



## HEADLINES

### **EU/ Enterprise: New Action Plan for sustainable consumption and production in Europe**

On 16 July, the European Commission published the “Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan”, a series of measures to improve the environmental performance of products, in particular their energy efficiency, and to increase the consumers’ awareness of and demand for more sustainable goods and production technologies.

The Commission’s plan sets out a list of voluntary and obligatory actions with the aim to provide a new framework for environmental product policy, to promote eco-friendly and leaner production, to contribute to sustainable consumption and production internationally and to show examples of gains in efficiency and cost reduction. The package of actions comprises a revision of the Ecodesign Directive, extending compulsory minimum Ecodesign requirements for ‘energy-using’ products to all ‘energy-related’ products such as water-using devices or windows, and setting minimum marketability standards. Besides, the measures foresee an extension of mandatory labelling of products as well as plans for the promotion of green public procurement.

### ESBA OPINION

ESBA generally supports to the Commission’s plans to reduce negative environmental impacts caused by current consumption and production patterns in the EU. Measures directed at the improvement of environmental performance of products have to be designed in such a way as not to put small businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Plans for a revision of the Ecodesign Directive as well as the introduction of compulsory minimum marketability standards could pose a potential threat to micro and small businesses and place them out of the market. ESBA urges the Commission to ‘Think small first’ when legislating. Rigorous application of this principle – in Brussels and at national level – will help entrepreneurs feel the tangible benefits of the EU’s SME policy and for progress to be made on objectives reach so far.

To read more about the Action Plan for sustainable consumption, production and industry, please click [here](#)

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### **EU/ EIT: Commission appoints EIT Governing Board**

On 30 July, the European Commission officially appointed the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The board will hold its first meeting on 15 September in Budapest, chosen recently to be the EIT headquarter. The 18 members of the Board are professionals from academia and industry. The Board is given the task of establishing ‘Knowledge and Innovation Communities’ (KICs), which will be the operational centres of the EIT. KICs will be based on an integrated public-private network and the newly appointed Board will decide on their location. KICs main mission will be to generate and disseminate new knowledge products and best practices in the innovation sector. The official launch of 2-3 KICs is foreseen for the end of 2009.

### ESBA OPINION

ESBA welcomes the progress in the process of the creation of the EIT. Close cooperation between the SME community and the EIT will be key to bridge the innovation gap between the EU and its

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major competitors and would contribute to the Lisbon Goals of increasing growth and jobs by linking research, education and innovation.

To read more about the EIT and to learn about the composition of the Board, please click [here](#)

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### IN BRIEF

#### **EU/ New industrial property rights strategy to protect innovative SMEs**

On 16 July, the European Commission adopted a Communication on a new industrial property rights strategy for Europe. Besides outlining the creation of a Community patent and an integrated patent jurisdiction, the Commission Communication sets out a list of measures to improve the quality of the industrial property rights system in Europe. In particular, the Communication aims to provide access to high-quality industrial property rights for all innovators, especially SMEs. In order to protect the industrial property rights and to fight against counterfeiting and piracy, the Commission aims to improve coordination between key enforcement actors at national level as well as to develop effective cooperation between Member States in the field of information exchange on counterfeited goods.

To read more about the Commission strategy on industrial property rights, please click [here](#)

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### PUBLICATIONS

#### **Eurostat: European Union Labor Force Survey-Annual results 2007**

The *Eurostat* publication presents annual averages of the main results of the EU Labour Force Survey for the EU-27 and for all Member States. Indicators presented in this publication are: employment rates, part-time employment as share of total employment, number of employed people broken down by economic activity and by occupation of the main job, average of hours usually worked by week, percentage of employees with limited duration contract, percentage of unemployed for 1 year and more, and youth unemployment ratio.

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

#### **SCALES-Initiative: Overcoming Resource-Constraints through Internationalization? An empirical Analysis of European SMEs**

Based on resource dependency theory and the model for entrepreneurial internationalization this paper investigates whether resource scarcities in terms of labor, finance and technology increase the likelihood for SMEs to aim to access or accumulate these specific resources through internationalization. The results indicate that perceived resource constraints in terms of labor and finance spur SMEs to undertake international activities with the aim to access or accumulate labor, respectively finance.

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

## CONSULTATIONS

### NEW:

#### **Online Consultation on post-2012 climate change agreement**

*Closes 29 September*

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the post – 2012 climate change agreement, which will replace the Kyoto Protocol. The consultation invites stakeholders to give their feedback on the ‘Bali Road Map’, including the mid-term emission reduction actions for developed countries, emission reduction actions for developing countries, adaptation to climate change, technology cooperation and finance.

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

### ONGOING:

#### **Online Consultation on Combating Late Payments in Commercial Transactions**

*Closes 31 August 2008*

The Commission has launched an online consultation on combating late payments in commercial transactions. Its aim is to explore possibilities to propose better and more effective rules to combat late payments between businesses or between public authorities and businesses within the EU. The questionnaire seeks to gather views from small businesses on problems with late payment under the current Directive 2000/35/EC on late payments, and on possible means of ensuring more timely payment in commercial transactions within the EU.

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

#### **Online consultation on Administrative Burdens Reduction**

*Closes 21 September 2008*

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

### **SME related events**

**8-10 September 2008** 5<sup>th</sup> EMN Annual Conference: “Microfinance – A tool for growth and employment in Europe”, taking place in Nice. The event is organized by the European Microfinance Network. For more information, please go to: [http://www.european-microfinance.org/nice\\_en.php](http://www.european-microfinance.org/nice_en.php)

**10-11 September 2008** Sixth Annual WIPO Forum on Intellectual Property and SMEs for Intellectual Property Offices and Other Relevant Institutions in the OECD Countries, organized by WIPO, taking place in Cardiff, Wales. For more information, please go to: [http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2008/smes\\_cwl\\_08/](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2008/smes_cwl_08/)

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- 15-16 September 2008** Conference on “Consolidating Research and Innovation for European SMEs”, Paris; organised by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union; for more information, please go to:  
[http://www.fp7.cz/dokums\\_raw/sme-days-2008-paris-908\\_2158.pdf](http://www.fp7.cz/dokums_raw/sme-days-2008-paris-908_2158.pdf)
- 18 September 2008** EU Finance Day for SMEs, organized by the European Commission, taking place in Berlin. For more information, please go to:  
<http://www.sme-finance-day.eu/>
- 25 September 2008** EU Finance Day for SMEs, organized by the European Commission, taking place in Stockholm. For more information, please go to:  
<http://www.sme-finance-day.eu/>
- 4-7 November 2008** 35<sup>th</sup> International Small Business Congress (ISBC 2008) & 31<sup>st</sup> Institute for Small Business & Entrepreneurship Conference (ISBE 2008), taking place in Belfast, Northern Ireland. For more information, please go to :  
[www.isbc2008.org](http://www.isbc2008.org) and [www.isbe2008.org](http://www.isbe2008.org)
- 6-14 Mai 2009** First European SME Week, organized by the European Commission. The SME week will run from 6 to 14 May 2009, it will be launched in Brussels on 6 May. For more information, please go to:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support\\_measures/smeweek2009/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/smeweek2009/index.htm)