### **Other SME-related events**

##### **The Single Market Forum**

**3/4 October 2011**

**Krakow, Poland**

The Forum will gather market participants such as businesses, social partners, non-governmental organisations, Parliaments, and public authorities at various levels of government. It will examine the state of the single market, the transposition and application of existing directives, aimed at making the single market work in practice, and facilitate exchanges of best practice.

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

##### **How to promote and boost innovation and competitiveness of the European industry?**

**5 October 2011, 13.00-14.30**

**Brussels, Belgium**

This business lunch event presents an opportunity for an informal discussion with German MEP Herbert Reul, Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. His speech will be followed by a Q&A session.

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

##### **Supporting SME and Enterprise Development through EU Programmes and Policies**

**17/18 November 2011, 9.00 am**

**Brussels, Belgium**

This event will focus on a vast number of policy fields (e.g. Small Business Act, State Aid), which constitute the framework for the development of enterprises. An overview of European programmes and funding opportunities for SMEs will also be provided.

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

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