



HEADLINES

ESBA/SEAP EVENT 2014: A TRANSLATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP: WHAT'S IN IT FOR SMES?

19 June 2014

12:15 – 17.30

Venue: AmCham EU

Avenue des Arts/Kunstlaan 53 | B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Arguably one of the most important deals for the European Union, a *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* with the US is currently being negotiated, making the trans-Atlantic market the largest free trade area in the world. But what does this mean for Europe's smallest businesses. Is it a good thing? Will the SME chapter be thorough enough? Or is it really for big business only and will SMEs draw the short end of the stick? These are the topics we wish to discuss with some of the key players in the negotiations.

Invitation and registration: [here](#)

IN BRIEF

EU/Access to finance: EUR 400M EIB loan agreement with BBVA

On 9 May, the European Investment Bank (EIB) reached an agreement with BBVA for a loan of EUR 400M for financing projects in the industrial and service sectors carried out primarily by SMEs (at least 70%), and mid-cap enterprises (up to 30%). BBVA will match the loan, bringing financing to a total of EUR 800M. The objective is to improve access to finance through long-term finance for those projects and credit lines on favourable terms in order to fund working capital requirements. Loans will be capped at EUR 25M for projects carried out by SMEs. Eligible projects will be mainly in Spain and 30% of funds are to be invested in convergence regions.

To read the project summary, please click [here](#).

EU/Commission: The UK's EU minister wants the next European Commissions' focus on the Digital Economy and Business.

European Small Business Alliance – Brussels Office

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On 13 May, speaking at a conference, David Lidington, the British EU minister, said that the next European commission should put all its focus on the Digital Economy and Business to help Europe get out of the financial crisis. Speaking about the UK's priorities for the next EU commission he said that they should refrain from launching a thousand new initiatives and instead should focus on pushing for what already works such as the internal market. He argued that "EU legislation ought to be looked at through the prism of a growth test. When amendments come forward, the question should be asked: 'Will this change add to jobs and foster growth?'" He said that the UK should continue what they do best and find allies who also interested in thorough liberalisation and the cutting of red-tape. The UK's focus would be on competitiveness, energy, addressing the EU's democratic deficit, reforming freedom of movement and finally designing a two speed Europe where the Eurozone could continue their deepening integration whilst the UK would be able to remain in the position they currently are in.

To read the complete speech click [here](#).

EU/Justice: The European Account Preservation Order advances.

On 13 May, the European Account Preservation Order was ratified in the General Affairs Council. This regulation intends to facilitate cross-border debt recovery for Businesses which often cannot afford lengthy judicial pursuits and have to abandon an estimated 600 million euros a year in cross border debt. The UK and Denmark have opt-outs but the other EU member states will have to abide by this regulation when it is published in the EU's Official Journal, around June, after the European parliament and the European Council both ratified the text into law on the 16th May. Johannes Hahn, replacing Viviane Redding during the EU elections declared "Every Euro counts: Small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of European economies, making up 99% of businesses in the EU. Around 1 million of them face problems with cross-border debts." Although this regulation only applies to cross-border cases and only allows for funds to be blocked on a creditor's bank account, this still allows time for a national judicial procedure to be completed without the debtor having time to move the funds elsewhere to avoid payment.

To read more about the European Account Preservation Order Regulation ratified by the European parliament and the Council click [here](#).

EU/Employment: The Council adopts the Executive Directive on Postal Workers

On 13 May 2014, the Council of Ministers adopted the Directive on postal workers, proposed in 2012 by the European Commission and approved by the Parliament in April. The directive aims at increasing the level of protection of "postal workers" – i.e. a person who, on behalf of his or her employer, is sent for a limited time to work in the territory of another EU Member State – as it imposes Member States to adopt legislation to ensure that a number of social rights being respected. The directive clarifies definitions, Member States responsibility to verify compliance and punish abuses, and it defines a number of requirements the employers have to comply with. Overall, as further harmonizing working conditions for posted workers, the directive should reduce the risks of social dumping by enterprises, while significantly bettering the conditions of sectors such as the construction one.

To read the 1996 Posting of Workers Directive, please click [here](#).

To read the approved text, please click [here](#).

EU/Trade: US oppose inclusion of financial services in T-TIP

On 15 May, EU Trade Commissioner, Karel De Gucht and US ambassador to the EU, Anthony Gardner clashed disagreed over financial services in T-TIP at a European Business Summit meeting. Anthony

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Gardner, US ambassador to the EU, re-iterated the US position that financial services should be excluded from negotiations over the EU-US free trade noting that the Dodd-Frank Act was progressing at a faster pace than its EU equivalent, the Basel banking standards. De Gucht answered that the EU would continue to push forward to translate agreed principles on financial services and refuted the Dodd-Frank act argument, claiming there is uncertainty surrounding the Act since many of its parts are currently subject to legal proceedings in several courts in the US.

For the event programme, please click [here](#).

For an account of the discussion, please click [here](#).

EU/Industry: Key Enabling Technologies Summit: KETs & European Industrial Renaissance

The Enterprise and Industry Directorate general of the European Commission organised on May 19th in Grenoble (France) a Key Enabling Technologies Summit (KET Summit) gathering European and local entrepreneurs together with Research Organisations. As a first concrete answer to the recommendations on Industrial Policy of the European Council in March, the KET Summit focused on the future challenges for the reindustrialisation of Europe by using the most innovative and strategic technologies. Key Enabling Technologies comprise micro- and nanoelectronics, advanced materials, industrial biotechnology, photonics, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing systems.

To read more on Key Enabling Technologies, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat: Industrial Production

On 14 May, Eurostat published its latest estimates on industrial production. The statistical office found that in March 2014 compared with February 2014, seasonally adjusted industrial production fell by 0.3% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.2% in the EU28. In February 2014, industrial production rose by 0.2% and 0.3% respectively. In March 2014 compared with March 2013, industrial production dropped by 0.1% in the euro area and increased by 0.5% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: Inflation

On 15 May, Eurostat reported that Euro area annual inflation was 0.7% in April 2014, up from 0.5% in March. A year earlier the rate was 1.2%. Monthly inflation was 0.2% in April 2014. European Union annual inflation was 0.8% in April 2014, up from 0.6% in March. A year earlier the rate was 1.4%. Monthly inflation was 0.1% in April 2014.

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

EU/Eurostat: Production

On 15 May, Eurostat published flash estimates indicating that seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.2% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.3% in the EU28 during the first quarter of 2014, compared with the previous quarter. In the fourth quarter of 2013, GDP grew by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.4% in the EU28. Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.9% in the euro area and by 1.4% in the EU28 in the first quarter of 2014, after +0.5% and +1.0% respectively in the previous quarter.

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

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EU/Eurostat: International Trade

On 16 May, Eurostat reported that its first estimate for the euro area (EA18) trade in goods balance with the rest of the world in March 2014 gave a 17.1 billion euro surplus, compared with +21.9 bn in March 2013. The February 2014 balance was +14.2 bn, compared with +9.8 bn in February 2013. In March 2014 compared with February 2014, seasonally adjusted exports fell by 0.5% and imports by 0.6%.

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

EU/Eurostat: Production in Construction

On 19 May, Eurostat released its latest estimates concerning production in construction. Estimates indicate that in March 2014 compared with February 2014, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector fell by 0.6% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.5% the EU28. In February 2014, production in construction rose by 0.4% and 0.5% respectively. In March 2014 compared with March 2013, production in construction increased by 5.2% in the euro area and by 5.3% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: Unemployment

On 19 May, Eurostat released its latest employment figures. The employment rate of the population aged 20 to 64 in the EU28 showed a clear pattern during the last decade: it rose steadily from 66.7% in 2002 to 70.3% in 2008, then fell with the financial crisis to 68.9%, and has since continuously decreased to 68.3% in 2013. The Europe 2020 strategy target is to have an employment rate of at least 75% in the EU28 by 2020. For the age group 55 to 64 in the EU28, the pattern is quite different: the employment rate has grown steadily from 38.1% in 2002 to reach 50.1% in 2013.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation on protection and enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights outside the EU

DEADLINE: 10/06/2014

The purpose of the survey is to gather information from those involved with and interested in IP rights in non EU countries, in order to build up a picture of the reality of IPR protection and enforcement in countries outside the EU.

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

Consultation on investment protection and investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement (TTIP)

DEADLINE: 21/06/2014

The proposed approach contains a series of innovative elements that the EU proposes using as the basis for the TTIP negotiations. The key issue is whether the EU's proposed approach for TTIP achieves the right balance between protecting investors and safeguarding the EU's right and ability to regulate in the public interest.

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

Consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy

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DEADLINE: 31/10/2014

The objective is to inform on the review of the Europe 2020 strategy and to seek stakeholders' views on its further development.

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

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: important dates

22-25 May 2014 - European Parliament Elections
23 May 2014 - COREPER I
26 May 2014 - Competitiveness Council
28 May 2014 - COREPER II
28 May 2014 - COREPER I
02 June 2014 - Commission presents 2014 country-specific Recommendations
04-05 June 2014 - G7 summit in Brussels
04 June 2014 - COREPER I/II
05-06 June 2014 - Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council
05-06 June 2014 - Justice and Home Affairs Council
11 June 2014 - COREPER I/II
12 June 2014 - Environmental Council
13 June 2014 - Transport, Telecommunications & Energy Council
16-17 June 2014 - Agriculture & Fisheries Council
17-18 June 2014 - COREPER II
18 June 2014 - COREPER I
19 June 2014 - Eurogroup
20 June 2014 - Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Other SME-related events

Horizon 2020 Proposal Development – From idea to proposal

27 May 2014

Webinar

This new webinar provides practical tips on developing a project proposal in response to H2020 calls. It will explain how to analyse the call and the work programme topic, what to pay attention to in the new templates, and what the evaluators will look for in proposals. Differences between FP7 and H2020 will be covered.

Addressing cybersecurity: the corporate perspective

5 June 2014

Brussels

Bruegel

As we become more reliant on modern technology, we also become more vulnerable to cyber-attacks such as corporate security breaches, spear phishing, and social media fraud. The challenge to understand cyber risk and deliver effective and accessible security becomes harder as technology continues to rapidly evolve and our systems become ever more complex. The panel will discuss these issues and address the following questions: what can companies and individuals do to address these threats and what role can and should policy makers play?

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NEW

Brussels Economic Forum 2014

10 June 2014

Brussels

The Brussels Economic Forum 2014 will debate how the EU and its Member States can support the nascent economic recovery and which lessons to draw from Europe's response to the crisis so far. While Europe is gradually returning to growth, the recovery is still fragile and employment figures are improving more slowly than desired. While the ground for a sustained recovery has been laid, now is the moment to critically examine all strategic options to keep shaping EU economic policy for growth and stability.

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