



HEADLINES

EU/Smart Regulation: The Regulatory Fitness Programme (REFIT) for lighter EU regulation:

On 2 October 2013, the European Commission published the results of the screening of its Regulatory Fitness Programme to make EU legislation simpler and lighter, as 74% of European Union citizens believe that the European Union's legislative acts generate too much "red tape" and are too burdensome.

The European Commission outlined the progress made so far and highlighted that Smart Regulatory principles have been mainstreamed into all the policy areas under the European Union's competence. Also, it mentioned the different legislative proposals it tabled and the initiatives it undertook to make regulation simpler to understand, adopt and implement. Some of these include reforms under Data Protection legislation and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

The European Commission's goal under REFIT is to avoid unnecessary administrative burdens and costs by making its legislation simpler. For this, it recognizes the need to boost co-operation between the European Union and Member States and with other European Union institutions. Because Smart Regulation should not be a "one-off initiative" but rather a guiding principle for better EU regulation, it should be embedded into the European Union's policy cycle and decision-making process.

ESBA Opinion:

ESBA Welcomes the Commission's initiative, as smart regulation and administrative burden reduction in particular have been high on our members' agendas. European legislation often comes with substantial implementation requirements which is both costly and resource intensive. There are great differences in terms of resources and ease of compliance between large companies and SMES. Even within the SME spectrum there are substantial discrepancies. What can be perfectly manageable for a company with 200 employees can be detrimental to a company employing 2. Let us not forget that 92% of all EU businesses are micro-companies with less than 10 employees. The Commission's Regulatory Fitness Programme helps ease the disproportionately heavy burdens on Europe's smallest. We urge the Member States to give the Commission their fullest cooperation in this approach.

To access the European Commission's communication on Regulatory Fitness, please click [here](#).

To access ESBA's issue Sheet on EU Regulatory Fitness, please click [here](#).

IN BRIEF

EU/Internal market: European Commission adopts communication evaluating national regulations on access to professions.

On 2 October 2013, the European Commission has adopted a communication which evaluates Member States' regulations on access to professions. The aim of this exercise is to level the discrepancies between Member States regarding access to regulated professions. The Commission believes that young people are dissuaded to take up regulated professions, both in their own Member State and abroad, because of stringent conditions as well as discrepancies in national rules. The executive foresees an increase in employment and in GDP as effects of alleviating and leveling regulations across the EU.

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To read more on the European Commission communication on regulated professions, please click [here](#).

To read more about on the modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive, please click [here](#).

EU/Enterprise: European Commission publishes shortlist of candidates for the European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2013.

On 30 September 2013, the Commission's DG Enterprise and Industry announced that a shortlist of candidates for the European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2013 has been selected. A diversified jury of representatives from business, academia and governments shortlisted 19 projects over 6 categories. These categories include Promoting Entrepreneurial Spirit; Investing in Skills; Improving the Business Environment; Supporting Business Internationalisation: Supporting the Development of Green Markets and Resource Efficiency, and Responsible and Inclusive. The Award ceremony will be held in conjunction with the SME Assembly in Vilnius on 25 November this year.

For more information about the European Enterprise Promotion Awards, please click [here](#).

EU/Transport: Germany calls for lighter fuel efficiency standards.

On 27 September 2013, during a meeting of the EU Competitiveness Council, Germany presented a proposal to delay the goal of reaching 95 grams CO₂ emissions for passenger cars to 2024. By 2020, 80% of national fleets would fall within the standard, whereas the remaining 20% would be eased in over a 4-year period, 5% each year respectively. Though beneficial to German car manufacturers, the proposal destroys compromises reached by the Irish Presidency. Critics report that the lowered ambitions will lead to 104g/km in 2020 and a further drop to 100g/km in 2022 before reaching the goal of 95g/km in 2024.

To learn more about CO₂ emissions from passenger cars, please click [here](#).

EU/Internal Market: Businesses damaged by misleading marketing practices.

On 26 September, the Internal Market Committee and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted recommendations on misleading marketing practices. In Europe, more and more businesses are victims of misleading marketing practices, causing several damages particularly to small companies. The report by Rapporteur Mr Cornelis de Jong MEP (GUE/NGL, NL) highlights the effects of bogus business directories on European businesses, engendering losses of billions of euros and recommends several potential solutions to this problem.

To read more on the review of Directive 2006/114/EC concerning misleading and comparative advertising, please click [here](#).

EU/ Budget: ITRE committee approves consolidated text of Horizon 2020 and COSME.

On 26 September 2013, the European Parliament committee on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE) voted on the adoption of the consolidated text of the Competitiveness for Enterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises (COSME) programme for the years 2014-2020. The committee also voted on the adoption of the consolidated text of each report within the Horizon 2020 package. All have been adopted by a large majority. The expected budget for the two programmes is € 77bn for Horizon 2020 and € 2bn for COSME respectively. The final vote in the European Parliament will take place after the approval of the Multiannual Financial Framework discussions.

To read more about Horizon 2020, please click [here](#).

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To access the European Commission's webpage on the Programme for the Competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs (COSME) 2014-2020, please click [here](#).

EU/Transport: Eurovignette: New method for measuring road tolls.

On 16 September 2013, European Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas held a press conference at the International Road Transport Union (IRU) in Vilnius (Lithuania). Mr Kallas stated that the European Commission intends to change the road pricing method from a time-based to a distance-based system. The aim of these measures would be to simplify Member states' notification and reporting requirements, introducing new values for infrastructure and external costs and ensuring greater transparency as well as non-discriminatory rules for tolling schemes.

For more information about the 2006 Eurovignette directive, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat: Volume of retail trade

On Wednesday 3 October 2013, Eurostat published data indicating that the Volume of retail trade was up by 0.7% within the Euro area, and up by 0.4% within the EU in August 2013, as compared to July 2013.

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

EU/Commission: Professional Qualifications:

On 2 October 2013, the European Commission published a Communication on evaluating national regulations on access to professions.

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

EU/EIB: Framework loans

On 2 October 2013, the European Investment Bank published its ex-poste evaluation on the use of framework loans to finance EIB investments in the EU, from 2000 until 2011.

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

EU/Eurostat: Unemployment data

On 1 October 2013, Eurostat published its data on unemployment in the Euro Area, at 12%, and on the EU area, at 10.9%. In both zones, rates have risen compared to August 2012's unemployment figures.

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

EU/Eurostat: Inflation

On 30 September 2013, Eurostat published a flash estimate outlining that inflation for September 2013 is expected to be 1.1%, decreasing by 0.2% since August 2013.

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

EU/Eurostat: Languages

On 26 September 2013, and as part of the European Day of languages, Eurostat revealed that two-thirds of working age adults in the EU in 2011 claimed to know a foreign language.

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

CONSULTATIONS

NEW:

Consultation on the Green Action Plan for SMEs.

Closes: 12 December 2013

The aim of this consultation is to collect stakeholders' points of view on valid support measures for SMEs to become more resource efficient and sell green products and services. The results of this consultation and the results of the Flash Eurobarometer³⁴² "SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets", will be taken into consideration whilst developing actions to be included in the forthcoming Green Action Plan for SMEs.

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

Consultation on Crowdfunding in the EU – Exploring the added value of potential EU action

Closes: 31 December 2013

The consultation offers different stakeholders the opportunity to express their views on crowdfunding. It will attempt to highlight the benefits and the risks of this new form of financing, and find suggestions for the Commission regarding potential further actions.

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

ONGOING:

Consultation on a new European approach to business failure and insolvency.

Closes: 11 October 2013

This consultation aims at collecting views on insolvency law in order to evaluate whether there is a particular need for harmonisation, and to what extent such a harmonisation affects national legislation.

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

Consultation on the "Experience Economy" as an emerging industry.

Closes: 11 October 2013

The European Commission seeks to gauge the opinion of stakeholders on the "Experience Economy", and whether EU action in this field is necessary to support new business models. The Experience Economy includes among others cultural and creative industries, leisure and sport, tourism, entertainment and eco-industries.

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

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

07 October 2013 – Justice and Home Affairs Council

08 October 2013 – Justice and Home Affairs Council

09 October 2013 – Coreper I and II

10 October 2013 – Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council

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11 October 2013 – Coreper I
14 October 2013 – European Parliament committee meetings
14 October 2013 – Eurogroup
14 October 2013 – Environmental Council
15 October 2013 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council
15 October 2013 – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
16 October 2013 – Coreper I
16 October 2013 – European Economic and Social Committee plenary session
17 October 2013 – European Economic and Social Committee plenary session
17 October 2013 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council
17 October 2013 – European Parliament committee meetings
17 October 2013 – Governing Council meeting of the ECB
18 October 2013 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council
18 October 2013 – Foreign Affairs Council
21 October 2013 – European Parliament plenary session
21 October 2013 – European Parliament committee meetings
21 October 2013 – Foreign Affairs Council
22 October 2013 – European Parliament plenary session
22 October 2013 – European Parliament committee meetings
22 October 2013 – General Affairs Council
23 October 2013 – Coreper I
23 October 2013 – Coreper I
24 October 2013 – European Parliament plenary session
24 October 2013 – European Council
25 October 2013 – European Parliament plenary session
25 October 2013 – European Council
30 October 2013 – Coreper I

Other SME-related events

TEN-T DAYS 2013.

16-17-18 October 2013

Tallinn, Estonia

The European Commission will host the TEN-T DAYS 2013 in Tallinn, Estonia. During these three days, the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport will hold several seminars and debates on the role of transport infrastructures in the European Union.

To learn more about the TEN-T DAYS 2013, please click [here](#).

A Renaissance of Industry for a Sustainable Europe (RISE).

16 October 2013

Brussels, Belgium

The Greens | European Free Alliance in the European Parliament will host an event on reindustrialisation and on promoting competitiveness and sustainability.

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

Retail Forum 2013.

17 October 2013

Brussels, Belgium

The European Commission, together with the Retail Forum for Sustainability, organises the Retail Forum 2013, this year focusing on green transitions for retailers.

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

SMEs in Horizon 2020.

18 October 2013

Brussels, Belgium

The European Commission organises an Info Day on SME participation to Horizon 2020, with particular regard towards SME support organisations.

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

International Conference: Digital Privacy & Data protection: Best practices to prepare for the new EU Regulation in today's fast-paced digital economy.

22 October 2013

Paris, France

The European Voice newspaper organises an international conference on Digital Privacy and Data Protection. This conference will be a chance to share best practices for the new EU regulation on Data Protection.

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

The Path to Growth: Achieving Excellence in Business Friendly Public Administration.

29 October 2013

Brussels, Belgium

Directorate General Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission organises a conference on modernising public administrations and how to strengthen relations with businesses.

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

Europe's energy outlook: Heading in the right direction?

07 November 2013

Brussels, Belgium

Friends of Europe organises its 10th annual Energy Policy Summit on Europe's energy outlook. The debate will take place in Brussels on 7 November 2013.

To learn more about the 10th Energy Policy Summit, please click [here](#).

Broadening the benefit of EU R&I programmes: New partners, new member states, new international alliances.

13 November 2013

Brussels, Belgium

On 13 November 2013, Science | Business will hold a debate on the EU R&I programmes, focusing on new partners and new alliances.

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

The Brussels Tax Forum 2013.

18 November 2013

Brussels, Belgium

On 18 November 2013, Directorate General Taxation and Custom Union of the European Commission will host a forum on tax issues, aimed at policymakers, taxation experts and other stakeholders.

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

Encouraging a Europe of Enterprise, SME Assembly in Lithuania.

25 - 26 November 2013

Vilnius, Lithuania

Under the auspices of the Lithuanian Presidency, this year's SME Assembly will take place in Vilnius. Policy makers, business and consumer organisations and a large amount of entrepreneurs will discuss the most pressing issues pertaining to SMEs.

For more information about the SME Assembly, please click [here](#).

Social Entrepreneurs: Have Your Say!

16-17 January 2014

Strasbourg, France

The DG MARKT will host a two days conference on Social Entrepreneurship. The conference aims at discussing the latest developments on Social Business Initiative as well sharing opinions with stakeholders.

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