



HEADLINES

EU/Taxation: The Commission plans to introduce an EU-wide carbon tax

On 4 November, a high-ranking European Commission official from DG Taxud, responsible for taxation and customs union, announced the Commission's plans to introduce an EU-wide carbon tax. The Commission intends to review the 2003 Energy Taxation Directive with the aim of introducing a CO₂-related element to the existing taxation of energy products and electricity. The proposal is currently in its draft version, and is expected to be finalised early next year by the new Commission. The main aim of the proposal is to address those sectors not currently covered by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, such as transport, agriculture and buildings.

According to the Commission, putting a carbon price should result in emission reductions in these areas. Equally, the Commission is of the opinion that introducing pan-European taxation is imperative in order to avoid distortions in the Internal Market and carbon leakage. The current draft sets the possible tax rate on motor and heating fuels to be in the range of 0,01 and 0,03 EUR/kg of CO₂ with the year 2013 set as the implementation deadline. The Commission hopes that the introduction of carbon taxation will help meeting the emission reduction target of 20% by 2020, as well as stimulating extra revenue to address the climate change issue.

To access the existing Energy Taxation Directive, please click:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:283:0051:0070:EN:PDF>

IN BRIEF

EU / European Council: EU leaders discuss Lisbon and Copenhagen

On 29 and 30 October, the European Council convened in Brussels for its regular EU summit. The EU heads of State and Government emphasised the need to complete the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in order for it to enter into force and ensure institutional clarity for the European Union. The European Council also ascertained its position with regard to the international climate change negotiations to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. In particular, it agreed to the ambitious reduction targets of 80-95% by 2050 and to the need to provide EUR 100 billion annually to the developing countries for mitigation and adaptation measures. Equally, the Council discussed the economic, financial and employment situation in the Union, highlighting the urgency of ensuring secure and sustainable economic recovery and strengthening the financial services supervision framework.

To access the Presidency conclusion, please click [here](#)

EU/Lisbon Treaty: Czech President Vaclav Klaus is the last to sign the Lisbon Treaty

On 3 November, Czech President Vaclav Klaus finally attached his signature to the Lisbon Treaty, after the Czech court ruled earlier that it was compatible with the State Constitution. As a pre-condition for his consent, President Klaus secured the exemption for his country from the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Treaty. The document will now officially enter force on 1 December 2009. Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, whose country is currently holding the rotating EU Presidency, is expected to call an extraordinary summit of the EU leaders in November to come to a

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decision as regards who will become the first EU President and the first High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security.

Equally, the British Conservative party leader David Cameron has ruled out holding a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, preferring to secure certain opt-outs on key policies instead. The new EU Treaty is expected to streamline the decision-making in the EU, which expanded to 27 Member States in the past decade. In particular, it will extend the co-decision procedure to numerous policy areas, giving the European Parliament a greater weight with regard to EU legislature.

To access the text of the Lisbon Treaty, please click [here](#)

EU/Eco-innovation: Enterprises face difficulties to obtain eco-funding

On 22 October, European Union businesses, during a conference in Brussels, voiced their concerns with regard to a considerable difficulty to obtain funding for eco-innovation projects. While the EU eco-innovation funding scheme was established to support innovative products and technologies that European enterprises would otherwise find burdensome to finance, in reality banks are lacking technological expertise to approve such projects. Equally, securing funding for the projects without the so-called 'sexy patent', such as investments into energy efficiency and electric grids, is proving similarly difficult for SMEs. An initiative to launch a network of European experts in order to facilitate access to eco-innovation funding for SMEs was suggested as a solution to the problem.

To read more on the EU Eco-innovation funding scheme, please click [here](#)

EU/eBusiness: the Commission launches the SME eBusiness Guide

On 27 October, the European Commission launched a new virtual tool called 'eBusiness Guide for SMEs: eBusiness software and services in the European Market'. The aim of this service is to provide advice to SMEs with regard to their eBusiness capabilities and useful ICT know-how. The European Commission ensured that the new guide is easily accessible and utilizable on an EU-wide level. The new service is free of charge.

To access the eBusiness Guide for SMEs, please click [here](#)

Publications

OECD: "IEA Scoreboard 2009"

The new OECD Publication presents a comparison of OECD member countries' attainments with regard to various energy security and efficiency issues. It is published in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and is therefore divided into 35 themes covering subjects from costs to diversification.

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

CEPS: "Investigating diversity in the banking sector in Europe: the performance and role of savings banks"

The new publication from the Centre for European Policy Studies examines the advantages of varied banking systems, placing a particular emphasis on savings banks. It compares European countries where such banks are prominent (Germany, Spain, etc.) versus those where they are not (Belgium and Italy) and concludes that such banks present considerable economic and social benefits.

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

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Eurostat: “European business: facts and figures – 2009 edition”

The new Eurostat publication presents most recent available statistics with regard to structure, features and development of European business in a wide range of areas starting with energy and extractive industries and finishing with services and media. It considers a wide range of themes including employment, regional distribution and the role of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

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

Consultations

NEW:

Public consultation on the review of the Financial Regulation

Closes on 18 December 2009

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the review of the Financial Consultation with the aim of simplifying the financial rules and procedures as regards project funding by the EU budget. The Commission particularly welcomes contributions from EU funds recipients, NGOs and various public and private bodies.

To read more about the consultation and to access the questionnaire to be filled in by stakeholders, please click [here](#)

ONGOING:

Public consultation on Community innovation policy

Closes on 16 November 2009

The European Commission has launched an online consultation to explore new ways to address challenges for a better European innovation policy. The consultation seeks to follow-up the findings of the Commission Communication “Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world” and two previous consultations, one on the effectiveness of innovation support in Europe and one on design as driver of user-centered innovation.

To read more about the consultation and to access the questionnaire to be filled in by stakeholders, please click [here](#)

Online consultation on Administrative Burdens Reduction

The European Commission has launched an online consultation on the reduction of administrative burdens. Inspired by examples of Best Practice in Belgium and the Netherlands, the consultation invites entrepreneurs to identify unnecessary red tape in order to help the EU improve the quality of its legislation. The consultation is part of the Action Programme to reduce admin burdens on businesses in the EU by 25% in 2012.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

Ongoing

EU Institutions: Important dates

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| 10 November 2009 | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council in Brussels, Belgium |
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| 11-12 November 2009 | European Parliament convenes for its mini plenary session in Brussels, Belgium |
| 19 November 2009 | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council in Brussels, Belgium |
| 19-20 November 2009 | Meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels, Belgium |

Other SME related events

10-11 November: the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Swedish Government are organising a high-level conference entitled 'Growing together for a sustainable Europe' to take place in Gothenburg, Sweden. In the framework of the conference, decision-makers from all EU Member States will discuss their work on the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

To learn more about the event, please click:
<http://www.skl.se/artikel.asp?C=7803&A=60315>

16-17 November: the Swedish Government is organising the Third Equality Summit to take place in Stockholm, Sweden. The event will bring together main stakeholders and address the development of effective policies with regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting the equality of rights and opportunities.

To learn more about the event, please click:
http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/11/16/equality_summit

17-18 November: Forum Europe is organising the First e-Commerce Pathway event to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The event is designed to serve as a meeting platform for all stakeholders working in electronic commerce.

To learn more about the event, please click:
<http://www.ecommerce-conference.eu/>

18 November: the European Commission is organising a conference entitled 'Educating a New Generation of ICT Standards Professionals' which will take place in Brussels, Belgium. The aim of this public event is to provide information to all stakeholders involved in the ICT European Standardisation.

To learn more about the event, please click:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3555

19 November: CEN and CENELEC are organising an interactive seminar entitled 'SMEs and Standardisation' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The conference will look at the existing initiatives aimed at strengthening SMEs participation in the standardisation process and present the SME Standardisation Toolkit.

To learn more about the event, please click:
<http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/homepage.htm>

19 November: the European Commission is organising the debate entitled 'Towards a creative Europe: What role for creative industries?' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. At the centre of the debate will be the discussion on the economic and social merits of the creative industries.

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To learn more about the event, please click:

http://create2009.europa.eu/about_the_year/debates/7th_brussels_debate.html

20 November: the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, together with CEPIS and the e-Skills Industry Leadership Board, are organising the European e-Skills conference to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The conference will analyse the importance of ICT industry for the EU economy and look at the latest developments in the field.

To learn more about the event, please click:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3691

23-24 November: the European Commission is organising the conference 'Beyond the crisis: Design for a sustainable future' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. Set in the framework of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, the conference will look at current economic priorities taking sustainability issue into account.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://design-innovation.teamwork.fr/home.php>

9 December: The European Commission is organising the conference 'MACHINERY IN EUROPE, Perspectives and challenges for the European machinery industry' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The aim of the conference is to bring together various stakeholders and politicians in order to analyse current trends in the sector and discuss solutions for the future.

To learn more about the event, please click:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3522&lang=en