



IN BRIEF

EU/Finance: Commission and EIB launch fi-compass as part of Investment Plan

On 19 January 2015, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) introduced fi-compass, a platform for advice on financial instruments for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), such as the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund. The platform will assist public and private investors in finding investment projects by providing them with financial and technical support. Additionally, fi-compass will create more transparency for investors. The platform thus aims to meet the Investment Plan's objectives of mobilising and channelling investments, as well as tackling barriers to investment.

To read more about fi-compass, please click [here](#).

EU/Digital Agenda: The importance of self- and co-regulation in digital technologies

The digital sphere has great economic potential. Unleashing this potential however requires overcoming certain challenges such as access for all, skills, and cybersecurity. In order to involve the actors involved in the digital sphere, a model of self- and co-regulation has been created. Taking its roots in the Renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility, the European Commission established the Community of Practice (CoP). It brings together stakeholders wishing to promote, test and improve best practice principles for self- and co-regulation. This Community of Practice looks at the role of self- and co-regulation in addressing the challenges brought by new digital technologies.

To read more about the Commission's self- and co-regulation actions, please click [here](#).

EU/Trade: European Parliament debates recommendations for TTIP

On 21 January, the INTA Committee of the European Parliament held a discussion on its recommendations for the EU-US trade talks. These recommendations will reflect the changes in the assembly brought by the European elections, as well as the new public opinion towards the agreement. Mr Lange, INTA Committee Chairman, argued for a more inclusive and transparent TTIP, with more benefits for citizens. MEPs from the center-right, instead, called for basing the recommendations on a less defensive approach. May 2015 will be the likely date to vote on the final text. Meanwhile, German Minister for Development, Mr Müller, presented a study from ILO on TTIP's effects on the developing world. The European Commission largely agreed with its opinions. It affirmed the trade agreement will not negatively impact developing countries. Rather, the latter will gain from reducing non-trade barriers implied in the deal.

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

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EU/Finance: Latvia determined to realise Investment Plan during its Presidency

On 21 January 2015, the Latvian Minister for Finance, Mr Janis Reirs, during an exchange of views with the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Committee (ECON), expressed Latvia's determination to make the Investment Plan operational during its Presidency of the EU. To accomplish this goal, Reirs underlined the need for close cooperation and dialogue between all involved parties. Additionally, Reirs emphasised the Presidency's focus on overall economic growth, competitiveness, economic governance, financial market regulation, a banking union and tax policy.

To read more about the Investment Plan, please click [here](#).

EU/Payments: MIF Deal reached between European Parliament and Council

On 21 January 2015, the Council confirmed a deal reached with the European Parliament on the draft regulation on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions. Under the compromise agreed with the Parliament, for all credit card transactions, the cap is set at 0.3% of the value of the transaction, and at 0.2% for debit card transactions. Moreover, during the first five years following the date of application of the caps, Member States may allow payment services providers to apply a weighted average interchange fee equivalent to no more than 0.2% of the annual average transaction value of all debit card transactions.

To read the full final compromise text, please click [here](#).

EU/Finance: Private and public banks warn costs of FTT might outweigh its benefits

On 23 January 2015, four European banking federations united themselves against the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) in a letter to the eleven Finance Ministers of the participating Member States. The letter is a response to France and Austria's attempt a day earlier to break the deadlock by presenting a compromise in order to enforce the tax in 2016. The federations expressed their concerns about the damaging effects of the FTT on the internal market and European recovery as well as the lack of an extensive impact assessment. Additionally, the banking federations warned for increasing costs of borrowing for businesses in the EU.

To read more about the Financial Trade Tax, please click [here](#).

EU/Inter-Institutional Relations: Latvia set out objectives of its Council Presidency before EU Parliament committees

Spanning over three days, the new Latvian Presidency of the Council held discussions with Parliament's committees on its priorities for the next six months. On 19 January, Ministers in charge of the respective portfolios exchanged views with FEMM, CULT and AFET, while in the following day was the turn of their colleagues to follow suit in JURI, REGI and AFCO. Finally, on 21 January, the Presidency illustrated its goals in the Council before MEPs of ITRE, DEVE and IMCO, ENVI, INTA, EMPL and AGRI.

To read more about the Latvian Presidency, click [here](#).

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PUBLICATIONS

European Commission: Employment and Social Development in Europe 2014

On 15 January 2015, the European Commission published a report on the employment and social developments in Europe in 2014. Among other things, the report focusses on the impact of the recession.

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

World Economic Forum: The Future of Electricity

On 20 January 2015, the World Economic Forum published a report on transition in the energy sector, including the use of renewable energy sources in the EU. The report states that the European Union could have saved billions of euros had it invested in more suitable energy sources.

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

Friends of Europe: Rethinking Urban Mobility

On 19 January 2015, Friends of Europe published a report on revising urban mobility in the context of sustainable and green urban development. It scrutinises methods to improve sustainable development and focuses on the 2014 European Green Capital Copenhagen.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation on the review on the Working Time Directive (Directive 2003/88/EC)

DEADLINE: 15/03/2015

The main purpose of this consultation is to gather insights and contributions from the public in the context of the ongoing review and impact assessment process concerning the Working Time Directive and possible changes to the Directive.

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

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: important dates

02 February 2015: European Parliament Committee Meetings

05 February 2015: European Parliament Committee Meetings

09 February 2015: Foreign Affairs Council

09-12 February 2015: European Parliament Plenary Session

09-12 February 2015: European Parliament Committee Meetings

10 February 2015: General Affairs Council

12 February 2015: European Council

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Other SME-related events

The Sovereign Debt Crisis, the EU and Welfare State Reform

03/02/2015

Brussels

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) organises a symposium on 3 February 2015 about the sovereign debt crisis and its effects on European welfare state reform. During this symposium the forthcoming special issue of the journal Comparative European Politics will be discussed.

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

Reboot Europe: Is the Europe 2020 Strategy working and if not, how can we fix it?

03/02/2015

Brussels

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) organises an event on 3 February 2015 on the Europe 2020 Strategy and its results so far. Furthermore, it will discuss if the governance of Europe 2020 should be improved.

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

The Future of Audiovisual Media Services in Europe

05/02/2015

Brussels

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) organises an event on 5 February 2015 on the European Audiovisual Media Services Directive and related issues such as content and convergence, media plurality and diversity and independence of regulation.

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

The Future of Patents

10/02/2015

Brussels

Bruegel will host a debate on 10 February 2015 on the potential role of the patent system in stimulating investment and growth in Europe. During this debate the issues that investors, innovators and regulators face will be discussed.

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

Sovereign Debt Restructuring: Legal Framework and European Challenges

12/02/2015

Brussels

Bruegel organises a workshop on 12 February 2015 about the options for sovereign debt restructuring in the European Union. The workshop will additionally focus on Greece and the options regarding its sovereign debt.

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