

Jean Monnet European Module

*“The European Economic Constitution after the Lisbon Treaty:
Undertakings in the new social market economy”*

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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

WE WANT YOU: BUILDING UP EUROPE

GREEN PAPER on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy Towards a more efficient European Procurement Market

Brussels, 27 January 2011

Meeting the procurement challenges of the public sector has become a very important scope for the European Union. Given the amount of public money at stake and the number of public purchasers and suppliers involved, the way in which public procurement is regulated and administered has an immediate and substantial influence on the business environment. Within the framework of Europe 2020 growing strategy, the process whereby the public sector awards contracts to companies for the supply of goods or services must support an innovative, resource-efficient and low-carbon economy. Given the relevance of this sector the Internal Market and Services Directorate General of the European Commission released on January 27th a Green Paper (http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/docs/2011/public_procurement/20110127_COM_en.pdf) on the modernization of the public procurement system within the European Union aiming at promoting a public consultation. In the Green Paper there are 144 questions to debate concerning the future reform of the EU public procurement rules. The results of this new research will be made public in summer 2011 and will lead to a proposal for a reform.

All citizens and organisations are welcome to contribute to this consultation. Everyone who desires can follow the instructions here: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2011/public_procurement_en.html under the voice "How to submit your contribution".

BUYING EFFICIENTLY, BUY SOCIAL

A new Guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement

Brussels, 28 January 2011

European Commission - Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit D.2 and Directorate-General for the Internal Market and Services Unit C.3

The new Guide is a very concrete tool to help public authorities to buy goods and services in a socially responsible way in line with EU rules. It also highlights the contribution public procurement can make to stimulate greater social inclusion. This publication is commissioned under the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity PROGRESS (2007-2013). This programme is managed by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 goals in these fields.

Further information here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6457&langId=en>

**DRIVING FORWARD: QUALITY, INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCY IN PROVIDING SERVICES
OF GENERAL INTEREST**

A new guide

Brussels, 28 January 2011

This new Guide, issued by **European Commission**, aims at clarifying the European rules applicable to the organization and financing of services of general interest. This Guide thus helps public authorities, especially at local level, to provide high quality and efficient services in line with the EU rules.

Answering questions raised by various stakeholders on the entrustment of services of general interest, the document further explains that public authorities can use public procurement rules and, at the same time, ensure quality, innovation, continuity and comprehensiveness of social services.

This new Guide is an update of the FAQs on State aid and public procurement published in November 2007. It is largely based on questions received through the Interactive Information Service, which was put in place in January 2008 as part of the Commission clarification strategy on services of general interest.

The update also addresses questions raised by recent Court judgments, the work of the Member States and the Commission within the Social Protection Committee and the Commission services' on-going dialogue with public authorities, organisations representing service users and providers, the European Parliament and other stakeholders.

Finally, the document provides specific guidance on the application of the Internal Market rules, and of the Services Directive, to social services.

Further information here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=6458&langId=en>

GERMANY:

Public procurement and pensions schemes: the Commission seeks Germany's compliance with Court judgment of 2010

Brussels, 14 March 2011

The **European Commission** asked Germany for information on measures taken to comply with a 2010 Court of Justice judgment ([C-271/08](#)) that Germany had failed to fulfill its obligations under EU public procurement rules by directly awarding contracts for group pension services on the basis of a collective agreement without an EU-wide call for tender. If the German authorities do not inform the Commission within two months of measures taken to comply with the Court ruling, the Commission may refer the case to the Court for a second time and request the Court to impose financial penalties on Germany.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/287&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

FRANCE:***The Commission asks France to open to competition in public procurement for the purchase of geographical information***

Brussels, 14 March 2011

The **European Commission** decided to call on France to amend its legislation so as to repeal the provision reserving certain contracts for the supply of geographical information for the Institut géographique national (IGN). Under French law, State services or bodies must buy their large-scale reference geographical information from the IGN, the integrated geographical information system covering the entire territory of France and which comprises four geographical databases.

The Commission takes the view that this requirement is at odds with EU rules on public procurement and that France should have opened up these contracts to competition, as the geographical information in question could be provided, in most cases, by other economic operators. The Commission has sent France a reasoned opinion, the second step in the infringement procedure. If France does not comply with its obligations under EU public procurement law within two months, the Commission may refer the matter to the European Court of Justice.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/289&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

SPAIN:***Spain amends its legislation on public sector contracts following infringement procedure***

Brussels, 6 April 2011

The **European Commission** has closed infringement proceedings against Spain over a series of provisions in Spanish public procurement law on modification of public contracts after award (Spanish Law 30/2007 on public sector contracts known as the LCSP). This law, according to the Commission, gave contracting authorities a wide, almost unlimited, power to modify essential terms of public contracts after award, in a manner which was not in line with the principles of equal treatment between bidders, non-discrimination and transparency set out in EU public procurement rules. The Commission also considered that the LCSP allowed for the possibility of the contracting authority to resort to the use of negotiated procedures without publication in violation of Article 31 of Directive 2008/14/EC. The LCSP has been substantially amended by a new Law 2/2011 on Sustainable Economy (LES).

[...]

[...]

The new regime established by the LES is a welcome step in that it limits the power of the contracting authorities to modify public contracts after award in a way that alleviates the concerns that had triggered the infringement procedure. However, this new regime will be closely examined and monitored by the Commission to ensure its compatibility with EU public procurement directives and with the case law on modification of public contracts and additional works.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/430&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

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FOUR FREEDOMS

1. Free movement of People

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE EURES

Activity Report 2006 - 2008 presented by the Commission in accordance with Article 19 (3) of Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 "Towards a single European labour market: the contribution of EURES", COM/2010/0731 final

Brussels, 13 December 2010

Introduction on European Employment Services.

Strategic objectives for EURES: outcomes and impacts (promote mobility of workers and reduce barriers to mobility by contributing to the development of a European labour market open and accessible for all, ensuring the transnational, inter-regional and cross-border exchange of vacancies and job applications, and ensuring transparency and information exchange).

The EURES delivery mechanisms: the services of the EURES network are delivered by the EURES advisers and other relevant staff of the EURES members and the partner organizations involved;

EURES is built on a strong human network; training of EURES personnel is vital in order to ensure a professional network; towards mainstreaming of EURES in PES; EURES cross-border partnerships.

EURES service provision: the EURES network assists jobseekers, job changers and the unemployed, as well as employers, through the delivery of a range of services via the EURES Job Mobility Portal and the EURES adviser network. These include direct job matching assistance and indirect job matching assistance by providing information on the labour market situation and information on living and working conditions in other EEA countries, plus Switzerland) and EURES as a mechanism for job matching.

EURES must maintain its strong role as an instrument for promoting mobility. In order to address the real needs of the EURES clients and provide measurable outcomes, EURES must be re-positioned as a key tool to improve matching between jobseekers and vacancies throughout Europe.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0731:FIN:EN:HTML>

REAL MEASURES FOR THE EUROPEAN JOB MOBILITY

Brussels, 16 November 2010

EURES Charter: *Official Journal C 311*

The European Coordination Office has adopted this EURES Charter: to which the EURES members (the specialist services appointed by the Member States) and the EURES partners (all other participating organisations, including social partner organisations), in accordance with Article 3 of the Decision, shall adhere when carrying out activities within the framework of the EURES cooperation.

[...]

The article divides the activities in 3 parts:

part I concerning the description on EURES activities (as an integral part of the service offer of the EURES members, accessible at any of their local offices);

part II regarding the operational objectives, quality standards and obligations of the EURES members and partners;

part III is about the termination of a uniform system and about common models to share information within members and partners (the systems and procedures for the exchange of information are essential for the functioning of the EURES network. EURES members and partners shall comply with the uniform system and common models for the exchange of labour market and mobility-related information that are established by the EURES Coordination Office in close cooperation with the EURES members and partners).

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:311:0006:01:EN:HTML>

2- Free movement of goods

A BRAND NEW NOMENCLATURE

Brussels, 15 December 2010

Commission Regulation (EU) No 1228/2010 of 15 December 2010 amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2658/87 on the tariff and statistical nomenclature and on the Common Customs Tariff *OJ L 336, p. 17–19*

In certain circumstances, taking into account the special nature of some of the movements of goods mentioned in Regulation (EC) No 1186/2009, it seems appropriate to reduce the administrative burden when declaring such movements, by assigning them a specific CN code. It is the case, in particular, when the classification of each type of goods in a movement for the purpose of drawing up the customs declaration would entail a workload and expense disproportionate to the interests at stake.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:336:0017:01:EN:HTML>

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 351/2011 of 11 April 2011

amending Regulation (EU) No 297/2011 imposing special conditions governing the import of feed and food originating in or consigned from Japan following the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power station

Brussels, 11 April 2011

The EU reaction to the Fukushima nuclear station threat

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, having regard to Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, and in particular Article 53 thereof, feed and food originating in or consigned from Japan which do not comply with the maximum levels referred to in Annex II, shall not be placed on the market.

Such non-compliant feed and food shall be safely disposed of, or returned to the country of origin.'

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:097:0020:0023:EN:PDF>

3- Free movement of services

TOWARDS A BETTER FUNCTIONING SINGLE MARKET OF SERVICES

Brussels, 27 January 2011

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION Towards a better functioning Single Market for services – building on the results of the mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive (Text with EEA relevance), COM(2011) 20 final

In this Communication, the Commission presents the main results of the "mutual evaluation" process accompanied by a Commission staff working document describing in detail the process and the first set of results of the legislative reforms adopted by Member States to implement the Commission's Directive of 2010 "Towards a Single Market Act - For a highly competitive social market economy". The Document is concluded with future proposed actions, Objectives, including a timeline to ensure the recent directive effective implementation.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0020:EN:HTML>
SEC(2011) 102 final

Commission staff working paper on the process of mutual evaluation of the Services Directive Accompanying document to the Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the council, the European economic and social Committee and the Committee of the Regions towards a better functioning Single Market for services – building on the results of the mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive

This Commission staff working document accompanies the COM(2011) 20 Communication detailed above.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2011:0102:FIN:EN:PDF>

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Single Market Act Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence "Working together to create new growth"; COM/2011/0206 final

Brussels, 13 April 2011

Single Market Act Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence "Working together to create new growth"

The Commission laid down plans for a new [Single Market Act](#) in October, launching a public consultation on a list of 50 proposals that could be put into action in the next two years. Each of the [12 key projects](#) outlined this week is accompanied by a flagship initiative for which the Commission will make proposals during the coming months, the aim being to gain final approval from the European Parliament and the Council before the end of 2012. Some of the ideas are not new, though others, including the introduction of legislation to facilitate access to venture capital across Europe, a new system of standardization for the services sector, and the simplification of public procurement, are seen as more recent developments.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011DC0206:EN:NOT>

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Brussels, 14 December 2010

Communication from the Commission — Notification of evidence of formal qualifications — Directive 2005/36/EC on recognition of professional qualifications (Annex V) (Text with EEA relevance) 2010/C 337/02

This communication of the Commission, clarifies the titles adopted by the Member States for evidence of formal qualifications and the body which issues the evidence of formal qualifications concerned, the certificate which accompanies it (where appropriate), the corresponding professional title, and the applicable reference date or reference academic year. This is performed in accordance to Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, as amended by Council Directive 2006/100/EC.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:337:0010:01:EN:HTML>

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY

Brussels, 24 November 2010

European Securities and Markets Authority

Regulation (EU) No 1095/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Securities and Markets Authority), amending Decision No 716/2009/EC and repealing Commission Decision 2009/77/EC

In this regulation, the EU discusses the establishment of the European Supervisory Authority (European Securities and Markets Authority) embodying it as a Union body with legal personality enjoying an administrative and financial autonomy. The Authority is entitled of supervisory powers over credit rating agencies, granting it appropriate powers of investigation and enforcement, as well as the possibility of charging fees. The Authority is given with specific features, independence, and accountability in this regulation. This legislative framework substitutes the prior supervisory out of the 2009 'de Larosière Report'

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010R1095:EN:NOT>

Brussels, 24 November 2010

European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority

Regulation (EU) No 1094/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority), amending Decision No 716/2009/EC and repealing Commission Decision 2009/79/EC

In this regulation, the EU discusses the establishment of the European Supervisory Authority (European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority) embodying it as a Union body with legal personality enjoying an administrative and financial autonomy. Furthermore, the document specifies the Authority's composition, scope of action, powers and tasks, decision-making procedures, budget and relationship with the Commission, MS competent authorities, and the joint bodies of the ESFS.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010R1094:EN:NOT>

[...]

[...]

Brussels, 24 November 2010

European Banking Authority

Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority), amending Decision No 716/2009/EC and repealing Commission Decision 2009/78/EC

In this regulation, the EU discusses the establishment of the European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority) (ESA) embodying it as a Union body with legal personality enjoying an administrative and financial autonomy.

This legislative framework substitutes the prior supervisory out of the 2009 'de Larosière Report'.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010R1093:EN:NOT>

Brussels, 24 November 2010

a new European System of Financial Supervisors

Directive 2010/78/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 amending Directives 98/26/EC, 2002/87/EC, 2003/6/EC, 2003/41/EC, 2003/71/EC, 2004/39/EC, 2004/109/EC, 2005/60/EC, 2006/48/EC, 2006/49/EC and 2009/65/EC in respect of the powers of the European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority), the European Supervisory Authority (European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority) and the European Supervisory Authority (European Securities and Markets Authority)

Following the shortcomings in financial supervision, the European Parliament has called for a move towards more integrated European supervision, in order to ensure a true level playing field for all actors at Union level and reflect the increasing integration of financial markets in the Union. It is in this new supervisory framework, that the initiative of creating a new European System of Financial Supervisors, comprising three new ESA, has taken place.

For this purpose, the Council and the Parliament have issued a directive aiming at changing some legal acts of the Union in the field of operation of the three ESA concerning the definition of the scope of certain powers of the ESA, the integration of certain powers established in legal acts of the Union, and amendments to ensure a smooth and effective functioning of the ESA in the context of the ESFS.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:331:0120:01:EN:HTML>

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EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

IMAGINE ALL THE PEOPLE, LIVE THEIR LIFE IN.. CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Catalogue of scenario studies published by EEA

Brussels, 1 April 2011

“The report brings together a review of available scenarios studies relevant to environmental assessment and decision-making at the European (or sub-European) scale (263 studies), and facts sheets of selected 44 studies using common description categories, which enables the user to review existing scenario studies that may be of relevance to their particular interest and benefit from them. It is also a contribution to the evolving knowledge base for Forward-Looking Information and Services (FLIS).”

The ability of an accurate prevision-making is fundamental to develop an integrated *corpus* of rules and decision environmental related. However the future evolution is uncertain and it's necessary to develop different scenarios to forecast all the possible evolutions at least at the European level.

More information here:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/catalogue-of-scenario-studies>

THE POWER OF CONSUMERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Brussels, 3 March 2011

According to a Eurobarometer survey, 8 out of 10 citizens consider the environmental impact of a product when they decide which to purchase. It is therefore important to provide information to consumers in order to empower them to purchase better, greener products when they shop. To achieve this objective, previous Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas and Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva, together with representatives of EuroCommerce and the European Retail Round Table (ERRT), launched the Retail Forum. The retail forum is a platform that permits Retailers to play a significant role in provoking positive changes in patterns of consumer demand through their partnerships with suppliers and through their daily contact with European consumers.

More information here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/industry/retail/launch.htm>

WE PROGRAM, YOU ACT

Implementation of environmental law

Brussels, 24 January 2011

The 6th Environmental Action Programme takes a broad look at the environmental challenges and provides a strategic framework for the Commission's environmental policy up to 2012. Its four key environmental priorities are climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, and natural resources and waste. There are different extend to complete the implementation of the Environmental action Programme: the **reach** regulation (EC No 1907/2006) to check and replace chemicals causing the greatest concern; the **infringement** program that guarantees the correct application of EU law.

More information here:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-454.568+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

MORAL HAZARD? NO THANKS, IT'S A MATTER OF ENVIRONMENT!
Mapping the impacts of natural hazards and technological accidents in Europe.

Brussels 12 January 2011

The report is an EEA publication that assesses the occurrence and impacts of disasters and the underlying hazards such as storms, extreme temperature events, forest fires, water scarcity and droughts, floods, snow avalanches, landslides, earthquakes, volcanoes and technological accidents in Europe for the period 1998-2009.

More information here:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/mapping-the-impacts-of-natural>

PAINT THE ECONOMY GREEN
The UNEP yearly report for 2010

SOER 2010 highlights the twin challenges of maintaining the functions of ecosystems (**ecosystem resilience**) and finding ways to cut resource use in production and consumption activities and their environmental impacts (**resource efficiency**). It also underlines the importance of equal access for rich and poor to the benefits of a green economy. Greening Europe's economy is essential for building a sustainable future globally and meeting the Millennium Development Goals and the aims of the Rio+20 agenda. UNEP and EEA lead the change moving the world toward a sustainable path in the 21st century. The UNEP report, echoing some of the key findings of the EEA's flagship report *The European Environment: State and Outlook 2010* (SOER 2010), continue to stress the importance of the economic, social and environmental dimensions in the shift to a global green economy.

More information here:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/unep-report-maps-the-pathways>

MAIN ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATED RULES AND PROPOSALS FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 21 December 2010

- New rules tabled for European chemical plants 21/12/2010 (Environment, consumers and health)

The Commission proposes strengthening rules controlling accident hazards involving chemicals. Changes include stricter inspection standards and improving the quality of information given to the public.

(http://europa.eu/news/archives/2010/12/index_en.htm#top)

- Restrictions on GMO cultivation 21/12/2010 (Food and food safety)

Ministers ask the Commission to provide more information in order to continue discussions on the proposal to allow member countries to restrict the cultivation of GMOs.

More information here:

http://europa.eu/news/archives/2010/12/index_en.htm#top

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EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY

ENERGY TAXATION:

Commission promotes energy efficiency and more environmental friendly products

Brussels, 13 April 2011

The European Commission has today presented its proposal to overhaul the outdated rules on the taxation of energy products in the European Union. The new rules aim to restructure the way energy products are taxed to remove current imbalances and take into account both their CO₂ emissions and energy content. Existing energy taxes would be split into two components that, taken together, would determine the overall rate at which a product is taxed. The Commission wants to promote energy efficiency and consumption of more environmentally friendly products and to avoid distortions of competition in the Single Market. The proposal will help Member States to redesign their overall tax structures in a way that contributes to growth and employment by shifting taxation from labour to consumption. The revised Directive would enter into force as of 2013. Long transitional periods for the full alignment of taxation of the energy content, until 2023, will leave time for industry to adapt to the new taxation structure.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/468&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EU SUSTAINABLE ENERGY WEEK:

Commission will announce action on smart meters for more savings Debating on the best use of energy

Brussels, 8 April 2011

Between 11 and 15 April 2011, more than 30 000 participants in 43 countries discussed energy efficiency and renewable energy during the 2011 edition of the EU Sustainable Week. The European Commission is organizing the core event in Brussels in order to debate on the best use of energy efficiency and renewable energy across Europe and show concrete examples how to increase both. It announced the next steps to deploy smart grids throughout Europe and give consumers more possibilities to control their consumption and save more energy.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/138&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

INFRINGEMENT PROCEEDINGS IN THE FIELD OF INTERNAL MARKET OF ELECTRICITY AND NATURAL GAS

Commission urges Italy, Poland and Romania to change their end-user price regulation schemes to ensure freedom of choice for consumers

Brussels, 6 April 2011

The European Commission today formally requested Italy, Poland and Romania to bring their national legislation on regulated end-user energy prices in line with EU rules. EU law on the internal energy market foresees that prices are set primarily by supply and demand. End-user prices set by state intervention put obstacles to new market entrants and therefore deprive consumers and companies of their right to choose the best service on the market. The Commission has decided to send reasoned opinions to the three Member States. If the Member States do not comply with their legal obligations within two months, the Commission may refer them to the Court of Justice.

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/studies/doc/20110131_eurobarometer_energy.pdf

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ENERGY MARKET

How the market has changed

Brussels, April 2011

The 2010 Annual Report of the Market Observatory for Energy focuses on the time period from the beginning of 2009 to mid-2010.

Energy markets witnessed a slow but gradual recovery from their lows reached in the early months of 2009. The report provides a detailed description of the evolution of oil, gas and electricity markets in the EU. The energy profiles of a selection of important energy trading partners for the EU are also briefly presented.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/113&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING ON TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

Recent international developments and their impact on world energy markets and the EU energy sector

Brussels, 21 March 2011

In the light of the recent developments in Japan and North Africa, the Council took stock of the state of play in the energy sectors in these regions and of their possible impact on energy markets and EU supplies. The Commission briefed ministers on the latest developments. The Council discussed the response at EU and member state level.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/11/72&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

THE EU CIVIL PROTECTION ASSISTANCE IN ACTION

The European Union's response to the earthquake and the nuclear plant situation in Japan *Brussels, 14 March 2011*

Since the devastating earthquake which struck Japan on Friday 11 March, the European Union is fully mobilised to translate its solidarity in concrete support. The Civil Protection coordination mechanism (MIC) is preparing to coordinate deployment of in kind assistance and experts from Europe, as soon as the Japanese authorities so request it. Inside the Commission, a coordination group of nuclear experts has been established to exchange information, assess it and be ready to assist in case the situation in nuclear power plants further deteriorates.

The Commission's humanitarian and civil protection service (ECHO) follows the situation on a 24/7 basis through its Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and its humanitarian offices in Bangkok, Jakarta and Manila.

Japan authorities have not asked for help, but the EU stands ready to provide help in case of a request. The European Commission is getting information from the International Atomic Energy Agency on the situation in Japan on a regular basis.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/149&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EESC CALLS

for a common EU external policy on energy

Brussels, 18 March 2011

The EU should consider the security of its energy supply as one of the priorities of its external policy, the European Economic and Social Committee has suggested in its opinion on energy supply and neighbourhood policy. In the opinion, which was requested by the Hungarian EU presidency, the Committee came out in favour of appointing a high representative for energy policy to ensure that Europe speaks with one voice in this area.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=CES/11/35&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EUROPEAN ENERGY EFFICIENCY PLAN:

Commission gears up for more savings with renovation and smart meters

Brussels, 8 March 2011

The European Commission today adopted a plan for saving more energy through concrete measures. Energy efficiency is a key tool for strengthening Europe's competitiveness and reduces energy dependence, while decreasing the level of emissions. The set of measures proposed aims at creating substantial benefits for households, businesses and public authorities: it should transform our daily lives and generate financial savings of up to €1000 per household every year. It should improve the EU's industrial competitiveness with a potential for the creation of up to 2 million jobs.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/271&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

THE BARROSO'S RECIPE FOR A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE : FOUR COMMITMENTS

Brussels, 4 February 2011

Europe pays 2.5% of its GDP to import energy, while an integrated EU energy market would increase the internal growth, create new employment and implement consumers' savings.

The action must be prompt, since energy represents 80% of the emissions, imports are carbon intensive fossil fuel and highly expensive, several members states rely on a single gas supplier, investments will reach one trillion of euros by 2020.

Without any action the energy dependence from abroad will become even trickier. Provisions forecast that we will not meet all the 20-20-20 goals, as the consumption reduction by 20% is not a feasible aim. Some countries like Sweden, Latvia and Finland are doing very well and will meet the goals. Some other countries like Luxemburg and Malta are doing very bad. The global investment in renewables is expanding more in Europe than in USA and China.

Four commitments to provide competitive, sustainable and secure energy for Europe might be: complete the internal energy market by 2014, end energy islands by 2015, boost energy efficiency, improve the coordination of EU external energy policy.

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/documents/pdf/energy_en.pdf

THE OLD EUROPE WANTS TO DRESS GREEN

Brussels, 12 February 2011

Renewable energies are: wind power (both onshore and offshore), solar power (thermal, photovoltaic and concentrated), hydro-electric power, tidal power, geothermal energy and biomass (including biofuels and bio liquids).

The binding targets for 2020 is reaching 20% share of renewable energy in the EU overall energy mix. Every Member State has to reach individual targets and has to reach the same target of a 10% share of renewable energy. In the electricity sector, only seven out of 27 Member States expect to meet these 2010 intermediate targets. In the transport sector, nine expect to meet their 2010 targets.

The EU as a whole reached just over 18% for the share of renewable energy in the electricity in 2010 rather than the target of 21%. For transport, the EU reached 5.1% instead of 5.75%.

According to their national plans submitted in 2010, the Member States will all meet their 2020 targets. To reach the 2020 targets annual capital investment would need to rapidly double to €70bn, that should mainly come from the private sector. Member states provide financing aids such as: grants, loans and loan guarantees, equity funds, and production aid: feed in tariffs, premiums, quota/certificate schemes, fiscal incentives and tenders.

Support schemes need to ensure the costs of renewable energy production continue to fall but they also need to provide a stable investment environment. We are not proposing a harmonization of financing, since the Commission simply encourages the coordination of renewable energy support schemes. A convergence of financing, such as feed in tariffs, will be necessary in the medium or long term, when a truly European market is created.

[...]

[...]

This can include greater cooperation in setting tariffs, technology bands, tariff lifetimes etc. Cooperation mechanisms are means of allowing Member States to benefit from a form of trade of renewable energy whilst still maintaining control over their national support schemes and the achievement of their national targets.

The advantage of a single European energy market for renewables is the economies of scale of the industry across the EU that will drive production costs down and keep the industry globally competitive, with a huge potential for job creation. It is more cost-effective to produce solar power where there are more sunny days than where there are few, the same with wind energy and windy days. Low production costs will ultimately be reflected in the power price, and both companies and consumers will benefit.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/54&format=HTML&aged=0%E2%8C%A9uage=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EUROPE WANTS YOUR IDEAS

Brussels, 19 February 2011

The European Commission published the 2011 call for project proposals under the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) funding program. EUR 67 million are available to co-fund projects that facilitate the widespread use of renewable energy and help realize Europe's energy saving potential.

The deadline will be the 12-05-2011.

The objective of the Intelligent Energy - Europe II Program ("IEE II") is to contribute to secure, sustainable and competitively priced energy for Europe, by providing for action:

- to foster energy efficiency and the rational use of energy resources;
- to promote new and renewable energy sources and to support energy diversification;
- to promote energy efficiency and the use of new and renewable energy sources in transport.

The Program in particular contributes to the EU Energy 2020 Strategy, and facilitates the implementation of the EU action plan for energy-efficiency and of the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources.

Intelligent Energy – Europe builds on the experience gained from its predecessor, the first Intelligent Energy - Europe (2003-2006) Program. This Program has become the main EU instrument to tackle non-technological barriers to the spread of efficient use of energy and greater use of new and renewable energy sources.

Intelligent Energy – Europe builds on the experience gained from its predecessor, the first Intelligent Energy - Europe (2003-2006) Program. This Program has become the main EU instrument to tackle non-technological barriers to the spread of efficient use of energy and greater use of new and renewable energy sources. From 2007, Intelligent Energy – Europe has been included in the overall Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Program (CIP) in order to contribute to achieving the objectives of EU energy policy and to implementing the Lisbon Agenda. The Program is managed by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI, formerly known as Intelligent Energy Executive Agency) under powers delegated by the European Commission.

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/call_library_en.htm

WHOLESALE ENERGY MARKETS:

Commission proposes rules to prevent market abuse

Brussels, 8 December 2010

Market abuse that takes place in one Member State often affects the prices in another Member State. It is crucial to ensure EU level comprehensive rules which guarantee that citizens can be confident that prices are formed fairly and they can fully benefit from the internal energy market." The new rules aim at ensuring that traders cannot use inside information to benefit from their transactions or manipulate the market by artificially causing prices to be higher than would be justified by the availability, production cost or capacity to store or transport energy. In particular, the rules prohibit the following:

- **use of inside information** when selling or buying at wholesale energy markets. Exclusive and price sensitive information should be disclosed before trades can take place
- **transactions that give false or misleading signals** about the supply, demand or on prices of wholesale energy market products
- **distributing false news or rumors** that give misleading signals on these products.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1676&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> and
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/markets/wholesale_en.htm

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSES TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL COOPERATION

Brussels, 7 December 2010

The Commission proposes that the Regional Initiatives concentrate on more targeted goals, in particular on the following actions:

- accelerate the implementation of the 2nd and 3rd legislative energy package, including network codes
- ensure competitiveness through market coupling by 2015 allowing lower price for cross-border energy
- launch pilot testing to experiment new ideas which could then be used at the EU scale, for example on Smart Grids
- identify regional infrastructure priorities and coordinate cross-border investments to ensure security of supply and help cope with possible gas crisis
- promote the development of renewable energy

The European Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) should monitor and coordinate the work of Regional Initiatives to ensure greater coherence of the regions' work programs.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1672&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE:

Commission proposes EU priority corridors for power grids and gas pipelines

Brussels, 17 November 2010

The Commission defines EU priority corridors for the transport of electricity, gas and oil.

In the electricity sector four EU priority corridors are identified:

An offshore grid in the Northern Seas and connection to Northern and Central Europe to transport power produced by offshore wind parks to consumers in big cities and to store power in the hydro electric power plants in the Alps and the Nordic countries.

Interconnections in South Western Europe to transport power generated from wind, solar, hydro to the rest of the continent.

Connections in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe, strengthening the regional network.

Integration of the Baltic Energy Market into the European market.

In the gas sector, three EU priority corridors are identified:

- Southern Corridor to deliver gas directly from the Caspian sea to Europe to diversify gas sources.
- Baltic Energy Market Integration and connection to Central and South East Europe
- North-South corridor in Western Europe to remove internal bottlenecks and enable best use of possible external supplies.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1512&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> and http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/strategy/2020_en.htm

COMMISSION PRESENTS ITS NEW ENERGY STRATEGY TOWARDS 2020

Brussels, 10 November 2010

The Communication "Energy 2020" defines the energy priorities for the next ten years and sets the actions to be taken in order to tackle the challenges of saving energy, achieving a market with competitive prizes and secure supplies, boosting technological leadership, and effectively negotiate with our international partners.

The new energy strategy focuses on five priorities:

1. Achieving an energy efficient Europe;
2. Building a truly pan-European integrated energy market;
3. Empowering consumers and achieving the highest level of safety and security;
4. Extending Europe's leadership in energy technology and innovation;
5. Strengthening the external dimension of the EU energy market.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1492&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>,
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2010/2020_en.htm

NUCLEAR WASTE: COMMISSION PROPOSES SAFETY STANDARDS FOR FINAL DISPOSAL

Brussels, 3 November 2010

The Commission proposed safety standards for disposing spent fuel and radioactive waste from nuclear power plants as well as from medicine or research. In the Directive Member States are asked to present national programmes, indicating when, where and how they will construct and manage final repositories aimed at guaranteeing the highest safety standards. With the Directive internationally agreed safety standards become legally binding and enforceable in the European Union.

Safety concerns all citizens and all EU countries. EU have to make sure that they have the highest safety standards in the world to protect citizens, water and the ground against nuclear contamination. Safety is indivisible. If an accident happens in one country, it can have devastating effects also in others.

Year by year, 7 000 cubic meters of high level waste are typically produced in the EU, with the majority of the material being stored in interim storages. High level waste is the part of reprocessed spent fuel which cannot be re-used and has therefore to be disposed forever.

While these interim storages are necessary for fuel elements and high level waste to reduce temperatures and to decrease radiation levels, they are no long term solution as they need continuous maintenance and oversight. As they are typically close or on the surface, there is in addition a risk of accidents, including airplane crashes, fires or earth quakes.

Under the Euratom Treaty, the EU has the legal competence to protect the general public from ionizing radiation. The energy mix is a national competence. Out of 27 Member States, 14 Member States have nuclear power plants.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1460&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

SAFETY STANDARDS FOR NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL

Brussels, 3 November 2010

Why is the Commission proposing the Directive?

More than 50 years after the first nuclear power plant become operational (1956 Calder Hall, UK), there are still no final repositories for nuclear waste in the whole European Union. The majority of highly radioactive waste from nuclear power plants is put in interim storages.

What is the best solution?

There is a broad consensus among scientists that deep geological disposal is the most appropriate solution for the final disposal of high level nuclear waste. "Strategic Research Agenda" (www.snetp.eu)

[...]

[...]

What is the EU proposing?

- Member States have to draw up national programmes within four years of the adoption of the Directive.
- National programmes have to be notified. The Commission may ask Member States to modify their plans.
- Two or more Member States can agree to use a final repository in one of them.
- The public must be informed by Member States and should be able to participate in the decision making on nuclear waste management.
- Safety standards drawn up by the International Atomic Energy Agency become legally binding.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/540&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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HUMAN RIGHTS

CHILDREN FIRST

A new convention will grant speedier maintenance of payments from abroad

Brussels, 6 April 2011

The Convention will create a common legal framework between EU and the non-EU countries which ratify it to facilitate the international recovery of family maintenance claims. Since the vast majority of maintenance claims involve children, the Convention is first and foremost a measure to protect children. It creates a worldwide system of cooperation between national authorities, provides for free legal assistance in child support cases, and streamlines procedures for recognition and enforcement of court decisions on maintenance.

The new system will also speed up procedures help to find hiding debtors, which are currently long and complicated. At the international level, the Convention completes the Hague system regarding family law already in place concerning child abduction, parental responsibility and international adoption.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/261&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

NEVER STOP FIGHTING THE TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The new directive(PE-CONS 69/10) Replaces framework decision 2002/629/JHA in the fight against the trafficking in human beings

Brussels, 21 March 2011

A major step was taken today in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The Council adopted EU wide minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and the level of sanctions in the area of trafficking in human beings. The new rules also strengthen the prevention of the crime and the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/261&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

WOMEN POWER

No development without women's empowerment

Brussels, 8 March 2011

The EU commissioner for development Andris Pieblags has launched a project sponsored by the Commission, that is basically a gender drawing competition: Children around the world are required to present their vision of gender equality through a draw.

[...]

[...]

The aim is to create a debate and a reflection on what gender equality means and to make children aware of gender issues. This attention to woman's interests and conditions has always characterized UE social policies in order to speed up the process of achievement of THE MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/261&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

INTOLERANCE FOR INTOLERANCE

Foreign affairs council conclusions on intolerance, discrimination and violence on the basis of religions or believes

Brussels, 21 February 2011

During the 3069th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting of Brussels which took place on the 21th February 2011 Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council reaffirms the strong commitment of the European Union to the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief without any discrimination.

All persons belonging to religious communities and minorities should be able to practice their religion and worship freely, individually or in community with others, without fear of intolerance and attacks Freedom of religion or belief is intrinsically linked to freedom of opinion and expression as well as to other human rights and fundamental freedoms, which all contribute to the building of pluralist and democratic societies.

More information here:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/genaff/119404.pdf

NEW GUIDE TO THE VENICE COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES

A new guide to the Venice commission's activities and working method provided by the Commission

Brussels, 31 January 2011

Established in 1990, the European Commission for Democracy through Law, better known as the Venice Commission is an advisory body to the Council of Europe on constitutional matters.

The Venice Commission is composed of experts in constitutional and international law, supreme or constitutional court judges and members of national parliaments. The Commission plays an important role in the defense of Europe's constitutional heritage and has gradually expanded to become an independent instance of legal thinking, internationally recognized.

The purpose of the Venice Commission's action in the field of constitutional justice is to promote the Council of Europe's goals of democracy, the protection of human rights and the rule of law by assisting constitutional courts and equivalent bodies (constitutional councils, supreme courts) in a dialogue of judges, often referred to as judicial cross-fertilization. While constitutions differ, the basic principles underlying them form a common ground.

[...]

[...]

Legal reasoning in respect of the application of these principles in one country can be a source of inspiration in another country, notwithstanding the differences in the constitutions. Since 1993 the Commission's constitutional justice activities thus include the publication of the Bulletin on Constitutional Case-law, which contains summaries in French and English of the most significant decisions over a four month period. It also has an electronic counterpart, the CODICES database, which contains some 7000 decisions rendered by over 95 participating courts together with constitutions and descriptions of many courts and the laws governing them (<http://www.CODICES.coe.int>).

More information here:

<http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2010/CDL%282010%29109rev-e.pdf>

CLOSE THE GATES!

Trans-Atlantic symposium on dismantling transnational illicit networks

Brussels, 27 January 2011

The European Union and the United States will co-host an international symposium on dismantling transnational illicit networks from May 17-19, 2011 in Lisbon, Portugal.

Its focus will be on cross-border crimes and illicit routes, including drugs, arms, human smuggling/trafficking, money laundering and illicit finance, corruption and maritime crimes.

More information here:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118961.pdf

THE HEART BEYOND THE OBSTACLE

EU ratifies UN convention on disability rights

Brussels, 5 January 2011

It is the first time in history the EU has become a party to an international human rights treaty – the United Nation's (UN) Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The Convention aims to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy their rights on an equal basis with all other citizens. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty to be ratified by the EU as a whole. It has also been signed by all 27 EU Member States and ratified by 16 of these (see Annex). The EU becomes the 97th party to this treaty. The Convention sets out minimum standards for protecting and safeguarding a full range of civil, political, social, and economic rights for people with disabilities. It reflects the EU's broader commitment to building a barrier-free Europe for the estimated 80 million people with disabilities in the EU by 2020, as set out in the European Commission's disability strategy.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/4&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

PEOPLE ARE NOT BARGAINING CHIPS

Trafficking in human beings

Brussels, 24 November 2010

The Permanent Representatives Committee of the Council paved the way for EU wide minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and the level of sanctions in the area of trafficking in human beings. Once adopted, the new rules will also strengthen the prevention of the crime and the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings.

More information here:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/117996.pdf

EUROPE AGAINST DEATH

Brussels, 12 October 2010

Joint Council of Europe / European Union declaration to mark the European Day against the Death Penalty and the World Day against the Death Penalty - 10 October, 2010

More information here:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/116973.pdf

Human Rights Group

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EUROPE 2020: A STRATEGY FOR EUROPEAN UNION GROWTH

THE EURO PLUS PACT: **European Council conclusions, 24-25 March 2011**

Brussels, 24-25 March 2011

The aim of the Euro Plus Pact is providing a new quality of economic policy coordination to effort the economic crisis of the last years.

In the Pact Member States emphasize their commitment to the Europe 2020 Strategy. In particular, they aim to implement measures in order to:

- make work more attractive;
- help the unemployed get back to work;
- combat poverty and promote social inclusion;
- invest in education and training;
- balance security and flexibility;
- reform pension systems;
- attract private capital to finance growth;
- boost research and innovation;
- and allow cost-effective access to energy and step up energy efficiency policies.

More information here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=DOC/11/3&format=PDF&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

INNOVATION CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES IN EUROPE: **Background information to the European Council of 4 February 2011**

Brussels, 4 February 2011

This information by the Commission for the Council shows interesting results with regard to comparison of innovation and education indicators in European Union and other countries: Usa, Japan and China.

The indicators of innovation that are examined in the comparison are: New doctorate degrees (per 1000 population aged 25-34); Tertiary educated population (% of population aged 25-34); Expenditure on R&D (% of GDP); Public-private joint publications (per million population); Patents invented (per billion GDP in PPS €); Medium-high- and high-tech product exports (% of total product exports); License and patent revenues from abroad (% of GDP).

More information here:

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

BACKGROUND ON ENERGY IN EUROPE:

Information prepared for the European Council, 4 February 2011

Brussels, 4 February 2011

The document by the European Commission analyzed the current situation and forecast related to the energy demand in the EU. The analysis considered the following aspects: Key facts about energy and the EU; EU energy goals and priorities; An integrated energy market; Energy efficiency; Renewable energy; Technological challenge; External dimension

More information here:

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

EU ENERGY PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER THE EU ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Brussels, 4 February 2011

In November 2008, the Commission put forward a comprehensive **European Economic Recovery Program** (EERP) to exit from the crisis and coordinate recovery in Europe financing **59 energy projects**. The Commission has already adopted 44 grant decisions for the gas and electricity infrastructure projects and has signed grant agreements on carbon capture and storage (6 projects) and offshore wind energy (9 projects) with the beneficiaries. **This represents an amount of € 3, 8 billion.**

More information here:

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

INNOVATION PRIORITIES FOR EUROPE:

**Presentation of J.M. Barroso, President of the European Commission to the European Council
of 4 February 2011**

Brussels, 4 February 2011

President Barroso showed the 4 priorities that Europe should follow for a better R&D, namely:

- The first priority is Smart' fiscal consolidation;
- Improved framework conditions;
- Steer and monitor at EU level;
- A future-oriented EU budget.

More information here:

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

A RESOURCE EFFICIENT EUROPE:
Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy

Brussels, 26 January 2011

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social Committee of the regions.

Natural resources underpin the functioning of the European and global economy and our quality of life. They include raw materials such as fuels, minerals and metals but also food, soil, water, air, biomass and ecosystems.

By 2050 the global population is expected to be around 9 billion and people in developing economies will legitimately aspire to the consumption levels of developed countries. Intensive use of the world's resources puts pressure on our planet and threatens the security of supply. Increasing resource efficiency will be key to securing growth and jobs for Europe.

It will bring major economic opportunities, improve productivity, drive down costs and boost competitiveness. It is necessary to develop new products and services and find new ways to reduce inputs, minimise waste, improve management of resource stocks, change consumption patterns, optimise production processes, management and business methods, and improve logistics.

This will help stimulate technological innovation, boost employment in the fast developing 'green technology' sector, sustain EU trade and benefit consumers through more sustainable products. Using resources more efficiently will help us in making progress to deal with climate change and to achieve also the target of reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions.

The aim is to protect valuable ecological assets for present and future generations. It will help us ensure that the agricultural and fisheries sectors are strong and sustainable and reduce food insecurity in developing countries. By reducing reliance on increasingly scarce fuels and materials, boosting resource efficiency can also improve the security of Europe's supply of raw materials and make the EU's economy more resilient to future increases in global energy and commodity prices.

More information here:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0021:FIN:EN:PDF>

ANNUAL GROWTH SURVEY: ADVANCING THE EU'S COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social Committee of the regions

Brussels, 12 January 2011

January 2011 launches the first European Semester of ex-ante policy co-ordination starting with this Annual Growth Survey which is anchored in the Europe 2020 strategy. This document brings together the different actions which are essential to strengthen the recovery in the short-term and prepare the EU to move towards its Europe 2020 objectives.

The EU has taken decisive action to deal with the crisis: the fall in productivity, the deterioration of public finances and the increase in unemployment have been less marked than in other parts of the world.

In 2010, EU gross government debt rose, on aggregate, to around 85% of GDP in the euro area and to 80% EU-wide. Structural weaknesses that were not tackled before the crisis have become more apparent and urgent.

[...]

[...]

The crisis has taken a heavy toll on Europe's societies, despite the cushioning provided by welfare systems. The rise of unemployment is a central problem and around 80 million people are estimated to live below the poverty line in Europe.

Therefore, the EU needs to use this crisis to address decisively the issue of its global competitiveness. Medium term potential growth for Europe is projected to remain low and estimated at around 1.5% up to 2020 if no structural action is taken namely to resolve the labour productivity gap with our main competitors and absorb the deficit accumulated.

That is why the European Council adopted the Europe 2020 strategy with ambitious targets for a new growth path. The preliminary indications of Member States on their national targets in the five areas agreed under the Europe 2020 strategy.

If fully implemented, this strategy will help the EU come out stronger from the crisis and turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity, competitiveness and social cohesion

More information here:

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

ANNUAL GROWTH SURVEY, ANNEX 1: PROGRESS REPORT ON EUROPE 2020

Brussels, 12 January 2011

In this first "European Semester", in the framework of a new policy of coordination cycle the Commission presents the Annual Growth Survey focusing on key messages on actions that should be addressed as a matter of priority by Member States.

The "European Semester" is a time-window in the first half of each year in which Member States reporting under the Stability and Growth Pact and reporting under the Europe 2020 on macro-economic policy developments and structural reforms. The analysis underpinning the messages is set out in three accompanying reports one specifically dedicated to Europe 2020 strategy.

Taking this guidance into account, Member States will then prepare their medium term budgetary strategies in their Stability or Convergence Programmes and will set out in their National Reform Programmes the measures needed to move towards the Europe 2020 targets and to address obstacles to growth. Member States will thus be able to factor in these contributions when preparing their budgets for the following year.

In this first "European Semester", the Annual Growth Survey focuses on key messages on actions that should be addressed as a matter of priority by Member States. It's underlined how pulling Europe out the crisis requires a coordinated, comprehensive programme of reforms, covering fiscal consolidation, return to sound macro-economic conditions and front loading growth-enhancing measures.

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/1_en_annexe_part1.pdf

DRAFT JOINT EMPLOYMENT REPORT, European Commission

Brussels, 12 January 2011

This document is a draft version of the Joint Employment Report, mandated by Article 148 TFEU, is part of the Commission package to launch the European Semester. As key input to strengthened economic guidance, the JER is primarily a forward looking analysis, expanding on key employment messages contained in the Annual Growth Survey, that take in account the following aspects :

- Employment performance is affecting the macro-economic framework conditions;
- Identifying priority areas for growth enhancing reforms;
- headway forward: striving for more employment

More information here:

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/3_en_annexe_part1.pdf

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Brussels, 2 January 2011

The EESC's Response to the European Commission Consultation. The Declaration of President Sepi accompanying the Integrated Report on the post-2010 (Lisbon) Strategy: Proposals from organized civil society, which contains contributions from national ESCs and partner organizations as well as the EESC Opinion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy.

More information here:

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.news.10088>

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