

WEEK IN BRUSSELS

Week ending Friday 5 December

New President of the European Council

On 1 December, Donald Tusk, the former Prime Minister of Poland, replaced Herman Van Rompuy as the President of the European Council. Donald Tusk was elected by the 28 EU heads of state or government on 30 August 2014, for an initial term of two and a half years. His predecessor, Herman Van Rompuy, was the first President of the European Council, in office from 2009 to 2014. The new President expressed his appreciation for the work of Herman Van Rompuy and outlined what he wants to achieve for Europe:

- Protection of the EU's fundamental values of freedom and solidarity;
- End the economic crisis and complete a genuine Economic and Monetary Union
- A strong EU, supporting its neighbouring countries

(Source: European Council)

<http://www.european-council.europa.eu/home-page/highlights/inauguration-of-donald-tusk,-new-president-of-the-european-council?lang=en>

Latvian Presidency – Priorities for transport

The Latvian delegation has announced its work programme for its coming Council Presidency, starting in January 2015. In the field of road transport the Presidency will finalise the formal procedures necessary for the adoption of the revised directive on weights and dimensions as well as the directive facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road safety related to traffic offenses. Taking into account the importance of road safety, the Presidency stated that it could envisage a Ministerial discussion on the planned mid-term evaluation of policy orientations 2011-2020. Also, the Latvian Presidency will look at development, implementation and financing of the TEN-T network. The above priorities will be included on the agendas of the Transport (TTE) Council meetings scheduled on 13 March and 11 June 2015. (Source: Council of Ministers)

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16214-2014-INIT/en/pdf>

Global new car registrations increase

Based on results, which are preliminary in some cases, global passenger vehicle sales in October were up around 2.1% from the year before. Most of this growth was generated in North America, but Asia and Western Europe also posted strong gains in October. However, vehicle sales were down once again in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Year-to-date sales in the first ten months of this year were up around 2.90 million units over the same period in 2013 (up 4.6%).

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/11/global-new-car-registrations-increase-2-1-in-october-2014/>



Competitiveness Council

The Competitiveness Council met on 4 and 5 December in Brussels. On 4 December the Council adopted conclusions with a focus on the role of SMEs and on preparations for the establishment of a roadmap dealing with the challenges and opportunities of European industry. The Council also exchanged views on the priorities for further enhancing the internal market and adopted conclusions on three key subjects: the smart regulation agenda, the strategy for the management of customs risks to facilitate trade and the enforcement of intellectual property rights. Prior to the Council meeting ACEA, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, called on policy makers to take genuine action on industrial competitiveness in the EU. ACEA welcomed the fact

that political leaders recognise the contribution of industry to EU growth, and fully supports the aim for industry to contribute 20% of GDP by 2020. However, ACEA believes that stronger sector-focused strategies will be needed to support the new European Commission's call for greater job creation through strengthened competitiveness and stimulated investment in Europe. ACEA believes that a sectoral approach to competitiveness is the most effective way forward.

(Source: Council of the European Union and ACEA)
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/146048.pdf
<http://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/put-sectoral-industrial-competitiveness-at-heart-of-policy-says-automobile>

Investments in transport infrastructure

The Council of the European Union on Transport, Telecommunications and Energy met on 3 December 2014. Ministers adopted a set of conclusions on transport infrastructure and the trans-European network (TEN-T), which will contribute to the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Minister Lupi stated: "Investments in transport infrastructures and efficient networks are key to fostering growth and competitiveness, thus creating more and better jobs. With the conclusions adopted today, the Council unanimously sends a clear message on the enormous potential of infrastructure investments, in the context of the review of the Europe 2020 Strategy". Key messages are to be delivered to the December European Council. (Source: Council of the European Union)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/trans/146017.pdf

European Commission: EU companies must boost R&D

The European Commission's 2014 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard results were published on Thursday 4 December. The scoreboard analyses the top 2500 companies worldwide, representing about 90% of the total business R&D expenditure. Data show that EU-based companies invested €162.4bn in 2013, whereas US-based companies invested €193.7bn and the Japanese ones €85.6bn. The results showed that investment in research and development by companies based in the EU grew by

2.6% in 2013, despite the unfavourable economic environment. However, this growth has slowed in comparison to the previous year's 6.8%. It is also below the 2013 world average (4.9%), and lags behind companies based in the US (5%) and Japan (5.5%). The automobile sector, where investments continued to increase by 6.2%, accounts for one quarter of the total R&D invested by the EU Scoreboard companies.

(Source: European Commission)

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-2342_en.htm

MEPs back deal with Council on automatic emergency call system for cars

A European Parliament/Council deal on 'eCall', agreed on Monday 1 December, was backed by Internal Market Committee MEPs on Thursday 4 December. The 'eCall' system would use the 112 number to call the emergency services automatically, enabling them to reach crash scenes faster and thus save lives and reduce the severity of injuries. The deal would require all new car models to be equipped with eCall technology from 31 March 2018. The approved agreement now needs to be formally approved by all EU member states and finally the European Parliament as a whole. This will probably take place in March 2015. (Source: European Parliament)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20141201IPR81901/html/MEPs-back-deal-with-Council-on-automatic-emergency-call-system-for-cars>

Week ahead

Council of Ministers

Tuesday 9 December

- The Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council will follow-up on the 2030 climate and energy framework, agreed upon by EU leaders. Discussions will focus on the new governance process. It will also prepare a synthesis report to be endorsed by the European Council in December. The synthesis report will provide guidance for subsequent Commission proposals aimed at improving implementation of the strategy.