

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 25 October

Commission adopts Work Programme for 2014

The European Commission has formally adopted its Work Programme for 2014. Identifying the priority growth-enhancing proposals to be completed in the months ahead, the Programme focuses on the finalisation of the banking union, the single market and the digital agenda and aims to ensure that the new measures under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 swiftly become operational. Growth and jobs remain the Commission's top priority in 2014, with a particular focus on combating youth unemployment and facilitating access to financing. In line with the Blueprint for a deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union, the Commission will continue work on completing the banking union, reinforcing economic governance and exploring further deepening of the EMU. The adoption of the Single Resolution Mechanism Fund is a priority, and the Single Supervisory Mechanism becomes operational in 2014. The Commission will also take the opportunity to take a longer-term perspective and look ahead in a variety of key sectors: on energy and climate change, on a modern industrial policy, on justice and home affairs policies, and on the rule of law. In terms of external action, key areas include the trade agenda, notably negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the US, and important international negotiations, such as on climate change and development.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-978_en.htm

EU and Canada conclude negotiations on trade deal

Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper have reached a political agreement on the key elements of a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This is the first free trade agreement between the European Union and a G8 country and is hoped to generate new opportunities for growth and the creation of jobs in the EU. On the basis of this political breakthrough, the negotiators will now be able to continue the process and settle all the remaining technical issues. Subsequently, the agreement will need to be approved by Council and Parliament. The EU-Canada agreement will remove over 99% of tariffs between the two economies and create sizeable new market access opportunities in services and investment. In the area of government procurement, Canada taken commitments both at the federal level, and opened its sub-federal level to European bidders. The agreement will also seek to improve the protection of intellectual property rights in Canada as well as the protection of the names of EU agricultural products. Once implemented, the agreement is expected to increase two-way bilateral trade in goods and services by 23% or €26 billion, fostering growth and employment on both sides of the Atlantic. The overall benefits of the agreement are expected to raise the level of the EU's annual GDP by approximately €12 billion a year.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-972_en.htm?locale=en



EU and China to hold high-level economic and trade talks

The European Commission and the Chinese Government will begin the fourth High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue (HED) on 24 October in Brussels. It is the first such meeting since the change in the Chinese leadership and is a key mechanism for managing cooperation and competition between the

two economies. The HED will cover macro-economic challenges facing the international economy, future sources of growth, industrial policy questions as well as trade and investment issues, and customs cooperation. The HED offers an opportunity to discuss strategic issues in the EU-China economic and trade relationship. It is co-chaired by Vice-President Rehn and Commissioner De Gucht as well as Chinese Vice-Premier Ma Kai. A further seven Chinese Ministers and Vice-Ministers will participate in the dialogue. The HED will also prepare the forthcoming EU-China Summit, where both sides expect to be able to launch the negotiations for an investment agreement. Commenting on the talks, Olli Rehn, Commission Vice-President in charge of economic and monetary affairs and the euro stated: "The EU and China together represent around a third of global GDP and both economies are in the process of important structural reforms. In an increasingly interconnected world we need to understand each other's perspectives and problems if we are to provide an effective, cooperative response to current challenges and promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth in the EU, China and globally."

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-982_en.htm?locale=en

European automotive industry welcomes progress on digital single market

ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association has highlighted the importance of harmonisation and agreement on the digital single market in light of the recent European Commission proposal and upcoming EU Council discussions on the digital agenda. Europe's automobile industry spends €32 billion on research and development annually, and a large portion of this goes into new vehicle and infrastructure information technologies that require harmonisation between markets to be technically and commercially viable. ACEA stated that the development of a Digital Single Market is a key step towards ensuring that the industry's investments create widespread benefits. Erik Jonnaert, Secretary General of ACEA said, "Ongoing work on vehicle logistics management systems, vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure networks and integrated infrastructure grids necessitates agreement about the functioning of the digital market. New technologies for vehicles and for the transport sector will only work if deployed in a consistent and coordinated manner."

Many of the new telecommunications services being rolled out by the industry will not work if the corresponding infrastructure required is not ready or fails to meet technical standards. "The automotive industry needs fast, reliable and secure networks to keep and enhance our competitiveness. It is for this reason that ACEA supports the European Commission in its aim of grasping the leadership in the digital economy."

(Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/news/news_detail/european_automotive_industry_welcomes_progress_on_digital_single_market



Week ahead

No relevant activity

MEPs will return to their respective Member States for constituency week. Meanwhile, there are no meetings scheduled for the Council and no key announcements are expected from the European Commission.