

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Thursday 20 December

EP Environment Committee backs plan to reduce motor vehicle noise

MEPs in the Environment Committee have voted on legislation to reduce the noise from motor vehicles. The proposed regulation sets lower sound limits for new vehicles in category M (for passengers) and N (for goods). By a margin of one vote, the Environment Committee supported more stringent limits on sound emissions than those proposed by the rapporteur and the EPP, ECR and EFD groups. A proposal by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups, which goes further, was adopted by 29 votes in favour to 28 against, with two abstentions. The reduction, taking effect six years after the regulation enters into force, would first apply to the approval of new vehicle types. Subject to proper assessment of their impact on car industry, new limits should be reviewed and, if necessary, adapted. They would then apply for all new vehicles that will be registered, sold or will enter into service in the EU. In addition, MEPs called on the Commission to introduce a new labelling scheme like those already used for to show fuel consumption, tyre noise and CO₂ emissions. The plenary vote on the legislation is scheduled for the March session in Strasbourg. (Source: European Parliament) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20121214IPRO4666/html/Environment-Committee-backs-plan-to-reduce-motor-vehicle-noise>

Proposal to improve EU rights under international trade agreements

The European Commission has proposed a new framework to enhance the EU's ability to enforce its rights in the international trading system. The proposal covers the EU's trade responses in cases of illegal trade measures in other countries, and it will allow effective action to safeguard the interests of EU companies and workers. The proposal is for a framework to enable the Commission to take executive action when the trade interests of the EU are at stake, rather than reacting on a case by case

basis when the EU rights are not respected. The Commission is proposing a Regulation to establish a clear and predictable framework for adopting implementing acts following international trade disputes that have a negative economic impact on the EU. In cases of last resort, trade sanctions can be put in place to encourage the offending country to remove illegal measures. Action could also be taken to compensate for import restrictions that are imposed on EU products in exceptional situations (so-called safeguard measures), or to react to cases where a WTO member country changes its trade regime in a way that negatively affects EU trade (such as raising its import tariffs) without adequate compensation. Such implementation acts would only be taken under certain well-defined conditions and might take the form of new or increased customs duties or quotas on imports or exports of goods, among other possible measures. The proposal is for an EU Regulation of the Council and the European Parliament and will now be discussed by the Council and the European Parliament under the ordinary legislative procedure. (Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1390_en.htm?locale=en



EU commercial vehicle registrations down 18.5% in November

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, shows that commercial vehicle registrations dropped 18.5% in November

2012 compared to November 2011. All major markets faced a double-digit downturn ranging from -13.6% in Germany to -16.1% in the UK, -20.7% in France, -25.1% in Spain and -27.5% in Italy. From January to November, the EU recorded 1,569,390 new commercial vehicles, or 11.4% less than in the same period a year ago. The UK (-4.8%), Germany (-5.2%), France (-9.2%), Spain (-25.2%) and Italy (-32.5%) all saw their markets contract. (Source: ACEA)
http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/passenger_car_registrations_-7.6_over_11_months_-10.3_in_november



EU and Singapore agree trade deal

EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht and Singapore's Minister of Trade and Industry Lim Hng Kiang, have completed final negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union and Singapore. The Commission says the agreement is one of the most comprehensive the EU has ever negotiated and hopes to create new opportunities for companies from Europe and Singapore to do business together. An EU-Singapore FTA will be the EU's second ambitious agreement with a key Asian trading partner, after the EU-Korea FTA, which is in operation since July 2011. In addition, this agreement is a first when it comes to promoting 'green growth' and has been especially designed to meet the EU's "2020 strategy" for a competitive economy. The deal will simplify rules to boost trade and investment in environmental technologies and promote green public tendering. Both the EU and Singapore will now seek approval for the deal from their respective political authorities and envisage initialling the draft agreement in spring 2013. Talks between the two sides on investment will continue. These discussions, which started later than the trade negotiations, are based on the new EU competence under the Lisbon Treaty. Commenting on the announcement, EU Trade

Commissioner Karel De Gucht stated: "After our agreement with South Korea, sealing this deal with Singapore clearly puts the EU on the map in Asia. But we do not intend to stop here – I hope it will open the doors for FTAs with other countries in the ASEAN region." (Source: European Commission)
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1380_en.htm?locale=en

Week ahead

All EU institutions are on recess until the New Year