

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 1 March

European Commission publishes guidelines on financial incentives for EVs

The European Commission has published new guidelines on how member states should use financial incentives to best increase demand for low emission vehicles. Currently rules on financial incentives differ across the EU, however, the Commission believe a common framework could help facilitate the assembly of larger quantities of such vehicles, prompting lower prices for consumers. Mandatory principles under the guidelines include non-discrimination with regard to the origin of the vehicle, compatibility with EU type-approval legislation, non-violation of EU state-aid rules, the taking into account of public procurement provisions, and respecting mutual recognition by notifying incentives. Member States must consider these principles in order not to violate the EU Treaty provisions. The Commission has also recommended other non-mandatory principles. These include: technological neutrality, reference to a common performance-criteria, proportionality, adequate incentive size and reference to EU CO₂ limits.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-174_en.htm?locale=en

EU commercial vehicle registrations fall 10.6%

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers Association, show that new commercial vehicle registrations declined in January by 10.6%, continuing a downward trend which prevailed throughout 2012. Of all most significant markets, the UK was the only one to post growth (+5.4%). France (-9.8%), Germany (-15.5%), Spain (-15.5%) and Italy (-23.6%) saw their markets shrink. In total, 126,110 vehicles were registered in the EU.

(Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/commercial_vehicles_registrations_down_10.6_in_january

Commission and EIB reach agreement on breakthrough of Key Enabling Technologies

A memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the European Commission and the European Investment Bank that aims to pave the way for improved access to finance for investments in key enabling technologies (KETs). KETs - nanotechnology, micro-/nanoelectronics, industrial biotechnology, advanced materials, photonics and advanced manufacturing technologies – are considered of critical importance for shaping the future innovation and competitiveness of the EU. The scope of issues to be discussed by the high-level group is broad and relates to: research and innovation aspects; financial engineering mechanisms for KETs-projects; cooperation of KETs value chain stakeholders; trade and state aid related issues; human capital & skills; and national and regional KETs policies.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-150_en.htm?locale=en



Council agrees on 'Youth Guarantee' scheme

The EU's Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers have reached an agreement on the Youth Guarantee scheme. Under the Youth Guarantee member states should put in place measures to ensure that young people up to age 25 receive a good

quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The Recommendation, proposed by the Commission on 5th December 2012 as part of the Youth Employment Package, gives member states a clear benchmark and precise guidelines for establishing their own Youth Guarantee scheme on the basis of six principles:

- establishing strong partnerships with all stakeholders
- ensuring early intervention and activation to avoid young people becoming or remaining NEETs (not in employment, education or training)
- taking supportive measures that will enable labour market integration
- making full use of EU funding to that end
- assessing and continuously improving the Youth Guarantee and
- implementing the scheme rapidly.

Implementing the Youth Guarantee requires member states to establish strong partnerships with schools and universities, training providers, employment services, social partners, career guidance providers, youth support services and youth organisations to ensure early intervention and action. Member states can make full use of the European Social Fund and other structural funds, and will be required to assess and continuously improve their Youth Guarantee schemes. Furthermore, on 7-8 February 2013 the European Council decided to create a Youth Employment Initiative setting aside €6 billion for the period 2014-2020 to be allocated to regions where youth unemployment exceeds 25%. These funds will be available to implement the Youth Guarantee. (Source: European Commission)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-13-152_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-152_en.htm?locale=en)

President Barroso announces creation of a Science and Technology Advisory Council

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, has announced the creation of a Science and Technology Advisory Council. This informal advisory body held its first meeting in Brussels on 27 February. The Council is an independent and informal group of science and technology experts from academia, business and civil society, covering a broad range of disciplines and uniting expertise from across the European Research Area. Its members have been selected by the

President in consultation with the Chief Scientific Adviser, based on their scientific reputation, experience at the science-policy interface and communication skills. The main aim of the Council is to provide advice directly to the President on how to create the proper environment for innovation by shaping a European society that embraces science, technology and engineering. In particular, the Council will advise on the opportunities and risks stemming from scientific and technological progress. The President will also ask the Council for advice on science and technology related topics that are of key importance for underpinning the Commission's growth agenda. (Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-168_en.htm?locale=en



Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant business

Council of Ministers

4 March

Eurogroup - The Eurogroup, composed of the Member States whose currency is the euro, meets normally the day before the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting and deals with issues relating to the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

5 March

Economic and Financial Affairs Council
The Council will take note of progress on a draft directive on bank recovery and resolution. It will also examine a package of measures aimed at combating VAT fraud—the “quick reaction mechanism” and the “reserve charge mechanism” and will be called on to adopt conclusions

European Parliament (Group/Committee week)

No relevant business