

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 22 March

EU new car registrations fall 10.5% in February

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, show that in February 2013, European new car registration fell 10.5% to 795,482 units. The UK was the only country to post growth (+7.9%), with all other significant markets faced a downturn ranging from -9.8% in Spain to -10.5% in Germany, -12.1% in France and -17.4% in Italy. Two months into the year, Germany (-9.6%) and Spain (-9.7%) performed similarly, compared to the same period a year earlier. France (-13.5%) and Italy (-17.3%) recorded a double-digit downturn, while demand was sustained in the UK (+10.3%).

(Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/passenger_car_registrations_-9.5_over_two_months_-10.5_in_february

Steps towards a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union set out

The European Commission has presented two new Communications on the next steps towards a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The aim is to strengthen economic policy coordination and integration in the euro area. These Communications follow commitments made in the Commission's Blueprint for a Deep and Genuine Economic and Monetary Union last November, and respond to calls from the European Council to take work forward on these two fronts. The Communication on the ex-ante coordination of plans for major economic policy reforms contains options on how to organise EU-level discussions on large-scale economic policy reforms in the Member States before final decisions are taken at national level. The reasoning behind this is to properly take into account any positive or negative spillovers of the reforms on other euro area countries early on in the decision-making process. The Communication on a Convergence and Competitiveness Instrument (CCI)

sets out options for two instruments: contractual arrangements for member states to undertake specific reforms and financial support to help Member States implement these reforms. These two new instruments complement the structures that already exist for the surveillance of budgetary and economic policy at EU level, which have been enhanced through the European Semester, Six Pack and Two Pack reforms. Commenting on the Communications, President Barroso stated: "These proposals – in particular the Convergence and Competitiveness Instrument - combine the need for more discipline at national level with more solidarity at EU level. They underpin the strength of the common currency and will help drive forward Europe's competitiveness, growth and job creation." (Source: European Commission) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-248_en.htm?locale=en



2012 records the lowest ever number of road deaths in EU

The European Commission has published figures showing that road fatalities across the EU decreased by 9% in 2012. This is the lowest number recorded since data was first collected. Country by country statistics illustrate that the number of road deaths still varies greatly across the EU. The countries with the lowest number of road fatalities remain the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark, reporting around 30 deaths per million inhabitants. Compared to the disappointing figures of 2011, when progress in cutting road deaths fell to 2%, the reduction of 9% in 2012 puts member states back on track towards the

objective of halving road deaths between 2010 and 2020. In order to reach this goal, an average reduction of around 7% is needed.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-236_en.htm?locale=en

EU leaders renew push for SME-proof legislation

A European Commission initiative to tackle the 10 most burdensome regulations for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has received backing from EU heads of states and governments. The European Commission had asked around 1,000 SMEs and business organisations to identify the top 10 most burdensome EU laws in order to change or reduce them. EU leaders have told the Commission to set out in June how it wants to reduce the burdens for SMEs and by the autumn, the EU executive will produce a list of unnecessary European rules that need to be reversed. The following EU laws were identified by SMEs as the 10 most burdensome:

- REACH
- VAT - Value added tax legislation;
- General Product Safety and market surveillance package;
- Recognition of professional qualifications;
- Shipments of waste
- Labour market-related legislation;
- Data protection;
- Working time;
- Recording equipment in road transport (for driving and rest periods);
- Procedures for the award of public contracts (public works, supply and service contracts);
- Modernised customs code.

(Source: EurActiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/specialreport-jobs-growth/eu-leaders-back-reducing-burdens-news-518570>



Commission proposes steps for worldwide type approval for cars

The European Commission is steering a reform of the UNECE 1958 Agreement on international vehicle regulations in a bid to help European carmakers to better access international markets. This initiative brings together the 27 EU Member States (represented by the Commission), Japan, Russian Federation, South Korea, South Africa, Australia. These countries have agreed on harmonised safety and environmental regulations for vehicles enabling carmakers to enjoy the benefits of lower compliance costs and economies of scale. The reform proposals steered by the Commission aim at establishing a worldwide type approval for cars, based on the principle a car "tested once, accepted everywhere in the world". This means that in the future any car produced in conformity with these regulations can be marketed in every contracting party to the Agreement. The Commission has also presented to the World Forum for the Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations in Geneva (UNECE/WP.29) proposals to let emerging countries more easily join the Agreement. With more countries joining, its geographical coverage will expand to the benefit of EU car producers.

(Source: European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6503&lang=en&tpa_id=0&title=Helping-EU-car-producers-going-international--Worldwide-car-approval-under-preparation

Week ahead

European Commission

25 March

- Green Paper consultation on long term financing of the European economy

27 March

- Proposals for modernisation of the trade mark system
- Public debate on 2030 energy and climate framework

Council of Ministers

No relevant meetings

European Parliament (Committee week)

26 March – TRAN

- Vote on Modalities for reaching the 2020 target to reduce CO2 emissions from new light commercial vehicles.
- Report back on trilogues.