



HEADLINES

EU/Late Payments: Commission urges four Member States to comply with the Late Payment Directive to protect SMEs in their commercial relations.

On 15 February 2017, the Commission has taken action against four Member States who are not implementing the Late Payment Directive. The Member States are Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Spain. These four Member States have two months to take measures to comply with the Directive. If not, the Commission could decide to take the Member States to the European Court of Justice. The Late Payment Directive was implemented in 2013. The Directive has put time limits in place for payments by companies and public authorities when producing goods and services. In B2B transactions the time limit was set at 60 days unless expressly agreed upon otherwise. This Directive gives businesses the right to compensation when payment deadlines are not met. On 26 August 2016, the Commission adopted a report on the implementation of this Directive. The report stated that the implementation overall is positive but that further enforcement of the Directive is still needed.

For more information on the Late Payment Directive, please click [here](#).

ESBA Opinion: "

IN BRIEF

EU/Environment: The Commission announces the creation of the Circular Economy Platform.

On 2 February 2017, Commissioners in charge of the Circular Economy Package announced the creation of a new platform meant at encouraging and enhancing investment in circular economy projects. Vice-President Katainen highlighted the creation of a Circular Economy Finance Support Platform with the European Investment Bank which will be used to match investors with innovators. The new platform is meant to encourage new forms of financing required to enhance innovation in the Circular Economy. It will reinforce the link between already existing instruments such as the EFSI and the InnovFin-EU Finance for Innovators which should allow for the development of new financial instruments for circular economy projects.

For more information on the Circular Economy Package, please click [here](#).

EU/Digital: Agreement reached between the Institutions for the modernisation of EU copyright rules.

On 10 February 2017, negotiators from the Parliament, the Council and the Commission announced that they have reached an agreement to modernise existing EU copyright rules. The new rules would allow European citizens to access and fully use their online subscriptions when travelling within the EU. The deal has been endorsed by Coreper. The next step in the legislative process will be for the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament to formally adopt the proposal before it can enter into force, which has been foreseen for 2018.

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For more information on the Digital Single Market, please click [here](#).

EU/Digital: The Commission launches a new study targeting barriers for SMEs in the Data Economy.

On 17 February 2017, the Commission launched a new study on the emerging barriers to the free flow of data including issues of data ownership, interoperability, (re)-usability and access to data, and liability. This study aims at providing evidence and analysis for the EU Free Flow of Data Initiative. In parallel to this study, the Commission is also carrying a public consultation to gather stakeholder feedback and identify key challenges faced by businesses in the Digital Single Market. Both initiatives aim at finding solutions on removing barriers when sharing or accessing data, reducing the costs born when sharing data and enhancing the benefits deriving from data sharing.

For more information on the Digital Single Market, please click [here](#).

EU/Digital: The Council agrees on a proposal to fight cross-border infringements to EU consumer protection laws.

On 20 February 2017, the Council adopted a general approach to increase cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws. The aim of the proposal is to further decrease the negative effect cross-border infringements to EU consumer law has on consumers. The proposal sets out to increase harmonisation between the different public enforcement authorities to ensure early detection, investigation and cessation of intra-Union infringement. This will be done by setting a number of minimum investigation requirements and enforcement powers that every national authority will have to be able to execute properly to ensure an effective fight against infringements.

For more information on the Digital Single Market, please click [here](#).

EU/Trade: CETA can benefit the European economy.

On 20 February 2017, Artis Pabriks, Parliament's lead MEP on CETA, outlined the many benefits the free-trade agreement with Canada could have for the European economy. CETA will allow SMEs to access the Canadian market which was previously out of reach for them because of tariff and non-tariff barriers, moreover the deal will boost wealth and enable national governments to better assist their citizens in need. With the support of the EU Parliament and of the Canadian Parliament, CETA will enter into provisional application, allowing Member States to see firsthand the positive effect the deal will have on the economy before they have to ratify the agreement in the upcoming years to allow for its full implementation.

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

PUBLICATIONS

EPC: Future of taxation in the single market

On 27 January 2017, The European policy centre (EPC) published a report on the need for a strategic vision on the future of European taxation rules. The writers of the report try to identify the remaining problems and some possible solutions for the common taxation. They conclude that a fair, transparent and effective taxation is detrimental to enhance public trust and unleash the full potential of the single market. It could also form the basis to modernise tax systems.

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

Friends of Europe: Go with the flows

On 3 February 2017, the think tank Friends of Europe published a paper on the digitalisation of globalisation. The paper specifically tackles the cross-border flow of data. The article questions if the EU are not missing out on this digitalisation. Digital content has been mainly produced by the US but they show a shift to large European countries such as Germany. Another opportunity for European businesses that the paper highlights, is the chance to get a lot of manufacturing back to Europe thanks to the growth in automatisisation.

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

CONSULTATIONS

Public consultation on the functioning of mutual assistance between EU Member States for the recovery of taxes

DEADLINE: 08/03/2017

The competence of tax authorities is limited to their national territory. They cannot take recovery actions in other countries, although tax debtors may have moved to another country or may dispose of assets in other countries. Therefore, the EU has adopted legislation which allows the EU Member States to provide mutual assistance to each other, for the recovery of their taxes. The European Commission is currently undertaking an evaluation of this legislation, as announced in its Action Plan on value added tax (VAT). This public consultation seeks the opinion of persons confronted with such recovery assistance procedures and other stakeholders.

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

Public consultation on the capital markets union mid-term review 2017

DEADLINE: 17/03/2016

The aim of the consultation is to seek feedback on how the current capital markets union (CMU) programme can be updated and completed so that it represents a strong policy framework for the development of capital markets, building on the initiatives that the Commission has presented so far.

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

Public consultation on the special scheme for small enterprises under the VAT Directive

DEADLINE: 20/03/2017

This consultation aims at obtaining the views of stakeholders on: (i) the current VAT provisions for SMEs and their application; and (ii) possible changes as regards the VAT provisions for SMEs. Its results will feed into the review of the SME scheme.

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

Public consultation on the reform of VAT rates

DEADLINE: 20/03/2017

This Open Public consultation aims at obtaining stakeholders views' on the following aspects: (i) The need for EU action in the field of VAT rates; (ii) The proper balance between harmonisation and

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Member States autonomy in setting VAT rates; (iii) The problems and risks linked to differentiation of VAT rates within the Single Market; (iv) The desirable direction for reform; (v) Stakeholders' views on the proposed policy options.

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

Public consultation on the Definitive VAT system for Business to Business (B2B) intra-EU transactions on goods

DEADLINE: 20/03/2017

This consultation aims at obtaining the views of stakeholders on: (i) The current VAT situation of B2B intra-EU supplies of goods; (ii) Possible short term improvements of the current transitional VAT system; (iii) The need to move towards the definitive VAT system based on the principle of taxation of the supply in the Member State of destination.

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

Public consultation on the 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](#).

Public consultation on Building the European data economy

DEADLINE: 26/04/2017

This public consultation will be used to shape the future policy agenda on the European data economy. The consultation tries to collect information on the trading of non-personal data, the effects of the local storage of data, the nature of barriers to this data and ways how to tackle these barriers.

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

Public consultation on the rules on liability of the producer for damage caused by a defective product

DEADLINE: 26/04/2017

This public consultation aims to collect feedback on the application and performance of the Directive on liability for defective products (Directive 85/374/EEC). This directive guarantees the liability of the producer in the event of damage caused by malfunctioning products. The results of the public consultation will provide evidence to assess the extent to which the provisions of the Directive have been effective and efficient.

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

COMING-UP

EU Institutions: Important Dates

22 February 2017 : Coreper I

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22 February 2017 : Coreper II

27 February 2017: Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

28 February 2017: Environment Council

1 March 2017: Coreper I

1 March 2017: Coreper II

2 March 2017: Coreper II

3 March 2017: Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Other SME-related events

European Industry Day

28/02/2017, Brussels

On 28 February 2017, the European Commission will organise the European Industry Day to take stock of existing actions and stimulate debate on a joint vision for the long-term future of European industry. The nature of industry is changing, driven by rapid technological change. The evolution of industrial activity is characterised by digitalisation, clean and circular technologies, and a higher reliance on service. High-level policy makers including Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, and Commissioners Bieńkowska and Moedas will all participate in the event.

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

Towards a more sustainable Europe

01/03/2017, Brussels

On 1 March 2017, the EESC wants to start the debate on a long-term strategy for a more sustainable Europe. Based on an assessment of long-term trends and challenges, such as the digitalisation of the economy, the shift to a low carbon economy and the transformation of labour markets, the hearing will explore the transition to a new economic model that is economically more resilient, socially more fair and environmentally more responsible.

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