



HEADLINES

EU/Parliament: ESBA meets new and re-elected MEPs in Strasbourg

From 15-18 September, a delegation of ESBA representatives met with a large number of MEPs to discuss SME policy for the coming term. The main topics of discussion were the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the General data Protection Regulation. Both issues are of great importance to SMEs across Europe. TTIP has the potential to boost growth and competitiveness for European SMEs, but it is crucial that the SME chapter within the agreement will be well developed. Similarly, it is vital to consider the compliance burden the new data protection regulation can have on small companies if we are not carefully considering their needs. ESBA has urged MEPs not to make costly data protection officers and impact assessments are not made part of the lives of non-data driven small business owners. Small companies are struggling as it is, additional and unnecessary burdens must be avoided. ESBA welcomes President elect Mr. Juncker's plans of a first Vice-President, safeguarding the better regulation principles, as it shows that the European Commission is aware of the urgent need to alleviate administrative, regulatory and compliance burdens for SMEs.

IN BRIEF

EU/Competitiveness: Commission urges to boost the EU's competitive strengths

On 11 September, the European Commission published the 2014 European Competitiveness Report, which provides an annual assessment of EU industrial competitiveness. As highlighted in the report, the EU manufacturing sector still relies heavily on high-quality products and highly skilled workers. Policy actions should therefore address elements that are detrimental for firms' growth, such as public administration burdens and high energy costs. From a SMEs point of view, the report highlights the urgency of acquiring a stronger position in international markets, which can only be achieved through investments flows and support for innovation. The outcomes of the 2014 European Competitiveness Report will be discussed in the Competitiveness Council on 25-26 September 2014.

To read more about the report and to download a copy, please click [here](#).

EU/CETA: European Parliament expresses mixed feelings about CETA

On 16 September, a debate took place with trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The subject was the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Negotiations, which have been ongoing since May 2009, are now finished, however the deal still requires the consent of the European Parliament. During the debate Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) expressed mixed feelings about the agreement. They are excited about the opening of the Canadian public procurement market and the protection of 145 EU geographical indication marks. On the other hand, they are concerned about the investor-state-dispute-settlement (ISDS) clause. MEPs fear that multinationals will sue governments over legitimate policies which are in the public interest.

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To learn more about EU trade with Canada, please click [here](#).

EU/SMEs: European Commission launches SMEs programmes under Horizon 2020

On 18 September, the European Commission announced the first SMEs that will benefit from the SME instrument of the Horizon 2020 (H2020) programme. This new EU plan focuses on research and innovation as a means to support job development. As a result of H2020, projects from 155 SMEs will each receive €50,000 to finance feasibility studies for their ventures. This will help SMEs develop their activity and secure competitiveness in the market.

In addition to this general SME instrument worth €3 billion, the Commission released another programme under H2020 investing €90 million in SMEs, called the 'Open and Disruptive Innovation scheme' (ODI). The aim is to foster the development of innovative SMEs in the ICT sector with disruptive potential in terms of products, services, models, and markets.

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

To access the official page of the Open Disruptive Innovation scheme, please click [here](#).

EU/TTIP: European Parliament concerned about lack of transparency in TTIP

The European Parliament (EP) is demanding that policies and regulations regarding foreign trade should be clearly communicated to its trading partners and public legislators, before the final document will be made available to the general public. On 10 September, Fabio De Masi (MEP) stated that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is an affront to trade transparency. He thinks that the trade deal allows corporations to include their interests behind closed doors, thereby dodging public legislators. Among many concerns surrounding the EU-US and EU-Canada trade deals, the most controversial issue is the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clause. ISDS provisions allow foreign companies to bring actions against governments before arbitration panels, rather than going through the established courts. As a member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, Fabio De Masi advised the Commission to stop the secrecy behind TTIP and allow the participation of public legislators.

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

EU/Finance for SMEs: Lessons from Italy to bolster the economy

Sandro Gozi, a Member of the Parliament of Italy, raised the argument that the European Union ought to make its requirements for cutting public debt and budget deficits less strict. This comes after the Bank of Italy announced (on 9 September) that it would expand the range of properties and estates accepted as collateral to increase the possibilities of Italian banks to borrow from the European Central Bank. In brief, the financial measures aim to create incentives for banks to lend more money to SMEs. Of course, the decision is driven by the drastic reduction of bank lending to SMEs, as a consequence of the economic crisis. Many people call (like Gozi) on the European Union to follow similar steps than the ones in Italy, given the expected weak economic growth in the near and medium term.

If you would like to know more about financial programming provided by the European Central Bank, please click [here](#).

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EU/Data Protection: National Parliaments urge EU to act swiftly

On 22 September, members of 16 of the national parliamentary delegations adopted a joint declaration during an interparliamentary meeting in Paris. The core message sent is that they want the EU to quickly adopt the package on data protection. The delegations of Germany, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Romania, the United Kingdom, Slovakia and Sweden would like the reform on the protection of personal data to be adopted by 2015. The urgency arises from the fear that, if the EU does not impose its data protection standards on third countries, they will impose theirs on the EU.

To read more about data protection within the EU, please click [here](#).

To access the text adopted by the European Parliament at first reading, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

EU/Eurostat: "The EU in the world in thirteen statistical themes"

On 19 September, Eurostat released the latest version of "The EU in the world". This series compares the EU with the 15 non-EU G-20 members based on different statistical fields such as population and GDP.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Inflation"

On 19 September, Eurostat published the inflation rates for the August 2014. The Euro area annual inflation is stable at 0.4% and in the whole EU it is stable at 0.5%.

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

OECD & European Union: "Matching Economic Migration with Labour Market Needs"

On 18 September, the OECD and the EU published a study on labour market needs. This is the outcome of a three year research project conducted by the two organisations. The publication collects the papers presented at the conference "OECD-EU dialogue on mobility and international migration: matching economic migration with labour market needs" (Brussels, 24-25 February 2014), jointly organised by the OECD and EU.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Production in construction"

On 17 September, Eurostat reported that in July 2014 compared with June 2014, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector remained stable in both the euro area and the EU28. In June, it fell by 0.4% in the euro area and by 0.1% in the EU28.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Annual growth in labour costs up to 1.2% in both euro area and EU28"

On 16 September, Eurostat published the growth in labour costs for the second quarter of 2014. Compared with the second quarter of 2013, labour costs in the euro area and the EU28 rose by 1.2%.

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

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OECD: "OECD Economic Outlook, Interim Report September 2014"

On 16 September, the OECD released the Economic Outlook Interim Report for September 2014. This is an update to the report issued in May 2014 and revises the projections made then.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Euro area job vacancy rate stable at 1.7%"

On 16 September, Eurostat published the job vacancy rates for the euro area and the EU28 for the second quarter of 2014. Both rates remained the same when compared with the first quarter of 2014 but increased when compared with 2013 where they were 1.5%.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Industrial production"

On 12 September, Eurostat reported that in July 2014 compared with June 2014 seasonally adjusted industrial production rose by 1.0% in the euro area and by 0.7% in the EU28. That is a 2.2% increase in the euro area and a 2.0% increase in the EU28 when compared with 2013.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Employment"

On 12 September, Eurostat published the employment figures for the euro area and the EU28 for the second quarter of 2014. Compared with the first quarter, employment rose by 0.2% and by 0.3% respectively.

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

EU/Eurostat: "Trade balance"

On 5 September, Eurostat published the first estimate for the EU28 current account balance. The seasonally adjusted external current account will most likely have a surplus of € 12.0 billion in the second quarter of 2014. This is a decline compared with 2013 (€ 47.5 bn) and the first quarter of 2014 (€ 25.2 billion).

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

OECD: "Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2014: An OECD Scoreboard"

On 4 September, the OECD has published a study on access to finance for SMEs and entrepreneurs. This highlights the difficulties and problems for SMEs to secure financing by monitoring the developments in 31 countries. In addition it also states some of the policy responses by governments.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation on the revision of the Commission's Impact Assessment guidelines

DEADLINE: 30/09/2014

The Commission has committed to revise its Impact Assessment guidelines in 2014. These guidelines are intended for internal use in the Commission, but the objective of this consultation is to seek stakeholders' views on the draft revised guidelines.

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

Public consultation on more effective EU merger control

DEADLINE: 03/10/2014

The Commission is seeking views on possible improvements of the EU Merger Regulation contained in the White Paper "towards more effective merger control".

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

Consultation on the implementation of the Framework Regulation Integrating Business Statistics (FRIBS)

DEADLINE: 07/10/2014

The objective of this consultation is first to collect the views of businesses on issues regarding the supply of data for compiling business statistics. Additionally, they are seeking inputs from the users of business statistics on how better to match the statistics produced with user needs.

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

Public consultation on Horizon 2020 "Science with and for Society" Work Programme 2016-2017

DEADLINE: 12/10/2014

The objective of the Part V of Horizon 2020 "Science with and for Society" is: "to build effective cooperation between science and society, to recruit new talent for science, and to pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility".

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

Public consultation on a possible extension of geographical indication protection of the European Union to non-agricultural products

DEADLINE: 28/10/2014

This consultation aims to identify the current means of protection provided at national and EU level and the potential economic, social and cultural benefits that could be brought by improved Geographical Indication protection in the EU.

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](#).

Public consultation on the Evaluation of the Commercial Agents Directive (86/653/EEC)

DEADLINE: 31/10/2014

The objective of this consultation is to evaluate the functioning of the Commercial Agents Directive. As the first general evaluation it will assess whether the Directive remains fit-for-purpose in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, consistency and EU added value.

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

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Public consultation on cross-border mergers and divisions

DEADLINE: 01/12/2014

The objective of the consultation is to collect information, which would allow the Commission to assess the functioning of the existing EU legal framework for cross-border operations of companies and any potential need for changes in the current rules.

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

Public consultation on a strong European policy to support Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs 2015-2020 - Public consultation on the Small Business Act (SBA)

DEADLINE: 15/12/2014

The aim of this public consultation is to gather feed-back and ideas on how the Small Business Act for Europe should be revised to continue a strong European policy to support Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs in 2015-2020.

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

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: important dates

29 September - 7 October: Public hearings European Commission nominees

29th September: General Affairs Council Meeting

29th September-1st October: European Parliament Committee Meetings

6-7 October: European Parliament Committee Meetings

8-9 October: European Parliament Plenary Session

Other SME-related events

European SME Week

29 September - 5 October 2014

It takes place in 37 countries and therefore events and activities - will occur on a national, regional or local level, as close as possible to existing and potential entrepreneurs.

To find out more about European SME week, please click [here](#).

2014 SME Assembly

1 - 3 October 2014

Naples, Italy

The theme of the conference this year will be "Growth Through Enterprise: The Opportunities Ahead." As with previous years, the European Enterprise Promotion Awards Ceremony will be a key feature of the Assembly which will bring together SMEs; business organisations; European, national and regional government; academia and the media.

To find out more about the 2014 SME Assembly, please click [here](#).

NEW

KARIM Network : Think Innovative, Grow Responsible

2 October 2014

Brussels

Manage for today, lead for tomorrow - the success of every SME is built on this premise. Yet today's economic context coupled with growing global competition has made it all the more challenging for

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Europe's SMEs to survive let alone thrive. That's why the support network developed by KARIM, a EU initiative set up in North West Europe, has been so instrumental.

The KARIM Conference taking place on 2 October 2014 is inviting innovation enthusiasts and practitioners to come along for fresh insights into 'Responsible Innovation', a new philosophy that the EU is firmly supporting

To find out more about this event, please click [here](#).

NEW

Funding Opportunities for SMEs in Horizon 2020

6 October 2014

Berlin

The workshop will include practice-related sessions on proposal development, stakeholder engagement and on how to create sustainable partnerships to support SME innovation and to influence future EU strategies and H2020 programmes.

In a nutshell, this workshop will provide participants with the theoretical knowledge and hands-on practice necessary to understand the European funding landscape and the importance of impact and EU policy goals all across Horizon 2020 topics.

To find out more about this event & register, please click [here](#).