



### HEADLINE

#### **EU/ Access to finance: Report shows that SMEs suffer more from credit-crunch than large businesses.**

On 19 April 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report on financing of SMEs and entrepreneurs. The report shows that there is a disproportionate effect of the credit crunch on SMEs as compared to large businesses. Over the period 2007 – 2010, SMEs had to pay higher interest rates and had to provide more collateral. Furthermore, SMEs were required to pay back loans quicker than large companies. As recognised by the OECD report, banks perceive the risks associated with SME loans to be higher while the future revenues of a small company are estimated lower. Finally, the report emphasises that over the period 2007 – 2010, SMEs saw a drop in demand of their products and services and an increased amount of payment delays for the services rendered.

To read more about the OECD's Centre for SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Local Development, please click [here](#)

#### **ESBA Opinion**

The figures presented in this report, once again confirm that there is something fundamentally amiss with the manner in which small businesses are approached by financial institutions. It has been stated and reiterated time and again that we look to small businesses to get Europe out of the crisis. It is of vital importance that banks start realising the long-term effects of their anti-lending policies as well as the burden they place on small businesses by placing exorbitant requirements on them.

### IN BRIEF

#### **EU/ Employment and Social Affairs: Presentation of the new 'Employment Package'**

On 18 April 2012, the European Commission issued its new 'Employment Package', aiming at stimulating job creation. The European Commission asks Member States to reform their labour markets to encourage hiring, by means of measures such as diminution of the taxes on labour, better use of hiring subsidies and promotion of self-employment. Three particular sectors stand out as essential for future growth: the green economy, ICT, and health and social care. The communication puts the accent on 'flex-security' as a cornerstone of the EU employment policy, but the new strategy also insists on the need to maintain job quality, and tries to address the issue of a mismatch of skills.

To access the full Communication please click [here](#)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

### **EU/ Growth and Jobs: Allowing co-operatives to further contribute to economic growth**

On 23 April 2012, on the occasion of the opening of the European cooperatives week, the role of co-operative enterprises in the Europe 2020 Strategy for growth was debated. Discussions were centred on the reform of the Statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE). This Statute was supposed to provide co-operatives with a stable legal tool to ease their operations in the Single Market but did not have the desired effect. A recent Commission report showed the SCE is too complex and needs simplification.

To read the report on the implementation of the SCE Regulation, please click [here](#)

### **EU/ Access to finance: Commission supports struggling Greek SMEs**

On 20 April 2012, Vice-President of the European Commission Antonio Tajani spoke at the conference "Growth in Greece: SMEs and entrepreneurship in the Europe 2020 strategy". This event followed the publication on 18 April of a Commission Communication 'Growth for Greece', which urges Greek authorities to implement EU legislation permitting the co-financing of working capital for SMEs. Greek SMEs are hit hard by the economic crisis. According to the latest figures by the European Commission one thousand SMEs are closing their doors each week in Greece.

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

### **EU/ Employment: MEPs approve unemployment benefit for self-employed frontier workers**

On 18 April 2012, the European Parliament adopted a Commission proposal extending unemployment provisions to self-employed cross-border workers who become unemployed. The resolution amends the modernised social security coordination Regulations No (EC) 883/2004 and 987/2009. The amendment applies to workers who used to be self-employed in a country providing unemployment benefit scheme, but are now living and unemployed in a different Member State. It allows them to receive unemployment benefits from the country of last activity.

To access the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, please click [here](#).

### **EU/ Employment and Social Affairs: Commission calls for boost in minimum wages**

On 18 April 2012, in the context of new Communication 'Towards a job-rich recovery', the European Commission asked for actions to promote job quality. The document encourages Member States to introduce a minimum salary, or to raise the already existing ones where possible. An increase in income is seen by the Commission as a way to stimulate demand. However, it is also recognised by the Commission that there needs to be room in public finances to make this possible.

To read more information on wages and labour market trends, please see the Commission's working document [here](#)

### **EU/ Employment: Erasmus and Leonardo good for business**

On 17 April 2012, the European Commission launched the "We Mean Business" Campaign, intending to raise awareness among employers of the benefits of hosting Erasmus and Leonardo trainees. With support of grants by the European Union, these programmes provide financial support to students wanting to conduct an internship in another Member State. The funds made available through these

**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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

programmes aim to stimulate businesses to hire interns where reduced budgets would have made this virtually impossible due to the crisis.

To learn more about the We Mean Business Campaign, please click [here](#)

To learn more about the European Commission's Youth Opportunities Initiative, please click [here](#)

### **EU/ Employment: Gender equality goes hand in hand with economic growth**

On 16 April 2012, the European Commission published its annual report on equality between women and men. The report specifies that the employment rate of women is 13 % lower than for men and that women on average earn 16.4 % less than their male counterparts. Although the position of women has improved compared to last year's study, much needs to be done according to the Commission. The report stipulates that the number of women in high company positions needs to increase, as more and more evidence indicates that female participation in economic decision making has a positive effect on a company's performance.

To access the full report by the European Commission, please click [here](#)

### **EU/ Entrepreneurship: Member States are spreading the 'Entrepreneurial spirit'**

On 13 April 2012, the European Commission published a report 'Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe', showing that most EU Member States promote entrepreneurship education. Half of all Member States are currently reforming their education system so as to give entrepreneurship a greater role in the curricula. The Commissioner for Education, Androulla Vassiliou, stresses the need to create a 'spirit of entrepreneurship' through the education system in order to change the entrepreneurial attitude in Europe.

To read the report by the European Commission, please click [here](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **EU / Commission: Business Climate Indicator for the euro area**

On 26 April, the Commission published the Business Climate Indicator for the euro area for April 2012. It decreased by 0.24 point to -0.52.

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

### **EU / Commission: Economic Sentiment Indicator for April 2012**

On 26 April, the Commission published the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) for April 2012. It finds that the ESI remained stable in the EU, but decreased by 1.7 points in the euro area. The ESI is below its long-term average in both areas.

To access this publication, 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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

### **World / OECD: Composite Leading Indicators (CLIs) for April 2012**

On 10 April 2012, the OECD released its Composite Leading Indicators for April 2012. They show signs of a positive change in momentum for the whole OECD area, with differences between countries.

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

### **EU / Commission: Quarterly report on the euro area**

On 3 April 2012, the Commission published the quarterly report on the euro for the first quarter of 2012. The report examines the macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area.

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

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **NEW**

#### **Consultation on the assessment of the suitability of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for the Member States**

*Closes: 11 May 2012*

Eurostat has launched a public consultation to get the opinion of stakeholders on the suitability of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) to be used by Member States. The use of IPSAS would make it easier to compare Member States budgets and would assist the European Commission in the preparation of the assessment reports Member State's budgets.

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

#### **Consultation on the future of European Company Law**

*Closes: 14 May 2012*

The purpose of this consultation is to collect views from all interested stakeholders on the future of European company law. The revision will have great effect on the legal structure with regards to the protection of interest of shareholders and others, the constitution and maintenance of public limited-liability companies' capital, takeover bids, branches disclosure, mergers and divisions, minimum rules for single-member private limited-liability companies, shareholders' rights and related areas such as financial reporting and accounting.

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

#### **Consultation on Financial Support for Energy Efficiency in Buildings**

*Closes: 18 May 2012*

The objective of this consultation is to obtain the views of stakeholders on how the financial support for energy efficiency measures aimed at improving the energy performance of buildings, both at EU as well as at national/regional/local level, could be improved.

To access this 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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

### **Consultation on Gender imbalance in corporate boards in the EU**

Closes: 28 May 2012

This consultation will feed into an assessment of possible EU-level measures to enhance female participation in economic decision-making, which will inform the Commission's decision on whether to propose action and on the form it should take.

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

### **Consultation on the internal market: Factual examples of double non-taxation cases**

Closes 30 May 2012

The Commission wants the views of all relevant stakeholders to gather evidence of double non-taxation within the EU and in relation with Third Countries. The results of the consultation will be used to identify and develop the appropriate measures to avoid double non-taxation which creates an unfair competitive advantage to the taxpayer.

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

### **Consultation on the EU environment policy priorities for 2020: Towards a 7th EU Environment Action Programme**

Closes 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012

This consultation aims at gathering the views of informed stakeholders and of the general public on the policy priorities for the environment up to 2020. The Commission welcomes opinions on the sectors which should be addressed in priority and on the most effective instruments the EU should use to take up the challenges described in the consultation document.

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

### **The provision of information and reservation services for safe and secure parking places for trucks and commercial vehicles under the ITS Directive 2010/40/EU**

Closes 8 June 2012

The Commission is seeking the opinions of stakeholders and EU citizens on providing information and reservation services for safe and secure parking places for trucks and commercial vehicles.

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

### **Consultation on bank accounts**

Closes 12 June 2012

The Commission is willing to collect stakeholders' viewpoints on the necessity of taking action and on the possible policy tools to be used to improve the transparency and comparability of bank account fees, bank account switching and access to a basic payment account.

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

### **Consultation on the Access to Interoperability Information of Digital Products and Services**

**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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

*Closes: 20 June 2012*

The Commission will analyze how the market situation could change if the significant market players were legally forced to disclose interoperability information and if necessary will draft Commission Communication or a Directive by 2012. This consultation particularly focuses on owners and potential users of interoperability information that is not covered by standards.

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

### **Consultation on the future of European Insolvency Law**

*Closing: 21 June 2012*

As part of the revision of the Insolvency Regulation (Reg (EC) 1346/2000), the European Commission has published a public consultation to obtain the views of all relevant stakeholders.

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

### **Consultation on a EU strategy to reduce injuries resulting from road traffic accidents**

*Closes: 22 June 2012*

This consultation will serve as input for the drafting of a strategy to reduce the severity of injuries caused by road traffic accidents. The questionnaire addresses general issue related to road safety and more specific issues on how to improve the data available on victims of accidents and their collection at EU level, and on how to target some specific groups of road users.

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

### **ONGOING:**

#### **Online consultation on administrative burdens reduction**

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**

2 May 2012 – Weekly meeting of College of Commissioners

2 May 2012 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council

2 May 2012 – Meeting Coreper II

3 May 2012 – Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions

3 May 2012 – Meetings Coreper I and II

#### **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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

4 May 2012 – Meeting Coreper I  
7-8 May 2012 – European Parliament Committee meetings  
8 May 2012 – European Parliament Conciliation Committee  
8 May 2012 – Meetings Coreper I and II  
9 May 2012 – Weekly meeting of College of Commissioners  
9-10 May 2012 – European Parliament (mini) plenary session  
10 May 2012 – Meeting Coreper II  
10-11 May 2012 – Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council  
14 May 2012 – Foreign Affairs Council  
14 May 2012 – Eurogroup meeting  
14-15 May 2012 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council (development issues)  
15 May 2012 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council  
16 May 2012 – Weekly meeting of College of Commissioners  
16 May 2012 – Meetings Coreper I and II

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

#### **Hearing on "SMEs: competitiveness and business opportunities" at the ITRE Committee**

**8 May 2012**

##### **Brussels, Belgium**

This public hearing organised by the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy aims to hear stakeholders about how to boost SMEs competitiveness. The points that will be addressed will be the reduction of administrative burdens, the role of the Cosme programme and possible solutions to help SMEs seize global opportunities.

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

#### **ALDE stakeholders consultation seminar on Horizon 2020**

**15 May 2012**

##### **Brussels, Belgium**

The ALDE group in the European Parliament organises a seminar on Horizon 2020 to determine its stance on the Horizon 2020 - new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. This seminar will bring together European Commission representatives, industry and research institutes/universities, as well as policy makers at EU, national and regional levels.

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

#### **JRC Conference on "Scientific support for growth, jobs and sustainability: the example of the Eco-Industries"**

**15 May 2012**

##### **Brussels, Belgium**

This conference organised by the Commission Joint research centre will aim at identifying where scientific support is needed to strengthen Eco-Industries in Europe. Eco-industries have a high potential for growth and job-creation at local level.

### **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](mailto:secretariat@esba-europe.org)

## ESBA Bulletin of 27 April 2012 – Volume 14 – Number 6

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

### **Green Week Conference 2012**

**22 – 25 May 2012**

**Brussels, Belgium**

The 2012 edition of the Green Week conference will focus on water, stakeholders will exchanging best practices and experiences.

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

### **Conference "Mission Growth" - Innovation for the competitiveness of European industry**

**29 May 2012**

**Brussels, Belgium**

This conference is organised by DG Enterprise and Industry. It will focus on how Europe can boost its industrial competitiveness and innovation capacity to generate growth and create jobs. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, as well as vice-President Antonio Tajani will be present.

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

### **Conference on Electronic Procurement – Challenges and Opportunities**

**26 June 2012**

**Brussels, Belgium**

The European Commission has recently proposed that e-procurement should become mandatory across the EU by mid-2016. This conference is co-organised by the Commission and the European Parliament.

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