

## WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 22 February

### Constitutional Affairs Committee proposes plan for reallocation of EP seats

The Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament has proposed a plan for the reallocation of seats within the European Parliament. In order to comply with the Lisbon Treaty and make room for Croatia's MEPs when it joins the EU, the European Parliament must have 751 members (15 fewer seats than at present) after the 2014 elections. The solution proposed aims to keep member state's losses to a minimum, with 12 EU countries each losing a seat, whilst others would gain none. The Committee stated that the proposal should avoid "traumatic reallocation of seats, with heavy losses for medium and small member states and huge increases for big ones" and is also "the one most likely to win a majority within Parliament and unanimity in the Council". The overall aim is to keep member states' losses of seats to a minimum, whilst respecting as far as possible the "degressive proportionality" principle, whereby MEPs from larger member states represent more citizens than those from smaller ones. The proposed solution would mean that Romania, Greece, Belgium, Portugal, Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Ireland, Croatia, Lithuania and Latvia would each lose one seat at the next European elections. This plan was approved with 21 votes in favour and one abstention. The remaining 3 seats in the 15-seat reduction would come from Germany, whose share under the Treaty must be cut from 99 seats to 96. (Source: European Parliament)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20130218IPR05909/html/EP-seats-after-2014-elections-no-member-state-loses-more-than-one-plan>

### EU new car registrations fall 8.7% in January

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, show that new car registrations in the EU fell 8.7% in January to 855,159 units reaching a historic low recorded for a month of January, since the start of the series in 1990. Within the major markets, only the UK posted growth

(+11.5%), while downturn prevailed in Germany (-8.6%), Spain (-9.6%), France (-15.1%) and Italy (-17.6%). In absolute figures, Germany remained the largest market with 192,090 new registrations, followed by the UK (143,643 units), France (124,798) and Italy (113,525). Spain registered 49,671 new cars, which was slightly less than Belgium (50,684 units). (Source: ACEA)

[http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news\\_detail/passenger\\_car\\_registrations\\_-8.7\\_in\\_january\\_2013](http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/passenger_car_registrations_-8.7_in_january_2013)



### EU Energy Commissioner promises post-2020 policy in 2014

European Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger has confirmed that he will bring forward proposals for post-2020 energy policy, before the current term of the Commission ends on 31 October 2014. Mr Oettinger stated that the Council would talk about binding targets in an orientation debate and that he favoured binding targets. He also stated that the targets will be "pragmatic" and "sensitive". For 2020, the EU has committed to cutting its emissions to 20% below 1990 levels, as well as renewable energy and energy efficiency targets. (Source: European Commission)

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/oettinger/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/oettinger/index_en.htm)



## EU Trade Commissioner urges Canada to make extra effort to reach trade deal

Karel De Gucht, European Trade Commissioner, has stated that Canada must offer the European Union broader access to its markets if both sides are to agree a free-trade accord they have been negotiating since 2009. A free-trade agreement with Canada would be the European Union's first such deal with a major world economy. The Commission and the Canadian government are said to want to complete a deal soon, as the European Parliament, which must sign off on any agreement, is due to hold elections 2014 and the change in lawmakers could delay ratification. (Source: Euractiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/trade/de-gucht-urges-canada-extra-effo-news-517999>

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## Single European patent officially signed

The European Union has formally signed on a new unitary patent for participating member states. Signing off on a plan first considered in 1973, 24 of the EU's 27 industry ministers meeting at the Competitiveness Council in Brussels put their names on the agreement to allow inventors to register their idea with one EU agency. Under the previous system, patents had to be registered separately in individual EU countries. The patent court's headquarters will be in Paris, with some functions in London and Munich. Infringements of patents in life sciences will be heard in London, whilst engineering and physics-related cases will be dealt with in Munich. (Source: Euractiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/innovation-enterprise/european-patent-finally-agreed-news-517945>

## Week ahead

### European Commission

No relevant business

### Council of Ministers

28 February

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - The Council will seek to reach an agreement on a proposed recommendation to establish a "youth guarantee", intended to ensure that young people under 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or traineeship. The Council will also hold a debate on the 2013 European Semester exercise, the annual monitoring of economic policies and structural reforms.

### European Parliament (Committee week)

ENVI – 26 February

Vote on Temporary derogation from Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community.

