



## HEADLINES

### **EU/Lisbon Treaty: The die is cast: EU heads of state confirm two new EU top jobs**

On 19 November, the European Union Heads of State, after months of guesses and speculation, decided on the new EU President and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy under the freshly ratified Lisbon Treaty. Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy was chosen to become the first EU permanent President, with the current Trade Commissioner Baroness Catherine Ashton given the post of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs during an extraordinary summit convened by the Swedish Presidency.

Both politicians are not well known internationally, and the European Union is said to have compromised global visibility in exchange for chairmanship and consensus-building virtues. The new posts are created in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty, which will enter force on 1 December 2009. The EU president is set to chair EU summit meetings, while the High Representative for Foreign Affairs will represent the Union of 27 Member States internationally.

### ESBA Opinion

ESBA congratulates the new European Union President and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs on their new and challenging positions. The position of the first EU President is particularly challenging in context of the current economic environment. Being fully aware of the importance of SMEs in getting the EU economy back on track, Commission President José Manuel Barroso has pledged to make the reduction of administrative burdens for small business a “high political priority”. Considering Mr. van Rompuy’s past political experience as the Belgian Secretary of State for Finance and for Small and Medium Enterprises, ESBA is confident that the new EU President will share Commission President Barroso’s sentiments on the importance on SMEs, and that he will support the Commission in its efforts to create a healthy environment for Small and Medium Enterprises.

## IN BRIEF

### **EU/Employment: New report reveals impact of the crisis on the EU labour market**

On 23 November, the European Commission published the 2009 Employment in Europe Report, which revealed the ramifications of the current economic crisis on the European labour market. The employment contracted by 4.3 million jobs compared to 2008, with male, young, temporary and low-skilled workers being among the most affected. The report further highlighted the need for long-term structural reforms, since the current short-term incentives are proving neither sufficient nor sustainable. In addition, the report looks at two important European labour market aspects: job mobility and the implications of climate change. It concludes that long-term unemployment remains a significant hazard, whereas the move to a low-carbon economy will alter the EU labour market considerably. The Employment in Europe reports are published annually and constitute an essential part of the evaluation and reporting of the EU Jobs and Growth Strategy.

To read the 2009 Employment in Europe Report, please click [here](#)

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### **EU/Post-Lisbon Agenda: Commission presents its consultation document on the EU 2020 Strategy**

On 24 November, the European Commission published a Public Consultation on the Future 'EU 2020' Strategy, which sets out the key priorities to ensure that the European Union is leading the world as a knowledge-based, socially inclusive, green and prosperous economy. The first priority concerns growth based on knowledge, with the aim of boosting innovation by improving education, research and the digital economy of the EU. The second area focuses on empowering people by enhancing skills and entrepreneurship as well as fighting poverty and exclusion. The final priority centres around the concept of a competitive, connected and green economy, which would introduce a new approach to industrial policy based on sustainability and low-carbon technologies. Also, the document touches upon the exit strategy from the current crisis, the potential of the Single Market, the need for a greater role for the Member States, the European Parliament and all other stakeholders. The EU 2020 Strategy will replace the current Lisbon Strategy, due to expire next year, and is expected to be approved by spring 2010.

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

### **EU/Telecoms: Parliament strengthens consumers' rights in the EU telecommunications market**

On 24 November, the European Parliament voted in favour of the EU's telecoms reform package during its plenary session in Strasbourg. The new package is expected to enhance consumer choice with regard to the EU telecommunications market by stimulating competition. In addition, it is expected to improve the high-speed internet broadband coverage across the EU and provide European consumers with a considerable amount of new rights in the sphere of privacy and providers' selection. The telecoms reform package was proposed by the Commission in November 2007 and comprises 5 different EU Directives and a new Regulation establishing the European Body of Telecoms Regulators (BEREC).

To read the preliminary text of the EU's telecoms reform package, please click [here](#)

### **EU/Public Private Partnerships: Commission unveils its Communication**

On 19 November, the European Commission published its Communication on the enhancement of public private partnerships (PPPs) entitled 'Mobilising private and public investment for recovery and long-term structural change: developing Public Private Partnerships'. The Communication emphasises the importance of such partnerships in providing necessary investment and expertise given the ramifications of the current economic crisis on public finances. The document sets a more effective PPP framework by stimulating funding through the European Investment Bank and the European Funds and by enhancing innovation and best practice exchange.

To read the Commission communication, please click [here](#)

### **EU/Energy Efficiency: Parliament and Council reach two important compromises**

On 18 November, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers reached a political agreement with regard to the Commission's proposal on the energy efficiency of buildings. The proposal aims at strengthening energy performance of the construction sector, and the political agreement retains the essential elements, such as ensuring that all new buildings are nearly zero energy by 2020.

Equally, the Parliament and the Council reached a political consensus on the Labelling Directive, whereby its scope will be expanded to include all energy-related goods. Both Directives are vital in order for the European Union to meet its ambitious target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

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To access the Proposal for a Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings, please click [here](#)

To access the Proposal for a Directive on Energy Labelling, please click [here](#)

### **EU/Entrepreneurship: Committee of the Regions launches the ‘Entrepreneurial Award’**

In October, the Committee of the Regions launched the ‘European Entrepreneurial Region Award’ (EER), supported by DG Enterprise & Industry. The principal objective is to reward those European regions that have demonstrated an exceptional business perspective. Equally, it is expected that this award will stimulate policy-makers to better identify and meet the needs of SMEs. EER is in line with the ‘Think Small First’ principle, which forms the basis of the Small Business Act.

To read more about the European Entrepreneurial Region award, please click [here](#)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **World Bank: “World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change”**

This new publication from the World Bank examines the ramifications of climate change for global development. It considers such crucial topics as public policy responses to emerging climate threats, adaptation of land and water management, as well as food and energy provision. The report highlights the pressing urgency to confront these challenges.

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

### **European Commission: “INNO-Learning Platform Annual Report 2008-2009”**

The INNO-Learning Platform report, entitled “Working Towards More Effective Innovation Support in Europe” evaluates the activities of the INNO-Learning Platform (ILP), an initiative of the Commission Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, during years 2008 and 2009. Its objective is to emphasise the best practices with regard to innovation support across the European Union.

To download the INNO-Learning Platform report, please click [here](#)

### **OECD: “OECD Economic Outlook”**

This November 2009 issue of the by-annual OECD Economic Outlook publication analyses current economic developments and future forecasts for OECD and largest non-OECD countries up until 2011. The general economic data is supplemented by a special chapter focusing on the effects the current economic crisis had on the automobile industry.

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

### **OECD: “World Energy Outlook 2009”**

The new publication from the International Energy Agency, published by the OECD, analyses global trends and provides forecasts with regard to energy. The 2009 edition covers such topics as financing investments in energy necessary to fight climate change, analysis of the natural gas market and energy developments in Southeast Asia.

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

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## Consultations

### NEW:

#### **Public consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy**

*Closes on 15 January 2010*

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on its working document for the EU 2020 Strategy, which is to replace the current Lisbon Agenda due to expire next year.

The document focuses on prosperous, green and socially inclusive growth. All interested parties are invited to send their suggestions to [EU2020@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EU2020@ec.europa.eu).

To access the Commission working document and read more about the consultation, please click [here](#)

#### **Public consultation on the International Financial Reporting Standard for Small and Medium-sized Entities**

*Closes on 12 March 2010*

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the International Financial Reporting Standard for SMEs, with the aim of analysing the views of EU Stakeholders. The consultation is part of the review of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Company Law Directives by the Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services.

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

### ONGOING:

#### **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 Regulation 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 access the public consultation, please click: [here](#)

#### **Online consultation on administrative burdens reduction**

*Ongoing*

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](#)

## COMING UP

### EU Institutions: Important dates

**23 – 26 November 2009:** European Parliament convenes for its plenary session in Strasbourg, France

**30 November – 1 December 2009:** Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council in Brussels, Belgium

**2 December 2009:** Meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council in Brussels, Belgium

**3 – 4 December 2009:** Meeting of the Competitiveness Council in Brussels, Belgium

### Other SME related events

**2 December:** The European Engineering Industries Association is organising a dinner-debate entitled 'Managing a volatile trading environment' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The event will centre on the competitiveness aspects such as market access and commerce with regard to equipment suppliers.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://www.eu-nited.net/cms/index.php?idcat=92&idart=428>

**2 – 3 December:** The Värmland and West Sweden Region is organising the conference entitled 'Regional Innovation and Growth' to take place in Brussels, Belgium. The event aims at analysing best practices to enhance regional innovation and growth across the European Union.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://www.regionvarmland.se/index.asp?id=3479>

**7 – 8 December:** The European Institute of Public Administration is organising the seminar entitled 'Immigration within the EU, the Labour Market and Economic Growth' to take place in Maastricht, the Netherlands. The event will focus on the effects of global migration flows on the European labour market and growth.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://seminars.eipa.eu/en/activities09/show/&tid=3368>

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