



IN BRIEF

EU/Better Regulation: new Director General for the Regulatory Scrutiny board

On 2 March 2016 the European Commission has appointed Ms. Anne Bucher as the Director-General to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. The main objective of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board is that of providing a legitimate control on and support for all of the Commission's work. The Board is set to examine all draft impact assessments, major evaluations and "fitness checks" of existing legislation. De Jure any initiative and impact assessment tabled to adoption ought to receive a positive opinion by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. Ms. Bucher, will be joining Mr Didier Herbert (Director) Mr. Vassili Lelakis (Principal Adviser and Bernard Naudts (adviser) to complete the team appointed to run the Board. The Commission has also appointed five new Deputy Directors-General to its departments for Agriculture and Rural Development; Competition; Environment; Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, and Trade.

For more information on the Regulatory Better Regulation, please click [here](#).

EU/Corporate Taxation: Council backs proposals to further combat aggressive tax planning

On 8 March 2016, finance ministers endorsed the new rules for multinationals on country-by-country reporting. This applies to companies with a total consolidated group revenue of at least 750 million euros and will be annually. It requires Member States' tax authorities to automatically exchange information between all countries where the multinational has subsidiaries or the parent company. When the multinational's parent company does not reside in the EU, it will have to file a report through its subsidiaries. The Commission will present a proposal in April when the current impact assessment on CbCR has been finalised. The new rules are expected to enter into force in the spring of 2016.

For more information on corporate tax avoidance, please click [here](#).

EU/Better Regulation: Parliament endorses Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-making

On 9 March 2016, Members of the European Parliament endorsed a deal between the key institutions to improve the decision-making process by focusing on quality, transparency and planning. The agreement provides the European public with more insight in the legislation process and ought to lead to simpler and better rules. Part of this is the more important role of impact assessments in EU legislation that should capture not only environmental, social and economic effects, but also administrative burden, competitiveness and the cost of not legislating. Furthermore, the three institutions will improve planning by discussing the multi-annual and annual work programme. Finally, improving transparency requires more access to trilogues and delegated acts.

For more information on Better Regulation, please click [here](#).

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EU/SME Market Access: SMEs prefer to expand their business based on proximity, rather than profound market research

A study was conducted on the methods used by Lithuanian SMEs to determine their foreign market growth strategies. It points to a strong preference for geographically close markets (62% of respondent SMEs), and places market research as the second most preferred method, with 30% usage. From this, we can conclude that there is a gap in knowledge-based choice of new markets, and a heavy reliance on logistical ease and cultural familiarity behind SMEs' choices for regional market entry. The study also highlights a continuation of this trend of regional expansion present in SMEs' plans for business development from 2015 onwards.

For more information on SME internationalisation, please click [here](#).

EU/Single Market: Friendlier environment for SMES in Europe

On 28 October 2015, The European Commission introduced a new Single Market Strategy to strengthen the European Single Market to reduce barriers in key business sectors across the European Union. The European Commission's goal is to ease the free movement of goods and services by removing existing barriers and stimulating competition and trade throughout the European Union. MEP Marene Mizzi has been appointed as the S&D Rapporteur on the new Single Market Strategy. During the last SME Intergroup in the European Parliament, she supported the creation of SME-friendly Single Market initiatives and stressed that her amendments to the report would benefit small-business owners. SMEs should have a better and simplified access to finance. Also, better rules on bankruptcy and insolvency should be developed in order to help start-ups and SMES.

For more information about the European Commission Single Market Strategy, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

EIF support for SMEs

On 9 March 2016 the European Investment Fund published its findings on the previous year's spending focused on SMEs. In this publication, the EIF outlines its accomplishments and newly implemented programs for SMEs in 2015, with numbers and figures detailing the amounts funded in 2015 and expected for further investment in 2016. The report focuses on the Investment Plan for Europe, guarantees and securitisation, equity, microfinance and regional mandates.

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

Digital skills: Creating economic growth across Europe

On 15 March 2016, Friends of Europe published a report based on a conference that took place in Brussels on the topic of Digital Skills on 24 February 2016. The report reiterates the importance of digital technologies for the development of SMEs. It talks about the EU Digital Skills Agenda and the jobs that the inclusion of a digital aspect in a business creates, as well as the changed environment that the digital revolution creates for companies. The authors conclude that in order for businesses to develop digitally, their opinions need to be heard by the policy makers and their concerns revolving around digital knowledge, financial opportunities and business accreditation to be taken into account.

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

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The 2016 Startup Nation Scoreboard: How European Union Countries are Improving Policy Frameworks and Developing Powerful Ecosystems for Entrepreneurs

On 14 March 2016 the European Digital Forum, led by the Lisbon Council and Nesta, published its annual report on the environment for entrepreneurs in the 28 Member States of the European Union. It evaluates progress in policymaking on issues related to creating a favourable environment for startups, as outlined in the Startup Manifesto. It looks at overall policy results, then focuses on the six priority areas of the Manifesto - Institutional framework, Skills and education, Access to talent, Better access to capital, lower barriers to success, Data policy, protection and privacy, and Thought leadership. Then it goes in depth and assesses progress made in each country individually. The authors identify a set of overarching problems, namely fragmentation both within and among member state start up ecosystems and the use of old policy tools for the creation of startup policy, leading to good wording, but not much in actual hard measures.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation on the evaluation and modernisation of the legal framework for the enforcement of intellectual property rights

DEADLINE: 01/04/2016

With this consultation the Commission seeks views from all interested parties, in particular rightholders, the judiciary and legal profession, intermediaries, public authorities, consumers and civil society, on the question if the legal enforcement framework is still fit for purpose.

To access this consultation, please click [here](#).

Consultation on proposal to reform notifications of new regulatory requirements for services providers

DEADLINE: 19/04/2016

The aim of this public consultation is to seek the view of stakeholders on the existing services notification procedure established by the Services Directive and on potential improvements of that procedure. The results of this consultation will provide invaluable input for the Commission when preparing any future policy proposals and assessing the impact of different policy options

To access this consultation, please click [here](#).

Consultation on the Written Statement Directive

DEADLINE: 20/04/2016

The main purpose of this consultation is to gather insights and contributions from the public in the context of the ongoing evaluation of the Written Statement Directive.

To access this consultation, please click [here](#).

Consultation on Improving double taxation dispute resolution mechanisms

DEADLINE: 10/05/2016

The consultation is part of the work on implementing the June 2015 Action Plan for a Fair and efficient Corporate tax system in the European Union and focuses on improving the double taxation dispute resolution mechanism.

To access this consultation, please click [here](#).

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Open public online consultation on the development of a comprehensive, integrated Research, Innovation and Competitiveness Strategy for the Energy Union.

DEADLINE 27/05/2016

The objective of this public consultation is to collect the opinions of stakeholders and interested parties, including EU citizens and private and public organizations, with regard to the development of a comprehensive research, innovation and competitiveness strategy for the Energy Union.

To access this consultation, please click [here](#).

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: important dates

24 March - 8 April

04 April 2016	European Parliament Committee Meetings
06 April 2016	COREPER I
06 April 2016	COREPER II
07 April 2016	European Parliament Committee Meetings

Other SME-related events

Seminar: energy union and the need for integrated energy solutions. The energy agenda 2016 06/04/16, Brussels

On 06 April 2016, ALDE will be holding a workshop to discuss on the right energy solutions for the European Union. Europe needs secure, affordable and sustainable energy for all - the integration of power generation, heating, cooling, buildings, transport and ICT is part of the solution. Vice President of the Energy Union and European Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič will offer their views.

To find out more about this event, please click [here](#).

Annual Conference on European Data Protection Law 2016 07-08/04/16, Brussels

On 7 and 8 April 2016, ERA is organising a two-day conference to assess the concrete novelties GDPR will introduce and to focus on how to implement and apply it in practice. The Annual Conference on European Data Protection Law 2016 aims to provide legal practitioners and data protection specialists with the necessary guidance to prepare for GDPR implementation and to realise its full potential.

To find out more about this event, please click [here](#).