



Business Support on Your Doorstep

EU Alert

network
enterprise europe

9th October 2009

Reinforcing the Social Dimension of the Growth and Jobs Strategy

The EU's strategy for growth and jobs must pay more attention to social cohesion goals in the future, says a new report presented by the European Commission last week. The report from the Social Protection Committee – which brings together experts from each EU country – finds that social protection systems have helped shield Europeans from the worst effects of the financial crisis. But it concludes that social protection alone is not enough to prevent poverty and exclusion, calling for more emphasis on goals such as fighting child poverty and promoting active inclusion. Further modernisation of social protection needs to be fully articulated with growth and jobs strategies.

Over the past decade, economic and employment growth has in general improved overall living standards in Europe, says the report. However, inequalities have often increased and poverty and social exclusion remain a major issue in most countries, although with substantial differences across the EU.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1374>

New Regulations of the Commission on Maritime Transport

The European Commission has adopted a new exemption regulation that will enter into force on 25 April 2010. It renews for 5 more years the existing exemptions from the ban on restrictive business practices for shipping consortia liner. This exemption allows for cooperation between companies so that they can provide a joint service in freight. The new Regulation incorporates amendments as reflecting current market practices and bringing the consortia block exemption in line with other block exemption regulations for horizontal cooperation between companies.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9161>

Council Adopts New Eco-Design Directive

The Council adopted a revised eco-design directive following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. The new directive extends the scope of the existing directive 2005/32 by covering in principle all energy-related products.

The current eco-design directive, adopted in 2008, contemplated mandatory reductions in electricity consumption of appliances, computers, printers and televisions. With the new rule many more products will have to adapt to a number of requirements in support of obtaining increasing energy efficiency. The amendment of this directive is part of a package of energy efficiency with which the EU intends to reduce its energy consumption by up to 20% in 2020, and this package is a major priority of the current government of the Union.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9157>

EU Acts to Limit Health Risks from Exposure to Noise from Personal Music Players

Consumers will benefit from new default settings on personal music players set at safe exposure levels, as well clear warnings on the adverse effects of excessive exposure to high sound levels, following a decision by the European Commission.

In October 2008, the EU Scientific Committee SCENIHR, warned that listening to personal music players at a high volume over a sustained period can lead to permanent hearing damage. 5-10% of listeners risk permanent hearing loss. These are people typically listening to music for over 1 hour a day at high volume control settings. It is estimated that up to 10 million people in the EU may be at risk. The European Commission has sent a mandate to CENELEC (the EU standardisation body) requiring new technical safety standards to be drawn up.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9156>

Trade Barriers Regulation (TBR)

EU companies face trade barriers every day in their international operations. These can include restrictions on sales in export markets, discriminatory taxation systems or difficulties in acquiring and enforcing patent rights in foreign countries. Such barriers hurt companies, workers and consumers.

The Trade Barriers Regulation (TBR) is an instrument in effect since 1995, aimed at helping EU businesses overcome trade barriers and thereby develop their activities overseas. The TBR is specifically designed to remove obstacles to trade in third countries, as well as to tackle unfair foreign trade practices that cause injury within the EU internal market.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/434>

Enabling Technologies in Europe

Key Enabling Technologies such as nanotechnology, micro- and nanoelectronics including semiconductors, advanced materials, biotechnology and photonics are of exceptional importance for being at the forefront of managing the shift to a low carbon, knowledge-based economy. Mastering such technologies lays stable foundation for well paid jobs in the EU and allows for sustainable, broadly shared growth. They are the main drivers for innovative goods and services needed for addressing major societal challenges. Therefore the Commission proposes to develop and implement a European vision for the industrial deployment of such technologies in the EU.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1394>

12,000 Attend European Job Days in the Commission Headquarters

Around 12,000 jobseekers, 80 recruiting organisations and actors on the labour market participated in a major job fair in the EU Commission's Berlaymont headquarters on Saturday 3 October – the flagship event in this year's European Job Days. Similar events are taking place in September and in October all over Europe. Jobseekers and employers have the possibility to visit over 500 diverse events, ranging from recruitment fairs to seminars and lectures on job mobility.

"The Job Days are concrete evidence of the EU's commitment to providing more and better jobs for Europeans in this time of economic uncertainty", said Employment Commissioner Vladimír Špidla.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1408>

Europe Launches Satellite Navigation Service

The European Commission last week declared the official start of operations by EGNOS, the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service, with its Open Service now available for free to businesses and citizens. EGNOS is Europe's first contribution to satellite navigation and a precursor of Galileo, the global satellite navigation system that the European Union is developing.

Antonio Tajani, Vice-President for Transport, said: "What we are doing today opens the door for European businesses and citizens to benefit from the myriad of better applications and new opportunities made possible by more precise navigation signals. We are laying the foundation stone of a very imminent future." EGNOS is a satellite-based augmentation system that improves the accuracy of satellite navigation signals over Europe. The accuracy of current GPS signals is improved from about ten metres to two metres.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1399>

A Woman to Woman Approach to Entrepreneurship

More women are needed in business. This week, 130 successful European businesswomen are kicking off a campaign to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs and start their own companies. Appointed by Commissioner Vladimír Špidla yesterday evening in Stockholm, these successful business women will act as Entrepreneurship Ambassadors.

Vice-President Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, and Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, jointly stated: "The EU needs more entrepreneurs, more people that have innovative ideas and creative approaches to business. For too long, we have underused women's potential. This must change and we have to encourage more women-led businesses. This will not only bring fresh business ideas but it will also strengthen the role of women in our societies."

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1426>

Attitudes Towards the EU in the UK

About half of the British public feel there is a general negative bias in reporting on EU affairs on television, radio and in the written press, with written press reports seen as the most negative, according to a public opinion poll published by the European Commission.

Some 48% of respondents indicated that written press reports about the EU tend to be unnecessarily negative. Even those who consistently expressed unfavourable opinions about the EU and the UK's membership, mostly agreed that press reports were too negative (45% versus 27% who saw them as objective and only 18% who felt they were positive).

The report revealed a clear relation between the amount people feel they know about the EU and their attitude. Those who felt they knew quite a lot or a great deal about the EU were more than twice as likely to have a consistently favourable opinion about the EU's image and the benefits of membership, than those who said they know nothing at all or only a little about the EU (35% and 17%, respectively).

http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/press/press_releases/2009/pr0998_en.htm

Consultation: Chemical Accidents

Major accidents in chemical industry have occurred world-wide. In Europe, following the Seveso accident in 1976 prompted the adoption of legislation aimed at the prevention and control of such accidents. In 1982, the first EU Directive 82/501/EEC – so-called Seveso Directive – was adopted. On 9 December 1996, the Seveso Directive was replaced by Council Directive 96/82/EC, so-called Seveso II Directive. This directive was extended by the Directive 2003/105/EC. The Seveso II Directive applies to some thousands of industrial establishments where dangerous substances are present in quantities exceeding the thresholds in the directive.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/seveso/index.htm>

If you have any queries about the EU Alert bulletin, or would like some more information about any of the topics in this edition, please contact Enterprise Europe West Midlands on 0121 455 0268

www.een-midlands.org.uk

