

## WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 9 December

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### UK vetoes EU treaty change

Prime Minister, David Cameron has vetoed an EU wide treaty aimed at tackling the current economic crisis in the eurozone, stating that it was not in the UK's interests. For those countries that agreed to the recommendations, which includes all those within the eurozone and a number from outside, an "accord" will be drawn up that sets out strict rules committing the signatories to balanced budgets. These are defined as a structural deficit no greater than 0.5% of gross domestic product. In addition, governments will be required to submit their national budgets to the European Commission, which will have the power to request that they be revised. Commenting on his decision, Prime Minister Cameron stated: "We want the eurozone countries to come together and solve their problems. But we should only allow that to happen within the EU treaties if there are proper protections for the single market, for other key British interests. Without those safeguards it is better not to have a treaty within a treaty, but have those countries make their arrangements separately. It was a tough decision but the right one". (Source: BBC News) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16104275>



### European Commission present plans to assist SMEs in getting access to credit

The European Commission has announced a number of measures aimed at assisting SMEs to get easier access to credit. The EU Action Plan "Helping SMEs

access more financial resources" includes increasing financial support from the EU budget and the European Investment Bank (EIB) and a proposal for a regulation setting uniform rules for the marketing of venture capital funds. This new regulation aims to make it easier for venture capitalists to raise funds across Europe for the benefit of start-ups. In addition €1.4 billion of new financial guarantees will be provided under the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs, and the European Investment Bank will keep its SME loan activity at a sustained pace, close to the 2011 level of €10 billion. The European Commission and the EIB have also launched a guarantee facility for innovative SMEs to help them access finance from banks. This follows on from the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF), launched in 2007, that has assisted 75 companies benefit from €7 billion in EIB loans to projects enhancing European growth and competitiveness. The new risk-sharing instrument for SMEs will be managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF). In addition, the EIB and the European Commission are to provide extra resources for research infrastructures. (Source: European Commission)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1513&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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### European Commission proposes vehicle noise reduction

The European Commission has proposed to reduce noise produced by cars, vans, buses, coaches, light and heavy trucks. Noise limit values would be lowered in two steps of each 2 dB(A) for passenger cars, vans, buses and coaches. For trucks the reduction would be 1 dB(A) in the first step and 2 dB(A) in the second step. The first step is to apply two years after the publication of the text once approved by the European Parliament and member states and the second step is foreseen three years thereafter. Altogether, these measures aim to reduce vehicle noise by 25%. In

addition, the Commission intends to introduce a new and more reliable test method to measure sound emissions. (Source: European Commission)  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1520&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguage=en>

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## 18 new MEPs to take their seats on 12 December

18 new MEPs will officially take their seats in Strasbourg, in the week beginning 12 December. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the number of MEPs is set at 751, and these numbers are reallocated among the Member States. The distribution of the 18 new seats is among 12 Member States: Spain will receive 4; Austria, France and Sweden will receive 2; and Bulgaria, Italy, Malta, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and the UK will all receive one new MEP. The only country to lose seats is Germany, which will go from 99 MEPs to 96. However, the extra three MEPs will continue until the end of the 2009-2014 legislature. The new MEP for the UK is Anthea McIntyre, a Conservative. This seat has been allocated to the West Midlands on the recommendation of the Electoral Commission. (Source: European Parliament)  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/111011/Anthea\\_McINTYRE.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/111011/Anthea_McINTYRE.html)



## Week ahead

### **European Commission**

Tuesday 13 December  
DG Energy  
Energy Roadmap 2050

### **Council of Ministers**

Monday 12 December, Tuesday 13 December  
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

Thursday 15 December  
Foreign Affairs Council - Trade

### **European Parliament (Plenary Session - Strasbourg)**

Tuesday 13 December  
Single European Transport Area – debate

Wednesday 14 December  
Commission Work Programme for 2012 - vote