

## WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 5 July

### Lithuania takes over Presidency of the European Council

Lithuania has taken over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Ireland. This marks the first time that Lithuania has held the Presidency, since it became an official Member State of the European Union in 2004. The Lithuanian Presidency's main priorities have been grouped under three categories: Credible Europe; Growing Europe; and Open Europe. Key plans include to make progress towards sounder public finances in the EU and to strengthen the ground for financial stability, building on the Europe 2020 agenda and the European Semester, reinforced by stronger Single Market policy, as well as the effective implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs, and promoting free trade with strategic partners such as the USA, Japan, Canada and others. On 1 January 2014, Lithuania will hand over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to Greece, who will then hold the Presidency until Italy follows on 1 July 2014. In addition to Lithuania's Presidency of the Council of the European Union Croatia has become the 28<sup>th</sup> Member State of the European Union. Neven Mimica will become the European Commissioner responsible for Consumer Protection and 12 MEPs will join the Parliament (5 to join EPP, 6 to join S&D).

(Source: BBB)

<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/>

### Second Round of EU-Japan trade talks

The EU and Japan have completed the second round of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) two months after the first round in Brussels. Heading up the EU team which flew to Tokyo for the talks was Mauro Petriccione, Director in the European Commission's Directorate General for Trade. The Japanese side was led by Ambassador Jun Yokota, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The second round had started on 24 June. The aim is for a comprehensive agreement on goods, services and investment, eliminating tariffs, non-tariff barriers and covering

other trade-related issues, such as public procurement, regulatory issues, competition, and sustainable development. The second round of negotiations focussed on the text of the agreement in all the areas that will make up the future FTA. The negotiating sessions were divided between fourteen various working groups covering topics ranging from trade in goods, services, investment, competition, government procurement, and trade and sustainable development. An agreement between the two economic giants is expected to boost Europe's economy by 0.6 to 0.8% of its GDP and will result in growth and the creation of 400.000 jobs. It is expected that EU exports to Japan could increase by 32.7%, while Japanese exports to the EU would increase by 23.5%. The next round of negotiations will be in Brussels on 21-25 October 2013 with a further round envisaged early next year.

(Source: European Commission)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-645\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-645_en.htm?locale=en)



### May EU commercial vehicle registrations down 7.4%

Figures published by ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association show that demand for new commercial vehicles resumed its downward trend after a slight increase in April (+3.6%) attributed to a calendar effect. Downturn prevailed across segments, leading to an overall 7.4% decrease in the EU which counted a total of 135,587 new vehicles. The Spanish market remained stable (+0.4%), while the UK (-4.0%), Germany (-9.6%), France (-11.2%) and Italy (-

16.2%) registered fewer vehicles than in May 2012. From January to May, the UK was the only major market to expand (+8.0%). The decline ranged from -9.4% in France to -10.2% in Spain, -10.9% in Germany and -21.3% in Italy. A total of 681,337 new commercial vehicles were registered in the region, or 7.5% less than in the first five months of last year. (Source: ACEA)

[http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news\\_detail/commercial\\_vehicle\\_registrations\\_-\\_7.5\\_over\\_five\\_months\\_-7.4\\_in\\_may](http://www.acea.be/index.php/news/news_detail/commercial_vehicle_registrations_-_7.5_over_five_months_-7.4_in_may)



## European Parliament adopts Roadworthiness reports

On July 1st 2013, the European Parliament Plenary discussed the draft reports on the Roadworthiness Package. On the following day, the Parliament adopted all three Roadworthiness reports but the final votes on the legislative resolutions were not taken. The Plenary referred the reports back to the TRAN-committee so that the negotiations with the Council can begin in order to reach a first reading agreement. A number of amendments were made to Rapporteur Werner Kuhn's TRAN committee report including a compromise on the separation of activities between periodic inspection and repair allowing the possibility for repairers to be involved as inspector on the same vehicle but only if the supervising body ensures a high level of objectivity. The "adopted amended proposal will now be transferred back to the Transport Committee which next week is expected to give Rapporteur Kuhn a mandate to start the Triologue discussions with the Council. The discussions are expected to start in September/October, with a view to reach a first reading agreement. (Source: European Parliament))

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2012/0184\(COD\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2012/0184(COD)&l=en)

## Launch of European Alliance for Apprenticeships

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships has been launched by Commissioners Androulla Vassiliou (Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth) and László Andor (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) at the 2013 WorldSkills competition in Leipzig, Germany. The Alliance aims to help to fight youth unemployment by improving the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU through a broad partnership of key employment and education stakeholders. It also seeks to change attitudes to apprenticeships. It will in particular identify the most successful apprenticeship schemes in the EU and apply appropriate solutions in each Member State. The Alliance is supported by the first-ever joint Declaration by the European Commission, the Presidency of the EU's Council of Ministers and European level trade union and employer organisations (the European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC, BusinessEurope, the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services - CEEP and the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises - UEAPME). The Alliance promotes measures which will be supported by the European Social Fund, the Youth Employment Initiative and Erasmus+, the new EU programme for education, training and youth.

(Source: European Commission)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-634\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-634_en.htm?locale=en)

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## Week ahead

### European Commission

Wednesday 10 July  
Innovation Investment Package

### Council of the EU

Tuesday 9 July  
Economic and Financial Affairs Council  
Meet to discuss the Lithuanian Presidency's six month work programme

### European Parliament (Plenary)

TRAN – 8/9 July  
Approval of TEN-T agreement  
Roadworthiness Package – mandate for negotiations