



HEADLINES

Swedish Presidency Work Programme (SB)

On 1 July, during the official Swedish EU Presidency takeover, the new Presidency presented its Work Programme for the upcoming 6 months. Economic recovery and climate change will be high on the agenda culminating in a United Nations Summit in Copenhagen at the end of this year.

With unemployment still rising, attention will be directed towards developing a new strategy for the creation of growth and jobs, as the current strategy will conclude next year. To encourage sustainability and high quality in public finances, Sweden will play a coordinating role in the public finance sector throughout the European Union. To diminish pollution and revive economic activity in the Baltic Sea Region, the Presidency has developed a specific Baltic Sea Strategy. Other priorities of the Presidency include the promotion of a common asylum policy and increased EU cooperation on immigration issues.

If the Treaty of Lisbon will be ratified by all Member States, the implementation of the Treaty will be another important priority on the Swedish agenda.

ESBA OPINION

The European Small Business Alliance welcomes plans of the Swedish Presidency to give high priority to the areas of public finance as well as the creation of growth and jobs. The economic crisis is still prevalent and SMEs will have an ever more important role in getting our economy back on track. Issues such as late payments by institutions and businesses as well as access to finance remain significant obstacles for SMEs. ESBA encourages the Presidency to take clear actions on these fronts.

To read more about the priorities of the Swedish Presidency, please click [here](#)

IN BRIEF

EU/SME: New Commission SME training guide

On 3 July, the European Commission published a handbook, aimed at helping SMEs to fulfil their needs for training and skills. SMEs often lack the knowledge as well as the resources needed to facilitate the development of both staff and management. Offering guidance with regards to such issues as obtaining financial assistance for training purposes and overcoming institutional barriers, the handbook is set as a useful tool for obtaining the necessary training and skills development needed by SMEs to remain competitive in today's global economy. The guide devotes special attention to micro- and small businesses.

To download the guide and 50 best practice examples, please click [here](#)

EU/Consumer Policy: New system to alert consumers about unsafe products

On 3 July, Meglena Kuneva, Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, presented a new online system for the notification of dangerous consumer products on the EU market. The new "GPSD (General Product Safety Directive) Business Application" enables producers and distributors to notify Member States authorities about unsafe products on the EU market more quickly than before. Under the new system, businesses will be able to alert all Member States concerned at the same time in one step,

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making the system more cost- and time efficient. In contrast to the old system, whereby notifications had to be sent to each Member State separately, the new instrument allows for speedy processing of information and dissemination among Member States authorities.

To read more about the GPSD Business Application, please click [here](#)

EU/Financial policy: New Microfinance Programme for SMEs

On 2 July, the European Commission proposed a €100 million Microfinance Programme to provide credit to both existing small businesses and to aspiring small business owners who were rendered jobless due to the economic crisis. Microfinance, generally known as tiny loans to help people in developing countries set up their own businesses, has been winning popularity within the EU, as an increasing number of entrepreneurs face difficulties with regards to access to finance. Since the new financing facility is a joint effort of the Commission and international financial institutions, the EIB in particular, the initial sum €100 million is expected to leverage up to as much as €500 million in credits or 45.000 loans over a period of up to 8 years. The new 'Progress Microfinance Facility' is expected to come into effect in 2010

To learn more on the Microfinance Programme, please click [here](#)

EU/Entrepreneurship: European Enterprise Awards

On 13 May, the third series of European Enterprise Awards, as initiated by European Commission Vice-President Verheugen in 2005, has been awarded at the closing ceremony of the first European SME Week in Prague, in recognition of regional efforts in support of entrepreneurship. More than 350 entries consisting of national winners and runners up from across the Union plus Norway have been competing for the Awards. The Jury's Grand Prize went to the Scarborough Renaissance Partnership of the north-eastern English (UK) seaside town, a small place suffering heavy seasonal fluctuations in unemployment due to their strong dependence on tourism. The partnership managed to lower the rate of unemployment in winter time significantly.

To learn more about the awards or to register for the 2010 European Enterprise Awards, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

EIB/EC/ANIMA: “Euro-Mediterranean success stories”

The European Investment Bank, the European Commission and ANIMA Investment Network have accumulated a collection of business success stories from the Euro-Mediterranean region. The publication, presented to EU and Mediterranean finance ministers in Brussels in June of this year, aims to make a statement by demonstrating that cooperation in the region is already a reality, both economically and socially.

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

OECD: “OECD Factbook 2009. Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics”

Based on more than 100 indicators, the *OECD Factbook 2009* presents a rich pool of statistical data for all OECD member countries in a wide range of areas such as: population and migration, macroeconomic trends, economic globalisation, quality of life and a special focus chapter on inequality. The publication, aimed at professionals working on economic and policy issues, presents a definition for each indicator, provides comments on the comparability of the data, sheds light on the long-term trends related to the indicator and offers a list of references for further information on the indicator.

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

Eurostat: “Consumers in Europe”

The publication “Consumers in Europe”, published by Eurostat, comprises a rich set of data and useful information on consumer markets and consumer protection issues within the EU. It serves as a useful pool of information for policy-makers, representatives of organisations, public authorities and suppliers of goods and services to access the most relevant and practical information for the development of EU consumer policies.

To download the full publication, please click [here](#)

Eurostat: “Taxation trends in the European Union – Data for the EU Member States and Norway

The report “Taxation trends in the European Union – Data for the EU Member States and Norway”, published by Eurostat, provides a comprehensive statistical and economic analysis of the different tax systems of the Member States of the European Union and Norway. Presented in a unified statistical system, the data allow for a comparison of various tax systems in the 28 countries covered.

To download the full publication and, please click [here](#)

CONSULTATIONS

NEW:

Online consultation on design in European innovation policy

The European Commission has launched a public consultation, centering around its staff working document on Design as a driver of user-centred innovation. The aim of the consultation is to find out whether the EU should do more in terms of design and, if positive, what. The questionnaire, which will take up a maximum of 90 minutes to complete, has been made available online and is divided into three sections: identification, key-, and specific questions. Furthermore a distinction is made between organizations and private persons.

To learn more about this public consultation, please click: [here](#)

COMING UP

EU Institutions: Important dates

Other SME related events

13-15 July: In the run-up to the Copenhagen meetings in December, crucial issues will be discussed at an informal workshop on Climate Change held by the Swedish Presidency.

To learn more about the workshop, please click:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/7/13/climate_workshop

23-24 July: The Swedish Presidency is organising an informal meeting of Energy Ministers to discuss the coordination of policy agendas on climate change, energy efficiency, innovation and competitiveness.

To learn more about the meeting, please click:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/7/23/informal_meeting_of_energy_ministers

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24-25 July: Back-to-back with the meeting of Energy Ministers the EU Environment Ministers will come to Brussels to discuss the realisation of an eco-efficient economy.

To learn more about the meeting, please click:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/7/24/informal_meeting_of_environment_ministers

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