

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 6 June

Council agrees position on lorry sizes

The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council has reached a political agreement on updated rules for maximum weights and dimensions of heavy-goods vehicles, buses and coaches. The new draft directive aims to amend the current 1996 directive in order to improve those vehicles' aerodynamics, fuel efficiency and road safety. The proposal will grant derogations on vehicle length which will allow rear flaps to be attached to the vehicle, or for the front of the vehicle to be redesigned, to create a more aerodynamic shape. Drivers' field of vision will also be improved through a new lorry cab design, and the new deflecting shape and crumple zone will greatly reduce the impact of frontal collisions, thus helping to save the lives of numerous pedestrians and cyclists. The use of clean fuels will be promoted by authorising a weight increase of one tonne for alternatively fuelled vehicles, so as to take into account the weight required for alternative fuel technology. The maximum weight of buses would be increased by 1.5 tonnes to accommodate various developments such as the increase in the average weight of passengers and their luggage, and of new equipment imposed by the safety regulations. The adoption of this directive requires the approval of both the Council and the European Parliament.

(Source: Council of the European Union)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/143084.pdf

World's largest civilian robotics programme launched

The European Commission, along with 180 companies and research organisations (under the umbrella of euRobotics), have launched the world's largest civilian research and innovation programme in robotics. The initiative, called SPARC, will cover manufacturing, transport, agriculture, health, civil security and households, and is the EU's industrial policy effort to strengthen Europe's position in the global robotics market. The initiative is also expected

to create over 240,000 jobs in Europe, and will increase Europe's share of the global market to 42%, a boost of €4 billion per year. The initiative will see joint investment from the European Commission and euRobotics, at €700 million and €2.1 billion respectively. Robotics enables companies to continue manufacturing in Europe, where they might otherwise move operations to lower-cost countries.

(Source: EU Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-619_en.htm



Industrial producer prices down in April

According to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, industrial producer prices fell by 0.1% in both the euro area and the EU28 in April 2014 compared with March 2014. Compared with April 2013, industrial producer prices in April 2014 decreased by 1.2% in the euro area and 1.1% in the EU28. The largest decreases were observed in Malta (-2.3%), Belgium (-1.5%) and Sweden (-0.6%). The highest increases were seen in Romania (+1.7%), Greece (+1.3%) and Latvia (+0.7%). A fall in the energy sector in both the euro area and the EU28 is to blame for the decrease in industrial producer prices' in both areas prices remained stable for intermediate goods and capital goods, and increased slightly in both areas for non-durable consumer goods.

(Source: Eurostat)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-14-85_en.htm

European Commission sets out proposals to strengthen recovery

The European Commission has set out a series of economic policy recommendations to individual member states to strengthen the economic recovery. The key features of the recommendations to the United Kingdom include:

- Reinforcing the budgetary strategy, endeavouring to correct the excessive deficit.
- To address structural bottlenecks relating to infrastructure, skills mismatches and access to finance for SMEs.
- To maintain commitment to the Youth Contract, especially by improving skills that meet employer needs.
- To continue efforts to improve the availability of bank and non-bank financing to SMEs.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-623_en.htm



G7 Summit outcome

The leaders of the G7 met in Brussels recently to discuss economics, trade, energy security and foreign policy. The main points from the summit include:

- G7 leaders reaffirmed their objective to support economic growth and job creation.
- Ambitious and comprehensive growth strategies will be presented at the G20 Summit which will include actions in the areas of investment; small and medium enterprises; employment and participation of women; and trade and innovation.
- Agreed to work towards building resilient financial institutions.
- Governments will identify and implement concrete domestic policies in order to build a more

competitive, diversified, and resilient and low-carbon energy system.

- Agreement was made on the following core principles: diversifying energy fuels, sources and routes; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; promoting clean and sustainable energy technologies; and enhancing energy efficiency.
- Promoting the use of low carbon technologies and of a more integrated Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) market.
- Restating commitment to the low-carbon economy agenda with the aim to adopt a global agreement in 2015.

(Source: BBB)

http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/143078.pdf

Week ahead

European Commission

No relevant activity

Council of Ministers

12/13 June

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

European Parliament

The European Parliament will return to normal business in July following the recent elections.