

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 10 June

Commission publishes new recommendations on delivering growth and jobs

The European Commission has published recommendations that each member state should take to stimulate economic growth, create more jobs and keep public finances under control. These recommendations come as a response to plans each government submitted earlier this year, in order to meet common EU economic goals. Significant recommendations include calls to step up efforts to reach EU targets on employment, research and development, energy efficiency, higher education and reducing poverty, and calls to work harder at reducing debt and narrow the gap between spending and tax revenue to bring national budgets into line with EU targets. These recommendations will be discussed and debated by the European Council on the 23-24 June, and will be formally approved in July. It will then be the responsibility of individual governments to implement these plans in their 2011-2012 budgets. (Source: European Commission)

http://ec.europa.eu/news/economy/110608_en.htm

Heavy lorries to pay for costs of noise and air pollution

The European Parliament has voted its final approval to proposals which will allow member states to levy an additional charge on heavy lorries, to cover the cost of air and noise pollution. This is a revision of the "Eurovignette Directive", implemented in 1999, which charges heavy goods vehicles for the use of infrastructure, and which previously prohibited the recovery of "other costs" such as air and noise pollution. Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Transport, welcomed the new rules as "a very important step forward", stating, "These new EU rules will send the right price signals to operators so they will invest more in efficient logistics, less polluting vehicles and more sustainable transport at large. They also give Member States new tools to fight congestion with possibilities

to vary charges at different times of the day to get heavy lorries off the roads at peak periods". The revenues from these tolls are to be "earmarked" to provide investment to improve transport sustainability in areas such as alternative infrastructure, and innovative clean transport systems. (Source: European Parliament)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/681&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



European Parliament backs "green balance sheets" legislation

The European Parliament has backed new legislation which requires member states to standardise national environmental reporting data, in order to build up

Europe-wide "environmental economic accounts". The first environmental accounts are due to be made next year, and will initially only include 3 areas: air emissions, environmental taxes and material input and output flows. German MEP Jo Leinen (Socialists & Democrats) stated that this legislation "has tremendous political significance" and that the environmental balance sheets will "open up a new chapter in the measurement of sustainability and of the progress society is making towards it". (Source: EurActive)

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/sustainability/eu-countries-start-keeping-green-balance-sheets-news-505459>



EU's innovation performance needs major improvement

The European Commission's 2011 Innovation Union Competitiveness Report has announced that the EU's innovation performance needs major improvement, if the Europe 2020 strategy is to deliver smart sustainable growth. European Research, Innovation and Science Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn said: "This Report underlines that the road to the Innovation Union is long and challenging, with big obstacles along the way. But it confirms that the EU has agreed the right policies to get to the end of that road. Putting the Innovation Union into practice at European and national levels is an economic 'must', as important for sustainable growth as sorting out public finances". The report concludes that Europe needs to accelerate investment in research and innovation and that investment in innovation has to be "smarter" in order to deliver sustainable growth. (Source: European Parliament)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/692&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

Thursday 16 June

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

Ministers will discuss:

- The Transport White Paper
- The introduction of a single European railway area
- The introduction of an European Maritime Safety Agency
- Single European Sky
- The follow-up to the EU volcanic ash crisis
- Air cargo security
- The forthcoming ASEM Transport Ministers' meeting

Friday 17 June

Employment, Social, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

Ministers will discuss:

- The safety and health of pregnant workers
- Minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents
- European Year for Active Ageing
- Coordination of social security systems
- The principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

European Parliament (Committees)

ECON – Tuesday 14 – Wednesday 15 June

The European Semester for economic policy coordination - consideration of draft report

EMPL – Wednesday 15 – Thursday 16 June

Promoting workers mobility within the EU - consideration of compromise amendments and vote

EMPL – Wednesday 15 – Thursday 16 June

The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs - hearing