

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 9 November

Commission publishes CARS21 Communication

The European Commission has published a Communication following the outcome of the CARS21 report. The non-legislative document puts forward a number of proposals as a result of the CARS21 report that was published in June. An action plan lays out the proposals, which include measures to promote investment in advanced technologies and innovation for clean vehicles such as deployment of infrastructure for alternative fuels, standards for electric vehicles and R&D funding for low carbon vehicles. The action plan also puts forward measures to improve market conditions, which includes strengthening the Single Market for vehicles through an improved type-approval system; including market surveillance, to avoid unfair competition; streamlining financial incentives for clean vehicles; consistent application of the smart regulation principles, including the application of competitiveness proofing for major policy initiatives to estimate the specific impact of major policy initiatives on the automotive industry. The Commission will look to support industry in accessing the global market by pursuing balanced trade deals, which will look at the cumulative impacts and the continued promotion and continuation of bilateral negotiations, as well as looking to intensify work on international harmonisation of vehicle regulations. The final point of the action plan looks to promote investment in skills and training by encouraging the use of the European Social Fund. A process called CARS 2020 will look to monitor progress and continue dialogue with the industry and stakeholders. European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship, said: "Europe produces the best cars in the world. The Commission wants this leadership to be maintained, moving even further ahead in safety and environmental performance. The Commission is therefore today presenting a strategy for the EU automotive industry and will also take urgent action to address this sector's current difficulties and restructuring in a co-ordinated way. (Source: European Commission) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1187_en.htm

Focus on EU-US trade agreement following presidential election

Following the re-election of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America, calls have been made to strengthen economic and trade relations between the US and EU. A joint statement by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission said: "Creation of growth and jobs remains a priority for both the US and the EU and we will continue to work with President Obama to unlock the unparalleled potential of the transatlantic market." UK Prime Minister David Cameron congratulated the President and said: "There are so many things that we need to do: we need to kick start the world economy and I want to see an EU-US trade deal". (Source: European Council/Number 10) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/133319.pdf



Council expected to finalise negotiating position on EU Budget

European finance ministers are meeting in Brussels to finalise the Council's negotiating position on the 2013 EU Budget. Following the meeting of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, a Conciliation Committee meeting with the European Parliament will take place to attempt to form a joint text on the Budget. If a joint text is produced, the Parliament and

Council will have 14 days to approve the Budget. As it currently stands, the Council's position amounts to Budget payments of €132.70 billion, representing an increase of 2.79% compared to 2012. The Parliament has called for a 6.82% increase in payments to bring the total amount to €137.90 billion, with the European Commission proposing an increase of 6.85% to €137.92 billion. (Source: Cyprus Presidency of the EU) www.cy2012.eu/index.php/en/news-categories/areas/economic-financial-affairs/press-release-aspiring-for-an-agreement-on-the-2013-budget



Climate Action Commissioner calls for transport R&D to be key part of Horizon 2020

European Commissioner for Climate Action Connie Hedegaard has reiterated the importance of investment in road transport R&D as part of the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. Commissioner Hedegaard, speaking at The European Council for Automotive R&D (EUCAR) Annual Reception and Conference said: "I believe in a strong and competitive European car industry. Already now, we can see tangible results of the EU automotive industry's efforts in research and innovation, also due to substantial EU funding under the current research programme. The average CO₂ emissions of the new fleet have dropped from just below 160g/km in 2007 to 135g/km in 2011 and the supply of more fuel-efficient vehicles is continuously increasing. We want industry to maintain these efforts and the Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 clearly reflects this ambition". (Source: EUCAR) <http://www.eucar.be/news-and-events/Press%20Release%20EUCAR%20RC%202012>

Week ahead

European Commission

14 November: The Commission will present a legal instrument aimed at increasing gender balance on company boards in the EU; Commission presents its communication on the European Carbon Market Report 2012.

15 November: The Commission will present a Communication on the Internal Energy Market to take stock of progress made towards the completion of the internal energy market by 2014, identify the main challenges ahead and propose actions to improve the effective application of the third energy package.

Council of Ministers

12 November – EuroGroup

13 November – Economic and Financial Affairs Council

European Parliament (Group/Committees week)

12 November

ENVI: Exchange of views – Extraordinary hearing on backloading of green-house gas allowances and long-term perspective if EU ETS.