

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 9 May

Multi-billion euro innovation partnerships welcomed by Commission

The European Commission has welcomed the final adoption of nine public-private and public-public research partnerships by EU member states. The partnerships, which are worth up to €20 billion, were already approved by the European Parliament on 15 April. Most of the investment will go to five public-private partnerships in fuel cells and hydrogen, electronics, innovative medicines, aeronautics and bio-based industries. Commenting on the announcement, Neelie Kroes, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda, stated: "Europe must consolidate its high-tech strengths. These partnerships give us the means to work together to create jobs and keep Europe competitive." The EU's contribution of €9 billion to the package over the next seven years will unlock equivalent investment from the private sector and €4 billion from member states. The EU funding will come from Horizon 2020, the European Union's new €80 billion research and innovation programme running from 2014-2020.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-14-149_en.htm



Commission spring 2014 forecast: growth becoming broader-based

The European Commission's spring forecast points to a continuing economic recovery in the European Union following its emergence from recession one year ago. Overall, domestic demand is expected to become the key driver for growth over the forecast horizon. Labour market conditions started to improve in the course of 2013 and more job creation as well as a further decline in unemployment rates is expected to follow. Inflation is expected to remain low, both in the EU (1.0% in 2014, 1.5% in 2015) and in the euro area (0.8% and 1.2%). The largest downside risk to the growth outlook remains a renewed loss of confidence from a stalling of reforms. Uncertainty about the external environment has also increased. On the other hand, the European Commission state that further bold structural reforms could lead to a stronger-than- envisaged recovery.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-513_en.htm

22nd EU-Japan summit held in Brussels

Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, met the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, and President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, in Brussels for the 22nd EU-Japan summit. The leaders reaffirmed the importance of an early conclusion to a highly comprehensive and ambitious Free Trade Agreement (FTA)/ Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). They reiterated commitment to a rapid exchange of ambitious market access offers on procurement and on trade in services and investment. Also the EU and Japan stated their aim for a new strategic partnership in research and innovation.

(Source: European Council)

<http://www.european-council.europa.eu/eu-japan-summit>

Decision to introduce mandatory eCall system across the EU adopted

The Council of the European Union has adopted a decision to introduce a mandatory EU-wide eCall system to handle emergency calls sent automatically by cars or triggered manually by people in the car in case of a crash. This final adoption of the legislative act follows an agreement reached at the first reading within the European Parliament. An awareness campaign supported by the Commission will be launched before the introduction of the new system, in order to explain to citizens how to use the system, how to avoid false alarms and how the data involved are protected. It has been decided that member states must have the infrastructure to handle eCalls in place at least 6 months before the type-approval requirements for the corresponding in-vehicle device start to apply, and in any case no later than 1 October 2017.

(Source: Council of the EU)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/142525.pdf

Automobile industry re-affirms commitment to road safety

During a meeting in Athens with transport ministers on the eve of European Road Safety Day, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) has reaffirmed its commitment to further improving road safety for all. During the meeting, ACEA's Secretary General Erik Jonnaert presented ACEA's vision on road safety. He advocated taking an 'integrated approach', stating that as around 90% of accidents are caused by drivers they believe that it will only be through combining better vehicles with infrastructure, and through unproved driver training that accident rates can be lowered further. ACEA believes that Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) may be key to improving road safety, and is calling for further support from relevant stakeholders, including infrastructure providers, to ensure that these systems can be further expanded.

(Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/automobile-industry-re-affirms-commitment-to-safety-on-eve-of-european-road>

EU adopts stronger rules to defend its rights under trade agreements

The European Parliament and the EU Council have approved a new legal framework to better enforce EU rights under international trade agreements. The new regulation aims to allow for a more effective EU response to illegal measures taken by EU trading partners, and will give the EU a single horizontal framework to react swiftly and effectively to make sure that trade agreements translate into real benefits for EU businesses and workers. Should an international trade panel, such as a WTO panel, finds an EU partner country does not abide by international trade rules, the Commission will now be able to adopt trade sanctions under a streamlined procedure. The Commission will now also have legal powers to compensate for import restrictions imposed on EU products in exceptional situations, or to react to cases where a WTO member raises its import tariffs without adequate compensation for the EU

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-531_en.htm?locale=en



Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

No relevant activity

European Parliament

The parliament is no longer sitting due to the upcoming European elections. The UK elections for the European Parliament will take place on 22 May.