



### HEADLINES

#### **EU / Industry: Competitiveness Council reaches agreement on services directive**

The Competitiveness Council convened on 29-30 May 2006. In a major step towards finalising the services directive, the assembled competitiveness ministers agreed on the essential aspects of the commission's revised text, which was released on 4 April and corresponds closely with the agreement made in parliament. The primary change set out by the member states was an insistence that member states release present report to justify national requirements for service providers.

The Council also adopted conclusions relating to a Commission communication for a modern industrial policy. It underlined the importance of a successful implementation of the seven horizontal and seven sectoral initiatives envisaged in the Communication.

The Council also heard a progress report from the Commission on the efforts for a better regulation. Commissioner Verheugen pointed out that the revised internal Guidelines for impact assessments (IA) are being used to assess all major legislative and policy proposals in the priority list of the Commission's annual Work Programme. In addition, he stated that the assessment of administrative costs is now a compulsory and integrated part of impact assessments.

To read the press release, please go to:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/222&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

To see the Commission's amended proposal for the services directive:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006\\_0160en01.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0160en01.pdf)

To read Commission's Communication, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_330\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_330_en.pdf)

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#### **EU / Employment: Council fails to reach agreement over Working Time Directive.**

On 1-2 June 2006, the employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs council convened in Luxembourg. A long and extensive debate on the revision of the Working Time Directive dominated the Council's discussion. Although all delegations stated their appreciation for the compromise text tabled by the Presidency and its determination to achieve an overall agreement, it was not possible to reach a compromise. Member states continue to be divided over the possibility of not applying the maximum weekly working time (48 hours) if the worker gives his agreement to carry out such work (the "opt-out" provision).

On the other hand, Council reached political agreements on two other important legislative proposals: the Gender Institute and the future Community Programme PROGRESS to promote solidarity and social progress in the Union. The Gender Institute will give technical support to the Community institutions and the Member States, in particular as regards the collection, analysis and dissemination of data. The PROGRESS programme will financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the area of employment and social affairs.

## ESBA Bulletin of 12 June 2006 – Volume 8 – Number 10

To read Council's press releases, please go to:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/89830.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/89830.pdf)

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### In Brief

#### **FSB launches Brussels office and asks 'What can small businesses do for Europe?'**

On 31 May 2006, to coincide with the launch of its new Brussels offices, the Federation of Small Business (FSB) released a film presentation and report titled 'What can small business do for Europe'. Both the film and the report outline the course of action the FSB believes is necessary to avoid the loss of the entrepreneurial spirit in the EU. The FSB believes that SMEs present the key to solving problems relating to unemployment, lack of innovation, and an environmentally unsustainable economy. The FSB organised several screenings of its film on 31 May and 1 June.

To download the FSB's report, please go to:

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/documentstore/filedetails.asp?id=345>

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#### **SME events: Paul Rübig MEP, with ESBA, holds debate on innovation and IP**

On 31 May 2006, Dr. Paul Rübig, MEP and President of SME Global, in cooperation with ESBA and YES FOR EUROPE, held a dinner debate to hear the views of SME entrepreneurs regarding their views on the intellectual property (IP) system in Europe. Apart from SME entrepreneurs, the event was attended by representatives from EPO, DG Markt and the European Parliament. The uncertainty, delay and cost caused by the existing IP regime were highlighted, with entrepreneurs calling for simplicity, transparency and speed to combat the existing problems.

Please see the relevant article in the EU Reporter's e-zine (page 4):

[http://www.eureporter.co.uk/media/ezine/1149757807ezine\\_june\\_8.pdf](http://www.eureporter.co.uk/media/ezine/1149757807ezine_june_8.pdf)

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#### **EU / Regional Policy: Commissioner Hübner invites Regions to prepare for Cohesion**

During a visit in Galicia on June 1<sup>st</sup>, Regional policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner stressed the importance that European regions begin to work on new programmes for the next Cohesion policy as soon as possible, in order to start at the beginning of 2007. Commissioner Hübner also stated that the Commission is determined to work closely with the Member States to help them to prepare for the new Cohesion Policy. In July 2005, the Commission adopted a Communication on the future Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion policy. The draft will be probably adopted in final form in July 2006.

To read the press release, please go to:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/723&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

To read more about the new Cohesion policy, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/funds/2007/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/2007/index_en.htm)

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#### **EU / Information Society: Tech federations concerned over changed 'TV Without Frontiers'**

The European Commission is planning to update its TV without frontiers directive, by extending the regulation of traditional broadcasting to cover all audio-visual content. European branch federations warn that proposed changes could stifle net content. They claim that attempting to regulate new media in the same way as traditional broadcasters would be unrealistic and would inhibit the emerging new media market.

To know more about the TV Without Frontiers directive, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/index_en.htm)

### **EU / Lisbon Strategy: Committee of the Regions to create network of regions**

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is in the process of establishing a network of fifty regions and local authorities to monitor progress in implementing the Lisbon Strategy. In addition, the network will be used in order to create a Scoreboard to compare the performance of particular regions with regards to the Lisbon Strategy. The results of the monitoring exercise will be published from October 2006 on an interactive web platform on the CoR's website.

For more information, please go to the following website:

[http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/lisbon\\_strategy.htm](http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/lisbon_strategy.htm)

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### **EU / Internal market: Economic and Finance Council fails to agree on VAT**

The Economic and Finance Council met in Luxembourg on 6-7 June 2006. One of the most important points of the meeting was the attempt to reach an accord on the reform of value added tax rules across the EU. The Austrian Presidency had proposed a package which would move the application of VAT from a country supplying a service to the country in which the service is consumed. Under current arrangements, countries with low VAT rates are able to attract service providers who then sell their services across the EU. Discussions failed in the face of strong opposition from Germany, Luxembourg and Portugal.

For the council conclusions, please go to:

[http://www.eu2006.at/en/Meetings\\_Calendar/Dates/June/0706RatECOFIN.html](http://www.eu2006.at/en/Meetings_Calendar/Dates/June/0706RatECOFIN.html)

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### **EU / Economy: Commission raises EU growth forecasts**

In its most recent growth forecasts, released on 1 June 2006, the Commission has raised its predictions for eurozone growth in the second and third quarters. The recent assessment envisages eurozone growth of between 0.5-0.9% during this period, compared with 0.3-0.8% predicted for the second quarter and 0.2-0.8% for the third quarter in the previous assessment. However, the forecasts predict a reduction in growth by 0.4-1.0% in the final quarter.

To view the growth forecasts in full, please go to:

[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/indicators/euroareagdp\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/indicators/euroareagdp_en.htm)

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## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **CORDIS, European Innovation, 3/06: Seeking the commitment to innovation**

In our two features, we look at how the single market in Europe enables policy-makers to pave the way for innovation, and encourage market actors to introduce new products, methods and processes.

To download report:

<http://aoi.cordis.lu/toc.cfm?ed=91>

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## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Consultation on future Internal Market Policy**

The Directorate General for Internal Market and Services aims to consult on the future of Internal Market policy. The consultation is an essential part of our reflections on how to take Internal Market policy forward and ensure that it contributes fully in making Europe an attractive place to live, work and invest in.

## ESBA Bulletin of 12 June 2006 – Volume 8 – Number 10

This consultation is addressed to all Internal Market stakeholders, including: citizens, business, representative organisations and public administrations, as well as academia and think-tanks.

*Closes 15 June 2006*

More information and access to the consultation:

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

### **FP7 Consultation on Collaborative Working Environments supporting Business and Industry**

On April 6th 2005, the Commission's Proposal on "Information and Communication Technologies in the EU's 7th Framework Programme for research" was approved.

In this proposal, ICT supporting business and industry was included as an application research theme. The text of this theme included "optimized work organisation and collaborative working environments". The New Working Environments unit of the Directorate-General Information Society and Media of the European Commission has carried out FP7 Consultation process on Collaborative Working Environments supporting Business and Industry.

*Closes 7 July 2006*

You will find information and access to the consultation at the following link:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/information\\_society/activities/atwork/fp7consultation/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/atwork/fp7consultation/index_en.htm)

### **Consultation on the elements for a horizontal legislative approach to technical harmonisation**

The European Council of Ministers adopted a Resolution on 10 November 2003 inviting the Commission to prepare a revision of the New Approach to technical harmonisation in order to complete it and to update its different constitutive elements in order to ensure more coherence as between the various New approach directives already in operation and for future legislation.

The present consultation is designed to widen the scope of our consultative process to ensure that it includes a maximum of stakeholders and interested parties.

You will find information and access to the consultation at the following link:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/review\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/review_en.htm)

## **COMING UP**

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

12-15 June 06	European Parliament Plenary Session (Strasbourg)
15-16 June 06	European Council meeting (Brussels)
1 July 06	Finland takes over EU Presidency
3-6 July 06	European Parliament Plenary Session (Strasbourg)

### **SME related Events**

13-14 June 2006      Vienna - "Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises"  
Conference organised by the Enterprise and Industry DG - More information:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/charter/conf2006/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/charter/conf2006/index_en.htm)

16 June 2006      Hyperthinker Workshop: a Toolkit for Entrepreneurs; organised by ZN, Ebay and Google; taking place in Brussels. More info: <http://www.zn.be/event/tabid/694/Default.aspx>

26 June 2006      Research in female entrepreneurship - An event to share recent research and reflect on how this impacts on the development of female entrepreneurs and managers. Contact [charlotte.carey@uce.ac.uk](mailto:charlotte.carey@uce.ac.uk) for more information.

## ESBA Bulletin of 12 June 2006 – Volume 8 – Number 10

29 June 2006 'Working breakfast on home state taxation'; organised by SME Union; taking place in Brussels. More info:

<http://www.sme-union.org/event/index.php?LAN=en&ID=28>

6-8 September 2006 EFMD 36th EISB Conference; theme – embedding entrepreneurship education in Europe; more info: [www.efmd.org](http://www.efmd.org)

11-13 September 2006 The International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference; taking place in York; more info: [www.ncge.org.uk](http://www.ncge.org.uk)

17 September 2006 33rd International Small Business Congress; taking place in Sofia, Bulgaria; more info: [www.isbc2006.org](http://www.isbc2006.org)

22-23 September 2006 3rd International Conference ENTIME 2006, theme - Enterprises in Modern Economy: Opportunities and Threats. More info: [www.entime.org](http://www.entime.org)

31 Oct-2 Nov 2006 '29<sup>th</sup> ISBE Conference – International Entrepreneurship – from local to global enterprise creation and development'; organised by ISBE; taking place in Cardiff. More info: <http://www.isba.co.uk/>

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