

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 21 October

European R&D investment up 6.1% in 2010

The European Commission have published the “EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard” for 2011, which provides information on the world’s top 1400 companies (400 based in the EU and 1000 from outside) ranked by their investments in R&D. The 2011 scoreboard shows that R&D investment by the top EU companies recovered strongly in 2010, up 6.1% following a 2.6% decrease in 2009. The biggest EU investor in R&D was Volkswagen, sixth place in the overall table with an R&D spend of €6.3 billion, and 7 of the top 20 R&D investors in the EU come from the automotive sector. Despite the EU’s recovery in overall R&D spend, the scoreboard shows that EU companies as a whole are still trailing their major US and Asian competitors on R&D growth. In the US R&D investment increased by 10% whilst in Asia some countries showed very strong growth in R&D investment levels, including 29.5% for Chinese companies and 20.5% for those from South Korea. (Source: Europa)

http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu/research/scoreboard_2011.htm

digital networks. The bulk of the investment fund, €31.7, will be devoted towards upgrading the EU’s transport infrastructure, and the funding will also provide a particular focus on investment in sustainable transport modes. The “Connecting Europe Package” aims to create jobs, boost the EU’s competitiveness and make the EU’s economy greener, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy. (Source: Europa)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1200&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



EU adopts plan for €50 billion boost to European networks

The European Commission has adopted the “Connecting Europe Package”, a plan to invest €50 billion in improving Europe’s transport, energy and

EU new car registrations down 1.1% Q1-Q3 of 2011

ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, has announced that new car registrations in Europe are down 1.1% over the first 9 months of 2011 to 10,121,423 units, compared to the same period a year ago. In September, registrations were up 0.6% to 1,231,147 units, supported by German demand. Germany was the only major market to post growth (+8.1%) while the downturn ranged from 0.8% in the UK to 1.3% in Spain, 1.4% in France and 5.7% in Italy. From January to September, performances were diverse across the region, with the UK (-5.0%), Italy (-11.3%) and Spain (-20.7%) seeing their markets contract, while France remained stable (+0.2%), and Germany posted double-digit growth (+10.8%). (Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/passenger_cars_registrations_down_1.1_nine_months_into_2011

Eurovignette directive on road charges for lorries enters into force

The Eurovignette directive on road charges for lorries entered into force on Saturday 15 October, following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU. The rules must now be transposed into national law by 16 October 2013. Member states are not obliged to impose the charges, however those that choose to do so will now be able to charge lorries for the air and noise pollution they cause, in addition to the existing infrastructure charge. The law stipulates that revenues from all charges should be spent on transport projects, in particular on reducing pollution from road transport, improving vehicle energy efficiency, supporting the trans-European transport network, optimising logistics, improving road safety and providing secure parking places. Member states applying these charges will be allowed to exempt lorries weighing between 3.5 and 12 tonnes, but they will have to justify their decision to the European Commission. Brussels will assess the effectiveness of the rules by October 2015 and will consider if the derogation for lorries under 12 tonnes should be scrapped. Vehicles complying with Euro V standards will be exempt from air pollution charges until the end of 2013. Euro VI vehicles will be exempt until the end of 2017. Hybrid and electric vehicles will be permanently exempted. (Source: ENDS) <http://www.endseurope.com/27352/new-road-charging-rules-for-lorries-enter-force?referrer=bulletin&DCMP=EMC-ENDS-EUROPE-DAILY>

EU launches energy infrastructure plan

The European Commission has announced a €9.1 billion energy infrastructure plan. The plan aims to upgrade Europe's energy infrastructure, according to strategic climate and energy needs, and the money will be available under the proposed EU budget for 2014-2020, in the form of newly-minted project bonds, grants and loan guarantees. The grants will be awarded to a select group of "common interest" projects which will benefit from a fast-track permit granting procedure. Projects eligible for the scheme could then receive between 50-80% of their funding from the EU. To be eligible for EU grants, projects "will have to prove that they are commercially not viable", stated the Commission. At present it is not known how

the funds will be divided between renewable and fossil fuel projects, however the majority of the 12 earmarked priority infrastructure projects are for gas and oil pipelines. This €9.1 billion fund is part of the EU's planned €200 billion infrastructure investment over the next ten years. (Source: Euractiv) <http://www.euractiv.com/energy/eu-launches-9-energy-infrastructure-plan-news-508430>



Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

No relevant activity

European Parliament (Plenary Session, Strasbourg)

Tuesday 25 October

Tyres for motor vehicles and their trailers – Vote, First Parliamentary Reading

Engines placed on the market under the flexibility scheme - Vote, First Parliamentary Reading