



Headline

EU/EPA Awards 2014: ESBA Nominated for Trade Association of the Year

The European Small Business Alliance (ESBA) has been shortlisted for the European Public Affairs Awards 2014. Voting will open on 20 January and can be done by any Public Affairs professional, registered in the EPAD Directory.

To learn more about the nomination: <http://www.epaawards.com/shortlist#trade-association-professional-body-of-the-year>

and to vote for ESBA, please visit: <http://www.epaawards.com/voting>

IN BRIEF

EU/Internal market: Reforms to the structure of the EU's banking sector

The European Commission's proposal to reform the structure of the EU banking sector will be published late January or February 2014. The proposal will be based on the High-level Expert Group report, chaired by Erkki Liikanen, Governor of the Bank of Finland and a former member of the European Commission. According to Internal Market Commissioner Michel Barnier, the proposal aims at ensuring all banks can be resolvable and not require taxpayer bailout when they face difficulties. The banking structural reform will ensure that the financing of the real economy is not hindered.

To read more about High level Expert Group report on reforming the structure of the EU banking sector, please click [here](#).

EU/ Enterprise: SMEs participation in research and innovation programmes

The ongoing Horizon 2020 programme foresees funds dedicated to SMEs which aim at participating in research and innovation activities, including non-technological innovation. The SMEs-friendly programmes, amongst which the "Eurostars programme for research performing SMEs" and the "new SME instrument for supporting innovative SMEs and start-ups", will support entrepreneurial investment and businesses creation in green markets. These new funding programmes will help SMEs in overcoming barriers towards an active participation in research and innovation opportunities.

To read more about the Eurostars-2 programme supporting research performing small and medium-sized enterprises, please read [here](#)



To read more about opportunities for SMEs under Horizon2020, please click [here](#).

EU/Institutional Affairs: Greek Presidency official inauguration in Athens

On 8 January 2014, the official inauguration of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, for the first semester of 2014, took place in Athens. The President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias as well as Prime Minister Samaras and Foreign Minister Evangelos Venizelos welcomed both President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso. Amongst the Greek Presidency priorities announced, there are measures to boost growth, jobs and social cohesion and tackling the crisis in the eurozone completing the new EMU architecture, measures to control immigration flows and finally, promoting marine and maritime activities in a sustainable way in order to boost the EU economy.

To read more about the Greek Presidency priorities, please click [here](#).

EU/Internal market: Additional transition period of six months for Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) migration

On 9 January 2014, the European Commission published a proposal introducing an extra transition period of six months during which payments which differ from the SEPA format can still be accepted in order to guarantee minimal disruption for consumers and businesses. Additional time is particularly foreseen for those payment services users who are yet to migrate, but the official deadline for migration remains 1 February 2014. Payments that differ from a SEPA format could continue to be accepted until 1 August 2014.

To access more information about the SEPA, please click [here](#).

To read the proposal on the migration to Union-wide credit transfers and direct debits, please read

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

13-16 January 2014 – European Parliament Plenary session

15 January 2014 – COREPER I and II



16 January 2014 – European Parliament committee meetings

17 January 2014 – COREPER I

20-23 January 2014 – European Parliament committee meetings

20 January 2014 – Meeting of Foreign Affairs Council

21 January 2014 – Meeting of General Affairs Council

22 January 2014 – COREPER I and II

23 January 2014 – COREPER II (poss.)

24 January 2014 – COREPER I

23-24 January 2014 – Informal meeting of ministers for Justice and Home Affairs

Other SME-related events:

Seminar on fostering resource efficiency improvements in SMEs

15 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium

ESBA is invited to attend a seminar organized by the European Commission on fostering resource efficiency improvements in SMEs in the light of the recommendations of the European Resource Efficiency Platform "Action for a resource efficient Europe" and the Commission work on a Green Action Plan for SMEs.

Information and Networking Days – HORIZON 2020 Work Programme 2014-2015

15-16 January 2014

Luxembourg

The European Commission is organizing the Information and Networking Days for the people interested in the possibilities offered by the Horizon 2020 programme.

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

Business Breakfast: business priorities of the Greek Presidency of the EU

16 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium

ESBA is invited to attend a business breakfast organized by Eurochambres in cooperation with the Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and Industry, focused on the business-related priorities of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU.

HORIZON 2020 – Web Entrepreneurship's community building webinar

16 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium



The European Commission is organising a Community Building Webinar for active players of the start-up ecosystem to raise awareness on the HORIZON 2020 Web Entrepreneurship Specific Challenge.

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

2014: Economic and Financial Outlook

21 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium

ESBA is invited to attend a conference organized by the Hanns Seidel Foundation focused on the economic and financial outlook for 2014.

Business Breakfast: European Parliament 2014 elections with Philippe De Backer

(ALDE, Belgium)

22 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium

ESBA is invited to attend the EUROCHAMBRES European Parliament 2014 elections Business Breakfast event, opened by Philippe De Backer (ALDE, BE). It provides an opportunity to review the measures – legislative or otherwise - taken during the 2009-14 term in response to the financial and economic crisis.

Info Day on Innovation and Entrepreneurship support in H2020 Work Programme

24 January 2014

Brussels, Belgium

This event organized by the European Commission will introduce the two calls – the Open Disruptive Innovation Scheme and Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support – giving participants the chance to ask questions and providing time for networking.

MicroFinance and SME Banking – Successful International Models

12 June 2014

Maastrich, Netherlands

One day course organised by the University of Maastricht in which the challenges and issues regarding SME-banking will be discussed, together with an evaluation of the international models for Microfinance for SMEs.

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat: Industry



On 7 January 2014, Eurostat published a document comparing the Industrial Producers prices from November 2013 with October 2013, stating that they went down by 0.1% in both EU Member States and the Euro Area.

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

EU/Eurostat: Unemployment

Eurostat published on 8 January 2014 the EU and euro area unemployment rates for November 2013. The euro area seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 12.1% in November 2013, stable since April. The EU28 unemployment rate was 10.9%, stable since May. In both zones, the rates increased compared with November 2012.

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

EU/Eurostat: Retail trade

On 8 January 2014 Eurostat published that both the EU28 and the Euro Area volumes of retail trade went up by 1.2% and 1.4% respectively in November 2013.

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

EU/Eurostat: Inflation

On 7 January 2014, Eurostat stated that the Euro area annual inflation was expected to be 0.8% in December 2013, down from 0.9% in November, according to a flash estimate.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation

DEADLINE: 31/01/2014

This consultation is open to stakeholders and all those with an interest in enforcement of consumer rights across national borders within the Single Market. The EU has developed a solid set of rules on the consumers' economic interests to provide a level playing field to companies and equal consumer conditions to citizens in the single market.

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



Consultation on the draft Commission Evaluation Policy Guidelines

DEADLINE: 25/02/2014

The Commission Guidelines for Evaluation will be used by Commission services when they conduct evaluations of the performance and continued need for existing EU actions (e.g. financial programmes, legislative and policy measures).

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

Public consultation on information provided to consumers about characteristics of furniture products

DEADLINE: 04/03/2014

Information about specific furniture product characteristics, provided to consumers at the time of purchase, may be insufficient for them to compare between different furniture products sold on the EU market as a basis for informed choices.

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