



HEADLINE

Theresa May Speaks to CBI: Don't sell out to overseas investors

On 21 November, Theresa May spoke to the Confederation of British Industry. One of her points is one that ESBA has been advocating for many years: “We are home to one of the world’s financial capitals, but too frequently fast-growing firms can’t get the patient long-term capital investment they require, and have to sell-out to overseas investors to access the finance they need”.

ESBA President David Caro said: This statement is true for most - if not all - EU countries. Many very successful startups and brilliant ideas originate in Europe. The risk-averse climate and poor overall conditions however, make fast-growing SMEs try their luck in a more hospitable environment, such as the US. Europe needs to change its ways and create a climate where entrepreneurship is celebrated, risk is accepted and failure is seen as part of the entrepreneurial learning curve. A culture where the tendency to sell early is not a logical one. Only then can we prevent our SMEs from going elsewhere or selling out prematurely.

IN BRIEF

EuroPAwards 2016: ESBA Secretary General Wins In House Professional of the Year

On 16 November 2016, the prestigious European Public Affairs awards took place in the Stanhope hotel in Brussels. The European Small Business Alliance was shortlisted for three awards: Trade Association Campaign of the Year, In House Team of the Year and In House Professional of the Year. ESBA is proud to announce that its Secretary General, Patrick Gibbels, took home the award for best In-House Professional of 2016. The award recognises the hard work we do for small businesses throughout Europe and provides a boost for even better work in 2017!

To learn more about the EuroPAwards, please click [here](#)

EU/Digital Skills: Study finds UK SMEs are still lacking Digital Skills

On 18 October 2016, Lloyds Bank released its latest Business Digital Index on the UK market. The study found that two in five SMEs lack fundamental digital skills. In absolute figures that corresponds to about 1.44 million SMEs without any tech strategy. However, the trend is a positive one, as about two thirds of respondents indicated that they use digital tools to reduce costs. Furthermore, 45% of SMEs now use social media, which is a big leap from 27% in 2015. Lloyds suggested that digital strategies are crucial for export and that the opportunities of going online are not promoted enough.

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

For more information on the EU’s New Skills agenda, please click [here](#).

EU/Corporate Tax: Commission seeks to Corporate Tax harmonisation

On 26 October 2016, Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, presented his proposal for the CCCTB (Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base) to the European Parliament. The Commission has long sought to harmonise the corporate taxation regime within the EU, having pursued this since 2001. The Commission feels that the plethora of scandals may have given new incentive to the proposal. The new rules would apply to corporations with revenues of over €750 million per annum, and would be compulsory, a step away from the previous proposal. Other factors within the proposal seek to tackle the significant issue of profits shifting, which has drawn much attention in recent months. While NGOs are applauding the proposal as a step in the right direction,

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some criticise the initiative's threshold (€750 million/year) as being far too high). Despite the general optimism toward the Commission's proposal, the CCCTB may still receive intense opposition from several member states, as an attempt to steer their corporate taxation regimes.

For more information on the CCCTB, please click [here](#)

EU/Microfinance: EU increases its support for microfinance

On 27 October 2016, the European Microfinance Network held their Second EU Microfinance Day in Brussels. The EU has raised its commitment fund for microfinance to 1 billion in an attempt to boost growth, business development and tackle European Union unemployment, under the EU's Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, cited the move as a significant step to address unemployment and to instigate growth in the EU economy. EIF (European Investment Fund) chief Luigi Gilibert argued that microfinance was a key tool in contributing to smart and sustainable growth throughout the European Union. 'Progress Microfinance' was launched in 2010, and along with Juncker's Investment Plan for Europe, has generated a substantial degree of funding agreements. The EaSI was formatted to assist in widespread sustainable job creation, and along with the EIF (which aids in the funding of small and medium-sized businesses) has generated significant funding for European SMEs.

For more information about the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, please click [here](#)

EU/SME Finance: SMEs diversifying sources of funding

On 27 October 2016, a study exposed that SMEs are becoming more reliant on 'alternative' sources of lending, departing from bank loans. SMEs are increasingly diversifying their sources of finance due to the rigid nature of the current system of lending. Having traditionally been reliant on banks for the lending of capital, SMEs are seeking out more 'alternative' sources of funding. More and more often, SMEs are choosing to opt for this alternative form of lending, rather than the traditional route of bank loans, and the 'new' sector is growing dramatically. Having surveyed over 300 SMEs, alternative lender Liberis has composed a study showing that far more SMEs now opt for this form of alternative lending, instead of the traditional bank-lending route.

For more information about alternative funding, please click [here](#)

EU/Trade: Getting closer to a Dutch referendum on CETA

On 7 November 2016, almost two third of the necessary number of signatures were collected by Dutch activist groups in an attempt to force the government in organizing a referendum regarding the free-trade agreement EU-Canada. If they are able to reach the 300,000 signatures threshold, the Dutch government will have to trigger an advisory vote on CETA. While such vote is non-binding, the government would none the less be in a difficult position if the referendum goes against the agreement, as it was the case for the previous referendum which halted plans for closer relations with Ukraine. For CETA to be ratified, it needs to be approved by all Member States.

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

EU/European Parliament set to reject international standards on banks

On 10 November 2016, the European Parliament is set to vote down international banking rules as established in Basel, Switzerland. EU lawmakers are putting increasing pressure on regulators to water-down the application of new capital reserves regulations. The Head of the European Parliament's Monetary Committee, Roberto Gualtieri, suggested that the Parliament will opt to vote against it due to the wish for a greater level playing field between the EU, the United States and other regions. Thursday's vote will be yet another step in European politician's attempts to reform the way in which the regulatory system works. EU politicians present at a Basel meeting had

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previously said that they would not accept the framework in its current shape, adding to fears of further fragmentation in the international banking regulatory framework.

For more information about the Commission's Banking Union, please click [here](#)

EU/Single market: Benefits, shortcomings and challenges of the internal market

The Single Market has brought unprecedented benefits to millions of people across the EU, allowing workers to be employed in another country, creating cross-border opportunities for businesses, removing barriers to trade and much more. Still, there is room for improvement and the EU needs to act to make citizens, firms and consumers fully benefit from the opportunities of the Internal Market. Especially in this historical moment, characterised by legitimacy issues raised against the EU, a major involvement of the main stakeholders and new actions are deemed necessary to overcome major challenges (social inequalities, sustainable growth, jobs creation, etc.) and to promote a fairer and more inclusive environment. Commission's Single Market Strategy, followed by Parliament's report on the matter, is in line with these aspirations and contains many initiatives that will be implemented by 2017.

For more information on the Collaborative economy, please click [here](#).

EU/Collaborative economy: EU approach towards the sharing economy

The sharing or collaborative economy is rapidly expanding across the EU, creating new business models and reflecting technologic developments in our economy. New actors are involved, establishing new employment relationship between platforms, service providers (either professional or not) and consumers. Its economic, social and environmental benefits come along with major concerns, such as tax avoidance and protection of workers. The EU faces thus a major challenge: deal with new regulatory issues to promote legal certainty and boost competitiveness in the Single Market. In this context the Commission has presented its guidelines, publishing "A European agenda for the collaborative economy" in June 2016. On the other hand the EP is working on an own initiative report that will be presented in the following months.

For more information on the Collaborative economy, please click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

CEPS: CETA's signature: 38 statements, a joint interpretative instrument and an uncertain future

The EU finally proved to the world that it is still capable of signing ambitious trade agreements. However, the structural problems remain intact, and future EU trade agreements will most likely face similar complications. The fact that 38 statements and a Joint Interpretative Instrument were required in which member states can still threaten to exercise their veto rights when concluding the agreement, does not forecast an easy ratification process.

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

World Employment Confederation-Europe: White Paper on the Future of Work

Today's labour markets are undergoing fundamental change: we are facing less a job crisis than a work revolution. However, our perception of the labour market is still lagging behind. Among the policy recommendations of The World Employment Confederation-Europe are to modernise social security schemes, to develop portable and transferable social rights, to evolve tax and benefits schemes etc. in order to unlock the contribution of the employment industry in enabling work, adaptation, security and prosperity.

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

CEPS: Thirty Years of the Single European Market

Over the past thirty years, the Single European Market has been the core business of the European Union. Enormous progress has been achieved in both ‘widening’ and ‘deepening’ EU legislation, but empirical evidence indicates that market integration has stalled and that the expected economic benefits have fallen short of expectations. National policies have all too often been insufficiently supportive towards the goal of market integration. As a result, the past ten years have seen only little progress in market opening within the Union.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation on the Single Digital Gateway

DEADLINE: 28/11/2016

The idea behind the Single Digital Gateway is to provide all the information people need to do business cross-border, travel to another EU country, live, study or work in another EU country. It would improve and better connect existing portals, contact points and networks, and help people to complete the most frequently used national procedures fully online. The aim of this consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders on the identified problems and different policy options that can be pursued to address them.

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

Public consultation on the enhancement of the social legislation in road transport

DEADLINE: 11/12/2016

The consultation can particularly be of interest for citizens or undertakings using road transport services in their activity, road transport workers and companies engaged in the transport chain. It can also be of particular interest for regional, national or international public authorities and other organisations directly involved in the road transport sector.

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](#).

Public consultation for the mid-term evaluation of the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)

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DEADLINE: 11/01/2017

This public consultation is designed to support the mid-term evaluation of the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) carried out in accordance with the Article 13(1) of the EaSI Regulation No. 1296/2013 of 11 December 2013. The mid-term evaluation covers the activities undertaken under the three axes of the EaSI programme (PROGRESS, EURES, Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship) during the period 2014 - 2016.

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

The REACH REFIT Evaluation (REACH Review 2017)

DEADLINE: 28/01/2017

The REACH REFIT evaluation (REACH Review 2017) will build on the findings of the first REACH Review (published in 2013) and examine key developments since then. The REACH REFIT evaluation (REACH review 2017), is carried out in line with the principles of Better Regulation and will cover the five compulsory evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value. A public consultation is planned to obtain stakeholders' views on the approach to the evaluation and collect any potentially missing elements. Furthermore, a specific consultation on SME relevant issues will be carried out through the Europe Enterprise Network (EEN).

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

COMING-UP

21 November - 2 December

21 November	Coreper I Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council Plenary
22 November	EP ENVI committee meeting Plenary Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council
23 November	Coreper I Coreper II Plenary
24 November	Plenary EP INTA committee meeting
25 November	Coreper I
28 November	Competitiveness Council EP INTA committee meeting EP ENVI committee meeting EP IMCO committee meeting EP JURI committee meeting
29 November	Competitiveness Council EP EMPL committee meeting EP ITRE committee meeting
30 November	Coreper I Coreper II

Other SME-related events

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The Role of Business in the Circular Economy

24/11/2016, Brussels

The Energy Climate House team of CEPS is about to launch a new Task Force on "The Role of Business in the Circular Economy". The focus of this Task Force is on the role of EU policy and regulation to guide businesses and industry. Special attention will be given to the barriers and enablers companies encounter in their attempts to introduce circularity into their business operations.

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

The New EU Skills Agenda | Addressing the Skills Gap Facing the European Advanced Manufacturing Industry

29/11/2016, Brussels

EU policymakers, IPC members and the wider EU stakeholder community will participate in a panel discussion on how European policies, along with industry initiatives, can address the growing skills gap in Europe.

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

EU Trade Policy at the Crossroads

29/11/2016, Brussels

EurActiv hosts a high-level stakeholder workshop to take stock of current EU trade trends and discuss the way forward. The discussion will be based around questions such as: How can EU trade policy continue to be an engine for growth and jobs in Europe? What are the main obstacles to the future of EU trade policy? How to ensure credibility of EU trade policy? How to ensure a well-informed, evidence-based and balanced debate on EU trade policy? What are the main takeaways of the Slovak Presidency?