



IN BRIEF

EU/Digital: Commission starts consultation on geo-blocking

On 27 August 2015, the European Commission launched a public consultation into the 1993 Satellite and Cable Directive. This consultation is seen as an important step towards a review of existing copyright law for online audiovisual content and services and as an essential part of the Digital Single Market Strategy. The consultation will seek to measure public opinion on the issue of geo-blocking. Geo-blocking refers to the practice of content being available in certain member states, but blocked in other member states. This is done usually so that copyright can be sold to multiple right holders across a region. The 1993 directive leaves the domain of geo-blocking and content copyright up to member states. In order to create a borderless Digital Single Market, the Commission wants to create a more collective approach and ultimately end geo-blocking.

For more on the consultation on geo-blocking, please click [here](#).

EU/Single Market: Migration crisis disrupts Intra-EU Trade

On 31 August 2015, businesses started to feel the impact of Europe's migration crisis, with many facing disruption due to queues, spot-checks and stowaways. For the road haulage industry in particular, which is an industry built on just-in-time logistics, these disruptions have resulted in substantial and demonstrable losses. For example, in one case a load of high-grade steel plate was written off completely because migrants had got into the trailer. Those in the industry are, however, far more concerned about governments stepping up border controls and scrapping the Schengen agreement. According to the head of Poland's Association of International Road Transport Carriers, "suspending the free flow of people within the EU would definitely boost nationalistic tendencies, tendencies to close national markets, and that would limit international road transport, and have a really negative impact on the industry".

For more on the European Single Market, please click [here](#).

EU/Digital: The importance of Big Data

On 1 September 2015, the former head of DG connect Robert Madelin declared that big data is "here forever and in all sectors". Madelin is now the Senior Adviser for innovation at the European Political Strategy Centre. He has a strong belief in the impact big data will have across all industries, stating that "I don't think that anyone would dispute that the notion of data and data analytics taken together is here forever and in all sectors". On the issue of privacy concerns associated with big data and the digital market, Madelin argued that many of these issues are simply overstated. He suggested that a lot of big data was not of a personal nature, but instead either anonymised or a-personal. Furthermore, he added that any data that is personal will fall under the upcoming Data

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Protection act. Finally, Madelin is keen to continue the ethical debate on the sharing of health based information, which he feels if harnessed well, could have a positive scientific impact.

For more on big data, please click [here](#).

EU/UK: Number of contracts that do not guarantee a minimum number of hours up by 19%

On 2 September 2015, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the United Kingdom reported that the amount of people on zero hours contracts in the UK has increased by about one fifth in the last year. According to the ONS these workers are most likely to be working in the hotels and leisure industries. Following not far behind are the education and healthcare sectors. Unions have claimed that this is merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of employees working on contracts which leave them uncertain about how much they will be working week to week. There are also fears that a minimum wage increase will drive more employers to use similar contracts. The Institute for Economic Affairs, a free market think tank, has expressed the opinion that zero hour contracts are neither to be surprised nor concerned about as they suit many employers and more importantly, they suit many employees.

For more on zero hour contracts in the UK, please click [here](#).

EU/Finance: Differing national regimes will hinder Capital Markets Union

On 3 September 2015, Wim Mijs, Chief Executive Officer at the European Banking Federation (EBF) argued that the European Commission’s plan to create a Capital Markets Union (CMU) would be obstructed by the 28 different national tax regimes, bankruptcy legislation and accounting standards. The Commission presented the plan in February to fuel growth, strengthen the single market and to increase access to finance for SMEs. The currently divided capital markets would need to be closely connected to avoid exacerbating the weak spots in the European financial framework. The current lack of stability, predictability, legal certainty and coherence creates obstacles to investment, especially for SMEs. Mijs warns that the European Commission needs to address these differing national regimes in its Action Plan, and cannot postpone them.

For more on the Capital Markets Union, please click [here](#).

EU/Finance: Capital Markets Union to enable market-based financing

On 3 September 2015, a European Commission document on the Capital Markets Union (CMU) demonstrated that the Commission plans to streamline national legislation and cut the costs of stock market listings. Most European businesses rely on banks to finance their growth. The CMU aims to raise more corporate funds for economic growth by removing barriers and enabling market-based financing. The document mentions plans to modernise prospectus, create a pan-European market for private pension products, and to win back trust from retail investors by improving EU rules on online sales of financial services. Radical and politically sensitive changes in, for example, the tax and insolvency regimes, would require unanimity at the European level. The Commission is still determined to realise minimum harmonisation of these regimes to reduce differences and strengthen the weaker regimes.

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For more on the Capital Markets Union, please click [here](#).

EU/NL: Dutch ONL introduces entrepreneur bank to diversify financing

On 10 September 2015, ESBA's Secretary General Patrick Gibbels attended the National Entrepreneurship Day (*Nationale Ondernemersdag*) organised by ONL in the Netherlands. It is the goal of ONL to listen to the difficulties faced by entrepreneurs and find solutions to their set problems. During the conference, Peter-Paul de Vries, CEO at Value8, stressed that the main obstacle to business growth is the restrained credit supply and the lack of investment by the banks to invest in SMEs. De Vries did, however, advocate that a solution to this problem could be to use private investment as a source of capital for SMEs. The highlight of the conference was the launch of a new bank for entrepreneurs (DNOB) by Hans Biesheuvel, co-founder of ONL. This bank uses its network to bring together supply and demand of capital and credit. As a result, the risks of business loans are carried by multiple lenders, the source of financing becomes more diversified, and credit can be issued faster.

EU/Trade: Mass demonstrations against the TTIP and CETA

On 10 October 2015, there will be a major demonstration in Berlin against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Over 50,000 demonstrators from more than 30 organisations are expected to gather in front of Berlin's central train station, with concerns ranging from the end of cultural diversity in Europe to so-called devastating effects the deals could have in developing countries. The event is a joint effort by "Stop TTIP and CETA", the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB), agricultural and consumer associations, as well as environmental, cultural and development organisations. Together, these organisations are voicing their concerns over the lack of transparency surrounding the negotiations, as well as condemning the agreements as a threat to the EU's consumer, environmental and social standards.

For more on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

CEPS: TTIP's Hard Core: Technical barriers to trade and standards

On 4 August 2015, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) published a paper on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. This paper provides an overview of the TBT chapter in TTIP and the various issues between the US and the EU in this area, which in turn requires extensive expositions of domestic regulation in the US and the EU. TBTs, outside heavily regulated sectors such as chemicals, automobiles or medicines, can be caused by divergent standards, technical regulations and conformity assessments.

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

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CEPS: Rule-Makers or Rule-Takers? Exploring the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

On 9 September 2015, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) published a book on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. In this book, European and US experts explain the economic context of TTIP and its geopolitical implications, and then explore the challenges and consequences of US-EU negotiations across numerous sensitive areas, ranging from food safety and public procurement to economic and regulatory assessments.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation on a new Energy Market Design

DEADLINE: 08/10/2015

The objective of this consultation is to seek stakeholder's views on the issues that may need to be addressed in such a redesign of the European electricity market. These issues include: (i) improvements to market functioning and investment signals; (ii) market integration of renewables; (iii) linking retail and wholesale markets (iv); reinforcing regional coordination of policy making, between system operators and of infrastructure investments; (v) the governance of the internal electricity market; and (vi) a European dimension to security of supply.

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

Public online consultation on the export control policy review (Regulation (EC) No 428/2009)

DEADLINE: 15/10/2015

The aim of the consultation is to collect stakeholder and public input regarding the review objectives and options, as outlined in Communication (2014)244, and their likely impact on the EU's export control policy. The Commission will utilise the results of the consultation to help it identify the most suitable regulatory and non-regulatory actions to put into effect and decide whether, and how, in a sensible, effective and efficient manner, to propose amendments to Regulation (EC) N° 428/2009.

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

Consultation on the review of the Intergovernmental Agreement Decision

DEADLINE: 22/10/2015

This consultation document serves as a basis for getting stakeholders' assessment of the IGA Decision and to identify what could be improved in the mechanism it establishes in order to increase transparency of such agreements and compatibility with EU energy security provisions.

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

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: important dates

14 September 2015

General Affairs Council

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14 September 2015	Extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council
14-15 September 2015	European Parliament Committee Meetings
16 September 2015	European Parliament Plenary Session
16 September 2015	Coreper I and Coreper II
16-17 September 2015	EESC Plenary Session
17 September 2015	European Parliament Committee Meetings
18 September 2015	Environment Council
21-23 September 2015	European Parliament Committee Meetings
23 September 2015	Coreper I and Coreper II
25 September 2015	Coreper I

Other SME-related events

The Politics of TTIP: Deal or No Deal?

17/09/2015

Brussels

On 17 September 2015, POLITICO organises a conference on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). In a discussion, senior EU and US policy makers will examine the overall politics of TTIP and in particular focus on health, technology and energy.

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

Corporate Tax Transparency: A necessary responsibility of global corporations

24/09/2015

Brussels

On 24 September 2015, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) organises a roundtable on Corporate Tax Transparency with MEP Philippe Lamberts (GREENS/EFA, BE). The roundtable is part of the launch of IE's International Executive Program on Government and Corporate Affairs.

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

Challenges for growth in Europe

28/09/2015

Berlin, Germany

On 28 September 2015, Bruegel organises a conference on stable growth and energy transition. Both topics are central to the Juncker Commission's plan to help Europe recover from the crisis.

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

From start-up to scale-up: Fuelling growth firms in Europe

29/09/2015

Brussels

On 29 September 2015, Bruegel organises an event on start-ups and their struggle to scale up. The purpose of the event is to have a dialogue between policy makers, practitioners and academics on scale up problems and solutions.

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

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Capital Markets Union Breakfast

01/10/2015

Brussels

On 1 October 2015, POLITICO organises a breakfast on the Capital Markets Union (CMU) with Commissioner Jonathan Hill. The CMU would break down the remaining barriers to the free flow of capital in the EU, and would make it easier for pension funds and insurance companies to invest in businesses.

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