

## EU and Japan continue working towards open trade

The 12th round of EU-Japan talks for a free trade agreement ended this week in Tokyo. The negotiators discussed all areas of the future agreement with the exception of the investment chapter. A separate session will be organised on that topic at the end of the month. In the negotiations, the EU aims at going beyond trade in goods, even though market access, in particular for cars and agricultural goods, remains of key importance respectively for Japan and for the EU. For Europe, it is important for the success of the overall negotiations that Japan addresses issues of concerns, such as non-tariff measures that impede bilateral trade, public procurement constraints, including in the field of railways and public transport, and other issues, such as services, investment, intellectual property and geographical indications. The EU-Japan Summit of May 2015 gave a strong impulse to advance the negotiations further with the aim to conclude a highly comprehensive and ambitious agreement preferably by the end of 2015. The next full round of talks is planned for the end of October in Brussels. (Source: Dods)



## President Juncker addresses EU parliament on corporate tax avoidance

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and European taxation Commissioner Pierre Moscovici met with the Parliament's economic affairs committee (ECON) and the special committee for tax rulings (TAXE) to discuss the Commission's proposals for more transparent and efficient taxation of multinational companies across Europe. The meeting came as member states' tax practices have come under increased scrutiny following the 'LuxLeaks' scandal. This revealed that Luxembourg had approved schemes to help multinational companies to avoid paying tax. The co-existence of 28 different tax systems in a single integrated market has led to fierce tax competition between member states. Consequently, member states have continually lowered their corporate tax rates, to attract and retain foreign investment.

(Source: [The Parliament Magazine](#))

## Tsiparas wins Greek elections

Greek voters decided on Sunday (20 September) that Alexis Tsipras and his far-left Syriza party should be the ones to continue carrying out bailout-required reforms which they initially opposed, in an election that echoed the ballot which catapulted Tsipras to power in January. With 99.5% of the votes counted, Syriza emerged as the big winner with 35.47%. Voter turnout was 5%. Syriza will now re-enter the Greek parliament with 145 seats, only four less than its landslide victory almost nine months ago. Right-wing Independent Greeks secured 10 seats, which means Tsipras can continue the coalition government he led until he resigned and called for elections last month. Tsipras called the elections after Syriza was losing MPs that were unwilling to back the bailout deal the prime minister negotiated.

(Source: [EUObserver](#))

## Eurozone growth slows in September

Growth in the eurozone economy slowed in September but despite the monthly dip, it still expanded at the fastest quarterly rate in four years. Data company Markit said the flash reading of its eurozone Purchasing Managers Index fell to 53.9 points in September from 54.3 points in August. Despite the dip, the reading was still comfortably above the 50 points mark signifying expansion in the economy. The ECB has been carrying out a 60-billion-euro per month stimulus programme since March in an attempt to boost growth and ward off a dangerous spiral of falling prices. Analysts have begun to speculate whether the ECB will have to step up its Quantitative Easing (QE) stimulus programme in the wake of the decision last week of the US Federal Reserve to hold off on beginning to raise interest rates. (Source: [EU Business](#))

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## New European Commission web tool helps SMEs to innovate

The European Commission launched a new web tool which is expected to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access state-of-the-art technological services across Europe. The [tool](#) allows SMEs to find technological service centres active in the field of Key Enabling Technologies (KETs). Such centres can help SMEs to speed up the commercialisation of their innovation ideas. The centres have been selected according to a set of capacity and quality criteria. They provide services to enterprises, such as help with prototyping, testing, upscaling, first production and product validation. The web tool provides details for each of the 187 technology infrastructures within service centres active in the area of KETs. For each centre, an SME contact person has been identified and their contact details are provided. The launch of the web tool is a first step towards easier access for SMEs to technology. The Commission is looking into ways to promote European networks of such organisations with a single access point for SMEs. As a pilot, an action under Horizon 2020 is planned to help SMEs get access to technological services in the field of advanced manufacturing for clean production. (Source: [European Commission](#))

## Week ahead

### European Commission

Tuesday 1 October

- EU brokerage event on key enabling technologies in Horizon 2020
- Info Day on Smart Grids & Storage - Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2016 – 2017

### European Council

1 – 2 October

- Competitiveness Council – Ministers will discuss the monitoring of industrial competitiveness mainstreaming

