

## WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 31 January

### ACEA urges EU to take concrete actions to restore competitiveness

The European Automobile Manufacturer's Association (ACEA) has issued concrete policy recommendations to help the industry on its transition to growth. The industry's short-term recommendations to policy makers, based on the European Commission's CARS 2020 Action Plan, are:

- To drive innovation, by creating a pro-innovation, technology-neutral regulatory environment.
- To foster growth through international trade, by ensuring there are mutually-anticipated benefits and a clear 'level playing-field' when negotiating free trade agreements.
- To build a supportive regulatory framework by reducing the regulatory burden and cost of doing business in Europe.
- To anticipate and manage change, including by mitigating the social and economic impact of restructuring, and improving labour flexibility.

Commenting on the announcement Erik Jonnaert, ACEA's Secretary General said: "We welcome the fact that a number of our priorities are already echoed in the Commission's Communication, 'For a European Industrial Renaissance', published last week. We strongly hope that they will also steer discussions on concrete actions for the automobile industry at the European Council on industrial competitiveness."

(Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/automobile-industry-urges-eu-policy-makers-to-take-concrete-actions-to-rest>

### EU commercial vehicle registrations: +1.0% in 2013; +34.7% in December

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturer's Association, show that in December new commercial vehicle registrations grew by 34.7%, in the EU totalling 169,744 units. Growth was sustained across all segments and all major markets

recorded positive results ranging from +16.6% in France to +16.8% in Italy, +27.0% in Germany, +52.9% in Spain and +66.0% in the UK. From January to December, demand for new commercial vehicles was up 1.0%, reaching 1,711,843 units. Despite the increase, this was the third lowest level since the start of the series in 1997 in absolute figures. Spain (+9.7%) and the UK (+14.5%) positively contributed to the upturn, while Germany (-2.0%), France (-3.7%) and Italy (-11.7%) performed less well than in 2012. (Source: ACEA)

<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/commercial-vehicle-registrations-1.0-in-2013-34.7-in-december>



### Brussels sets advisory group on EU-US trade deal

The European Commission has launched a special advisory group of experts to give fresh input on all issues being discussed at the EU-US negotiating table for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The group, composed of 14 advisors from different consumer, labour and business groups, will help the EU executive to frame the discussion at the negotiating table so that Europe's high standards of consumer and environmental protection are fully respected. This is the second move taken by the Commission to ensure transparency and avoid a replay of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) which was rejected by the European Parliament after it was approved by all member states. Last week, the Commission also decided to postpone negotiations on an investor-state dispute settlement mechanism and launch a consultation on

which to build future talks on the issue. The so-called "investor-state" dispute clauses empower EU and US-based corporations to lodge private legal cases directly against governments. The Commission's initial proposal enabled US companies investing in Europe to by-pass European courts and directly challenge governments at international tribunals, whenever they find that laws in the area of public health, environmental or social protection infringe their right to do business. EU companies investing abroad would have had the same rights in the United States. The advisory group (which will operate in line with the Commission's standard Rules on Expert Groups) met informally on 21 January 2014 to discuss initial working arrangements and practical details. The first full working session will be held on 25 February 2014. In addition the EU and US have announced that the fourth round of negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will take place in Brussels from Monday 10th March until Friday 14th March. Prior to that round, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht and United States Trade Representative Ambassador Michael Froman will meet in Washington D.C. on Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th February to take stock of the negotiations to date. The aim of this meeting will be for both Commissioner De Gucht and Ambassador Froman to assess progress made after the first three rounds of talks and thereby provide their political guidance to the chief negotiators from both sides on how best to take forward the negotiations. (Source: European Commission)

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

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## Call on European Council to support Key Enabling Technologies

The third meeting of the High Level Expert Group on Key Enabling Technologies invited the European Council to provide political impetus to the implementation of the European strategy for Key enabling technologies (KETs) in order to rejuvenate manufacturing in Europe. EU member states and European industry were also invited to establish KETs-based projects of common European interest. Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship, chaired the meeting at which the Group presented its contribution to the European Council discussion in March. The report recalls the Council's acknowledgment in 2012 of KETS' systemic importance for the whole economy and highlights the

importance of KETs to achieve the goal of having industry represent 20% of the EU's GDP by 2020. The important contribution such technologies will make to the EU's ambition to transition to a low-carbon, energy-efficient economy is also emphasized. KETs are also one of the priorities in the Commission's re-industrialisation strategy, as highlighted by last week's Communication for a European Industrial Renaissance in which Vice President Tajani reaffirmed that Europe cannot prosper without a strong industrial base and that industry is essential to the economic revival of Europe and its competitiveness. Key Enabling Technologies comprise micro- and nanoelectronics, advanced materials, industrial biotechnology, photonics, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing systems.

(Source: European Commission)

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/key\\_technologies/kets\\_high\\_level\\_group\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/key_technologies/kets_high_level_group_en.htm)



## Week ahead

### European Commission

No relevant activity

### Council of Ministers

No relevant activity

### European Parliament (Plenary Session, Strasbourg)

Tuesday 4 February

Debate on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies