

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 11 January

Programme of the Irish Presidency of the EU published

Ireland has taken over the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union, starting on 1 January 2013. The Irish Presidency is the first in the Trio programme of Ireland (January-June 2013), Lithuania (July-December 2013) and Greece (January-June 2014). The "Programme of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013" states that the Presidency will focus on securing stability and ensuring that this leads to jobs and growth, and outlines three key areas where the Presidency aims to make a difference. These are:

1. People-centered recovery, designed to last
2. Investment in job-friendly growth and in Europe's resources
3. Europe and the world: a win-win engagement with our partners

(Source: eu2013.ie)

http://www.eu2013.ie/media/eupresidency/content/documents/EU-Pres_Prog_A4.pdf

Automobile manufacturers call for improved conditions for electric vehicles

ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, has produced a position that states e-mobility has the potential to play a key role in ensuring sustainable mobility for the future, but that under the current conditions it is unlikely that this full potential can be met. The ACEA position notes that this can partly be attributed to the current economic situation, with declining sales of vehicles, however it is to a large extent also due to slow progress in charging standards, the fragmentation of internal market as a result of uncoordinated approach to market incentives, a lack of dedicated support for R&D, and no clear and unified vision on infrastructure. ACEA states that standardising the connection between the electricity grid and electrically-chargeable vehicles is one of the prerequisites to help e-mobility gain a viable market share. It provides predictability to investors, enables

economies of scale, reduces costs for all stakeholders and is essential in increasing user acceptance. The industry has stressed the need for a single harmonised plug system for the recharging of electric vehicles on both the vehicle and the infrastructure sides, and already agreed on a joint proposal for an EU-wide charging system last year. However it is very concerned by the lack of progress in creating the framework to meet these goals. Commenting on the position, ACEA Secretary General, Ivan Hodac, stated: "It will only be possible to book real progress if there is full cooperation between utility providers, infrastructure companies, the energy sector, standardisation bodies and the automotive industry - with the full support of national governments and the European institutions."

(Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/images/uploads/files/Updated_ACEA_position_on_charging_ECVs.pdf



Euro VI legislation comes into force

Effective from 31 December 2012, the new Euro VI legislation has come into force. The legislation lays down common EU rules for pollutant emissions from heavy motor vehicles and their engines. It was developed in line with the principles of Better Regulation and following recommendations from the High Level Group for Competitive Automotive Regulatory System for the 21st Century (CARS 21) and feedback from a public consultation. The new legislation will provide an 80% reduction in nitrogen oxides and 66% in particulate matter emissions, as compared to 2008 levels under the previous Euro V

norms, the introduction of global harmonised test procedures and standards with USA equivalent emission limit values, and a positive cost benefit ratio. Commenting on the legislation, European Commission Vice President, Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship, stated: "The new emission reduction will help clean up the air we breathe and improve the competitiveness of Europe's automobile industry. As agreed in our recently adopted Cars Action plan we are creating a win-win situation: we will have cleaner trucks and buses, which will be trendsetters and exportable worldwide."

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-4_en.htm



High-level group to give green light for EU-US trade deal

Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the EU, has stated that the high-level working group on growth and jobs, set up at the last EU-US Summit in November 2011, will give the go-ahead to launch negotiations for a transatlantic trade agreement. The high-level working group on growth and jobs set up by US President Barack Obama and EU leaders last year to assess the feasibility of a comprehensive transatlantic trade agreement is supposed to deliver its final report by the end of the month.

(Source: EurActiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/trade/green-light-given-eu-us-trade-ag-news-516944>

Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

14/15 January: Informal Environment Council Meeting
The Environment Council will meet to hold an informal Climate workshop for the Working Party on International Environmental Issues

European Parliament (Plenary Session, Strasbourg)

14 January

Role of EU cohesion policy in implementing the new European energy policy – joint debate
Youth Guarantee – oral question

16 January

Programme of activities of the Irish Presidency – key debate

EU-China relations – debate

17 January

State of play of EU-Mercosur trade relations – oral question