

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 2 December

Commercial vehicle registrations up 7.7% in October

ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, has announced that European commercial vehicle registration increased 7.7% in October, amounting to 162,901 units. Registrations were up significantly in the largest EU markets with France showing 7.8% growth, Germany 7.2% and the UK up 11.1%. From January to October, Spain was the only major market to contract (-4.9%). Germany (+19.5%), the UK (+17.8%) and France (5.5%) all posted growth, leading to an overall 10.8% increase. (Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/commercial_vehicles_registrations_up_7.7_in_october



EU and US boost economic partnership

The European Union and the United States have announced a strengthening of transatlantic economic ties through a number of new initiatives. At the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), senior EU and US leaders agreed to facilitate their customs procedures, to strengthen their cooperation on electric vehicle and smart grid research and in the fields of new technologies, such as cloud computing, and raw materials. The leaders also discussed a number of strategic economic questions, in particular transatlantic economic cooperation in the Southern

Mediterranean and in emerging economies. Furthermore, the EU-US Summit tasked the TEC to establish a new High-Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth to identify options to further enhance EU-US economic relations. The working group will be co-chaired by U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk and EU Commissioner for Trade, Karel De Gucht and will report its findings, conclusions and recommendations by the end of 2012, with an interim report in June 2012 on the status of this work. (Source: European Commission)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1481&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

MEPs approve new code of conduct

The European Parliament has approved a new code of conduct tightening rules on MEPs' financial declarations and their contacts with lobbyists to avoid any perception of conflict of interest. Under the new rules, MEPs will have to report any outside activity for which they earn more than €5,000 per year and must refuse gifts worth more than €150. They are also required to publicly declare all professional activities for the three years preceding their election. Financial support of any nature and any financial interest that may cause a conflict of interests will also have to be disclosed. Any change to the declaration must be notified within 30 days and in the event of failure, the member will no longer be eligible to hold offices within Parliament. According to the new rules, the President of the Parliament, after having consulted an advisory committee, can decide to sanction MEPs that breach the code. The sanctions range from a forfeiture of the daily allowance, temporary suspension from Parliament's activities (not including the right to vote) for a maximum of 10 days, or the loss of the role of rapporteur or other elected offices within Parliament. Any such sanctions will be published on Parliament's web site. (Source: EurActiv)

<http://www.euractiv.com/future-eu/meps-approve-new-code-conduct-news-509386>

Horizon 2020 investment programme announced

The European Commission has presented a package of measures to boost research, innovation and competitiveness in Europe. Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn has announced Horizon 2020, an €80 billion programme for investment in research and innovation. Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou has put forward a Strategic Innovation Agenda for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), which will receive €2.8 billion of funding under Horizon 2020. In parallel, Vice-President Antonio Tajani has announced a complementary new programme to boost competitiveness and innovation in SMEs, with an additional budget of €2.5 billion. The funding programmes run from 2014 to 2020. Horizon 2020 will focus funds on three key objectives. It will support the EU's position as a world leader in science with a dedicated budget of €24.6 billion, including an increase in funding of 77% for the European Research Council (ERC). It will help secure industrial leadership in innovation with a budget of €17.9 billion. This includes an investment of €13.7 billion in key technologies, as well as greater access to capital and support for SMEs. Finally, €31.7 billion will go towards addressing six key themes: Health, demographic change and well-being; Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy; Secure, clean and efficient energy; Smart, green and integrated transport; Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials; and Inclusive, innovative and secure societies. (Source: European Commission)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/848&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>



CARS 21 High Level Group report published

The CARS 21 High Level Group has adopted a first set of recommendations for the competitiveness and sustainable growth of the European automotive industry. The report calls for a level playing field for the EU industry worldwide, stating that Free Trade Agreements should aim at full tariff dismantling and removal of non-tariff barriers, and all relevant stakeholders should advocate the introduction of a world wide system for the approval of vehicles in the 1958 UNECE Agreement (which ensures international harmonisation of vehicle regulations). In addition, the report recommends limiting vehicle noise, a more "real-world driving" measurement procedure for emissions and fuel consumption as well as an appropriate methodology for evaluating the CO₂ emissions of heavy-duty vehicles. The report states that member states should better coordinate financial incentives to enable large scale production of clean vehicles, and therefore incentives should be based on objective and commonly available performance data. The group also calls for a portfolio of alternative fuels and the related infrastructure to be deployed. (Source: European Commission)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1494&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Week ahead

European Commission

Wednesday 7 December

DG Internal Market and Services

Legislative proposal on a European regime for venture capital – providing SMEs with better access to venture capital finance

Council of Ministers

Friday 9 December

The European Council

European Parliament (Meeting of Committees – Brussels)

Monday 5 December

BUDG - Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2014-2020) System of own re-sources of the European Union

Thursday 8 December

INTA – U.S. – E.U. Transatlantic Economic Council