

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 23 March

ACEA President calls for change of direction in EU trade negotiations

ACEA President Sergio Marchionne, CEO of Fiat, has called on the European Commission and member states to change their approach in conducting trade negotiations. At a debate with European Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht, at the 3rd European Business Conference in Bruges, Mr Marchionne stated that EU trade policy should help strengthen its domestic manufacturing industries rather than giving up on them for reasons that are unfit, and stressed that the long-term economic prospects of the automobile industry require the further liberalisation of markets and the reduction of barriers to trade and investment. Mr. Marchionne went on to note that it is critical that Europe foster an internal economic framework that is more competitive than the one that exists today, whilst, in parallel, ensuring that Europe pushes for the world to become more of a level playing field, with equal access and opportunities for all of the players involved. Mr Marchionne called for a recognition of the importance of strategic sectors in determining trade policy, highlighting that manufacturing industries are key to sustaining economic growth and prosperity in Europe. He concluded by emphasising that a guarantee of equal conditions for all is the one fundamental principle that must apply, stating: "We have the tools to get there and they begin with tariff dismantling on both sides, until tariffs are brought to zero. In specific and limited cases, we are open to an asymmetric dismantling of tariffs". (Source: ACEA)

http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/automobile_manufacturers_call_for_change_of_direction_in_eu_trade_negotiations

Brussels seeks 'reciprocity' in trade deals

The European Commission has stated that the EU could block non-EU companies from bidding for government contracts if European firms continue to

struggle to win public tenders abroad. To counter what it regards as unfair competition from its major economic rivals, EU commissioners for the internal market and trade have put forward proposals that could see a dramatic shift in the public procurement landscape. Under the proposal, European public authorities could exclude foreign firms from competing for EU contracts over the value of €5 million if there is evidence that European companies are routinely overlooked by public bodies abroad. The proposals need to be approved by the EU's 27 member states and the European Parliament before becoming law. Commission figures show that the EU makes €352 billion worth of public procurement contracts open to foreign bidders. By comparison, the U.S. market offers only €178 billion to outside bidders and Japan €27 billion. Commenting on the proposal, Karel De Gucht, European Commissioner for Trade, stated: "I am a firm believer in making sure trade flows freely and government procurement must be an essential part of open trade markets worldwide. This proposal will increase the leverage of the European Union in international negotiations and with our partners to open up their procurement markets for European companies. I am confident that they will then get a fair opportunity at winning government contracts overseas and so generate jobs". (Source: EurActiv)

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/268&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>





EU study recommends harmonising car labelling

A study by UK consultancy AEA, conducted on behalf of the European Commission, has recommended that Europe should develop a single EU-wide fuel economy and carbon dioxide label for cars. The commission says that the findings will feed into a review of the 1999 directive on car CO₂ labelling, which is due to start in mid-2013. Six of the eight member states included in the study have schemes based on the EU energy label, with most comparing a car with the rest of the market, but only some showing how it rates against others of its type. Germany, which has the latter model, was criticised by NGOs and some member states last year for introducing a weight-based scheme. The study says future labels should ideally include both types of rating but if that is not possible, the former 'absolute' approach would be preferable. The study also suggests extending a requirement to display efficiency and CO₂ data on promotional material to online information. AEA found that the 1999 directive had been correctly transposed by all eight member states and that compliance was relatively high, but states that NGOs and other campaigning groups have cast doubts on official compliance figures. (Source: ENDS)

<http://www.endseurope.com/28427/study-recommends-harmonising-car-labelling?referrer=bulletin&DCMP=EMC-ENDS-EUROPE-DAILY>

ETS emissions rose by up to 2.4%, say analysts

Greenhouse gases from installations covered by the EU emissions trading scheme (ETS) increased by up to 2.4% in 2011, according to calculations by analysts

ahead of the European Commission's publication of verified data for that year. Carbon analysts at Deutsche Bank have calculated a 1.3% rise in ETS emissions last year, while Emmanuel Fages of Société Générale believes they grew by 2.4% and Matteo Mazzoni of firm Nomisma Energia by 2%. Final data released last year showed a 3.2% increase in emissions in 2010. Verified Commission figures for 2011 are due in early April. Deutsche Bank predicts a 1.66% rise in emissions from power plants and other combustion installations. The increase is linked to electricity generation from fossil fuels in countries such as Spain, which actively encourages the use of coal. In other countries, such as France and Finland, power plants emitted less carbon dioxide. Emissions from other ETS sectors increased by 0.4%, with the biggest rise in iron and steel manufacturing – up 2.67% – says Deutsche Bank. In the paper and refinery sectors, it predicts a 1.3% and 0.68% decline respectively due to lower production. (Source: ENDS) <http://www.endseurope.com/28420/ets-emissions-rose-by-up-to-24-say-analysts?referrer=bulletin&DCMP=EMC-ENDS-EUROPE-DAILY>

Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

No relevant activity

European Parliament (Committees – Brussels)

26-27 March – INTA:

Exchange of views on: EU-Russia agreement on trade in parts and components of motor vehicles

Vote - adoption of draft report on: EU and China: unbalanced trade?

Exchange of views on: Trade agreement between the EU of the one part and Columbia and Peru of the other part

26-27 – TRAN:

Exchange of views: Commissioner for Transport, Siim Kallas, on large and heavier trucks

Exchange of views on: Commission's Smart Mobility Challenge team.

Vote - adoption of draft report on: Laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of trans-European transport and energy networks

Exchange of views: Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)