

## WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 27 May

### Committee backs 30% carbon emissions target

The European Parliament's Environmental Committee (ENVI) has backed a move to a 30% carbon reduction target on 1990 levels by 2020. The ENVI Committee voted in favour of a resolution to increase the existing 20% target, arguing the move to 30% could create up to six million new jobs and boost the EU economy. The resolution, drafted by Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, Netherlands), was adopted with 44 votes in favour, 14 against, with 1 abstention. In the resolution, the ENVI Committee calls for the EU to set an unconditional 30% target as soon as possible, and in any event before the end of 2011. The Committee recognised that there should be some scope to include 'offsets' funded in other parts of the world, but MEPs said the EU should undertake to achieve 25% greenhouse gas reductions on its own territory. The resolution also states that achieving these targets will depend to a large extent on the EU meeting its existing renewable and energy efficiency targets, and suggests that national measures, such as investment in innovation and tax breaks, and a possible adjustment of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) can play a major role. The resolution is scheduled for adoption at Plenary on the 23 June 2011. While the committee insisted that "offsetting" in other parts of the world could make up a sixth of the target, they said the EU would need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% domestically. (Source: European Parliament) [www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110523IPR19955/html/Climate-EU-should-cut-CO2-by-30](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20110523IPR19955/html/Climate-EU-should-cut-CO2-by-30)



### OECD delivers strategy for greener economy

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has issued a strategy recommending policies to help governments move towards a greener economy. The strategy forms part of the OECD's contribution to preparations for next year's Rio +20 conference. It was presented at a ministerial meeting in Paris and discussed at the meeting of G8 countries in Deauville. The OECD lists policy options to address barriers to green growth such as regulatory uncertainty and low R&D returns. The aim is to help governments devise country-specific strategies, it says. The organisation is also planning to issue sectoral reports. The strategy is presented as the starting point for the OECD's long-term objective of supporting national and international efforts to achieve green growth. There is disagreement over the definition of "green economy" at international level. It contains indicators in four main categories: environmental and resource productivity; economic and environmental assets; environmental quality of life; and economic opportunities and policy responses. These are not final indicators, says the OECD. They will be further elaborated as more data becomes available. (Source: OECD) [www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en\\_21571361\\_44315115\\_48034436\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_48034436_1_1_1_1,00.html)

### Commission to propose lower car noise limits

Revisions to EU limits on car and lorry noise and a better measurement method will be proposed by the European Commission by September, a Commission official has told a conference in Brussels. The Commission's current plans would see the new limits introduced in two stages: the car limit, set at 74 decibels at the moment, would be cut to 72 dB(A) two years after the revised vehicle noise directive enters force and to 70 dB(A) after four years. The 80 dB(A) lorry limit would fall to 79 dB(A) after two years and to 77 dB(A) after four. The limits were last revised in 1996 but did not reduce noise levels as much as

expected because the assessment method did not reflect real-world conditions, the official said. New methods for measuring noise were developed by UNECE in 2007 and 2009. Industry has been using both the new and old test methods since 2007. The Commission has concluded the newer method is better. The revision will also remove existing derogations, such as those for diesel vehicles, to make the rules technology neutral. The commission also told conference delegates an implementation report on the environmental noise directive, due to be published on Tuesday, will now be released next Wednesday. Member states must submit their second monitoring reports on traffic noise next year. Most were late in submitting their first reports, due in 2007. (Source: Transport Environment) [www.transportenvironment.org/News/2011/3/25052011-Conference-on-EU-Noise-Policy/](http://www.transportenvironment.org/News/2011/3/25052011-Conference-on-EU-Noise-Policy/)

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## Small business gets an advocate in each EU member state

European Commission Vice President Antonio Tajani has announced a new network of member states' SME envoys at the SBA conference "Mobilising SMEs for the Future of Europe" in Budapest. As SMEs are affected by policies originating in different government departments ranging from tax to financial and from regulatory to education, the Commission believes the SME envoys will help small businesses to concentrate on their core business to strive and create jobs. The Small Business Act (SBA) is the European Commission's SME policy aiming to make Europe more business friendly and encouraging people to start their own business. In the future, the new Mr or Mrs SME will meet with SME representative organisations at EU-wide level within the SBA Advisory Group. This is part of the new governance called for in the recent review of the Small Business Act. This new mechanism will ensure closer monitoring and coordinated action in support of SMEs. (Source: European Commission) [ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/sme-envoy/national-sme-envoys/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/sme-envoy/national-sme-envoys/index_en.htm)

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## 'Soft skills' seen as key to employability

A recent survey by Junior Achievement Young Enterprise (JA-YE) has found that most business

leaders believe that Europe's young people lack the so-called 'soft skills' that are considered essential by many employers with a closer link needed between business and schools seen as a way to bridge this skills gap. The survey of more than 500 business leaders from across Europe found that 54% think young people lack 'soft skills' such as confidence, teamwork, self-motivation, networking and presentation skills. Meanwhile, more than two-thirds believe that their countries' education systems are either not at all successful or not very successful when it comes to developing financial and entrepreneurial skills amongst young people. (Source: JA-YE) [www.ja-ye.eu/pls/apex31mb/f?p=17000:1002:1999388111213484:::P1016\\_HID\\_INSTITUTION\\_ID,P1002\\_HID\\_ID:1,9085](http://www.ja-ye.eu/pls/apex31mb/f?p=17000:1002:1999388111213484:::P1016_HID_INSTITUTION_ID,P1002_HID_ID:1,9085)



## Week ahead

### European Commission

No relevant activity

### Council of Ministers

No relevant activity

### European Parliament – Meetings of Committees

(Brussels)

Group week