



HEADLINES

EU/ Taxation: FTT on the agenda of Economics and Financial Affairs Council

On 22 June 2012, on the occasion of the ECOFIN Council, the Finance Ministers of the Member States discussed the Presidency's progress report on the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT). The progress report is the latest effort to reach a consensus among all EU Member States, necessary to get the required unanimous consent in the Council. The progress report suggests to establish a 'slimmed version' of the tax, applying to a smaller number of financial products, excluding derivatives and looking more like the stamp duty currently in place in the UK. Opposition to the tax is fierce. Amongst the main concerns is the possibility of a relocation of certain aspects of the financial services sector to third countries. The UK and Sweden are strong opponents of the tax. At the meeting, the German Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, suggested a 'tour de table' to take stock of the current stance of Member States. He insinuated that, although Germany is generally in favour, the adoption of any kind of financial transaction tax is not likely any time soon.

To read the progress report by the Danish Presidency, please click [here](#)

IN BRIEF

EU/ Intellectual Property: European Parliament Committee recommends rejection of ACTA

On 21 June 2012, the European Parliament Committee on International Trade (INTA) adopted its recommendations on ACTA, drafted by David Martin MEP (S&D, UK), to reject the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement. MEPs fear the agreement will bring unintended consequences on citizen's privacy and that it will cause an increase in data protection issues. The Parliament's approval is necessary for the EU to ratify the international agreement. Three Parliamentary groups (ALDE, S&D and the Greens) have expressed their support for MEP Martin's recommendation.

To read the draft recommendation of rapporteur David Martin MEP, please click [here](#)

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

EU/Legal: Committee on Legal Affairs in favour of ADR and ODR

On 19 June 2012, the European Parliament Committee on Legal affairs (JURI) unanimously adopted opinions on the proposals on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). ADR schemes are designed to make it easier for consumers and business to settle their disputes out of court. The ADR and ODR proposals aim at tackling the gaps in ADR coverage and the lack of awareness of the availability of ADR schemes among consumers and businesses. Next step is the vote in the lead Parliamentary Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), scheduled for 10 July 2012, after which the plenary vote is expected to follow in the autumn of 2012.

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To read the European Commission's proposal on ADR, please click [here](#)

To read the European Commission's proposal on ODR, please click [here](#)

EU/ Finance: The European Investment Bank boosts lending to SMEs in Lebanon

On 19 June 2012 the European Investment Bank (EIB) announced the opening of a new credit line to provide financing to Lebanese SMEs through the network of the Societe Generale de Banque au Liban (SGBL). Boosting SMEs investment is part of the EIB Group's main goals, not only in Europe (where EUR 13 billion have been provided in 2011 for SMEs and midcap companies), but also in specific world regions like the Mediterranean, where the EIB acts as the largest net financial investor.

To learn more about EIB SME support schemes, please click [here](#)

EU/ SMEs: Commission Vice-President Tajani announces new measures in support of SMEs

On 15 June 2012, on the occasion of the European SME Envoys meeting in Malta, Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani disclosed new Commission initiatives in support of SMEs. Recognising the challenge of access to finance for small and medium businesses, the Commissioner for Industry and Enterprise announced the forthcoming publication of a practical information guide and reinforced involvement of the Enterprise Europe Network in facilitating access to European funds. Furthermore, participants were informed that the Commission is working on an Action Plan for Entrepreneurship, to be released in the fall.

To read more about the network of SME Envoys, please click [here](#)

EU/ Single Market: MEPs give green light to the Commission for boosting the single market

On 14 June 2012 the European Parliament adopted a resolution echoing the recent Communication of the European Commission setting out an action plan to give fresh impetus to the single market. Both documents aim at unleashing the full potential of the common market through 12 key initiatives, such as easing SMEs' access to capital and cutting administrative burdens. European policy makers subsequently underlined the numerous benefits SMEs could draw an improved digital single market.

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

To access the Commission Communication 'Single Market Act- Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence', please click [here](#)

EU/ Construction: Commission to announce a strategy to help ailing construction sector

On 8 June 2012, Vice-President of the European Commission Antonio Tajani a strategy supporting the construction industry in the autumn of 2012. On the occasion of the annual conference of the European Construction Industry Federation, Mr Tajani pronounced that the report will mainly address investment conditions, professional qualifications of construction workers and potential opportunities following from the Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings. The construction

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sector consists of mainly micro and small businesses, employing 20 million people and providing 6.5% of GDP. With the report, the European Commission acknowledges that action is needed as the sector has slimmed by 16% since 2007.

To learn more about EU legislation concerning the construction sector, please click [here](#)

EU/Single Market: Commission publishes new e-Signatures proposal

On 4 June 2012, the European Commission proposed a Regulation on electronic identification and trust services in the internal market. This Regulation would replace the existing e-Signatures Directive and create a legal framework for common electronic identification standards. Electronic signatures and electronic identification methods will be given the same legal status as traditional 'paper' signatures, so as to spur the uptake of e-procurement, e-business and e-commerce.

To access the proposal for a Regulation "on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market", please click [here](#)

To learn more about the current European legislation on electronic identification, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Commission: Flash Consumer Confidence Indicator June 2012

On 21 June 2012, Eurostat released its flash estimate of the consumer confidence indicator. It remained broadly unchanged in both the EU 27 and the euro area compared to May 2012.

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

EU/ EIB: FEMIP Annual Report 2011

On 21 June 2012, the EIB released its 2011 annual report on Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership (FEMIP). This facility aims at assisting the economic development and integration of the EU's Mediterranean partner countries.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on GDP per capita in the Member States

On 20 June 2012, Eurostat published its first estimate of GDP per capita in the Member States in 2011, showing that GDP per capita varied from 45% to 274% of the EU 27 average.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on production in construction

On 19 June 2012, Eurostat published a monthly comparison of the production growth rate in the construction sector, revealing between March and April 2012 a decrease by 2.7% in the euro area and by 6.6% in EU 27.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on international trade in goods

On 15 June 2012, Eurostat published its estimate of trade in goods balance, revealing a EUR 5 billion surplus for the euro area and a EUR 12 billion deficit for the EU 27 in April 2012.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on employment

On 15 June 2012, Eurostat published its estimate for the first quarter of 2012 on employment. The number of persons employed decreased by 0.2% in the euro area and remained stable in the EU 27 in the first quarter of 2012 compared with the previous quarter.

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

EU/ Commission: Key indicators for the euro area

On 14 June 2012, the Commission published an update of the key indicators for the euro area. This set of tables and graphs presents the most relevant economic statistics concerning the euro area including, inter alia, GDP, retail trade volume, unemployment rate, gross fixed capital formation and inflation rate.

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

EU/ ECB: Monthly bulletin June 2012

On 14 June 2012, the ECB published its monthly bulletin on the activities of the European System of Central Banks.

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

EU/ ECB: Statistics Pocket Book June 2012

On 14 June 2012, the ECB released an update of the Statistics Pocket Book providing, inter alia, an overview of major economic areas, macroeconomic indicators and financial market developments.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on annual inflation

On 14 June 2012, Eurostat released the annual inflation rates for April and May 2012. Euro area annual inflation was 2.4% in May 2012, down from 2.6% in April. EU annual inflation was 2.6% in May 2012, down from 2.7% in April.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on hourly labour costs First quarter 2012

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On 14 June 2012, Eurostat published a comparison of the hourly labour costs between the first quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, revealing an increase by 2.0% in the euro area and by 1.7% in EU 27.

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

EU/ EIB: JASPERS Annual Report 2011

On 13 June 2012, the EIB released its 2011 annual report on Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS).

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on industrial production

On 13 June 2012, Eurostat published a monthly comparison of the industrial production growth rate, revealing a drop by 0.8% in euro area and by 0.4% in EU27 between March and April 2012.

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

EU/ Eurostat: EU 27 Foreign Direct Investment in 2011

On 13 June 2012, Eurostat revealed that the EU 27 Foreign Direct Investment flows more than doubled in 2011 compared to 2010.

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

OECD: Unemployment rate April 2012

On 12 June 2012, the OECD published the OECD unemployment rate for April 2012. It has been remained unchanged since January 2011 at 7.9%.

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

EU/ ECB: Financial stability review June 2012

On 12 June 2012, the ECB released its bi-annual financial stability review providing an overview of the possible sources of risk and vulnerability to financial stability in the euro area.

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

OECD: Composite leading indicators

On 11 June 2012, the OECD published OECD composite leading indicators, designed to anticipate turning points in economic activity relative to trend continue to point to divergence between economies. They keep pointing to diverging patterns in economic activity.

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

EU/ Eurostat: Euro indicator on the external current account deficit

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On 8 June 2012, Eurostat published its first estimate of the EU 27 external current account deficit for the first quarter of 2012 recording a € 8 billion deficit.

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

EU/ Commission: The economic impact of the Services Directive: A first assessment following implementation

On 8 June 2012, the Commission published a study presenting new data on the barrier reduction resulting from the actual level of implementation of the Services Directive. It also estimates the impact of that reduction on sectoral trade, foreign direct investment, labour productivity and GDP.

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

CONSULTATIONS

NEW:

Consultation on Intelligent Energy – Europe III in Horizon 2020

Closes: 5 September 2012

Intelligent Energy – Europe II (IEE II) is one of the three pillars of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the main EU instrument for non-technological support in the field of energy. Its objective is to contribute to removal of market barriers that hamper the efficient use of energy and increased use of renewable energy sources. This public consultation will provide an important contribution for shaping IEE III in Horizon 2020.

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

Consultation on demand-side policies to spur European industrial innovations in a global market

Closes: 6 September 2012

The Commission is calling for ideas for potential new policy measures and focus areas for future targeted demand-side innovation actions at EU level, to enable faster uptake of innovations and to create a better environment for creating innovations in order to maintain the value and business investments in Europe.

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

Consultation on the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)

Closes: 12 September 2012

The GBER will expire on 31 December 2013. In this context, the present public consultation offers stakeholders the opportunity to provide input to the Commission at an early stage of policy making. Member States, other Institutions and stakeholders are invited to express their views on the GBER provisions currently applicable and to suggest possible amendments to these provisions.

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

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Consultation on List of projects submitted to be considered as potential Projects of Common Interest (PCI) in energy infrastructure

Closes: 20 September 2012

The objective of this consultation is to seek views on the list of all the projects that have been submitted to be considered by the ad hoc working groups as potential PCIs. Stakeholders may also suggest projects to be added to, or removed from, the list. The input from this consultation will feed into the PCI evaluation process.

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

Consultation on Code for Effective Open Voluntarism: Good design principles for self- and co-regulation and other multi stakeholder actions

Closes: 30 September 2012

In the CSR Communication COM (2011) 681, about "A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility," under the fifth action of the action plan, the Commission has undertaken to seek to codify good practice in various voluntary, self- and co-regulation processes in order to improve the framework for achieving EU policy objectives. The prime goal of action 5 is to encapsulate, in a very short text, the core propositions that frame effective voluntary multi stakeholder action.

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

ONGOING:

Consultation on an 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](#)

Consultation on the governance of the 'Internet of Things'

Closes: 10 July 2012

The Internet of today offers access to content and information through connectivity to web pages and to multiple terminals (e.g., mobiles, TV). The next evolution will make it possible to access information related to our physical environment, through a generalised connectivity of everyday objects. The Internet of Things holds the promise of significant progress but it is likely to have a profound impact on society, in areas like privacy, security, ethics, and liability. The European Commission envisions a recommendation addressing the main issues.

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

Consultation on exploiting the employment potential of the personal and household services

Closes: 15 July 2012

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The staff working document on personal and household services aims to have views of all stakeholders to comment on possible actions to address the issue of promoting new jobs in the personal and household services sectors. In particular, the Commission is interested in ways to improve measurement and monitoring of the employment levels in PHS, taking into account the impact of the on-going crisis, loss of purchasing power, labour market exclusion issues and the potentially positive effect on the creation or growth of SMEs.

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

Consultation on an EU Initiative to Reduce the Cost of Rolling Out High Speed Communication Infrastructure in Europe

Closes: 20 July 2012

High-speed Internet underpins all sectors of the economy and will be the backbone of the Digital Single Market. For every 10% increase in the broadband penetration the economy grows by 1 to 1.5%. In this context the European Commission is seeking views on how to cut the costs of setting up new networks for high speed internet in the EU. In particular, the Commission wants to explore how to reduce the costs associated with civil engineering, such as the digging up of roads to lay down fibre, and which can account for as much as 80% of the total cost. The Commission believes it could cut the cost of broadband investments by a quarter. Input is sought from all interested public and private parties including telecoms and utility companies for instance, investors, public authorities and consumers.

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

Consultation on Industrial Policy Communication 2012

Closes: 7 August 2012

The European Commission industrial policy flagship of 2010 laid out a strategy for sustainable growth, competitiveness and job creation in the context of Europe 2020. The 2012 review of the industrial policy communication will be adopted by the Commission in September 2012. The new communication should focus on a limited number of new initiatives capable of effectively delivering results. The responses to the questionnaire will help the Commission identify policy priorities and develop appropriate policy responses.

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

Consultation on the future rules on the entry and residence of non-EU national researchers, students, school pupils, unremunerated trainees and volunteers in the EU

Closes: 23 August 2012

The aim of the consultation is to collect opinions on future rules on the entry and residence of non-EU national researchers, students, school pupils, unremunerated trainees and volunteers in the EU, with a view to the revision of the students and researchers Directives as foreseen in the 2012 Commission Work Programme.

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

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Consultation on procedures for notifying and acting on illegal content hosted by online intermediaries

Closes: 5 September 2012

This consultation aims at making a contribution to the development of legal certainty and trust in cross-border online services. It also aims at combating illegality on the internet, and ensuring better fundamental rights compliance of notice-and-action procedures. Those elements are crucial to enhance the Digital Single Market, which is an important source for growth.

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

Consultation for the review of the EU fruit and vegetable regime

Closes: 9 September 2012

The European Commission is conducting an analysis of the current EU regime in respect of the fruit and vegetables sector in relation to its CAP 2020 reform proposals. In this context, this public consultation aims at informing and allowing interested parties to submit their views on the problem definition, challenges and options proposed, and at gathering facts and analytical documents to help the impact assessment.

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

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

25 June 2012 – External Relations and Foreign Affairs Council

26 June 2012 – General Affairs Council

26-28 June – European Parliament Committees meetings

27 June 2012 – Weekly meeting of the College of Commissioners

27 June 2012 – Meeting Coreper I

28-29 June 2012 – European Council Meeting

2-5 July 2012 – European Parliament Plenary Session

05 July 2012 – Governing council meeting of the European Central Bank

09 July 2012 – Eurogroup Meeting

Other SME-related events

Research Roadmap for Horizon 2020

25 June 2012

Brussels, Belgium

The Future Internet Assembly Working Group on Research Roadmapping is organising a workshop to review and extend the current FIA Research Roadmap as a core input to the next EU Framework Programme (“Horizon 2020”).

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

EIT Conference “Good Practices and Learnings: Linking Business, Research and Higher Education” 25-26 June 2012

Copenhagen, Denmark

During this conference, the European Institute of Innovation & Technology will illustrate how it implements its model and mission in practice and showcase its activities, achievements and developments to date at all levels: EIT headquarters, Knowledge & Innovation Communities and Co-location Centres.

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](#)

Young Innovators UNconvention

26- 27 June 2012

Brussels, Belgium

This unique UNconvention brings together young Europeans with innovative ideas and those who will inspire, guide and support them: entrepreneurs, investors, business and corporate personalities, academic and industrial experts, opinion leaders, and policy and decision makers.

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

ESBA’s Annual event 2012: “Micro-Business: Your Favorite Employer”

28 June 2012

Brussels, Belgium

The European Small Business Alliance will organise its annual event on 28 June 2012. This year’s topic will be “Micro-Business: Your Favorite Employer” putting the role of micro businesses in generating employment for Europe in the spotlight. The event will facilitate an interactive debate between entrepreneurs, Members of the European Parliament, officials of the European Commission and other stakeholders.

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

To register, please send an e-mail to secretariat@esba-europe.org

Public Hearing ‘Improving access to finance for SMEs’

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28 June 2012

Brussels, Belgium

The European Economic and Social Committee will gather representatives from SMEs and financial institutions to conduct a public hearing on the Commission's Action plan to improve access to finance for SMEs. In a context of crisis, it is particularly difficult for SMEs to access capital.

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

EU-US Workshop on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

12-13 July 2012

Rome, Italy

This workshop is organised in the framework of the Transatlantic Economic Council. It will focus on initiatives that could be taken to promote EU and US SMEs participation in international trade.

East-Meets-West on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

1-4 September 2012

Nicosia, Cyprus

This event organised by the European office of Cyprus will feature an international congress and an exhibition. It aims at promoting collaboration between science, technology and business.

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

Universities and Regional Innovation: From Policy to Practice

20 September 2012

Brussels, Belgium

The EU-DRIVERS annual conference, organised by the European Centre for the Strategic Management of Universities, will focus on cross-sectorial partnerships between academic, businesses and public agencies to support regional innovation.

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

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