



### HEADLINES

#### **ESBA/ Events: FSB and ESBA to launch campaign on cutting administrative burdens**

On 1 October, the UK Federation of Small Businesses, an ESBA member, will, with the support of the Alliance start a one-month campaign on cutting administrative burdens. Together with the European Commission's Vice-President Günter Verheugen, the FSB will launch a short film with the title "What would you do with 7 extra hours?" The viewing, followed by a reception, will take place at the West Midlands in Europe Office from 18:00 to 20:00.

This campaign represents a light-hearted reaction by the small business sector to the European Commission's Better Regulation initiative, which nevertheless carries a serious message. Research conducted by the FSB in the United Kingdom has revealed that small business entrepreneurs spend on average over seven hours each week filling in forms and reporting. As the movie shows, they consider this is time that could be spent more productively on job creation, innovation, skills development and training, supporting the local community and achieving a better work-life balance. The introductory film will be followed by a four-film series to be released weekly by email during October.

For more information and to register, please go to:  
[C5429/Coaching/Other\\_ESBA\\_Events/2007.aspx](http://C5429/Coaching/Other_ESBA_Events/2007.aspx) –

#### **EU/ Better Regulation: EP adopts own-initiative reports on Better Regulation in the EU**

During the Plenary Session, on 4 September, MEPs adopted four reports on Better Regulation in the EU. The package emphasised the need for plain and simple language while drafting EU laws, the importance of adequate impact assessments and the problem of ambiguity and ineffectiveness of "soft law". The four reports call for the full involvement of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission when new laws are being drafted.

The first Report on Better Regulation supports the process itself and presents possible solutions for more coherent and transparent EU law such as: simple language, "preventing gold plating", more accurate impact assessments and so called follow-up impact assessments. The second Report on Better Law Making 2005: Subsidiarity and Proportionality calls for wide-ranging consultations with stakeholders and use of the "do-nothing" option if necessary. The report welcomes in general the Commission's plans to reduce administrative burdens by 25% by 2012. The third report on Simplification of the Regulatory Environment welcomes the priority given by the Commission to simplification initiatives but calls on the Commission to include them in a specific part of its work programme and to monitor the law simplification process at Member State level. The final report on the Use of "Soft Law" calls for the deliberate use of "Soft Law" instruments.

#### **ESBA OPINION**

**ESBA welcomes the active role being played by the EP in the process of law simplification and MEPs' support for the Better Regulation Agenda. ESBA particularly backs the EP's call for comprehensive impact assessments and its calls for wide-ranging consultations with stakeholders,**

## ESBA Bulletin of 7 September 2007 – Volume 9 – Number 11

notably the small business community.. Effective, transparent and coherent EU law is a basis for a well functioning Internal Market and therefore disproportionate administrative burdens on SMEs should be reduced as soon as possible. ESBA considers that the commitment of all EU Institutions to the Better Regulation initiative is vital and that the EU agenda should not be undermined at national level.

To read more about the Better Regulation initiatives, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better\\_regulation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better_regulation/index_en.htm)

To read the Report on Better Regulation, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0363+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

To read the Report on Better Law Making 2005: Subsidiarity and Proportionality, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0364+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

To read the Report on Simplification of the regulatory environment, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0365+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

To read the Report on the use of soft law, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0366+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

### IN BRIEF

#### **EU/ Internal Market: EP adopts an own-initiative report on the Single Market Review**

On 4 September, MEPs adopted with 534 votes in favour an own initiative report by Jacques Toubon (EPP-ED) on the Single Market Review. This report presents the Parliament's vision of the Single European Market for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and refers at the same time to the Commission's report on the same topic that is expected to be presented to the European Council in December. The Parliament's report welcomes the Commission work thus far on the Single Market Review, but underlines that there is still a need for action in order to improve the smooth functioning of the Internal Market. The Commission's forthcoming and the Parliament's report on the Single Market are a reaction to the Commission Communication "A Citizens' Agenda - delivering results for Europe" published in May 2006.

#### **ESBA OPINION**

**ESBA welcomes the Parliament's own-initiative report but equally stresses the need for further improvement of the functioning of the Internal Market, to which SMEs are vital. ESBA supports the Parliament's call for further opening of network industries, in particular the energy sector, as well as its call on Member States to make a full use of the principle of mutual recognition in order to improve the free movement of goods.**

To read more about the Single Market Review, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/strategy/index\\_en.htm#consultation](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/strategy/index_en.htm#consultation)

To read the EP's own initiative report on the Review of the Single Market, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0367+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

#### **EU/ Internal Market: MEPs adopt a report on the Review of Consumer Acquis**

On 6 September, MEPs adopted an own-initiative report on the Green Paper on the Review of Consumer Acquis by Beatrice Patrie (PSE). The report comments on the Commission's Review of the Consumer Acquis, published in February 2007, which updates and creates coherence between the

## ESBA Bulletin of 7 September 2007 – Volume 9 – Number 11

eight existing consumer protection directives. The main aims of the review are: a high level of consumer protection, enterprise competitiveness and respect for the subsidiarity principle. In its report, the Parliament called for a high and comparable level of consumer protection between all Member States. The Parliament expressed its support for a mixed approach towards the review of Consumer Acquis, which involves the use of both horizontal sectoral instruments.

### ESBA OPINION

ESBA is engaged in an ongoing campaign on Rome I, which seeks to determine if the laws of the country in which the supplier or the consumer is based, apply to contractual agreements online. It has illustrated that, far from protecting consumers, legislative proposals in this field can in fact disadvantage individuals and SMEs, who act as both suppliers and consumers of goods and services. ESBA therefore calls on policy makers to recognise this important dual function in all new initiatives.

To see details of ESBA's campaign on Rome I, please go to:

[80725/EU\\_Advocacy/Current\\_Campaigns.aspx](http://80725/EU_Advocacy/Current_Campaigns.aspx)

To read the Green paper on the Review of the consumer acquis, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons\\_int/safe\\_shop/acquis/green-paper\\_cons\\_acquis\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/acquis/green-paper_cons_acquis_en.pdf)

To read the EP's own- initiative report on the Review of consumer acquis, please go to:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0383+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

### **EU/ Better Regulation: Commission calls for better implementation of Community Law**

On 6 September, the Commission adopted a series of proposals in the form of a Communication in order to improve the application of Community Law by Member States. This initiative was adopted in line with the Better Regulation agenda and aims to implement Community Law more effectively and to resolve complaints made by citizens and business more quickly. In its Communication, the Commission proposes the following improvements: more targeted preventative measures, improved information-provision and problem-solving, more efficient management of infringement cases and increased transparency. The Commission will therefore seek to be more efficient in making sure that EU law is properly applied by Member States.

### ESBA OPINION

ESBA supports all initiatives, which lead to the improvement of Community Law and its implementation. The main aim of EU Law is to serve the interest of EU citizens and businesses and therefore the Commission should ensure that the law is properly implemented and used at Member State Level. ESBA also welcomes Commission's willingness to resolve complaints made by citizens and business more quickly and to improve the management of infringement cases.

The text of the Communication will be soon published at the following website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better\\_regulation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/better_regulation/index_en.htm)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Financing Small Business: Recommendations for Action**

This summary publication by the European Commission presents the key conclusions of five reports that have reviewed both loan and equity finance and complements the conclusions on seed investment that were published in March 2007. It shows the best ways of improving the flow of finance to small firms according to the Commission, Member States and finance professionals.

To download the publication, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/financing/docs/profile\\_sheet\\_2007.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/financing/docs/profile_sheet_2007.pdf)

# ESBA Bulletin of 7 September 2007 – Volume 9 – Number 11

## CONSULTATIONS

### **Public consultation on Sustainable Industrial Policy**

On 30 July the Commission launched a public consultation on the action plans “Towards a sustainable industrial policy” and “Sustainable consumption and production”. The purpose of this consultation is to gather opinions on different policy options that will help to meet the goal of achieving a low carbon, resource and energy efficient economy. The consultation is open to the public and stakeholders.

You will find more information and access to the questionnaire at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=SurveySIPSCP>

*Closes 23 September 2007*

### **Public consultation on VAT-optional Reserve Charge Mechanism**

On 14 August the Commission launched a public consultation on VAT-optional reserve charge mechanism with an objective to ascertain the views and opinions of businesses on **additional costs and/or benefits** which the possible introduction of an optional reverse charge mechanism might cause for them. The consultation is based on a study assessing the expected impact of such an option on businesses.

You will find more information at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/common/consultations/tax/article\\_4209\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/article_4209_en.htm)

*Closes 15 October 2007*

### **Public consultation on Social Reality Stock-Taking**

The Commission launched a public consultation on the “social reality” of Europe today in terms of the nature of work, family life, demographic trends, social mobility, the position of women in the society, poverty and inequality. The role of the consultation is to generate debate on the social reality across Europe while seeking views on current social trends and on what contributes to today’s “well being”. It will invite views on access to education and employment as well as on the implications of changing social relationships.

You will find more information at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizens\\_agenda/social\\_reality\\_stocktaking/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizens_agenda/social_reality_stocktaking/index_en.htm)

*Closes 31 December 2007*

## COMING UP

### **EU Institutions: Important Dates**

10-13 September Parliamentary Committees

17-20 September Political Groups

13-14 September Portuguese Presidency Conference on Flexicurity, Lisbon

### **SME related Events**

10 Sept 2007 Driven by Innovation" CEO Luncheon Series with Ajit Shetty, CEO of Janssen Pharmaceutical, organised by the American Chamber of Commerce, taking place in Brussels, for more information and to register, please go to: <http://www.amcham.be/cgi-bin/events.cgi?Action=register&id>

## ESBA Bulletin of 7 September 2007 – Volume 9 – Number 11

10 Sept 2007 Business Dinner with Ms. Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Society & Media; organised by the British Chamber of Commerce; taking place in Brussels; for more information, please go to: <http://www.britcham.be/events/registration.asp?Eventid=660>

10 Sept 2007 Stakeholders seminar organised by European Enterprise Platform, which creates a two-way link between regions and blue-chip companies to explore economic development, policy cooperation and investment opportunities; for more information please go to [http://www.cor.europa.eu/En/activities/conferences\\_expo.htm#September2007](http://www.cor.europa.eu/En/activities/conferences_expo.htm#September2007)

11 Sept 2007 Breakfast Briefing with Peter Mandelson, EU Commissioner for External Trade; organised by British Chamber of Commerce; taking place in Brussels; for more information, please go to: <http://www.britcham.be/events/registration.asp?Eventid=676>

13 Sept 2007 EU Committee Breakfast Briefing with Petra Eler, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Gunter Verheugen, Enterprise and Industry; organised by the British Chamber of Commerce; taking place in Brussels; for more information, please go to: <http://www.britcham.be/events/registration.asp?Eventid=653>

24 Sept 2007 Business Lunch on “The New Approach for Standardisation and Normalisation: A Key Dossier for Companies” with Jacques McMillan, Head of Unit of Regulatory Policy, DG Enterprise; organised by the European Training Institute; taking place in Brussels; for more information please go to: [http://www.e-t-i.be/download/lunches\\_190307.pdf](http://www.e-t-i.be/download/lunches_190307.pdf)

08-11 Oct 2007 “OPEN DAYS 2007- European Week of Regions and Cities” organised by DG for Regional Development and the Committee of Regions; for more information please go to: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/conferences/od2007/about.cfm?nmenu=2](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2007/about.cfm?nmenu=2)

18 Oct 2007 EU Committee Breakfast with Jorgen Holmquist, Director General, Internal Market and Services Directorate-General; organised by the British Chamber of Commerce; taking place in Brussels; for more information, please go to: <http://www.britcham.be/events/registration.asp?Eventid=654>