

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 15 March

EU ministers discuss Clean Power for Transport Initiative

EU transport ministers have discussed the European Commission's Clean Power for Transport Initiative. At the 11 March Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, EU Commissioner Sim Kallas outlined the package to ministers where the majority of Member States agreed that alternative fuels and sources of energy should be deployed but felt strongly about the targets and deadlines set by the Commission for provision for charging points. Ministers also voiced concerns about the financing of the proposed measures and the deadlines for implementation. Secretary of State for Transport Patrick McLoughlin MP represented the UK at the Council meeting, signaling support for the proposal, emphasizing the need for a technology neutral approach and stressing that harmonisation must not create barriers to market. The exchange of views by ministers follows the publication of the package by the Commission on 24 January 2013, which aims to boost the market up-take of alternative fuels in transport. The Clean Power for Transport package consists of a communication on a European alternative fuels strategy, a draft directive focusing on infrastructure and standards and an accompanying document describing an action plan for the development of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in shipping. Council officials will now examine the proposal in light of remarks made by ministers, which will require approval from both the Council and European Parliament. (Source: Council of the EU) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/136008.pdf

Commission agrees draft mandate for EU-US trade negotiations

The European Commission has agreed a draft mandate for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement with the United States. The draft mandate will be communicated to the Council for

Member States' approval before negotiations can begin. European Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht said: "I am very pleased that just one month after the announcement by the EU and the US to go for this 'game-changing' trade deal, the European Commission is ready with a proposed mandate for the future negotiations. We can now roll up our sleeves up and get down to the business of preparing negotiations. I hope that Member States will now quickly decide to open negotiations so work can begin with the United States before the summer break." The Commission also published a roadmap for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which outlines the objectives and options of an agreement, as well as outlining findings from its initial impact assessment. (Source: European Commission) <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=877>



Commission approves first eco-innovation under new car CO₂ legislation

The European Commission has approved the first eco-innovation to help reduce CO₂ emissions from passenger cars under the EU's new car CO₂ legislation. The decision follows an application by Audi, who demonstrated that the use of LEDs in their low beam headlamp, high beam headlamp and licence plate lamp is innovative within the context of the relevant legislation, reduces CO₂ emissions and is not otherwise taken into account for determining the level of such emissions from vehicles. The reduction

in CO₂ emissions will be counted towards the achievement of the manufacturer's annual CO₂ emissions target, up to a maximum level of 7g/km CO₂ per year. EU legislation requires that by 2015 CO₂ emissions from all new cars registered in the EU should not exceed an average of 130g/km CO₂. The detailed conditions and the procedure for the approval of eco-innovations are set out in Commission Regulation (EU) No 725/2011. The Commission has also developed detailed Technical Guidelines on how companies should prepare applications to have their eco-innovations recognised, of which a revised version was published last month. (Source: European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/articles/news_2013031301_en.htm



2014 European Parliament election recommendations adopted

The European Commission has adopted a proposal which outlines recommendations around the 2014 European Parliament elections, reflecting the Lisbon Treaty. The Commission recommends that political parties within the Parliament should nominate a candidate for President of the European Commission to better engage voters in next year's election. The Commission is also calling on Member States to agree a common voting day for elections, which have previously been spread out over a period of four days. European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, said: "Europe cannot be built without the participation of Europeans. It is essential that citizens have their say as the European Union develops and moves forward. Today's practical recommendations will help to strengthen people's voice in European democracy and to make next year's

European elections a real debate about the future of Europe." (Source: European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/redoing/multimedia/news/2013/03/20130312_en.htm

Week ahead

European Commission

20 March

The European Commission will set out communications on the European Economic and Monetary Union as well as adopting a Green Paper on long-term financing of the European economy.

Council of Ministers

21 March - Environment Council

The Council will hold a debate on proposed changes to the 2011 directive on environmental impact assessment (EIA), the proposed changes to the 1998 Fuel Quality Directive and the 2009 directive on the promotion of the use of renewable energy.

European Parliament (Committee week - Brussels)

Monday 18 March

ITRE: Consideration of draft report on i) Periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers, and ii) Technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union.

Tuesday 19 March

TRAN: Consideration of draft report on i) Periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers, ii) Technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union, iii) Registration documents for vehicles, and iv) A strategy for an Electronic Toll Service and a vignette system on light private vehicles in Europe.

ITRE: Vote on i) Modalities for reaching the 2020 target to reduce CO₂ emissions from new passenger cars, and ii) Modalities for reaching the 2020 target to reduce CO₂ emissions from new light commercial vehicles.

Wednesday 20 March

ENVI: Consideration of amendments on Modalities for reaching the 2020 target to reduce CO₂ emissions from new passenger cars.

INTA: Consideration of draft motion for a resolution on EU trade and investment agreement and negotiations with the US.