

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 19 December

Rise in EU car registrations - ACEA

The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) has published the latest figures for EU passenger car registrations. In November, a moderate growth of 1.4% was recorded on a year earlier, marking the fifteenth consecutive month of growth.

The demand increase was mainly led by the significant growth recorded in Spain (+17.4%), followed by the UK (+8.0%), and Italy (+5.0%) while Germany (-1.8%) and France (-2.7%) recorded a slight decline. From January to November 2014, 5.7% more new passenger cars were registered in the EU compared to the same period last year. Looking at the largest markets, France remained stable (+1.1%), while Germany (+2.6%), Italy (4.3%), the UK (+9.4%), and Spain (18.1%) expanded.

Regarding new commercial vehicles, the EU market slowed slightly in November (-0.2%). Only the light commercial vehicle and bus and coach segments saw an increase last month, while truck and heavy truck sectors recorded a significant drop in sales. Spain (+13.3%), Italy (+6.5%) and the UK (+4.0%) contributed positively, while Germany (-9.1%) and France (-2.9%) performed less well than in the same month last year. (Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/passenger-car-registrations-5.7-over-eleven-months-1.4-in-november>

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/commercial-vehicle-registrations-8.8-over-eleven-months-0.2-in-november>

European Council Summit

EU Heads of State and Government met on Thursday 18 December in Brussels to discuss fostering investment in Europe and Ukraine. This was the first European Council held under the new President of the European Council, Donald Tusk. The European Council identified a number of key priorities in order to foster investment and address market failure in Europe. Amongst other, EU leaders called for:

- The EU and the US to conclude negotiations on TTIP by the end of 2015

- Further strengthening of the multilateral trading system and the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements with key partners
- Quicker adoption, transposition and implementation of EU legislation in the area of the Single Market
- An improved regulatory environment for investments
- Closer coordination of economic policies in order to ensure the functioning of the Economic and Monetary Union

With regards to Ukraine, the Council imposed substantial additional sanctions on investments, services and trade with Crimea and Sevastopol. This is to reinforce the EU's policy of not recognising their illegal annexation by Russia. From 20 December, investment in Crimea or Sevastopol is outlawed.

(Source: European Council)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/146411.pdf



Commission announces Work Programme 2015

The European Commission has adopted its Work Programme for 2015. The programme sets out the actions the Commission intends to take over the next year to boost jobs, growth and investment. The Work Programme sets out 23 new initiatives proposed by the Juncker Commission, 80 existing proposals which the Commission proposes to withdraw or amend for political or technical reasons. The Commission committed to deliver in 2015:

- An investment Plan, the legislative follow-up on the Plan announced last month unlocking investments of at least €315bn over the next three years
- A Digital Single Market Package, creating the conditions for a digital economy and society
- First steps towards a European Energy Union
- A fairer approach to taxation, including an action plan on efforts to combat tax evasion and tax fraud
- A European Agenda on Migration, developing a new approach on legal migration to make the EU an attractive destination for talent and skills
- Deeper Economic and Monetary Union

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-2703_en.htm

EU air quality proposals to be modified

The Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, confirmed that the European Commission intends to withdraw and modify EU proposals to increase recycling and curb air pollution as part of its 2015 Work Programme. Mr Timmermans said the current recycling proposals would be withdrawn and that a broader and more ambitious package would be presented in 2015. Meanwhile, the Clean Air package would be modified as part of the EU 2030 Energy and Climate Package to overcome supposed disagreements between national governments and the European Parliament. Before the Commission formalises the withdrawals, it will wait for the views of the European Parliament and the Council.

(Source: The Guardian)

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/16/eu-backs-down-on-plans-to-axe-waste-and-air-quality-directives>

Council reaches compromise on lorries and buses

The Council has reached a compromise agreement with the European Parliament on exceptions to current maximum sizes of lorries and buses. The directive will enter into force twenty days after its publication in the EU Official Journal. After publication, member states will have two years to transpose it. It will be reviewed in three years after the transposition deadline. The new directive still has to be formally

approved first by the Parliament and then by the Council. The final adoption is expected to take place in the next few months.

(Source: Council of the European Union)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/146371.pdf

EU support for electric vehicle charging points

This week, the European Commission's Innovation and Networks Executive Agency announced EU support for charging points for electric vehicles in France. The EU's TEN-T Programme will co-fund with almost €5 million a study and pilot deployment of 200 charging points for electric vehicles on the main French highways. The project should contribute to the development of charging infrastructure and enable a wider use of electric transport in Europe.

(Source: European Commission)

http://inea.ec.europa.eu/en/news_events/newsroom/200-charging-points-for-electric-vehicles-to-open-in-france-with-eu-support.htm

Week ahead

European Parliament

- In recess until 5 January 2015