



HEADLINE

On 25 May 2016, the European Commission presented the e-commerce package, containing a Regulation on addressing geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on place of residence or establishment, or nationality within the Single Market. The aim of this proposal, which further implements the Digital Single Market Strategy, is to prevent discrimination based on customers' nationality or place of residence in cross-border commercial transactions between traders and customers relating to the sales of good and the provision of services within the Union.

ESBA OPINION:

ESBA has been advocating against the European Commission creating an obligation for small businesses to sell across all Member States, as this creates considerable administrative burdens related to VAT registration, accounting, language barriers and administrative and legal procedures. Although the new proposal does not include an obligation to deliver to all Member States - a consumer could be asked to pick up their own goods or arrange for their own delivery service - the obligation to sell still means that a small business trading online will be forced to register for VAT in all countries it sells to, with all sorts of administrative implications. Small sellers are also concerned about what happens in case of a dispute. Which legal regime will apply and in which language will proceedings take place? Enhancing cross border trade is crucial if a true Single Market is to be achieved but the right conditions must be set, rather than plunging small businesses in the deep end and waiting to see what happens. ESBA encourages the European Parliament to take into account the disproportionately heavy burdens small and starting sellers will face in dealing with the new obligations.

IN BRIEF

EU/MobiliseSME: An Erasmus Programme for SMEs? Tell us your opinion!

The European Commission is interested in testing the attractiveness of a scheme which supports staff exchanges between companies (SMEs) across EU Member States and selected third countries. The exchange relates to an employee being placed in another company in Europe for a temporary period of time (one-way exchange). In this context, around 100.000 MSMEs from 19 EU countries + Turkey can participate in an online survey to say what they really want and expect from this project. This survey is about collecting feedback from businesses on the feasibility, attractiveness, organisation and features of such a scheme. The survey is available in 10 languages and is accessible by clicking on this link (<http://mobilisesme.eu/index.php/en/2016/05/10/survey-for-smes-online/>) or the following ones:

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If you would like to know more about MobiliseSME, you can contact Mr. Luigi Della Sala, the MobiliseSME Junior Project Manager: luigidellasala@gmail.com

If you have any issues with the survey, please contact: adam.krcal@technopolis-group.com

EU/Brexit: Juncker warns Europe about Brexit

On 9 May 2016, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission has expressed himself on the potential consequences of the UK exit from the European Union. Britain will be holding a referendum on the 23rd of June on whether or not it should stay within the framework of the European Community. The closeness of the opinion polls have spurred Juncker to claim that a 'Brexit' would "have unforeseeable consequences on European cooperation". Juncker, as expected has invested a lot of his time to bridge the gaps between member states and keep the Union together. Part of his efforts have been involved in creating a "fair deal" with Britain in February that included a set of reforms aimed at consolidating the United Kingdom's position within the block.

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

EU/Roaming Tariffs: New rules harmonise roaming when travelling in the EU

On 30 April 2016, new rules concerning the maximum permissible prices for texting or surfing online from another EU Member State entered into force. The new roaming tariffs allow mobile device users to pay only a small amount on top of the price they would pay in their national country: up to € 0.05 per MB of data, € 0.02 per SMS sent, and € 0.05 per minute of call made. This will only concern the transition period from now until mid-June 2017, date in which all Europeans will pay the same price for roaming whether they will use their phones, or mobile devices, in their home country or elsewhere in the European Union. The national telecoms regulators of each Member State are going to ensure that all the mobile phone operators will comply with these new rules on data roaming.

For more information on Roaming Tariffs, please click [here](#).

EU/ TTIP: Malmström warns against negative public opinion on TTIP

On 10 May 2016, amid criticism from French and German high position officials, Cecilia Malmström expressed concerns over the highly negative public opinion on TTIP witnessed throughout the European Union. However, the Trade Commissioner reminds Europeans that the negotiating mandate of the EU has been agreed on by all 28 member states, and that no concerns from the national level have been raised with the Commission over much of what is being criticized nationally. In the run up to general elections in France, the concerns over geographical indicators are being used as a campaign tool, while last week's Greenpeace leaks have been used to fuel fear from lowering of standards, one of the main points raised in the anti-TTIP campaign. In her blog, Malmström defended TTIP insisting that, "No EU trade agreement will ever lower our level of protection of consumers, or food safety, or of the environment."

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For more information on the latest TTIP developments, please click [here](#).

EU/ Social policy: Report on Framework Agreement on parental leave accepted in plenary on 12 May 2016

On 12 May 2016, in the plenary session in Strasbourg, MEPs voted on the Report on the application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU of March 8 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC, with rapporteur Maria Arena. It was argued in plenary and in preceding documents that a report on the implementation of the Directive needs to be produced so as to ensure that Member States are applying the provisions of this legislative act. In this report, the Parliament welcomes the progress made so far in transposing the Directive and calls for further engagement and strict following of the rules set out in the Framework Agreement. Furthermore it stresses the persisting gender inequality in the parental leaves taken and notes the need for an effective directive addressing the challenges of work-life balance.

For more information on the voted report, please click [here](#).

EU/Posted Workers: Eastern Europeans not happy with the revision of the Posted Worker Directive.

On 10 May 2016, the European Commission has set the deadline for national parliaments to submit their opinions on the revision of the Posted Workers directive. The revision is likely to fail, as the Central and Eastern European national parliaments of at least ten Member States have used a yellow card to stop the legislation. On 8 March, the European Commission proposed a review of the Posted Workers Directive, which regulates people, employed in one member state, but are sent to temporarily work in another. The proposal's intent is to fight so-called 'social dumping', where European companies use low-cost workers to bypass the labour laws of the host country. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stated that the same salary should apply "for the same job at the same place".

For more on the posted Workers Directive, please click [here](#).

EU/Capital Markets Union: Commission supports crowdfunding for Start-ups

On 3 May 2016, a report on the EU crowdfunding sector, part of the Capital Markets Union Action Plan, was published by the European Commission. The Commission supports innovative ways of connecting savings to growth in order to diversify the funding sources for European businesses as it is crucial to improving growth and job creation in Europe. Crowdfunding is currently still relatively small but is expanding rapidly. It has the potential to be a key source of financing for SMEs over the long term, if it is regulated adequately. National frameworks are being set up in different EU Member States to support the growth of the sector and ensure the protection of investors. These are generally consistent in terms of the objectives and outcomes they seek to achieve, but are tailored to local markets and domestic regulatory approaches. Since crowdfunding overall is a local source of funding, and the sector evolving rapidly, there is no great need for a framework at European level at this moment.

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

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PUBLICATIONS

ECIPE : The Cost of Non-Schengen for the Single Market

In May 2016, the European Centre for International Political Economy published an article which seeks to assess what the suspension of the Schengen Agreement would mean for the European economy. It deems it would be very harmful as it would specifically undermine the European Single Market and damage the four freedoms the EU was built on. A suspension of the Schengen Agreement would not only hamper cross-border labour, the free flow of goods and the free flow of intra-European services but it will also reduce financial flows within in the EU.

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

FTI Consulting: The State of the EU's Digital Single Market Project

In May 2016, FTI Consulting published this paper on the EU's Digital Single Market. It has a closer look at the DSM one year after it was established and reviews what it all means for business. As the DSM is not a monolithic initiative, i.e. it packages very disparate subjects and hard-core legislation, the publication gives an overview of the subjects. It covers content portability; platforms; copyright; geo-blocking; free flow of data among others, and gives a short evaluation on said topics.

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

CER: How to save the ideas behind TTIP

On 11 May 2016, the Centre for European Reform published a paper on the increasingly hostile debate on TTIP and how to save it. Greenpeace leaked negotiation material and TTIP critics' voices are getting louder in Germany and France. A petition in the Netherlands already gathered 100.000 signatures for a referendum on the agreement. How to counter this and gather support? CER suggest European politicians come clean about past trade policies, show how TTIP avoids past failures and improves European regulation, and emphasise TTIP's role in the world. Europe needs to come off its high horse and take the opportunity to change from defence to offence.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation on an effective insolvency framework within the EU

DEADLINE: 14/06/2016

This consultation seeks stakeholders' views on key insolvency aspects. In particular, it seeks views with regard to common principles and standards which could ensure that national insolvency frameworks work well, especially in a cross-border context.

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

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Public consultation on the role of publishers in the copyright value chain and on the 'panorama exception'

DEADLINE: 15/06/2016

The Commission is launching a public consultation on the role of publishers in the copyright value chain and on the 'panorama exception'. It will serve to gather views in particular on the impact that granting an EU neighbouring right to publishers could have on the publishing sector, on citizens and creative industries and as to whether the need (or not) for intervention is different in the press as compared to other publishing sectors.

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

Public consultation under the Start-up Initiative

DEADLINE: 30/06/2016

The objective of this public consultation is to seek direct feedback from all relevant stakeholders, including entrepreneurs and start-up communities, with the aim of improving the environment for start-ups in Europe.

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

Public Consultation on the Evaluation and Review of the ePrivacy Directive

DEADLINE: 05/07/2016

The objective of the consultation is to collect opinions which will be used for an overall review and a future REFIT of the ePrivacy Directive. It is looking at a number of issues with the existing 2009 Directive, which include: ensuring consistency of ePrivacy rules with the General Data protection regulation; updating the scope of the directive in light of the new market and technological reality; enhancing security and confidentiality of communications; addressing inconsistent enforcement and fragmentation at national level.

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

Public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights

DEADLINE: 31/12/2016

The objective of the consultation is to make an assessment of the present EU social "acquis", determining the extent to which existing rights are practiced and remain relevant or whether and where new ways to deliver on these rights should be considered; to reflect on new trends in work patterns and societies due to the impact of new technologies, demographic trends or other factors of importance for working life and social conditions.

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

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COMING-UP

01 Jun 2016	Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth - Internal Market
01 Jun 2016	Coreper I
01 Jun 2016	Coreper II
01 Jun 2016	Working Party on the Environment
01 Jun 2016	Working Party on Tax Questions
02 Jun 2016	Working Party on Social Questions
02 Jun 2016	Coreper II
02 Jun 2016	Working Party on Intellectual Property - Copyright
03 Jun 2016	Coreper I
03 Jun 2016	Working Party on Intellectual Property - Copyright
03 Jun 2016	Working Party on International Environment Issues
06-09 Jun 2016	Plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg
06 Jun 2016	Working Party on the Environment
06 Jun 2016	Working Party on Social Questions
07 Jun 2016	Working Party on European Free Trade Association (EFTA)
07 Jun 2016	Working Party on Tax Questions
07 Jun 2016	Coreper II
07 Jun 2016	Working Party on Social Questions
08 Jun 2016	Coreper I
08 Jun 2016	Coreper II
08 Jun 2016	Working Party on the Environment
08 Jun 2016	Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth - Internal Market
09 Jun 2016	Working Party on the Environment
09 Jun 2016	Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society

Other SME-related events

The Single Market Strategy: Chances for Entrepreneurs

03/06/2016, Warsaw

On 3 June 2016, DG Grow organized a discussion on the challenges facing the Single Market with various actors - public administration, businesses, academics, employers' organisations, trade unions and local government. It will also be an opportunity to promote Single Market instruments, as well as enterprises conducting cross-border activities in the EU.