

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 3 October

Commissioner-delegate Lord Hill recalled for second hearing

UK European Commissioner-Designate Lord Hill, who has been nominated to assume the Financial Stability portfolio, appeared before the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee for a confirmation hearing. After the hearing, the Committee's Co-ordinators made the decision to recall Lord Hill for a second hearing, as several concerns were raised. MEPs expressed concerns over Lord Hill's interests in the City of London, something which he denied during the hearing, explaining, "I am not here to represent the City of London, I am here to represent the European interest. I have a very clear and simple view – it is in the interests of the EU for Britain to be in it, and for Britain to be in the EU." Other concerns raised by MEPs related to plans on the Capital Markets Union, on which he commented he would first want to carefully assess which barriers currently exist, and that the two weeks since his nomination had not been enough time to formulate a comprehensive plan. All 27 commissioners nominated by EU member states must be approved by the European Parliament before the College of Commissioners can begin work. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has already been approved by the Parliament, alongside other Commissioners including those responsible for the environment (Karmenu Vella, Malta), international trade (Cecilia Malmström, Sweden) and transport (Maroš Šefčovič, Slovakia).

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-29442089>



Clean fuel infrastructure rules adopted by Council

The Council of the European Union has adopted a directive on building up minimum infrastructure for alternative fuels across the EU. Under the directive, each member state has two years to draw up an alternative fuel deployment strategy and submit it to the new European Commission. These strategies, or "national policy frameworks", will set out member states' national targets for putting in place new recharge and refuelling points for the different types of "clean fuel", such as electricity, hydrogen and natural gas, as well as relevant supporting actions. In order to ensure all new recharging and refuelling points are interoperable, common technical standards will be applied. The European Commission has said that policy frameworks of all member states will provide long-term security for private and public investment in vehicle and fuel technology and infrastructure roll-out. The deadlines for having the infrastructure in place range from 2020 to 2030, depending upon the type of fuel, vehicle and deployment area. The final adoption of the legislative act by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament earlier this year. The directive will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the EU Official Journal, which is expected to take place within the next few days.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1053_en.htm

EU-Canada trade deal agreed

The EU-Canada summit, which took place in Ottawa last week, marks the end of the five-year talks for a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This deal will allow EU companies to compete with US exporters on the Canadian market on a level playing field, as the US and Canada have already liberalised their trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Once implemented, the deal is expected to increase EU-Canada trade in goods and services by 23% and boost EU GDP by around €12 billion a year. The Commission has highlighted that CETA will:

- End customs duties: CETA will eliminate all industrial duties saving European exporters around €470 million a year.
- Let EU businesses bid for Canadian public contracts.
- Step-up regulatory cooperation: By reducing the cost of complying with technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures (including marking and labelling provisions) CETA will facilitate trade and benefit industry generally.
- Protect European innovations and agricultural products from a specific geographical origin.
- Streamline trade in services: CETA will bring new opportunities for European companies by creating access to the Canadian market in key sectors such as financial services, telecommunications, energy and maritime transport.
- Promote and protect investment.
- Reform and improve the investment-to-state arbitrations (ISDS) system.
- Ensure cooperation in the future.
- Safeguard democracy, as well as consumer and environment protection standards.

The text of the agreement was made public at the EU-Canada Summit, and will now be checked by the EU's lawyers and translated into all official EU languages. Subsequently, it will then be sent to the Council for authorization for signature. The next step will be the consent vote in the European Parliament, and if necessary the approval of the parliaments of member states.

(Source: European Commission)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-14-542_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-542_en.htm)

Future competitive taxi innovation relies on level playing field - IRU

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) has highlighted to newly-elected MEPs, Belgian politicians and industry stakeholders the recent challenges faced from so called ride-sharing apps, as well as drawing attention to recent innovation in Europe's taxi industry. The IRU has welcomed new technologies, but stressed that fair competition and clear regulations are essential. Speaking at a reception in Brussels on the introduction of smartphone taxi services, IRU Head of Passenger Transport Oleg Kamberski said, "Political leaders and decision-makers must ensure that regulations guaranteeing safety, security and high-quality taxi services for customers are respected." The

taxi industry has also called for a level playing field and for all market operators to play by the same rules and raised some safety, insurance and tax avoidance concerns relating to so called ride-sharing apps. Pascal Smet, the newly-appointed Brussels Capital Region Minister for Transport, commented that "I would like to reduce regulation and still meet the same objectives. I'm in favour of car-sharing, but under certain conditions. It should not compete with traditional taxis."

(Source: European Commission)

http://www.iru.org/en_media_press_pr?code=1214&lang=en



Week ahead

Council of Ministers

Wednesday 8 October:

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE) Council (Transport Ministers) will meet in Luxembourg to adopt a general approach on the two proposals of cross-border exchange of information on road traffic and a draft regulation on port services.

European Parliament

Commissioner Hearings will take place throughout the week with Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy and Security Policy, and Vice-President-designate of the European Commission, being heard on Monday 6 October at 18:30pm, and Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness being heard on Tuesday 7 October at 10:00am.

Committee meetings:

Monday 6 October

IMCO: Presentation of studies on discrimination of consumers in the digital single market, and consumer protection aspects of financial services.

Tuesday 7 October

INTA: Exchange of views on EU-Japan Trade Negotiations