



HEADLINES

EU/Red Tape: Smart Regulation and REFIT should remain Commission priorities

The European Commission, and its current president José Manuel Barroso, are currently pushing through the proposal of new initiatives for simplification and the removal or repeal of existing proposals and legislation considered to be going against the smart regulation agenda, i.e. creating excessive and unnecessary regulatory burden. In this optic the Commission has issued a Smart regulation scoreboard. While the European Commission has, in consultation with the European Parliament and the European Council, withdrawn 53 proposals, including all REFIT proposals, Member States were reminded of their duty to implement EU decisions in a way as to ensure an optimal environment for business. Considering REFIT's "rolling" nature, new areas where simplification could be implemented have been highlighted, such as creating a one stop shop for information about VAT with an EU VAT web portal, simplifying travel and identity documents and creating a new framework for business statistics. On the other hand further repeals have been planned in the area of energy labelling, transport rates, the CAP, standardised reporting in the environment sector and finally more EU judicial cooperation. REFIT is also pushing for removal of outdated or unsupported legislation, which would mean an end to dossiers on aviation charges, investor compensation schemes, pregnant workers, and on a fund for oil-pollution compensation. Finally, it will be proposed that the High Level Groups for Better Regulation and Administrative Burdens be merged into one, with a mandate for its members to assess implementation of Smart Regulation on the ground in every Member State.

ESBA opinion:

The reduction of regulatory, administrative and compliance burden are at the core of the Smart Regulation Agenda and an absolute necessity for the recovery and advancement of Europe's small businesses. Moving the core elements of the agenda from the Commission Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry to the Commission's secretariat general has been an indicator of the importance of the agenda for the EU and the dedication to its success by Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso. ESBA reiterates the vital importance of the agenda for European SMEs and urges the new European Commission to treat the Smart Regulation the same urgency and prominence as the current Commission has done and to advance the reduction of red tape. Though the current Commission has made real progress on the Better Regulation agenda, much still remains to be done. SMEs are the key to European economic recovery and need to be at the top of every decision-makers list of priorities.

To Read about Smart Regulation please click [here](#)

To visit the REFIT website please click [here](#)

To read the detailed justification for withdrawals, please refer to annex IV [here](#)

ESBA/Integration: ESBA Welcomes new Bulgarian and Turkish members

On 20 June, during its Annual General Meeting, the European Small Business Alliance (ESBA) officially welcomed two new members; TOSYÖV from Turkey and the Bulgarian organisation AASME. TOSYÖV, established in 1989, as a non-party, non-profit foundation, supports the development of an

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economic structure based on free enterprise and assists the spread of private enterprise and free market economy practices in Turkey. It aims at answering the business issues and training needs of craftsmen and artisans, small and medium size enterprise owners. The organization will be represented by Dr. Fikret N. Üçcan, who has enjoyed a long standing career as a Turkish diplomat and has held many political roles, such as Under-Secretary of the Prime Ministry.

AASME, the Association for Supporting Small and Medium Business - United Business Clubs is a nongovernmental, civil organization, the establishment of which was provoked by the deteriorating business environment in Bulgaria, unpredictable economic situation, investment uncertainty, progression of "hidden" taxes, hindering business bureaucracy, ever-rising intercompany indebtedness, cumbersome and inefficient judicial system and the inability of SMEs to protect and defend their own interests. The association aims at cooperation of SMEs in coping with business hardships. The organization will be represented by Mr. Vesselin Halachev, an International Economic Relations specialist and serial entrepreneur. Mr Halachev is a devoted defender of SME interests in his country. ESBA is proud and pleased to welcome these new members and looks forward to a fruitful cooperation.

IN BRIEF

EU/Industry: Internet Portal aims to help SMEs trade outside of the European Union

On the 18th June, a newly launched SME internationalisation portal was dubbed to be a “one stop shop”, for SMEs wishing to trade internationally, by Antonio Tajani. The portal will help SMEs who are seeking to extend their trade outside of the European borders, and will provide them with information with how best to fulfil that endeavour. One of the main achievements of the portal is to link SMEs directly with public support services. SMEs can also directly filter the information they are seeking through various categories and filters such as country, type of export/import and language of the SME seeking help. The full array of public service providers is of 300 institutions delivering more than 1200 types of services. The program is set to become more comprehensive as more public services sign up. The portal is free, and Commission figures have already shown that SMEs grow at a rate 28% higher when helped by public services, thereby showcasing the attractiveness of the project.

To access the portal please click [here](#)

To read more about SME internationalisation please click [here](#)

EU/Single Market: Visa Europe supports the EU's wish for a European Integrated Payment's market, but warns over possible dangers.

On the 19th June, Visa Europe, although rejoicing over the arrival of a new parliament, warned that if the wrong decisions are taken on the topic of creating a European integrated Payment's market, the situation could become worst for consumers. Visa says that the revision of the Payment Services Directive and a new regulation on interchange fees, will both help create a more Competitive, secure and innovative environment for an integrated European Payment Market but they have identified four elements which could be problematic, the first of which is ensuring a level-playing field to ensure optimal competition which is unlikely to be achieved due to problems of applicability of rules between competitors. The second danger is for the Honour all cards system to be abandoned, this added to a reduction in interchange fees could make it difficult for the market to adapt to the change. Elements such as co-branding should not be forced by regulation; neither should brands be forced to choose certain partners. Finally, debit and credit card definitions have to be updated to ensure legal certainty and optimal allocation of investment by Payment providers.

To read Visa Europe's complete statement please click [here](#)

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To read more about the revision of the Payment Services Directive please click [here](#)

To read more about the proposal for a new regulation on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions please click [here](#)

EU/SMEs: Unleashing Europe's potential through mobilising up to €25 billion of finance for SMEs

On the 30th June, Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-President, announced that European SMEs would soon have the possibility to access additional finance of €25 billion under the COSME Programme (EU Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMALL AND Medium-sized Enterprises).

The COSME Programme will mobilise loans and equity for investments in Europe, fund guarantees and counter-guarantees as well as invest in equity funds that provide risk capital to SMEs in their development. It is evident that public support continues to play a crucial role in enhancing access to finance for SMEs. Indeed, the existing EU support measures have facilitated SME survival, development and success across the EU. Even more importantly, the new EU financing initiatives for SMEs will continue in the future" said Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship.

To read the interview with Antonio Tajani, please click [here](#)

To learn more about access to finance please click [here](#)

EU/Digital: New guidelines to help EU businesses use the cloud

On the 26th June, the European Commission presented a number of guidelines to help business users reduce their saving costs by getting the most out of cloud computing services which allows individuals, enterprises or public sector to cut by 10% to 20% their saving costs by carrying out data processing in remote data centres. These guidelines meant to increase trusts in cloud computing services have been enacted have been enacted by the Cloud Select Industry Group as part of the Commission's European Cloud Strategy, the first step towards standardised building blocks for Service Level Agreement terminology and metrics (SLA) which is very much by cloud users according a survey from Trusted Cloud Europe. "This is the first time cloud suppliers have agreed on common guidelines for service level agreements. I think small businesses in particular will benefit from having these guidelines at hand when searching for cloud services" said Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President.

To read the guidelines, please click [here](#)

To learn more about the European Cloud Computing Strategy, please click [here](#)

EU/TTIP: TTIP is a land of opportunity for small businesses

On the 19th June, David Caro, President of the European Small Business Alliance (ESBA) and EU and International Affairs Policy Chairman for the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) stressed that opening up markets on both sides of the Atlantic will generate a wealth of business opportunities. On a press release on June 19th at the occasion of an event organised by ESBA and SEAP to discuss the impact of TTIP on SMEs, he welcomed the inclusion on the scope of the Agreement a specific Small Business Chapter as a common ground for concrete smart regulation principles which will reduce the burden of legislation on small firms. David Caro wishes the agreement will be a great push for entrepreneurship with more people starting their own business and will reflect the ambitions of SMEs and provide them with the tools to succeed.

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On June 24th, the European Commissioner for Trade, Karel de Gucht, reassured the opponents to TTIP saying that multinational companies won't be given too much power by the EU-US bilateral trade agreement as criticism on TTIP is growing. The bone of contention is the dispute settlement mechanism that would allow multinationals to bully the EU's 28 governments into doing their bidding regardless of environmental and labour laws, which the United States and the European Union deny. De Gucht has the option of removing a dispute mechanism from the agreement, although he says the United States will not accept that.

To read David Caro (ESBA, FSB) Press release, please click [here](#)

To learn more about Investment Protection and Dispute Settlement in EU agreements, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat: Labour Costs

On the 17th of June; Eurostar reported that the annual growth in labour costs slowed to 0.9% in euro area and 1.2% in EU28. Hourly labour costs rose by 0.9% in the euro area (EA18) and by 1.2% in the EU28 in the first quarter of 2014, compared with the same quarter of the previous year. In the fourth quarter of 2013, hourly labour costs increased by 1.6% in the euro area and by 1.4% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: Construction

On the 18th June, Eurostat reported that production in construction was up by 0.8% in euro area. In April 2014 compared with March 2014, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector grew by 0.8% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.6% in the EU28. In March 2014, production in construction fell by 0.3% and 0.2% respectively. In April 2014 compared with April 2013, production in construction increased by 8.0% in the euro area and by 7.2% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: Foreign Direct Investment

On the 20th June, Eurostat reported that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the EU28 to the rest of the world reached 341 billion euro in 2013, while investment from the rest of the world into the EU28 was 327 bn. Investment from the euro area (EA18) to the rest of the world amounted to 324 bn, while investment from the rest of the world into the euro area was 299 bn.

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

EU/Eurostat: International Trade

On the 26th June, Eurostat reported that EU international trade in services had increased significantly in the last decade. EU exports of services to the rest of the world rose from €367 billion in 2004 to €684 bn in 2013, while imports increased from €321 bn to €511 bn. Since exports have risen more strongly than imports, the trade surplus has almost quadrupled between 2004 and 2013, from €45 bn to €173 bn.

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

EU/Eurostat: Inflation

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On the 30th June, Eurostat reported that Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 0.5% in June 2014, stable compared with May. Looking at the main components of euro area inflation, services is expected to have the highest annual rate in June (1.3%, compared with 1.1% in May), followed by energy (0.1%, compared with 0.0% in May), non-energy industrial goods (0.0%, stable compared with May) and food, alcohol & tobacco (-0.2%, compared with 0.1% in May).

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

EU/Eurostat: Unemployment

On the 1st of July, Eurostat released its latest employment figures. The euro area (EA18) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.6% in May 2014, stable compared with April 2014, but down from 12.0% in May 2013. The EU28 unemployment rate was 10.3% in May 2014, down from 10.4% in April 2014, and from 10.9% in May 2013. Eurostat estimates that 25.184 million men and women in the EU28, of whom 18.552 million were in the euro area, were unemployed in May 2014. Compared with April 2014, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 63 000 in the EU28 and by 28 000 in the euro area. Compared with May 2013, unemployment fell by 1.361 million in the EU28 and by 636 000 in the euro area.

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

EU/Eurostat: Industrial Producer Prices

On the 2nd of July Eurostat reported that In May 2014, compared with April 2014, industrial producer prices had fallen by 0.1% in both the euro area (EA18) and the EU28. In April prices also decreased by 0.1% in both zones. In May 2014, compared with May 2013, industrial producer prices decreased by 1.0% in the euro area and by 0.9% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: Retail Trade

On the 3rd of July, Eurostat reported that In May 2014 compared with April 2014, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade had remained stable in the euro area (EA18) and had fallen by 0.1% in the EU28. In April retail trade decreased by 0.2% in the euro area and rose by 0.2% in the EU28. In May 2014 compared with May 2013 the retail sales index increased by 0.7% in the euro area and by 1.2% in the EU28.

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

CONSULTATIONS

NEW

Consultation on the contributions of credit institutions to resolution financing arrangements

Deadline: 14/07/2014

Consultation to support the evaluation of the Implementation of the EU Ecolabel Regulation

DEADLINE: 18/07/2014

The purpose of the consultation is to collect views from stakeholders on the implementation of the EU Ecolabel Scheme. The EU Ecolabel Scheme is a voluntary environmental labelling scheme designed to promote products with reduced environmental impact and through this contribute to a more efficient use of resources and a higher level of environmental protection.

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

Consultation on transparency measures for nanomaterials on the market

DEADLINE: 05/08/2014

This public consultation is conducted in support of the impact assessment announced to be launched by the European Commission in its Communication on the Second Regulatory Review on Nanomaterials. Its objective is to obtain stakeholder views on the currently available information on nanomaterials on the market, the problem definition that forms the basis of the impact assessment, as well as the potential positive and/or negative impacts of the aforementioned policy options.

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

Consultation on the European Commission's strategy on CSR 2011-2014

DEADLINE: 15/08/2014

The aim of this public consultation is to seek feedback on the achievements, shortcomings and future challenges of the Commission's activities on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as outlined in the Commission's 2011 Communication on "A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility".

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

Consultation on Combined Transport

DEADLINE: 15/08/2014

The EC is undertaking this public consultation to gather information about the implementation of the CT Directive, as well as to assess whether a revision of the CT Directive would be desirable and, if so, what possible enhancements could be made in future revisions of Combined Transport policy.

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

Consultation on a Policy initiative on aviation safety and a possible revision of Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 on common rules in the field of civil aviation and establishing a European Aviation Safety Agency

DEADLINE: 15/08/2014

This online consultation aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the present EU aviation safety system as well as possibilities for improvement with regard to safety, competitiveness, environmental protection and quality of air services.

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

Consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy

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

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EU Institutions: important dates

7th July 2014: First Meeting of the Committees where they elect their chairs and co-chairs.

7th July 2014: Eurogroup Meeting

8th July 2014: Economic and Financial Affairs Council

10th July 2014: European Parliament Committee Meetings

14th July 2014: Agriculture and Fisheries Council

14-17th July 2014: European Parliament Plenary Session

14-17th July 2014: European Parliament Committee Meetings

16th July 2014: European Council Meeting

17th July 2014: Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Other SME-related events

NEW

How to kickstart investment in Europe

8 July 2014

Brussels

The Bruegel think tank is holding a conference about the importance of revamping investment in Europe. Given today's situation in the EU, there is a clear need for long-term investments not only to finance infrastructure, innovation, education and environmental projects, but also projects aimed at increasing competitiveness. Kickstarting investment and channeling excess savings (as shown by today's current account surpluses in Europe) to the right places in Europe is therefore a major challenge for policy makers

NEW

Overview of the IPR Landscape in Macao for EU SMEs

16 July 2014

Webinar

The European Commission is organising a webinar. This free, 45-minute webinar presentation and 15 minute Q&A session on Wednesday, 16 July 2014 at 10:30am Brussels time (9:30am London, 4:30pm China) will take you through a range of simple, cost-effective measures to develop your business in Macao and protect its intellectual property. Get valuable insights from our experts, and ask questions live throughout the webinar.

NEW

Alternative and Receivables Finance 2014: The new world of working capital finance and funding for SMEs

17 October 2014

London

This one day event for SMEs and financial intermediaries will attempt to give an overview of how invoice finance, asset based finance and supply chain finance can assist companies with their growth plans. The topics covered will also include how alternative finance platforms such as P2P lenders, invoice trading services and crowd funders are revolutionising the funding choices open to businesses.

For more information please click [here](#)