



Jean Monnet European Module Newsletter #5

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Issue 5

*"THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC CONSTITUTION AFTER THE LISBON TREATY:
UNDERTAKINGS IN THE NEW SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY"*

The latest updates on major developments in the most relevant areas of the European Union integration process.

The Content:

1. Environmental Policy
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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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Urban sprawl eating into wildlife habitats in Europe

2 August 2013

"Our high-consumption lifestyles are putting more pressure on the land. But beyond the proportion of land we are covering with concrete, there is another important effect: roads and other infrastructure are carving valuable habitats into increasingly smaller fragments, with serious consequences for some of Europe's most endangered species", said the EEA Executive Director Hans Bruyninckx .



The European Environmental Agency (EEA) has redacted an interesting "land cover report" about the artificial transformation of natural areas from 1996 to 2006. The "land take indicators" are used as primary elements of measuring. The limited number of lands are restricted resources and their conservation must be taken into strong consideration. The extension of cities along natural lands such as forests, grass lands, vegetation soils or cultivation grounds is always pursuing its extensive course. Data extracted between 2000 and 2006 declared that almost half of the entire industrial sprawl covered the land, replacing rural parts of the earth into buildings, roads and human agglomerations. The loss that this situation is creating is very onerous primarily for the ecosystem's conservation including creatures and plants at risk. Besides this comment, another heavy consequence is represented by the growing of small urban groups, due to the destruction of nature. Then, the intensity of action-planning must respect the respective countries' social and economic conditions. Spain is on the top of the classification for artificial transformation of wildlife. To make matters worse, the urban sprawl has extended very fast in Portugal, Ireland, Hungary, Finland and Sweden, where the transformation of forest occurred mainly. Relying on the wildlife patrimony inherited which assemble together the rarest beauties of nature, animals and every kind of biodiversity elements, it is compulsory to start a managerial green defence program aimed towards the effective and accurate wildlife survival. The hope is that the new report analysing the period from 2006 to 2012 readable for next year, will show better and improved results.

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/urban-sprawl-eating-into-wildlife>

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/urban-sprawl-eating-into-wildlife/changes-in-european-land-cover/download>

VAN MANUFACTURERS MUST MAKE NEW MODELS MORE EFFICIENT BY 2020

18 June 2013

According to provisional data published by EEA new vans in Eu must become more efficient in order to cut carbon dioxide target in 2017 and 2020.

The average van sold emitted is of 180.3 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer (gCO₂/km), up to now the emission are slightly than 175 gCO₂/Km by 2017.

TARGET: Emission of 147g CO₂/Km this means 18.5% lower than current levels. This target is driven by Eu legislation adopted in 2011 that says: Member States must report all new vehicles sold each year. Each manufacturer has an individual target, calculated using the average mass of their registered vehicles. All individual manufacturer targets in combination make up the European industry target - by 2020, emissions should be on average below 95 gCO₂/km for new cars and 147 CO₂/km for new vans.

Hans Bruyininckx, EEA Executive Director said: *"To cut emissions significantly, manufacturers will need to improve the technology of their vehicles and sell more efficient models. The good news is that there is huge potential for using new technologies which are well-suited to the way vans are used, including electric or hybrid vehicle technology."*

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/van-manufacturers-must-make-new>



Populations of Grassland butterflies has declined almost 50% over two decades

23 July 2013

Grassland butterflies have declined dramatically between 1990 and 2011. This has been caused by intensifying agriculture and a failure to properly manage grassland ecosystems, according to a report from the European Environment Agency (EEA).

The Commission's strategy, "The European Environment Agency" (EEA) specifies the headline indicator, useful to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented policies and the expected targets to be reached. Between 1990 and 2011 butterflies and other insects had been used for experimental studies in the European zone as a measure of understanding the trend and conditions of the ecosystem. The choice of these specific insects was due to their exclusive abilities to pollinate plants which is essential either for agriculture or the entire natural system. According to the report, 17 species were analysed and the result was critical: 8 species have diminished, and 6 species indicate an uncertain result. The overall reason is attributed to the aggressive intensification of agriculture practices. They are especially concentrated in flatlands and soils suitable for easy methods of farming. As a consequence of this

policy, the homogenous grassland created on the one hand is not correctly suited for creatures' lively hood due to the disappearance of essential plants and, on the other hand it relieves the butterflies' aversion towards pesticides used in high quantities. Zones called "High Nature Value Farmland" with low use of pesticides are proper places for butterflies for their using of normal way of cultivations.

Furthermore, the abandoned mountainous and damp regions or their resulting deforestation are the second cause for wildlife decline, especially in eastern and southern Europe, where soils are not economically profitable and there aren't monetary subsidies in favour of cultivation, even from the "Common Agriculture Policy" (CAP). In order to monitor the wildlife in May of 1992 the "Natura 2000", was introduced an important measure for the protection and conservation of flora and fauna in the European union zone . The policy proposed for this program has to represent a common plan of actions implemented by adherent states. The conservation guidelines are underlined in two specific dispositions: the "Bird Directive" (79/409/EEC) and the "Habitats Directive" (92 /43/EEC), where three more species were added as new specific indicators of wildlife trends . Eventually, it is important a reorganisation of the CAP or public subsidies in order to reallocate monetary resources destined to HNV based on low agriculture practices.

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/populations-of-grassland-butterflies-decline>

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/the-european-grassland-butterfly-indicator-19902011/download>

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-818_en.htm



THREE RISKY PESTICIDES BANNED

02 May 2013

Three insecticides, clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiametomax have been banned by the European Commission because of the danger they may cause. The insecticides may indeed directly affect a wide range of organisms, both on land and in water. The EEA maintains that it is necessary the application of precautionary approaches in these hazardous issue. However the European authority also highlights that it is needed to go further since the ban only concerns three of seven neonicotinoids. It is mainly referred to crops attractive to bees, whose activity is essential for pollination. Therefore it does not take into account the risky impacts of neonicotinoids on aquatic invertebrate species, birds or other insects. Neither does the ban cover new neonicotinoid insecticide Sulfoxaflor which may come onto the market soon.

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/neonicotinoid-pesticides-are-a-huge>

LAND AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE

01 May 2013

"Land as an environmental resource" is a study published by the Institute for European Environmental Policy in the spring 2013 whose main concern is Land use. All the essential services we benefit from are provided by land. From food to timber, biomass for energy, clean water, healthy soils, cultural landscape, recreational space. Land is already overexploited. The higher demand for these services will overwork the soil at the expense of biodiversity, the quality of our land and all the services delivered by it, unless it is found the right balance to make it sustainable and therefore promote an efficient use of natural resources. The research investigates some of the ways to rectify its current exploitation and suggests solutions to address policy decisions in compliance with the EU's environmental objectives. It is indeed necessary a coherent approach to land use and its integration into key policy areas. The purpose is to consider the range of demand requiring different types of rural land use and ecosystem services in the EU to 2050 and examine the various ways in which these demands could be met.

http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1186/LER_-_Final_Report_-_April_2013.pdf



EU meets most international air pollutant emissions limits, further cuts possible

26 June 2013

Lots of air pollutant emission are below international agreed limit except nitrogen oxides, according to EEA Emissions of three air pollutants, including fine particulate matter, are only slightly above targets to be met in 2020. Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) typically is caused by traffic but also by industrial facilities and power plants. This pollutant is very unhealthy and cause damages to environment and human health, provoking respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular disease and leading to premature death in some cases. The UNECE Convention was agreed on in order to limit air pollutant causing acid rains and eutrophication. NO_x is the only pollutant for which the 2011 emissions exceeded the respective EU emission reduction commitment. EU's most successful reduction of air emissions has been cutting sulphur dioxide (SO₂) - in 2011 emissions were 82 % lower than in 1990. There are many reasons for emission reductions, including power stations switching from solid and liquid fuels to fuels such as natural gas, new legislation limiting vehicle exhaust emissions, flue-gas scrubbing technology in industry, reduced sulphur content in some liquid fuels, lower point-source emissions from industrial facilities, and the closure of older industrial facilities as a consequence of economic restructuring.

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/eu-meets-most-international-air>

Flood risk in Europe: the long-term outlook

5TH June 2013

According to EEA natural disasters are easing in Europe for many reasons including climate change. Floods in central Europe has caused impressive damages in Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. Floods, storms and other hydro-meteorological events account for around two thirds of the damage costs of natural disasters, and those costs have increased since 1980. Mainly this happens because of : land use change, increase in population, economic wealth and human activities. Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director, said: *"Considering flood risk in Europe, we can see climate change will be an increasingly important factor. But in many cases, flood risk is also the result of where, and how, we choose to live - increases in costs from flooding in recent decades can be partly attributed to more people living in flood-prone areas."*

Europe must anticipate future changes according to a recent EEA report on climate changes adaptation. Adaptation measures can be categorized as 'grey' measures such as technological and engineering projects, 'green' ecosystem-based approaches using nature, and so-called 'soft' measures such as policies to change governance approaches. The most effective adaptation projects often combine two or more different approaches. To put this into action, territorial and physical planning have an important role to play. The European Union is addressing flood risk through the Floods Directives. Countries are required to draw up flood risk maps by 2013 and establish flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness by 2015.

More information :

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/flood-risk-in-europe-2013>



ENVIRONMENTAL FISCAL REFORM

14 May 2013

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has carried out studies about the potential of an Environmental Fiscal Reform (EFR) to create jobs opportunities and social benefits, especially in the countries more affected by euro crisis: Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. The idea is to encourage growth by reducing taxation on labor and investment and shifting the tax burden to the production and consumption of environmentally harmful goods and services, and also removing harmful subsidies. All these measures could redirect consumers' behavior towards more sustainable commodities and new resources could be allocated to innovation. Moreover the incentives coming from the fiscal reform could create new jobs both low and highly skilled. "European governments are looking for effective ways to create sustainable growth. Throughout Europe people are clearly very concerned that solutions to the crisis should be fair, so it is apt to make polluters pay the costs that they currently impose on the rest of society", said J. McGlade, EEA Ex-Director.



Funds for Innovating Projects

17 May 2013

European Commission - IP/13/443 17/05/2013

The European Commission has launched different proposals in order to stimulate innovation and development environmentally sustainable. First of all, in May 31.5 million were allocated to fund new 45 eco-innovation projects in the following areas: material recycling, water, sustainable building products, green business, food and drink sector. The initiative is especially addressed to Small and Medium-Size Enterprises with innovative concepts needing capital to realize their growth potential. Many of them have performed impressive results over the past two years under the eco-innovation component of the EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP). The investment of EU eco-innovation funds has been definitely successful even in terms of profit: every euro invested has yielded 20 euro and each project has created 8 permanent full-time jobs. European Commissioner for the Environment Janez Potočnik stressed that *"Europe's competitiveness in the next decades will depend on its ability to overcome resource constraints"* and that *"new studies demonstrate that good business, job creation and environmental protection can go together and generate widespread benefits"*. More than 240 projects funded by the eco-innovation scheme are already underway. The eco-innovation projects cover a wide range of fields from omega 3 fatty acid production from algae, to pollution-free leather production.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-443_en.htm

WATER QUALITY

21 May 2013

European bathing water quality in 2012. (EEA Report No 4/2013)

Every year all the European Member States have to deliver to the EU their own reports on national bathing quality that then are published in an annual summary by European Environment Agency (EEA). The monitor is accomplished by analyzing certain types of bacteria that reveal pollution in the water and it concerns lakes, rivers and coastal sites. Thankfully the trend has been continuously improving since its monitoring began under the Bathing Water Directive in 1990. The report describes the evolution of water quality data over the period 1990- 2012. The percentage of excellent water quality in the EU has increased from 60% in the 1990s to 78% in the last year. In "European bathing water quality in 2012. (EEA Report No 4/2013)", it emerges that 94% of the European bathing sites has reached the minimum standard quality while in the 1990s it met barely the 70%. Cyprus and Luxembourg have remarkable results. Also eight other countries achieved encouraging values, above the EU average: Malta (97 %), Croatia (95 %), Greece (93 %), Germany (88 %), Portugal (87 %), Italy (85 %), Finland (83 %) and Spain (83 %). Despite the improvement, in some areas there are still problem with storm water overflows.

More information:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-2012>

Anniversary of the Carpathian Convention

22 May 2013

On the 22 May of 2003 the "Framework Convention for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians", known as the "Carpathian Convention", was signed by seven countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia. They

have pledged to cooperate on common focus like identity and development across the area. In these 10 years many important protocols have been agreed or are in progress, such as protection of biodiversity, tourism, forest, transportation or cultural heritage. Many others are expected, to name but a few, agriculture, energy, regional development.

ANNUAL EUROPEAN UNION GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY 1990-2011 AND INVENTORY REPORT 2013

May 2013

In May the European Environmental Agency published the new "Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2011 and inventory report 2013". This document is the annual submission of the European Union to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. It provides data about the emissions in the different economic sectors for all the European Members and compare data in a "base year", that is not the same for each European country, in order to monitor the anthropogenic GHG emissions, to evaluate the progress towards its reduction commitments and the implementation of obligations with accuracy, transparency and consistency.



Nevertheless, some critics have emerged. As often happens, it seems that there have been many irrelevant meetings more than concrete actions. The main problem turns out to be that the "Carpathian Convention" is a "soft" legislation, meaning that there is not real possibility of financial fines and sanctions. The major concern is the habitat fragmentation, that is disorienting the wildlife animals, and very limited progress have been made in this regard. In the end, the convention should be able to balance the development (and related political interests) with the largest attention possible to the conservation of the environment. There is still much work to do but a good start has been made.

http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?208722/The-Carpathian-Convention-at-10-On-the-map-but-much-left-to-do



GREECE TO COURT OVER RISKY LANDFILLING

30 May 2013

The European Commission has taken Greece before the European court of Justice since it has not taken the adequate measures to treat waste, exposing its own population and the environment to high risks. The incorrect treatment causes serious damages to water, soil, air, human health and all the living beings. That is just what is happening in the Kiato landfill. The Landfill Directive (Council Directive 99/31 EC) is an instrument that imposes stringent technical requirements for landfilling. It helps to reduce its negative effects on the environment during all the stages. Although Greece was already admonished not to have adjusted them, the action the Greek authorities took were too soft and not in compliance with the European legislation. The European Commission is taking legislative measures to push the Member State to redirect correctly its action.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-483_en.htm

Fisheries

30 May 2013

In the last spring the European Parliament worked on the ambitious reform of the "Common Fisheries Policy" in order to restore and maintain fish stocks, that is seriously in danger. "A recent WWF analysis shows that recovery of fish stocks could take more than 100 years under current proposals by EU Fisheries Ministers, whereas with the Parliament's offer, it could only take 10 years for 75% of the stocks to recover", concluded Ferrigno, WWF's Common Fisheries Policy reform coordinator. According to the WWF, certain European Union (EU) countries exerted bullying tactics with Members of the European Parliament (MEP) to achieve a weak deal that allows them to overfish until 2020 and these countries are also not really interested in protecting the coastal communities. On the 30th of May, the agreement was found on the basic regulation of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The WWF maintains that some positive elements were achieved but it didn't succeeded in stopping overfishing. The Environmental organization is concerned that some crucial problem rest unsolved, like concrete actions to replenish fish stock.

http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?208857/Late-night-deal-on-fisheries-lacks-decisive-action-on-fish-stocks

Consumers buying more efficient cars in Europe



The average car sold in the EU in 2012 was 9 % more fuel-efficient than the average 3 years before, according to a new report from (European Environment Agency) EEA. Improved technology and increased share of diesel cars are the main reasons of the fall in average CO2 emissions.

30 Apr 2013

The latest edition of Monitoring CO2 emissions shows that average CO2 emissions from the new car fleet in the EU fell by 2.6 % between 2011 and 2012. Technological changes and also the economic crisis may have increased sales of more efficient models. Jacqueline McGlade, said: "New vehicle technology is becoming more efficient, which is an encouraging sign. But significantly cutting the greenhouse gases from transport will also require a more fundamental change in the transport modes we use and how we use them." Carbon dioxide emissions from road transport increased by 21 % between 1990 and 2011. Under EU legislation, car manufacturers have individual emissions targets based on the average mass of the cars they sell. 2012 is the first year that manufacturers face fines if they exceed their target.

Diesel vehicles represent 55 % of the newly registered vehicle fleet and they traditionally had lower CO2 emissions than their petrol counterparts although this gap has narrowed in recent years. Anyway diesel cars emit higher levels of some air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, compared to petrol-driven equivalents. The lowest carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per kilometer were in Denmark and Portugal, while Hungary and Belgium were the only 2 EU Member States where cars sold in 2012 were on average less efficient than those sold the year before. Cars with the highest average emissions were sold in Latvia and Estonia. Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) include electric cars, hybrids and cars running on alternative fuels, and they represented 13 % of new cars sold in Italy, the highest proportion in any Member State.

BIOFUEL

May 2013

The Institute for European Environment Policy published last May a study called "Shifting away from conventional biofuels. Sustainable alternatives for the use of biomass in the UK transport sector" which investigates the potential of an innovative biofuel

sector. The current biofuel consumption effect on environment and society is much higher than expected. Indeed it has caused for example high levels of GHG emissions, or strong pressures on agricultural markets and consumer prices. A lively debate about this issue fired up in the last spring, since the topic was running in the G8 sphere. However, the new researches

carried out by the Institute for European Environmental Policy for ActionAid show that an advanced biofuel sector can considerably reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and can be also an opportunity to create a large amount of jobs.

More information:

<http://www.ieep.eu/assets/1192/>



Highest recycling rates in Austria and Germany - but UK and Ireland show fastest increase

19 Mar 2013

Austria, Germany and Belgium recycled the largest proportion of municipal waste in Europe in 2010. Although some countries have rapidly increased recycling rates, Europe is still wasting vast quantities of valuable resources by sending them to landfill, and many countries risk falling short of legally binding recycling targets.

Overall 35 % of municipal waste was recycled in Europe in 2010, a relevant improvement respect to the past, but many countries will find extremely difficult to meet EU-mandated targets to recycle 50 % of household and similar waste by 2020. It is showed in a report of the EEA which looks at the management of municipal solid waste, mainly consisting of household waste, in 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey. Although 5 countries have already achieved the target, most others will need to make huge efforts to achieve this before the deadline. At present, Bulgaria and Romania seem to recycle small proportions of municipal waste, so to meet the target by 2020 they must increase recycling by more than 4 percentage points per year during this decade - something which no country managed to do between 2001 and 2010! Recycling rates are highest in Austria, with 63 %, Germany (62 %), Belgium (58 %), the Netherlands (51 %) and Switzerland (51 %). Other findings shows that Europe is successfully moving up the 'waste management hierarchy', albeit more slowly than required by legislation, the report says: the amount of waste sent to landfill has decreased since 2001, while has increased the amount of waste incinerated, composted and recycled. Recycling can also reduce greenhouse gases and save valuable resources, since recycled materials replace virgin materials. Moreover, the municipal waste generated by each EU citizen fell by 3.6 % between 2001 and 2010; but this may be due to the economic downturn - waste generation per capita was quite stable between 2001 and 2007. On one hand Municipal waste produced by the average Slovakian increased by 39% between 2001 and 2010, while Norwegians and Croatians raised annual municipal waste by 30 and 25 % respectively. On the other hand many countries reduced the amount of waste generated: Bulgaria (18 %), Estonia (17 %), Slovenia (12 %) and the UK (12 %).

More info:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/media/newsreleases/highest-recycling-rates-in-austria>



Every breath we take - Signals 2013 focuses on air quality in Europe

15 Apr 2013

Poor air quality can have serious impacts on our health and the environment. What does Europe do to improve air quality? The new edition of EEA Signals takes a closer look. Air quality in Europe has improved greatly in recent decade, but air pollution is still a serious problem: it can trigger and aggravate respiratory diseases, damage forests, acidify soils and waters, reduce crop yields and corrode buildings. In particular, it is found to reduce the life expectancy of the average city dweller by 8 months in Europe, or up to 2 years in some areas. However almost 1/3 of Europe's city dwellers are still exposed to excessive concentrations of airborne particulate matter.

Signals 2013 - Every breath we take, consists of short and handy articles about several aspects related to air quality, including the state of Europe's air today, links between climate change and air, the way different pollutants can form in the atmosphere, and a brief overview of the European legislation on air quality. It was launched in Ireland by Minister Phil Hogan T.D., at the Air Science Policy Forum and the publication is illustrated with a remarkable series of photographs taken by the public, submitted in a photostory competition ImaginAIR organized by EEA in 2012, which asked participants to tell their story about air in 3 pictures.

More info:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/every-breath-we-take-2013>

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FLOOD RISK IN EUROPEAN CITIES

01 Mar 2013

To make people aware, EEA and some partners created an online mapping tool and on March 2013 is organized the First Eye on Earth User Conference in Dublin (Ireland) aiming to join together people with a common interest in sharing environmental data and information. During heavy rain, cities may be flooded if the water cannot drain quickly into the ground and the sewage system in cities cannot cope with the amount of water. That is way, the map shows the mean percentage of each city covered with impervious surfaces such as buildings, concrete or asphalt, where the soil is 'sealed'. Paris, Bucharest and Barcelona, for instance, are cities with more than 3/4 of their surface area sealed. However, it is important to know that soil sealing is only one factor contributing to increased risk of urban flooding. In 2011, really heavy rainfall in Copenhagen caused widespread flooding and damage when the sewers could not cope with the huge volume of water. Insurance damages alone were estimated at € 650-700 million, nevertheless around 60% of the area of Copenhagen is sealed, less than many other cities. Climate change has been observed across Europe, and according to an EEA report published in 2012 the effects are so varied across the continent: precipitation has increased in the north, but decreased in the south, and most forecasts show that both trends will continue during this century.

More info:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/climate-change-and-flood-risk>

Air pollution: breaches of legal limits continued through 2010 and 2011

18 Mar 2013

Air pollutant emissions were above legal limits in 8 Member States in 2011, preliminary data shows. In 2010, 12 Member States exceeded these limits, according to final official data reported under the European Union's National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive.



"Although the new data shows some clear improvement between 2010 and 2011, Europe still needs to work hard to reduce air pollution," EEA Executive Director Jacqueline McGlade said, "Emissions from transport are still a major problem, particularly in some cities." The NEC Directive covers four main dangerous air pollutants which can cause respiratory problems, contribute to the acidification of soil and surface water, and damage vegetation.

An early analysis of the official 'final' 2010 data confirms 12 Member States exceeded their NO_x (nitrogen oxides) ceilings, 7 of these Member States continued to breach them in 2011 and Germany was the only Member State to have exceeded 3 of 4 them in both 2010 and 2011. Road transport contributes about 40 % of total EU-27 NO_x emissions and unfortunately reductions from this sector over the last 2 decades have not been as large as initially supposed: partly because transport demand has been higher than expected; partly because real-world driving conditions have sometimes led to higher emissions than those anticipated with vehicle emission standards. The review of EU air policy says that, the European Commission should publish a proposal for a revised NEC Directive the next autumn, calling for stricter emission ceilings for 2020 or beyond to further protect health and the environment. For the first time, a ceiling for fine particulate matter may be introduced. Anyway, in absence of new legislation the NEC Directive remains in force requiring Member States to keep emissions below national ceilings also in future years.

More info:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/air-pollution-breaches-of-legal>

EUROPE 2020

Editors: Buontempo Michele, Cararo Andrea, Manes Alessio, Silvestri Gabriele

Employment: Commission proposes to improve application of workers' rights to free movement

Brussels, 26 April 2013

The European Commission has proposed new measures to ensure the better application of EU law on people's right to work in another Member State and so make it easier for people to exercise their rights in practice. Currently there is a persistent problem with public and private employers' lack of awareness of EU rules, regardless of whether the national legislation is compliant or not. This lack of awareness or understanding of the rules is a major source of discrimination based on nationality. Furthermore, people also consider that they do not know where to turn to in the host Member State when faced with problems concerning their rights to free movement. The proposal aims to overcome these obstacles and to help to prevent discrimination against workers on the basis of nationality by proposing practical solutions. The right of EU citizens to work in another Member State, laid down in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), includes the right not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality as regards access to employment, pay and other working conditions. Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 details the rights derived from free movement of workers and defines specific areas where discrimination on grounds of nationality is prohibited, in particular as regards access to employment, working conditions, social and tax advantages, access to training, membership of trade unions, housing and access to education for children.

The proposal, if approved by the European Parliament and Council, would help to ensure real and effective application of existing legislation. Member States would be required to:

- create national contact points providing information, assistance and advice so that EU migrant workers, and employers, are better informed about their rights
- provide appropriate means of redress at national level
- allow labour unions, NGOs and other organisations to launch administrative or judicial procedures on behalf of individual workers in cases of discrimination
- give better information for EU migrant workers and employers in general.



More info:

MEMO/13/384

Luxembourg, 21 June 2013

Country-specific recommendations on economic and fiscal policies

The Council drafted recommendations to 23 member states on the economic policies implemented in their national reform programmes, as well as set out opinions on each member state's fiscal policies, as presented in their stability/ convergence programmes.

The European Council endorsed priorities under the 2013 European Semester. The texts approved are forwarded to the General Affairs Council, with a view to the European Council meeting on 27 and 28 June. The European Semester involves simultaneous monitoring by the Commission of the member states' economic and fiscal policies during a six-month period every year. In the light of policy guidance from the European Council in March, the member states present their national reform programmes and stability/ convergence programmes annually in April. The national reform programmes is to be considered as a macroeconomic scenario for the medium term, national targets for implementing the "Europe 2020" strategy for jobs and growth, identification of the main obstacles to growth, and measures for concentrating growth-enhancing initiatives in the short term. The stability and convergence programmes set out medium-term budgetary objectives, the main assumptions about expected economic developments, a description of fiscal and economic policy measures, and an analysis of how changes in assumptions will affect fiscal and debt positions.



Employment: Commission proposes rules to make Youth Employment Initiative a reality

Brussels, 12 March 2013

Young people have been particularly badly affected by the economic crisis. In January 2013, the youth unemployment rate in the EU was more than twice as high as the adult rate, at 23.6 %. There are 7.5 million young Europeans (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in the EU. Youth unemployment is particularly acute in certain regions. This is not only a problem for the individuals concerned but also poses a serious threat to social cohesion in the EU and risks having a long-term negative impact on Europe's economic potential and competitiveness.

Youth unemployment has been particularly strong in certain regions of the Union. To tackle the unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment, the Commission adopted the Youth Employment Package on 5 December 2012. This measure includes a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, by setting out a second-stage social partner consultation on a Quality Framework on Traineeships, calling out a European Alliance for Apprenticeships and displaying ways to break down obstacles to mobility for young people.

The Commission Measures

In order to implement the Youth Employment Initiative, The European Commission has proposed operational rules to fight youth unemployment. The Youth Employment Initiative was proposed by the European Council on the 7th and 8th of February 2013 with a

budget of €6 billion for the period 2014-20. The tasks of the Youth Employment Initiative is to support young people not involved in education, employment or training (NEETs) in the Union's regions with a youth unemployment rate in 2012 at above 25%. It focuses on integrating NEETs into the labour market. The financial resources under the Youth Employment Initiative would therefore be devoted to the reinforcement of measures outlined in the December 2012 Youth Employment Package. In particular, the funds would be available for Member States to finance measures to implement in the eligible regions the Youth Guarantee Recommendation that was defined by the EU's Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers on 28 February. Moreover, Member States should implement measures to ensure that young people up to age 25 will be able to receive a better quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

The €3 billion taken from the funding would come from a dedicated Youth Employment balance sheet supplemented by at least €3 billion more from the European Social Fund. Young people have been particularly badly affected by the economic crisis. In January 2013, the youth unemployment rate in the EU was more than twice as high as the adult rate, at 23.6 %. There are 7.5 million young Europeans (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in the EU. Youth unemployment is particularly acute in certain regions. This is not only a problem for the individuals concerned but also poses a serious threat to social cohesion in the EU and risks having a long-term negative impact on Europe's economic potential and competitiveness. To tackle the unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment, the Commission adopted the Youth Employment Package on 5 December 2012. It includes a proposal for a Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, launches a second-stage social partner consultation on a Quality Framework on Traineeships, announces a European Alliance for Apprenticeships and outlines ways to reduce obstacles to mobility for young people.

Creating jobs for young people is a key objective of cohesion policy supported by both the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. The European Council of 7-8 February 2013 has decided to go a step further in the fight against youth unemployment by proposing the Youth Employment Initiative.

Leaders endorse EU's economic priorities for 2013

Brussels, 15 March 2013

At the European Council meeting on 14-15 March the EU leaders endorsed the Union's economic priorities for 2013 and provided strategic guidance for the member states' national budgetary policies and structural reforms for this year. This is part of the six-month policy coordination cycle between the EU member states, known as "the European Semester".

The five agreed EU economic policy priorities are:

- differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidation,
- restoring normal lending to the economy,
- promoting growth and competitiveness,
- creating new jobs,
- cutting bureaucracy in public administration.

The leaders emphasised that particular priority should be given to supporting youth employment and promoting growth and competitiveness.

The European Semester procedure given by the European Council, imposes member states to draft plans for their structural reforms and budgetary policies in 2013. The following measures are to be considered as major guidelines regarding especially budgetary policies, fiscal consolidation and ensuring economic growth.

Furthermore, Member states' expenditure and revenue measures, including short-term targeted measures, should therefore "boost growth and support job creation", particularly for the young. The leaders are also asked for structural reforms to be promoted through sustainable growth, employment and competitiveness as well as the correction of macroeconomic imbalances by shifting taxation away from labour, improving the efficiency of tax collection and tackling tax evasion.

In order to tackle youth unemployment EU redirected in 2012 €16 billion of unused structural funds to the most affected countries. That money helped some 800 000 young people and 55 000 small companies all over Europe.



More information:

1. Spring European Council
2. Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance signed



Moving Europe beyond the crisis: country-specific recommendations 2013

Brussels, 29 May 2013

The European Commission has adopted recommendations to EU Member States thought up in order to lead Europe beyond the crisis and enhance tools and strategies for growth. These recommendations are designed on the basis of detailed analyses of each country's situation and provide guidance to governments on how to boost their growth potential, increase competitiveness and create jobs in 2013-2014. Taken together, they represent an ambitious set of reforms for the EU economy. Moreover, the Commission has also adopted several decisions regarding the Excessive Deficit Procedure.

Even though most Member States are making progress on fiscal consolidation and are arranging reforms to enhance competitiveness, the effectiveness of these measures vary. Some Member States need to accelerate reforms or to implement them with greater urgency.

An objective is to contrast rising unemployment, especially youth unemployment, using active

labour market policies more intensely or by improving education and training systems through deeper reforms. More shall also be done to create the conditions for businesses to invest and create jobs, promoting competition in product and service markets and stimulating investment in research, innovation and resource efficiency. Finally, fiscal consolidation should continue, although at a different rate, while persisting weaknesses in the banking sector need to be worked out.

The package

The package includes:

- A Communication outlining the main findings of the Commission's country by country analysis, and how this can boost growth and job creation in the EU as a whole.
- 24 sets of recommendations, one set for every Member State - excluding Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus,- and a separate set for the euro area as a whole. The recommendations contain country-specific guidance on budgetary, economic and social policies, taking account of the individual situation of each Member State.
- Detailed analyses underpinning the recommendations, presented in 29 staff working documents (one for every EU Member State, one for the euro area and one for Croatia).
- In parallel with the European Semester recommendations, the Commission has also adopted a number of decisions under the Excessive Deficit Procedure, reflecting the latest developments in Member States that are expected to bring their government deficit below the EU's 3% of GDP threshold.

1. The 2013 country-specific recommendations (see MEMO/13/458)

Every year the CSRs offer “ad hoc” policy advice that guides national policies. This is carried out on the ground of a review of each Member State's economic and social performance in the previous year, and EU-wide priorities for jobs and growth set out in the Commission's Annual Growth Survey (MEMO/12/910).

In March, Member States agreed on the five priorities proposed by the Commission for 2013: pursuing differentiated growth-friendly fiscal consolidation, restoring normal lending to the economy, promoting growth and competitiveness, tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis and modernising public administration.

The recommendations are drawn up by the Commission services and adopted by the College of Commissioners. They are drafted after an accurate analysis of the national reform programmes and stability or convergence programmes that Member States submitted in April, combined with a detailed evaluation of the implementation of last year's CSRs.

The recommendations hug a broad range of matters, including public finances and structural reforms in several areas (like public administration, services, taxation, pensions and the labour market, in particular youth unemployment).

2. Decisions under the Excessive Deficit Procedure (see MEMO/13/463)

The Commission has recommended that the Council abrogate the Excessive Deficit Procedure for five countries: Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.

On the other hand, the Commission has recommended that the Council open an EDP for Malta.

In addition, the Commission has adopted Recommendations to the Council with a view to extend the deadlines for correcting the excessive deficit in six countries: Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

Finally, the Commission has recommended that the Council decides that no effective action has been taken by Belgium to put an end to the excessive deficit and that the Council gives notice to Belgium to take measures to correct the excessive deficit.

More information:
see MEMO/13/458



Regions and cities: Reform training schemes for young citizens and commit sufficient resources to the Youth Employment Initiative

Brussels, 31 May 2013

Reducing high rates of youth unemployment is one of the main goals of EU regions and cities. Taking into account the “Youth Employment Package”, the Committee of the Regions supports the European Commission's efforts to arrange and improve provisions for traineeships, apprenticeships and work placements. The CoR also warned Member States against providing insufficient funding for the Youth Employment Initiative, addressing 6 Euro Billions from the EU budget. The key question is how to get young Europeans into the job world. The solution includes providing fair traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities, addressing in particular young people who are not involved in education, employment or training. Bearing a wide vision of local needs and challenges, regions and cities have a key role to play in boosting the new initiative starting with the youth guarantee schemes which promise young people good quality employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a work contract within four months of finishing school.

“The key question is how to get young Europeans into the job world.”

The CoR insists that youth guarantees should be extended to cover young people up to the age of 30, including those with university degrees. However, the CoR acknowledges that adopting the scheme will be very expensive and not feasible in several Member States unless they can count on adequate EU funding. The CoR states that the best results in terms of youth employment are seen in countries where young people have the chance to take part in high-quality traineeships, and where well-established apprenticeship schemes form an integral part of the training and work placement system. It calls on all tiers of government to improve career services and employment agencies. Furthermore, it calls on the Commission to propose minimum quality standards for apprenticeships at a European level to ensure that the skills acquired can be recognised throughout Europe. Since in many Member States traineeships are misused and are sometimes abused as a source of cheap or even free labour, the CoR reiterates the need to put in place controls to protect young people and the quality of the training programmes.

With regards to mobility, the CoR calls for modernising the EURES network and requests that regions are given the possibility to earmark resources, either through the European Social Fund or through national and/or regional funds, to promote mobility schemes for all young Europeans under equal conditions, regardless of where they live. These schemes would be launched in addition to existing EU education programmes. Youth employment in regions and cities is mainly affected by Entrepreneurship strategies.

Therefore the CoR focuses on the financial tools that contribute in facilitating access to credit for young entrepreneurs and innovative start-ups.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Editors: Janusaite Darja, Resullu Elnur



The European Commission provides an exceptional contribution for Human Rights

Brussels, 8 May 2013

European Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs has announced the EU will respond to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's urgent appeal to invest more in human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) faces a funding shortfall for the third year in a row. Its budget for 2013 has already been reduced by 12% (about €13 million), a decision which affects its ability to prevent human rights violations, secure their respect, and protect human rights defenders.

In response to this appeal, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) will provide in 2013 an exceptional EU contribution of €10 million covering more than three-fourth of this financial gap. This exceptional EU contribution will allow the Office to continue its essential work at a time when monitoring, documenting and reporting on the situation of human rights is needed more than ever in various countries.

"We have decided to make this contribution as this UN Office represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. Human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace and good governance are common values and a silver thread that runs through the EU's foreign and development policy. We have both the moral obligation and the political will to protect them," said VP/HR Ashton and Commissioner Piebalgs.

Good governance, in all its components, is vital for an inclusive and sustainable development. The EU Agenda for Change for Development features prominently partners' commitments to human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to meeting their peoples' demands and needs.

Read more on http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-412_en.htm

"I'm really happy my appeal has been heard by the European Commission," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. "This is a much-needed and extremely welcome increase in the Commission's funding for human rights. I hope that my call will also be heard by other donors, so that together we can seize the current opportunities we have to improve the human rights of millions of people around the world."
Commissioner Piebalgs

EU and UNICEF: Fewer children behind bars, greater reforms needed

Brussels, 27 June 2013

Children in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia have seen steady and positive reforms in children's rights but still face huge barriers in accessing justice, according to a new European Union-UNICEF report launched today at a conference on justice for children in Brussels.

The report, *Juvenile Justice in the CEE/CIS (Central and Eastern Europe/ Commonwealth of Independent States) region: Progress, Challenges, Obstacles and Opportunities*, notes that across the region, fewer children are being put into prison. It also points to ill-treatment, sometimes amounting to torture, in all surveyed countries. Solitary confinement is still allowed in nearly all of them. The EU and UNICEF welcomed moves by governments in the region, including in countries due to join the EU, to widen the scope of reforms towards systematically protecting the rights of all children in the justice process. Broader reforms will include ending the culture of impunity by authorities and giving access to justice for all children who are victims or witnesses to crimes. Legislation in many of these countries is moving closer to international standards. Importantly, changes in legislation on sentencing and other reforms have also led to a substantial decline in the number of children languishing behind bars.

"Despite some progress, there is still scope for considerable improvement when it comes to children's rights. There is a need to overcome the institutionalisation of children and to promote less technical term in support of families. And our concerns don't just end there. It is essential that countries in our neighbourhood not only adhere to international human rights standards, but they must also ensure the effective implementation of recently-adopted criminal justice legislation, which in some countries is very progressive" European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle said in his opening speech at the conference.



The EU Missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah condemn death sentences issued in Gaza

Jerusalem, 15 June 2013

The EU Missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah condemn the death sentences issued in Gaza over the past weeks. They require that the de facto authorities in Gaza refrain from carrying out any executions of prisoners and comply with the de facto moratorium on executions put in place by the Palestinian Authority, pending abolition of the death penalty in line with the global trend.

The EU Missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah recall the EU's firm opposition under all circumstances to the use of capital punishment. The EU considers that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights.

Read more on <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/documents/news/>

European Commission: Trafficking in human beings increased but member states are slow to respond

Brussels, 15 April 2013

23.632 people were identified or presumed victims of trafficking in the EU over the 2008-2010 period. This is the most striking figure emerging from the first report on trafficking in human beings in Europe, published today by the European Commission. The report also highlights that the number of people being trafficked in and to the EU increased by 18% from 2008 to 2010, but less traffickers end up behind bars, since convictions decreased by 13% over the same period.

Despite this worrying background, to date, only 6 out of the 27 EU Member States have fully transposed the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive into their national legislation and three countries have only reported partial transposition of the directive, with the deadline having expired on 6 April 2013.

"It is difficult to imagine that in our free and democratic EU countries tens of thousands of human beings can be deprived of their liberty and exploited, traded as commodities for profit. But this is the sad truth and trafficking in human beings is all around us, closer than we think. I am very disappointed to see that, despite these alarming trends, only a few countries have implemented the anti-trafficking legislation and I urge those who have not yet done so to respect their obligations", said Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs.

Full and swift transposition of the EU Directive

In order to curb these trends the ambitious legislation and measures to address trafficking in human beings have to be adequately transposed and implemented.

If the Directive is indeed fully transposed, it has the potential to have a real and concrete impact on the lives of the victims and to prevent others from falling victim to such a heinous crime. This new EU legislation covers actions in different areas such as criminal law provisions, prosecution of offenders, victims' support and victims' rights in criminal proceedings and prevention. It also foresees the establishment in each Member State of a national rapporteur or equivalent mechanism reporting on trends, gathering data and measure the impact of anti-trafficking activities.

Read more on http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-322_en.htm

"It is difficult to imagine that in our free and democratic EU countries tens of thousands of human beings can be deprived of their liberty and exploited, traded as commodities for profit. But this is the sad truth and trafficking in human beings is all around us, closer than we think. I am very disappointed to see that, despite these alarming trends, only a few countries have implemented the anti-trafficking legislation and I urge those who have not yet done so to respect their obligations", said Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner

New initiative to combat violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Brussels, 23 July 2013

The European Union has just endorsed an initiative worth 25 million euros to combat violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Despite more than a decade of joint efforts from the international community and the Congolese Government, such violence remains commonplace. The European Union is very concerned by the continuing gender-based violence in the DRC and has therefore decided to launch a new programme which is innovative and presents a united front.

Mr Andris Piebalgs, Member of the European Commission responsible for Development, is delighted by the launch of this new initiative and states: "This new initiative should make a difference in the lives of women in the DRC. It is unacceptable that so many young girls and women are still victims of violence that goes unpunished and have no access to education. Moreover, any sustainable development is inconceivable without the participation of all stakeholders in our partner countries and we must not forget that women are at the heart of growth in Africa."

To help with the adoption of a new approach to relations between men and women which hopes to create a more harmonious and prosperous society in the DRC, whilst combatting gender-based violence effectively, the project aims to increase the percentage of children with proper access to education to at least 70 % in the provinces of Kinshasa and Bandundu. The initiative also aims to increase the capacity of the units in the Congolese national police force specialised in combatting violence against young girls and women in Kinshasa, Bandundu and Maniema. This will help to provide a contact point where victims and witnesses of violence can seek guidance, so that the guilty parties can be prosecuted and their violent crimes will not go unpunished. This approach can in future be extended to the rest of the country.

This programme should make it possible to tackle the roots of the problem by encouraging a new perception of the roles of women and men in society. By turning men as well as women into instruments of change, the initiative will have a better chance of success in the long term.

This initiative will be launched together with UNICEF and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, as well as with the support of the Congolese Government.

The EU Delegation's Statement on the recent evidence of torture and cruel treatment in Fiji

Brussels, 15 April 2013

The European Union Delegation for the Pacific issues the following statement in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission in Fiji:

The European Union Delegation is deeply disturbed by a video published recently on the internet containing graphic evidence of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment used against two men in handcuffs, suspected to be escaped prisoners. Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment represent grave violations of human rights and are prohibited under customary international law. Such acts can never be justified.

The EU Delegation welcomes the investigation that has been launched and calls the police to ensure it is conducted in a thorough and transparent manner, bringing the perpetrators rapidly to justice.

Read more on http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/fiji/press_corner/all_news/news/2013/20130313_01_en.htm

FOUR FREEDOMS

Editors: Corrente Federica, Marone Valentina, Rigott Martha

FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE:

Maximising the Impact of Migration: new guidelines from the Commission

Brussels, 21 May 2013.

In its communication the Commission underlines the importance of migration as a key element for inclusive economic and social development. Hence the need for the EU to adopt priority policies fostering the role of migrants as agents of innovation and development. Although it is already an example of how development could be achieved through labour mobility, lot of steps further can be made to promote the positive effects that the challenge of migration can offer.



As first, the Commission calls on all relevant agencies and international organizations to pursue a more coherent and coordinated approach at a global level, such that it can ensure people moving in search of a better life to be sure to exercise their rights in a safe environment. This can only be achieved strengthening partnership and cooperation between EU and non-EU countries and regions and promoting governance frameworks for maximizing the potential of migration and mobility. Moreover the Commission stresses the importance of migration as an *"enabling factor"* fundamental for attaining development both in countries of origin and of destination. Especially in times of crisis, promoting labour mobility contributes to a better match between demand and supply on the labour market. In this light, removing barriers which hinder economic competitiveness should be an efficient remedy to favor migrant workers.

Finally the Commission *"calls on migration policy makers and practitioners to take full account of development concerns in migration policy and step up their responsibility in ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights of all migrants through all dimensions of migration"*. Respect of human rights and freedoms is indispensable.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/immigration/general/docs/maximising_the_development_impact_of_migration.pdf

New amendment to the Schengen agreement on movement across EU countries

“The definition of short stay, it is no more “three months”, but starting from Oct. 18th, the length of stay in the Schengen Area is of “90 days in any 180-day period”, i.e. maximum 90 days in a continuous period of 180 days.”

Brussels, 26 June 2013

On June 29, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union amended Reg. (EC) No 562/2006 on the establishment of a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), the Convention implementing the Schengen agreement and other Regulations¹. Main changes affect the calculation of the length of stay in the Schengen Area and changes in the validity of the passport.

As for the definition of short stay, it is no more “three months”, but starting from Oct. 18th, the length of stay in the Schengen Area is of “90 days in any 180-day period”, i.e. maximum 90 days in a continuous period of 180 days. The short-stay calculator on the European Commission’s website can compute for how many days one can stay in the Schengen Area.

The second major change brought about by the amendment of the Regulation, is that third country nationals need a travel document whose validity shall last until at least three months after the intended date of departure from the Schengen area (even if in a justified case of emergency this obligation may be waived) and which has been issued within the previous 10 years from the date of entry to the Member State.

The above limitation does not apply to EU citizens.

The Regulation has entered into force from 19 July 2013.

For further information:

<http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R0610&from=EN>

¹ Council Regulations (EC) No 1683/95 and (EC) No 539/2001 and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS:

Reduced fees for chemical registration of chemicals

Brussels, 20 March 2013

Today the European Commission amended fees charged to small and medium sized companies (SMEs) for registering chemicals. SMEs to which the Regulation on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals (also known as REACH regulation) may apply, will benefit from a reduction of charges for registration of chemical substances used in the Common market.

Depending on their size (medium, small, micro) SMEs will pay 35% to 95% less for standard registration and 25% to 90% less for standard authorisation requests to European Chemical Agency. With this amendment it should be easier for SMEs to overcome the current difficult market situation.



EU chemical legislation

Antonio Tajani,
Commissioner for Industry
and Entrepreneurship, and
Janez Potočnik,
Commissioner for
Environment
acknowledged: "By
reducing fees for SMEs
affected by the REACH
legislation, the Commission
is directly responding to
their concerns. We are
working together towards
EU chemical legislation that
protects health and the
environment, as well
helping European
businesses to grow and to
create jobs."

For further information:

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/
LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?
uri=OJ:L:
2008:107:0006:0025:en:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:107:0006:0025:en:PDF)



New cosmetics products regulation

Brussels, 11 July 2013

Today the new cosmetics products regulation "Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on cosmetic products" entered into force. The new regulation is a recast of the Directive 76/768/EEC on cosmetic products, which has been substantially amended over time. Therefore a new regulatory framework for placing cosmetic products in the Common market was needed.

The new regulation seeks at ensuring that consumers are well informed about the composition of cosmetic products.

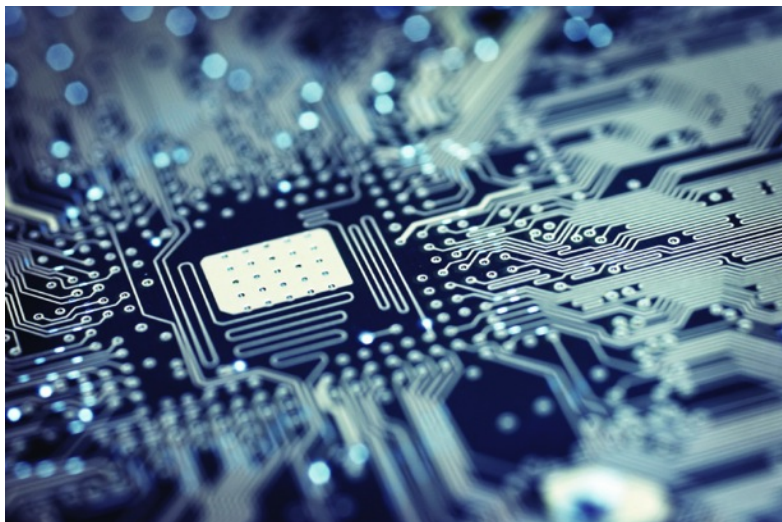
The most important changes are:

- Clearer obligations for safety assessment (e.g. requirement to include reasoning)
- Product labels should include name and address of responsible person (manufacturer, importer, distributor), date of minimum durability should be presented with a pictogramme, use of all nanomaterials has to be indicated
- Centralized notification system of placing cosmetic products in EU market

Free movement of cosmetic products in the Common market is guaranteed if they comply with the new regulation.

For further information:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:342:0059:01:EN:HTML>



FREE MOVEMENT OF SERVICES:

Keeping up with technology: a proposal to regulation on package travel

Brussels, 9 July 2013

The European Parliament and the European Council submitted a proposal for a new Directive to regulate the package travel sector. The previous attempt to regulate package travel dates back to Directive 90/314, which produced rights for European travelers booking package holidays, the latter usually consisting of “passenger transports and accommodation,” while providing consumers with the basic information needed to sign a contract. Although the old Directive constituted a fundamental pillar on which consumers could rely when purchasing a package holiday, the spread of Internet and the liberalization of the airline sector triggered the undeniable need to clarify and better specify the new categories of traders in package holidays and their place in the market, so as to eliminate the uncertainty among consumers. In addition to this, as also the proposal states, “some of the provisions of the Directive have become outdated or create unnecessary burden for companies.” Therefore, the new Directive aims at approximating rules on package travel and other combinations of travel services in order to increase the level of consumers’ protection and, in turn, strengthen the functioning of the Internal Market. Before publishing the proposal, between 2007 and 2012 a series of consultations and workshops took place, in order to gather the opinions and views of the interested parties, such as business stakeholders, consumers’ associations, lawyers, academics and 14 Member States. In the end, the final version of the proposal was published, laying its legal foundation in Article 114 of the TFEU, and homogenizing rules on package travels, thus, removing cross-borders transaction costs and at the same time increasing consumers’ choice.

For further information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/consumer-marketing/travel/package/>

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/consumer-marketing/news/>

A new step towards integration thanks to the new rules on payment services

Brussels, 24 July 2013

"Today, the payment market in the EU is fragmented and expensive with a cost of more than 1% of EU GDP or €130 billion a year. These are costs our economy cannot afford." The words pronounced by the Internal Market and Services Commissioner, Michel Barnier, clearly explain the rationale behind the approval of a new package of rules on payment services by the European Commission. The Package includes a new Payment Services Directive (PSD2) and a proposal for a regulation on interchange fees for card-based payment transactions. In particular, the constant technological development in the payment sector has made the need to modernize the provisions contained in the old PSD more urgent, so as to regulate the new types of payments such as those related to the e-commerce. Specifically, the PSD2 aims at increasing the level of integration in the European Market for Payment Services, while, at the same time increasing the level of consumers' protection, boosting transparency, innovation and security, and creating a level playing field for payment services providers in order to implement common technical standards. The new set of rules will bring benefits especially for consumers, because the higher level of competition in the market for electronic payments increases the number choices available to them, both in terms of service providers and types of services. Furthermore, PSD2 also aims at reducing the amount of fees paid by consumers for card payments, finally, providing customers with a higher level of protection against frauds and other payments incidents.

For further information:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-719_en.htm

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-730_en.htm

FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITALS:

A new Investment Plan for SMEs

Brussels, 28 June 2013

During the meeting of the European Council of 27-28 June 2013, heads of State and government debated a proposal of the European Investment Bank and of the European Commission to establish one single SME support instrument with a total worth of € 10.4 billion, co-financed by the Structural Funds. This new "Investment Plan" is aimed at boosting the financing of the economy and improving access to credit. *"The options would make small businesses loans cheaper for banks, have the potential to kick-start the EU's securitisation market and could reduce the 'no risk at all attitude' currently present in the EU banking sector".* Given the present economic context, the Council believes essential to provide SMEs the right priority, since they may improve job creation and reducing youth unemployment. The European Council agreed with EIB and the Commission on the need to promote entrepreneurship and self employment and thus approved the launch of such investment plan. All the initiatives should be included in a comprehensive operational programme and presented to the Council at the October 2013 Summit, in order for it to begin operating from January 2014.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/eib_en.pdf

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/137634.pdf

"The options would make small businesses loans cheaper for banks, have the potential to kick-start the EU's securitisation market and could reduce the 'no risk at all attitude' currently present in the EU banking sector". Given the present economic context, the Council believes essential to provide SMEs the right priority, since they may improve job creation and reducing youth unemployment. The European Council agreed with EIB and the Commission on the need to promote entrepreneurship and self employment and thus approved the launch of such investment plan. All the initiatives should be included in a comprehensive operational programme and presented to the Council at the October 2013 Summit, in order for it to begin operating from January 2014.



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Easier recovery of cross-border debts for citizens and businesses

Brussels, 30 May 2013

The European Commission welcomes progress on a proposal for a legislation to help European citizens and businesses to recover cross-border debts. The current situation makes it rather difficult for them to retrieve their money from debtors of other Member States. Different legal orders, costs taking a lawyer and translating documents are the most

insurmountable hurdles. The European Commission proposal includes a Europe-wide preservation order and was backed today by the European Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI).

"Today's vote by the Legal Affairs Committee is another step forward for a Europe for citizens and a Europe which helps small businesses," acknowledged Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner. "Our initiative on cross-border debt recovery will cut costs and save time for businesses, which are trying to get their money back in economically difficult times. Thanks to the committed work of rapporteur Raffaele Baldassarre MEP, I am confident that this important initiative will soon become law to lend an extra helping hand to citizens and business alike."

Next steps include the preparation of the draft directive which will then be discussed by Justice Ministers at Justice Council on 6 June 2013.

For further information:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-481_en.htm

"Today's vote by the Legal Affairs Committee is another step forward for a Europe for citizens and a Europe which helps small businesses," Vice-President Viviane Reding

Complying with international standards in the banking sector

Brussels, 16 July 2013

The 2008 financial crisis and the following 2011 European debt crisis highlighted the many weaknesses in the European banking sector, to the extent that a new piece of legislation, the Capital Requirement Directive IV (CRDIV) has become part of the EU body law, entering into force from 1st January 2014, and whose implementation will end in 2019. The CRDIV comprises a Directive and a Regulation, and implements the Basel III Agreement, which is a set of international common standards on bank capital adequacy approved by the Basel Committee, the international body setting down common minimum standards for the world banking system. The main innovations introduced by the Directive include a new relationship between the variable and the fixed component of remuneration, the strengthening of the corporate governance requirements, an increase in the level of diversity in the board composition so as to create an efficient group think, and, finally, a higher level of transparency with respect to the activities performed by banks, to the benefit of EU citizens. On the other hand, the Regulation in the CRDIV package establishes the creation of a Single Rule Book, in other words, a comprehensive collection of prudential rules for European and national banking institutions, which should harmonize the functioning of the entire system. Hopefully, the CRDIV measures will increase the solidity of the European banking system, improving its ability to deal with risks connected to the banking activities and to the possible losses which may arise from them.

For further information:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-13-0716_en.htm?locale=en

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-690_en.htm?locale=en

ENERGY POLICY

Editors: Pacini Maura, Pelosio Elena, Pierdonati Costanza



Green Paper issued by the Commission: "A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies"

On 27th of March 2013, the European Commission took the first step towards developing a 2030 framework for EU climate change and energy by adopting a Green Paper. The aim of the document, titled "A 2030 framework for climate and energy policies", is to consult stakeholders to obtain

evidence and views to support the development of

the 2030 framework. In fact, the Green Paper initiates a public consultation, running until the 2nd of July, allowing Member States, other EU institutions, all EU citizens and organisations including public authorities as well as other relevant stakeholders from outside the EU, to contribute and express their opinions; for example on the type, nature and level of potential climate and energy targets for 2030, together with other important issues of EU energy policy in a 2030 perspective. Those contributing views will allow for the Commission to be better equipped when dealing with its on-going preparations for more concrete proposals for the 2030 framework, which will be discussed by the end 2013. Günther Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Energy said: *"We need to define our climate and energy policy framework for 2030 as soon as possible to ensure proper investment that will give us sustainable growth, affordable competitive energy prices and greater energy security. The new framework must take into account the consequences of the economic crisis, but it must also be ambitious enough to meet the necessary long-term goal of cutting emissions 80-95% by 2050."*

The 2030 framework will draw from what it was learnt and experienced in the context of the 2020 framework and it will determine where improvements are to be made. Furthermore, it will also take into account the longer term perspective laid out by the Commission in 2011 in the Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050, the Energy Roadmap 2050, and the Transport White Paper.

More information: <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/green_paper_2030_en.htm>

Concerto Initiative - Development of smarter cities

14 May 2013,

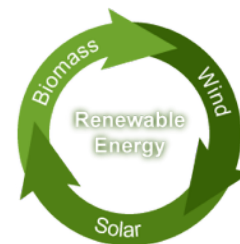
Today Vice Pres. Kallas and Kroes and the EU Commissioner for Energy Oettinger have held the first High Level meeting of the European Innovation Partnership "Smart Cities and Communities". The EIP's aim is to increase the broadcast of innovative technologies for energy savings as well as the use of renewable and sustainable energies for cities, promoting the collaboration between local institutions, industry suppliers and civil society representatives. This autumn the EIP will publish a Strategic Implementation Plan and will discuss the main implications at the CONCERTO conference that will take place on 22-23 October 2013.

More information:

<www.concerto.eu>

Renewable energy: progressing towards the 2020 targets

Brussels, 27 March 2013



In 2009 the Renewable Energy Directive was adopted and legally binding renewable energy targets were introduced.

In accordance with the reporting requirements laid down in the Directive, every two years the European Commission publishes a renewable energy progress report.

Under this framework on 27th of March the European Commission published its first report, which assesses Member States' progress in the promotion and use of renewable energy according to the 2020 renewable energy targets.

In the report the Commission analyses the overall renewable energy policy developments in each Member States and the compliance of these policies with the measures laid down in the Directive.

As the Commission shows in the report the renewable energy grew strongly encouraged by the adoption of the 2009 Renewable energy Directive and the legally binding renewable energy targets.

The data and the analysis carried out for the report show that while Europe as a whole is on its trajectory towards the 2020 targets, some Member States need to undertake additional efforts.

Moreover the Commission' analysis shows there are the basis for concern about future progress.

Finally the Commission argues that it is necessary a rigorous and complete implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive, in this way together with the progress in other elements, the European Union can expect the renewable energy industry to be growing, mature and globally competitive one in the led up to 2020 and beyond.

More information: < http://ec.europa.eu/energy/renewables/reports/reports_en.htm>

EU summit: President Barroso calls for action on energy at the European Council

22nd of May 2013

Following the invitation of the President of the European Council, President José Manuel Barroso made a presentation on energy priorities for Europe in which he stressed the need for a steady implementation of a number of proposals. He recognized that good progress was made by the European Council with regard to a European approach to energy policy, since several proposals have been laid down. However, he highlighted the lack of speed in the pace of implementation, stressing the *"need of political will to act at the European level"*.

President Barroso presented, at the beginning of the meeting, different scenarios and policy recommendations. He first noted how several factors have had negative repercussions on the global energy market: firstly the international financial crisis, that lowered the level of investments in the energy sector; secondly the development of new economic markets, such as China, India and Brazil, caused the increase of energy demand and, as a consequence, a rise in prices; thirdly, the Fukushima events led several countries to dismiss nuclear energy production; finally, the discovery and production of a significant amount of shale gas in the United States.

These events have contributed to widen the gap between energy prices charged to European industries and the prices charged to American ones. Such a gap has had significant consequences on international competition: from 2005 to 2012 gas price for European industries has risen of a 35%, whilst for the American industries it has instead diminished of the 66%.

President Barroso underlined: *"The reality is that the global energy landscape is changing very quickly and not in Europe's favour. But we should not be resigned to that"*.

He then proposed a so-called *"no regrets scenario"*, entailing action in five areas:

- complete the internal energy market,
- invest in innovation and infrastructure,
- commit to greater energy efficiency,
- exploit renewable sources more cheaply,
- diversify supplies.

Commission Recommendations

After the endorsement of the Commissions recommendations by the European Council in its conclusions, President Barroso finally stated: *"there is no silver bullet to solve the strategic energy challenges that Europe faces. But there is much we can do if we act together through Europe. The status quo is not an option, which is why we really need to implement what has been agreed today. I believe this is important to build this European energy community"*.



A new proposal on nuclear safety

Brussels, 13 June 2013

Following the nuclear accident in Fukushima in March 2011, member states asked the Commission, together with the European Nuclear Safety Regulators' Group (ENSREG), to carry out stress tests and to review the EU nuclear safety legislation. In Europe the "stress tests" put our own nuclear safety under the microscope. As the Commission underlined rigorous safety provisions help to ensure that accidents like Fukushima will not happen in Europe.

With the proposal of the 13th of June, the Commission improved the Directive 2009/71/EURATOM of 25 June 2009, by setting out deeper safety objectives for the European Union, aimed to significantly reduce the risks and protect people and the environment.

Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger said: "It's up to Member States to decide if they want to produce nuclear energy or not. The fact remains that there are 132 nuclear reactors in operation in Europe today. Our task at the Commission is to make sure that safety is given the utmost priority in every single one of them."

The new directive establishes:

- Safety objective
- EU-wide, legally binding reviews every six years
- National reviews
- New Power Plants
- On-site emergency preparedness and response

As to transparency it has to be published a strategy concerning the way in which the public is informed both in event of accident and in times of normal operation of the plant. The bodies entrusted to develop this strategy are the National Regulatory Authorities and plant operators. Very important point concerns the fact that the Directive ensures the independence of the National Regulator Authorities' decisions and those ones taken by political bodies.

The Commission worked closely with countries outside the EU, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it provides assistance to ensure that countries planning to start using nuclear energy meet internationally recognized safety standards and have the necessary safety infrastructure.

More information: < http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/safety/safety_en.htm>

Parliament adoption of offshore legislation

21 May 2013,
after the accident in the US Gulf of Mexico happened in May 2010, the Commission decided to strengthen the EU's safety framework for offshore operations.

Today the European Parliament has adopted the legislative proposal on the safety of offshore oil and gas operations in the EU territory.

The main points of the Directive are:

- **Licensing:** licensing authorities in MSs will guarantee the highest safety standards for operators acting in this field.
- **Independent national competent authorities.**
- **Obligatory ex ante risk assessments** containing risk control measures and an emergency response plan.
- **Independent verifiers.**
- **Transparency :** information will be made accessible to citizens.
- **Emergency response:** operators will prepare emergency response plans.
- **Liabilities:** companies will be fully liable for environmental damages.
- **EU Offshore Authorities Group and International:** MSs' inspectors will work together and with their international partners.



More information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/energy/oil/offshore/standards_en.htm>

JEAN MONNET MODULE

The European Module is part of the Jean Monnet Action under the Lifelong Learning Programme by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission. The purpose of the course is to analyse the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on the European Economic Constitution; the interplay between market integration and the European Social Model, as well as duties, rights and remedies for undertakings in the legal framework of the new social market economy will be thoroughly examined. Teaching activities will be carried on by the professors involved but also through lectures and seminars held by other invited guests, highly specialised in the field. The guest lectures/ seminars will give students the chance to have a view different from the one of the ordinary professor of their course.

Guest speakers will intervene on the following topics:

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and its the enforcement

The social dimension of European integration after Lisbon

The European energy policy

Services of general economic interest

The European environmental policy

The Newsletter

Students are divided into working groups, according to they interests. Each working group is assigned a topic and it is in charge of following the latest news in relation to it. The news are collected by each working group in short memoranda to be published in the website and disseminated by the newsletter.



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