

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 18 March

EU countries pushing for 30% cut in emissions

Environmental ministers from seven EU member states believe that emissions targets should move beyond the current 20% figure. The EU has set itself a legally binding goal to reduce its emissions by 20% from 1990 levels by 2020. Moreover, it has pledged to raise this to 30% if other countries make comparable commitments. The EU agreed a new Renewable Energies Directive in December 2008, which turns into law its binding target to source 20% of the bloc's energy from renewable sources by 2020. According to the seven countries, a 30% cut would not only help protect the climate but would also shelter Europe from future spikes in the price of oil, said a joint statement from the ministers. The statement from UK, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden and Greece, came ahead of a meeting of the EU's 27 environment ministers in Brussels. (Source: Euractiv)

www.euractiv.com/en/climate-environment/britain-germany-lead-push-deeper-co2-cuts-news-503044



25 countries give the green light for a European patent

Ministers from twenty-five member states will now go ahead with plans to introduce a common system for registering patents. The decision to proceed with a Europe-wide patent system was taken by EU ministers in Brussels on 10 March, with the agreement

of all the countries except Italy and Spain. Enhanced cooperation allows a group of countries to adopt new common rules among themselves, in areas where an EU-wide agreement cannot be reached. The agreement among the member states concerns the creation of the European patent as well as the use of English, French and German as the three main working languages. However, another potentially more difficult issue is not covered by the ministers' agreement. This concerns the idea of setting up a common jurisdiction system including a tribunal to resolve legal disputes, for example concerning the scope of individual patents. The European Court of Justice has since ruled that the creation of a Community Patent Court would not be compatible with the provisions of EU law, therefore casting uncertainty over the future establishment of a Europe-wide patent system. (Source: Euractiv)

www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/25-countries-give-green-light-european-patent-news-503000

EU car registrations up 0.9% in February

In February, demand for new cars slightly increased by 0.9% in the EU, with a majority of markets expanding, with a total of 981,429 new cars registered in the month. While most countries posted growth, ranging from +1.2% in Poland to 112.6% in Lithuania, five recorded a downturn, including major markets such as the UK (-7.7%), Italy (-20.5%) and Spain (-27.6%). The two remaining major markets posted growth, with registrations up 13.2% in France and 15.2% in Germany. Portugal and Greece saw their markets contract by 12.7% and 49.1% respectively. Two months into the year, new car registrations slipped by 0.3%, amounting to 2,023,133 units. A majority of markets performed better than in the same period a year ago though three of the five largest faced a double-digit downturn. The UK shrank by 10.2%, Italy by 20.5% and Spain by 25.8%. Poland (-4.2%), Portugal (-11.0%) and Greece (-58.5%) also saw their markets contract. Elsewhere, growth ranged from 1.9% in Luxembourg to 114.5% in Estonia. (Source: ACEA)



European Commission proposes early auctioning of 120 million EU allowances

The European Commission has proposed to auction 120 million EU allowances (EUAs) early to smooth the transition to phase III of the EU emissions trading scheme (ETS) in 2013. The early auctions should be held in 2012. The commission has been considering early auctions for some time. It consulted over the New Year on plans to auction between 100 million and 300 million phase III allowances in 2012. EU member states will now make a final decision by this summer through the EU climate change committee. The type of auction has still to be decided. Another 300 million allowances from the phase III new entrants reserve are already being auctioned by the European Investment Bank in 2012. (Source: European Commission) ec.europa.eu/clima/news/index_en.htm

Week ahead

European Commission

23 March – Publication of the White Paper on the Future of Transport, outlining a long-term vision for transport in Europe until 2050.

Council of Ministers

21 March - Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council. Ministers will discuss recent international developments and their impact on world energy markets and the EU energy sector.

24/25 March – European Council. Leaders will discuss the economic reform package and nuclear safety within the EU.

European Parliament –Committees/Mini-Plenary (Brussels)

JURI – 21/22 March

Vote on permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles