



### HEADLINE

#### **EU/Digital: Ansip and Oettinger present the new Digital Single Market Strategy**

On 6 May 2015, Commissioners Andrus Ansip and Günther Oettinger presented the new Digital Single Market Strategy, one of the top priorities of the Juncker Commission. As a consequence of regulatory obstacles and 28 different legal regimes, citizens and businesses are not able to fully benefit from digital technologies and opportunities. The Strategy therefore aims to enhance access for both consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe. Furthermore, it aims to create the right conditions and level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish. Lastly, the Strategy should maximise the growth potential of the digital economy. The Digital Single Market Strategy contains 16 key actions that should tackle barriers to the digital economy by the end of 2016.

### ESBA OPINION

ESBA welcomes the strategy, as it is vital to the completion of the European Single Market. More and more small companies operate online and updating the regulatory environment was long overdue. ESBA is particularly pleased with the Commission's focus on the core issues of connectivity and skills as well as the simplification of contract law. Perhaps most importantly issues of VAT are finally being addressed. ESBA does have concerns about the implementation of the strategy. Previous efforts to ease cross-border trade, most notably the Services Directive have been less than successful. The current political landscape within the EU is even more strenuous than it was at the times of this Directive, yet the strategy can only succeed if all Member States are fully committed to its implementation. Therefore ESBA calls on the Commission but also on the Member States to ensure full implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy.

### IN BRIEF

#### **EU/Better Regulation: MEPs put their thoughts on REFIT's current achievements ahead of new better regulation package**

On 1 May 2015, Sajjad Karim (ECR, UK), shadow rapporteur on REFIT in the IMCO committee of the European Parliament, expressed his opinion on the state-of-the-art of the programme launched by the Commission in 2012. Assessing REFIT's effectiveness in removing administrative burdens for businesses and citizens and simplifying EU legislation, Mr. Karim highlighted the positive developments of more consistent and inclusive impact assessments, able to target now also EU secondary legislation, an aspect of the EU's policy-making traditionally deemed as opaque and hard to grasp. The MEP further pledged to see advancements on a European Stakeholder Forum to be tasked with pursuing a 25% administrative burden reduction target by 2020, an idea underpinned by IMCO in the frame of the Parliament's report on the state of play of REFIT, a dossier lead by JURI. Member of the latter committee, Angelika Niebler (EPP, DE), who covers the report for the EPP,

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expressed ideas on the programme on 4 May 2015. The German MEP emphasised the successes of the now-expired High Level Group on Administrative Burdens, which brought more than €33 billion in annual savings, and put the attention on the “Think Small First” principle at the basis of REFIT. In outlining the next challenges for better regulation at EU level, Ms. Niebler called for speeding up the negotiations on a new Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making as well as enhancing the independence of the Commission’s Impact Assessment Board.

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

### **EU/Trade: Malmström attempts to convince MEPs with new plan for ISDS**

On 6 May 2015, Commissioner Cecilia Malmström presented the plans for the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism to the INTA Committee of the European Parliament. Ms. Malmström underlined the value of investment protection and discussed the plan to set up a permanent international investment court and a multilateral appeal mechanism as part of this court. The ISDS mechanism has caused a lot of commotion on both sides of the Atlantic. While MEPs in general welcomed the proposal to create a permanent court, a lot of diverging opinions were voiced by the MEPs on other proposals. Some MEPs argued that the proposal does not go far enough. Ms. Malmström hopes to wrap up most of the technical issues during the July round of negotiation talks and to start the political bargaining on more difficult areas can begin in fall 2015.

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

### **EU/Digital: Data Protection Package not soon to become a reality**

On 6 May 2015, Jan Albrecht (Greens/EFA, DE) underlined the importance to update the legislation on data protection. However, the rapporteur for the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament is not convinced that a resolution on data protection will be adopted before the end of 2015. First of all, because even if the Council agrees on a negotiating position before June, the negotiations are likely to proceed slowly. Mr. Albrecht explained that the Council is heading in a completely different direction than the Parliament. Secondly, when the regulation is adopted, the question is how the regulation will be enforced. Mr. Albrecht stated that he has called on the Council to be tough on individual rights and sanctions, but also on consumer rights.

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

### **EU/Better Regulation: The Commission criticises the Parliament and the Council on REFIT**

On 30 April 2015, the European Commission urged the European Parliament and the Council to contribute more to realising the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT). Currently, the Parliament and the Council do not consider the impact of the amendments they make to proposals. The Commission therefore aims to form a new agreement with the co-legislators in order to facilitate the everyday life of European citizens, companies and society in general. REFIT will be the main focus of the Commission in the upcoming months. A new platform, presided by the Commission’s Vice-President Frans Timmermans, will be created to involve professionals from industry and civil society.

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

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### **EU/Trade: The US allows the EU access to TTIP negotiation texts**

On 29 April 2015, the US government finally met requests from the European Member States to provide access to TTIP negotiation texts in order to enhance the transparency of the negotiation talks. The US has agreed to open reading rooms at its embassies across the EU to allow MEPs and national representatives to be better informed about the negotiation process. Reading rooms were already set up in Brussels for a selected number of MEPs. However, the US refuses to make its negotiating positions on unresolved issues available. Instead, it has agreed to provide consolidated texts, which combine the EU's and US' positions once the agreement on an aspect of the trade talks has been reached.

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

### **EU/Digital: Digital Single Market requires the completion of the Single Market**

On 5 May 2015, Catherine Stihler MEP (S&D, UK) underlined that several barriers need to be tackled in order to complete the Digital Single Market. She furthermore stated that the current legislation requires an update, as the issue of accessibility barriers has existed for ten years already. The Commission published its Digital Single Market Strategy on 6 May 2015 and the European Parliament is currently taking its own steps to identify obstacles to the completion of the Digital Single Market. Ms. Stihler argued that in order for Europe to remain competitive, the fragmentation of both the Digital Single Market and the Single Market needs to be addressed. In her opinion, these two markets are the same and will need each other to realise their completion and potential.

To read more about the Digital Single Market, please click [here](#).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **CEPS: The Geostrategic Implications of TTIP**

On 20 April 2015, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) published a special report analysing the strategic principles that determine the necessity to establish transatlantic relations. Specifically, Daniel Hamilton and Steven Blockmans, the authors, investigate the geo-economic influence of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) on developing and poor countries.

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

### **World Economic Forum: Accelerating Emerging Capital Markets Development: Corporate Bond Markets**

On 20 April 2015, the World Economic Forum published a report examining the importance to have solid access to long-term capital from varied sources in order to generate economic development and a stable fiscal system. The author underlines the importance of effective corporate bond markets to enable economic prosperity.

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

### **Bruegel: Capital Markets Union: A vision for the long term**

On 24 April 2015, Bruegel published a policy brief aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the possible implications of the creation of the Capital Markets Union. Nicolas Véron and Guntram B. Wolff, the authors, call on the European Union to stay focused on a limited number of crucial

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reforms and to establish independent teams with the purpose to formulate proposals on the more complex topics, such as corporate credit information.

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

### **CER: Do the UK's European ties damage its prosperity?**

On 30 April 2015, the Centre for European Reform published a report on the impact of EU legislation on the United Kingdom. The report shows that the Eurosceptic claims that EU regulation and the protectionism of the other Member States hold back Britain's economy are invalid.

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

### **Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies: It's Our Job: Reforming Europe's Labour Markets**

On 4 May 2015, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies published a policy brief intended to investigate the creation of jobs in Europe. Unemployment is still considered a significant economic and social challenge for the European Union. The policy brief offers an analysis of the existing EU labour market and provides a set of recommendations to improve the situation.

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

## CONSULTATIONS

### **Public consultation on Building a Capital Markets Union**

DEADLINE: 13/05/2015

The purpose of the Green Paper is to consult all interested parties on the Commission's overall approach to putting in place the building blocks for CMU by 2019, the underlying economic rationale of CMU, and on possible measures which could be taken to achieve this objective.

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

### **Public consultation on the Review of the Prospectus Directive**

DEADLINE: 13/05/2015

The purpose of the consultation is to gather views on the functioning of the Prospectus Directive and the implementing legislation. The consultation covers a very broad range of issues, including the possibility to make the regime more appropriate for small and medium-sized enterprises and companies with reduced market capitalization.

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

### **Public consultation on Securitization**

DEADLINE: 13/05/2015

This consultation aims to gather information and views from stakeholders on the current functioning of European securitization markets and how the EU legal framework can be improved to create a sustainable market for high-quality securitization.

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

### **Public consultation on the ex-post evaluation of the 7th Framework Programme**

DEADLINE: 22/05/2015

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This consultation has been set-up in order to provide the High Level Expert Group on the ex-post evaluation of 7th Framework Programme (FP7) with a range of opinion and views about the functioning, achievements, and impacts of FP7. It thus allows for contributions both from those with direct experience with the FP7 as well as groups or individuals who wish to give their views.

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

### **Public consultation on a Review of customs legislation on controls of cash entering or leaving the EU**

DEADLINE: 01/06/2015

The objective of this consultation is to gain stakeholder and public input regarding a review of Regulation 1889/2005 “on controls of cash entering or leaving the Community”. In order to judge the desirability of potential actions and policy options and to obtain new insights, the Commission Services would like to receive the views of stakeholders on the possible action to be taken to address the identified gaps.

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

### **Public consultation on remedies in the field of public procurement**

DEADLINE: 20/07/2015

The aim of this consultation is evaluating the effectiveness of the Directive 2007/66/EC on remedies in the field of public procurement. The latter puts in place provisions improving the quality and reducing the time needed for reviews of decisions taken by contracting authorities or contracting entities, in particular when these have infringed EU public procurement law.

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

### **Public consultation on cross-border parcel delivery**

DEADLINE: 29/07/2015

The aim of this consultation is to consult all interested parties on the main issues and possible areas of improvement for cross-border delivery services when sending packets and parcels across the EU.

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

## **COMING-UP**

### **EU Institutions: important dates**

11 May 2015	European Parliament Committee Meetings
11 May 2015	Eurogroup
11-12 May 2015	Agriculture and Fisheries Council
12 May 2015	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
13 May 2015	Coreper I and II
18 May 2015	Foreign Affairs Council
18-19 May 2015	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council
18-21 May 2015	European Parliament Plenary Session
18-21 May 2015	European Parliament Committee Meetings
19 May 2015	General Affairs Council
19 May 2015	Commission to adopt the Better Regulation Package
20 May 2015	Coreper I and II
22 May 2015	Coreper I and II

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### Other SME-related events

#### **European Data Protection Law: Recent Developments**

**11-12/05/2015**

Brussels, Belgium

The Academy of European Law (ERA) hosts a seminar on the EU's most important trends in the field of data protection. Several legal experts will discuss issues such as the draft General Data Protection Regulation, the EU-US Data Protection Agreement, as well as the potential effects of recent judgements of the European Court of Justice.

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

#### **The General Data Protection Regulation - Issues for the Trilogue**

**13/05/2015**

Brussels, Belgium

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), in cooperation with TechUK and the Coalition for the Digital Economy (COADEC), organises a seminar on the General Data Protection Regulation. The speakers will identify the main issues to be discussed during the trilogue. Furthermore, the seminar will focus on data protection issues faced by SMEs and start-ups.

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

#### **Maximising the Capital Market Opportunity for SMEs and Start-ups**

**26/05/2015**

Brussels, Belgium

ACCA and Barclays, in collaboration with UEAPME and EGIAN, host a debate on capital market opportunities for SMEs and start-ups. A panel of experts will focus on integrating capital markets and improving access to finance for SMEs and start-ups. The discussion will focus on securitisation, standardised accounting rules and changes to the prospectus directive.

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

#### **Growing a Sustainable EU Economy through SMEs: Boosting Jobs, Growth and Entrepreneurship**

**27/05/2015**

Brussels, Belgium

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) organises the GreenEcoNet Annual Conference on the contribution of SMEs to a sustainable European economy. A panel of policy, research and business experts will, among others, discuss the potential of SMEs to develop green jobs and growth by a more efficient use of resources.

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

#### **Internationalisation of SMEs: Improving Access to Markets for Green SMEs**

**27/05/2015**

Brussels, Belgium

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) hosts the GreenEcoNet Thematic Workshop which will focus on access to international markets for green SMEs. The workshop will address the main challenges faced by SMEs on internal market and how policies could help them integrate into global value chains.

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