

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 28 February

European Parliament adopts eCall report

The European Parliament has adopted the Internal Market and Consumer Policy (IMCO) Report on the deployment of an EU-wide eCall system by a large majority (72%). This proposal means that from October 2015 all new cars sold in the EU should be able to automatically alert emergency services to serious accidents (although this date is subject to revision). The European Council must now decide on their position for this dossier. They could choose to accept Parliament's stance or alternatively adopt their own position which they would then need to negotiate on with Parliament in order to reach an agreement. Commenting on the news the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), highlighted that for eCall to work three things need to be ready simultaneously: the devices need to be fitted to cars and vans; the equipment to receive and process the call – the Public Service Answering Points - must be ready in all member states; and the mobile network coverage needs to be in place. ACEA Secretary General, Erik Jonnaert stated that considering the member states' requirement for working infrastructure to be in place, the target date of October 2015 is very ambitious.

(Source: European Commission)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20140224IPR36860/html/Parliament-supports-life-saving-eCall-system-in-cars>

European commercial vehicle registrations up 4.7% in January 2014

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association show that in January 2014 demand for new commercial vehicles in the EU increased for the fifth consecutive month. Total commercial vehicle registrations grew by 4.7%, totalling 132,503 units. Growth was sustained across the van, truck and heavy truck segments, while the market for new buses and coaches contracted. Out of the most significant markets, Spain recorded the

highest upturn (+44.9%). Italy also posted double-digit growth (+12.2%), while demand in the UK (+5.3%) and Germany (+3.0) also increased. France was the only major market recording a decline (-5.1%).

(Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/commercial-vehicle-registrations-4.7-in-january-2014>



Commission's winter 2014 forecast: Recovery gaining ground

The European Commission's winter forecast foresees a continuation of the economic recovery in most member states and in the EU as a whole. After exiting recession in spring 2013 and three consecutive quarters of subdued recovery, the outlook is for a moderate step-up in economic growth. Following real GDP growth of 1.5% in the EU and 1.2% in the euro area in 2014, activity is seen accelerating in 2015 to 2.0% in the EU and 1.8% in the euro area. These figures each represent an upward revision of 0.1 percentage points compared with the autumn 2013 forecast. The forecast remains based on the assumption that the implementation of agreed policy measures at EU and member state level sustains improvements in confidence as well as financial conditions and advances the necessary economic adjustment in member states, by increasing their growth potential. Commenting on the figures, Olli Rehn, Commission Vice-President for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro stated: "Recovery is gaining ground in Europe, following the return to

growth in the middle of last year. The strengthening of domestic demand this year should help us to achieve more balanced and sustainable growth. Rebalancing of the European economy has been progressing and external competitiveness is improving, particularly in the most vulnerable countries. The worst of the crisis may now be behind us, but this is not an invitation to be complacent, as the recovery is still modest. To make the recovery stronger and create more jobs, we need to stay the course of economic reform."

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-188_en.htm



Commission opens taps on "SME Instrument" funding for innovation

From 1 March, innovative small and medium-sized companies in Europe will be able to apply for grants to help get their brightest ideas from the lab to the market. In total, some €3 billion in funding will be available under the "SME Instrument" over the next seven years as part of Horizon 2020, the EU's new research and innovation programme. Funding is competitive and project proposals have to be in line with call topics published on the Participant Portal, the gateway to EU research funding. In 2014, some €250 million of funding will be available under the SME Instrument's permanently open call.

(Source: European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7327&lang=en&tpa_id=0&title=A-Commission-opens-taps-on-%22SME-Instrument%22-funding-for-innovation

Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

Monday 3 March

Environment Council

A policy debate on "A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030"

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

Tuesday 4 March

Ministers are expected to focus on energy issues with key items on the agenda including:

- A policy debate regarding the Communication on "Energy prices and costs in Europe".
- A policy debate on the Communication regarding "A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030".

European Parliament (Meetings of Committees, Brussels)

No relevant activity