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EUROPOLITICS

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FOCUS

Copper network prices spark debate

By Manon Malhère

The idea of reducing the income that large operators make from leasing copper networks to their competitors, with a view to stimulating investment in optical fibre networks, is encountering fierce opposition among large operators, represented mainly by the European association of former monopolies, ETNO. The European Commission proposed the measure in a consultation that more generally concerned the calculation of these prices by national regulators, which closed on 28 November. In parallel, the executive recommends an increase in the prices charged to access copper networks in places where operators agree to invest in fibre. The idea is to make high-speed internet accessible throughout the EU by 2020. ETNO argues that this measure fails to provide incentive. ECTA, on the other hand, which mainly represents alternative operators, is critical of the huge profits earned by these incumbents. It firmly defends such a reduction and warns that keeping access prices high in exchange for investments in fibre amounts to granting public subsidies, which should be redistributed fairly among consumers and competitors, in particular by guaranteeing fibre network infrastructures open to competition and low prices. *Europolitics* will be back with more in an upcoming issue.

AIR TRANSPORT

Airlines concerned about revision of slots rules

By Isabelle Smets

Rules for allocating slots to airlines are going to be changed to ensure a better distribution of capacities at EU airports.

The reform is sparking concern among airlines, which fear losing part of their valuable slots at busy airports like Heathrow and Gatwick.

On 1 December, the European Commission will present a proposal for a **m e n d m e n t** of Regulation 95/93, which establishes slot allocation rules (a slot is an authorisation for an airline to take off or land at an airport on a given date and at a given time).

The reform will legalise what is known as 'secondary trading' of slots, ie the possibility for an airline to sell slots to another airline.

The idea is to encourage slot mobility and thus the entry of new airlines at airports, as air traffic forecasts suggest that there will be a pronounced lack of airport capacity in coming years.

Secondary trading of slots is not explicitly authorised by the current regulation but is not explicitly banned either.

As a result, slots are traded by airlines for monetary or other compensation (code sharing on the slot, for instance) in a number of states, especially in the United Kingdom, but in a legal grey zone that the Commission wishes to clarify.

The aim is for this practice to take place in a perfectly transparent EU framework.

The idea is to encourage slot mobility and thus the entry of new airlines at airports, as forecasts suggest that there will be a pronounced lack of airport capacity in coming years

But this is not what worries airlines. They fear that the Commission may propose a system of slot auctioning that would allow a much more radical entry of new carriers.

According to a European source, the option is on the table and will be decided by 1 December. One possibility is to impose the auctioning of slots for new airport capacities (when a new runway is opened, for example).

Airlines fear that the most financially sound airlines, which are not necessarily European, may sweep up all the slots.

Another possibility would be to "confiscate" part of all airlines' slots - for example 10% of slots between 8:00 and 9:00 in saturated airports (like Heathrow and Gatwick, but also Milan Linate, Orly, **(continued on page 4)**

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Slots rules

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Paris Charles de Gaulle, Dusseldorf, etc) - and put them up for auction.

For airlines, this would be the disaster scenario. The Commission seems unlikely to go that far, however, although the possibility has been considered. "This would be very risky," recognised the European source.

The reform in the works would strengthen, on the other hand, the 'use it or lose it' rule, whereby airlines must use each slot at least 80%, failing which it is put back in a pool and made available to other airlines. Use requirements would rise to 85% as a way of forcing

airlines to make better use of their slots.

NOISE AND GROUND HANDLING

Two other reforms are also set for 1 December: the ground handling services market (Directive 96/67/EC) and aircraft noise (Directive 2002/30).

The ground handling market (luggage, freight, refuelling and cleaning of aircraft, etc) was opened up to competition in 1996. But at the time exceptions were allowed that the Commission would now like to address. The minimum number of operators at airports to provide the four still relatively protected services (baggage handling, runway operations, 'fuel and oil' opera-

tions and freight handling and mail sorting) would rise from two to three. The reform would also allow airports to set minimum quality standards for operators. This would help avoid, for example, a repeat of the chaos that occurred during the winter of 2010-2011, when flights had to be cancelled at major airports because certain operators did not have a sufficient reserve of aircraft de-icing liquid.

The revision of the directive on aircraft noise will give the Commission a greater right of scrutiny over flight bans put in place in certain states.

Europolitics will be back with details in its next issue on the proposed reforms on ground handling and aircraft noise. ■

WASTE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Council and EP aim for agreement on 29 November

By Anne Eckstein

The clock is ticking and if the Polish EU Presidency hopes to work out an agreement on a symbolic environmental issue - revision of the Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) - it is going to have to show determination and flexibility, given the many points of disagreement with the European Parliament. The EP will in any case vote in plenary, in January 2012, either on a draft agreement negotiated with the Council or on the report by Karl-Heinz Florenz (EPP, Germany), adopted at second reading in the Committee on the Environment (ENVI), on 4 October (see *Europolitics* 4278). In the latter case, the matter would be headed straight into conciliation.

The next interinstitutional three-way meeting is set for 29 November and there are still numerous stumbling blocks: extension of the scope, possible transitional period and its length, collection targets and calendar, collection by small retailers and the question of national or EU registration. "It is hard to predict the future, given the many unsettled points," notes the rapporteur, who finds that the Council "does not really seem willing to budge".

STUMBLING BLOCKS

The first obstacle is the scope of the measure: the Council wants to keep the

scope "open" in order to cover all equipment, without drawing up an exhaustive list (as is the case with Directive 2002/96/EC, now in force). A six-year transitional period from the date of entry into force of the new directive would allow for update of the list. Parliament rejects such a transitional period.

The Council seeks a collection rate of 65% of WEEE by 2020 in most member states

On collection targets, the Council seeks a collection rate of 65% of WEEE by 2020 in most member states, with derogations for some until 2020. This target would be phased in, starting with 45% over the four years following the directive's entry into force and then 65% after a further four-year period. For MEPs, this target is inadequate. They recommend collection of 70% to 85% depending on the category of products, and recycling of 50% to 75% of WEEE. They also propose a re-use rate of 5% in order to give a "new life" to equipment that is still functional rather than destroying it.

The Council and Parliament also disagree over the calculation used to set these targets: the Council maintains that

the collection rate should be based on the volume of equipment placed on the market, while MEPs find that it should be based on the volume of waste generated.

MEPs also consider that consumers should be able to dispose of WEEE at no cost at any sales outlet, with no obligation to buy new equipment: the idea is to simplify procedures and to do away with the obligation to take waste to specialised collection centres. Accordingly, they argue that small retailers should be obliged to accept all types of equipment, at no charge and with no obligation to buy replacement products. The debate concerns the size of shops to which this measure would apply. Another aspect concerns the obligations imposed on distance sellers and the requirement of having a legal representative in every country. For MEPs, it should be possible to transmit data to a centralised European system so as to limit costs and administrative burdens on distance sellers, an argument that also holds for small and medium-sized enterprises.

All this leads to the debate on the no less controversial question of EU or national registration and the definition of 'producer'. The member states are convinced that national registration is necessary if only to ensure better control of implementation of the directive. MEPs call for a European producers' label and single registration. ■

HEALTH/CONSUMERS

Collective redress included in 2012 work programme

By Sophie Petitjean

The European Consumers' Organisation (BEUC) applauds the European Commission's 2012 work programme, presented on 15 November, in particular the reference to a European framework for collective redress.

"The Commission's intention to set rules for an EU collective redress system is long overdue and a very welcome sign. Let's hope the words are reflected in actions," commented BEUC Director-General Monique Goyens. She nevertheless regrets the absence of further commitments on access to a basic bank account.

The work programme, 'Delivering European renewal', announces major initiatives in the area of consumer policy for 2012: a package on general product safety in the fourth quarter, a new European consumer agenda in the second quarter and an EU framework for collective redress, the timing of which remains to be defined.

The package on general product safety includes three components: 1. revision of Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety in order to give enterprises clearer rules, advantageous compliance costs and equivalent conditions for serious firms; 2. a new horizontal single legislative instrument for market surveillance; and 3.

a multiannual action plan for market surveillance.

The European consumers' agenda, covering all consumer protection initiatives presented by this Commission, will define a strategic vision for consumer policy aimed basically at strengthening consumers' position by improving safety, information and education, rights, redress and access to justice, as well as implementing measures, in line with the principles of the social market economy.

The initiative for an EU framework for collective redress is vaguer. The executive simply announces an initiative that will follow on from the Commission's earlier work on collective redress at EU level.

HEALTH: ACCENT ON INNOVATION

There will also be a number of initiatives in the field of health in 2012. The Commission will present its proposal for revision of Directive 2001/37/EC on the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products.

It will also adopt its package on innovation in the field of health, made up of three elements: a communication on promoting innovation in the sector of medical devices and two legislative proposals, on medical devices and in vitro diagnostic medical devices, respectively.

The regulatory framework will be adapted to technical and scientific progress, include clearer and simpler rules and provide the instruments necessary for management at EU level.

The Commission will also adopt a proposal for revision of Directive 2001/20/EC on clinical trials in order to strengthen knowledge and innovation in clinical research. The questions likely to be addressed include: reduction of administrative delays, procedure in case of diverging decisions in the EU and streamlining of notification procedures. ■

Cloning: In 2013

In the wake of the failure of negotiations on the draft regulation on novel foods, in March 2011, the Commission is not expected to present its new legislative initiative until 2013. It is expected to focus on the use of cloning technologies for food production. "This initiative will follow the Commission's 2010 report on animal cloning for the production of food and will respond to requests for clarification of legislation on animal cloning in the internal market," notes the EU executive.

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**Customs enforcement: Crying need for clarification**

By Florence Martin

Ahead of the upcoming adoption of a proposal for a regulation on customs enforcement of intellectual property rights, the members of the European Parliament's Committee on the Internal Market (IMCO) listened to the opinion of experts, on 22 November. This hearing made the crying need for clarification on small consignments or goods in transit very apparent. The European Commission's approach on excluding travellers' luggage and sharing responsibility did not meet general approval either.

HAULIERS' RESPONSIBILITY

The proposal for a regulation provides that the cost of storing and destroying counterfeit goods should be paid for by the rights holders requesting border control intervention. The rights holder can then initiate a court case to recuperate these costs from the culprits. After the fashion of Jeremy Newman from the International Trademark Association (INTA), the rights holders have begun to speak out against this "unfair expense," which weighs SMEs down. The rights holders wish to draw attention to the role of hauliers. They feel that these intermediaries are "closer to the offence," as Neil Narriman from the Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI) has said, and should "share the responsibilities in order to go up the supply chain". The rapporteur, Jürgen

Creutzmann (ALDE, Germany), also expressed doubts regarding the sharing of responsibilities, arguing that the sender is often impossible to trace down and that the destruction costs should therefore be covered by the rights holders.

Unsurprisingly, Marc Van de Perre, political councillor of CLECAT, the European transport and logistics association, supports the Commission's approach. He explains that the officials cooperate as best they can with border controls by basing themselves on the information they have at hand. Since they are not allowed to open parcels or take decisions on the authenticity of merchandises, Van de Perre stressed that the risk analysis is carried out by customs officials.

LEGAL VOID

Given the galloping growth of e-commerce, which has been followed by an explosion of the expedition of small parcels, the Commission's proposal includes a specific procedure for "small merchandise dispatches" suspected of being counterfeit or pirate merchandise. The goods can be destroyed without the intervention of the rights holder – thus reducing the financial burden and administrative fees for the customs officials. This principle was unanimously well received by experts, especially since, as noted by Richard Bergstrom, MD of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), counterfeit medicine is merchandise that

"can typically travel in small parcels". Conversely, all the experts agree that what a 'small dispatch' is needs to be defined. The rapporteur feels that this is "indispensable" and the Council's Polish Presidency also wonders how wise it is to leave the definition out. In reality, the Commission wishes to adopt a definition by the delegated act procedure in order to be able to react quickly to practical evolutions.

As well as doubts concerning small dispatches, the MEPs and experts expressed doubts regarding the lack of clarity on transiting merchandise. They fear that this legal void will profit counterfeiters who can declare their goods as 'transiting' in order to sell them off more easily in the Union. In order to address the problem caused by the complaint registered by India and Brazil against the EU and the Netherlands at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in May 2010, the Commission proposes that a German patent holder, for instance, would no longer be allowed to request the seizure by EU customs authorities of generic medicine produced in India and in transit to Brazil - unless it can first prove that they risk being diverted and sold within the single market. Josefa Andres Barea (S&D, Spain) and the rapporteur feel that a law on this aspect is necessary.

Lastly, MEPs do not understand the exclusion of travellers' luggage from the regulation provided the luggage is for a personal and non-commercial use. ■

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EDUCATION COUNCIL

Agenda to promote adult learning

By Manon Malhère

To promote lifelong learning for adults with a view to meeting the growth and employment targets of the 'Europe 2020' strategy, the Education Council adopted, on 28 November in Brussels, a resolution on a renewed EU agenda for adult learning for the period 2012-2014.

The agenda builds on the three-year action plan for adult learning adopted in 2008.

In a nutshell, the 27 member states are invited to: increase adult participation in lifelong learning and facilitate their mobility, improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in adult education and training, develop adults' creativity and their learning environment as well as their capacity to innovate.

The agenda also aims to improve the pool of knowledge on adult education and training and to ensure follow-up of

the adult education and training sector.

The ministers also approved a new EU benchmark (a reference level for average European performances) for learning mobility.

*The objective is twofold:
to increase mobility
among students in higher
education and in initial
vocational education
and training*

The objective is twofold: to increase mobility among students in higher education and in initial vocational education and training.

This benchmark comes on top of the five approved in 2009 with the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

The Council approved an overall learning mobility indicator with a view to registering the different types of learning abroad experiences for young people. The ministers also adopted conclusions on language skills to enhance mobility.

In response to the Commission's communication entitled 'Supporting growth and jobs: An agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems' (September 2011), the Council adopted conclusions on reform of higher education.

To meet the objective of economic growth, the ministers encourage partnership and cooperation with enterprises and call for the strengthening of ties among higher education institutions, employers and labour market institutions.

The proposed measures also aim to increase the number of higher education graduates, to facilitate access to higher education and to minimise drop-out rates. ■

YOUTH COUNCIL

Ministers seek ways to improve quality of mobility

By Sophie Petitjean

It is important to facilitate mobility for young people, youth workers and youth organisations from the EU, and support cooperation, particularly with the Eastern European countries (Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia), in the context of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field. The Eastern dimension is a big priority for the Polish Presidency. This is the message that was adopted, on 28 November, by the member states' ministers of youth at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, presided by Poland.

The conclusions on the Eastern dimension of youth participation and mobility call on the EU to develop cooperation and improve the quality of mobility, in particular in the field of non-formal and formal learning and volunteering activities. In order to do so, the conclusions call on member states and the European Commission to promote exchanges and

mobility programmes for youth and youth organisations via the exchange of good practice for cooperation between organisations that work in the field of youth. They also ask for the removal of obstacles to mobility and to participation, namely by promoting the learning of foreign languages.

Moreover, the recommendations also make a series of specific recommendations to member states and the Commission. For example, they encourage member states to reinforce cross-sectoral cooperation between the different fields of action and the competent authorities in order to pursue the reflexion on the obstacles to reciprocal mobility of young people from countries that benefit from the European Neighbourhood Policy - for example by finding ways to facilitate the issuance of visas to young people from Eastern Europe.

The conclusions also call for active participation in multilateral platforms of the Eastern Partnership and for the promotion of cooperation with youth

information structures. As for the Commission, it is encouraged: 1. to maintain and strengthen the Eastern dimension of the EU's future youth programmes; 2. to continue to encourage cooperation in the field of youth between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries as part of the Eastern Partnership programme for youth; 3. to adapt the European youth portal in order to make it more useful and accessible to all young people, whatever European country they come from; and 4. to envisage developing the EU initiative for a Youth on the Move card.

The meeting ended with an orientation debate on the theme of youth cooperation with non-EU regions ('Youth in the world'). The objective of the discussion was to collect suggestions for measures to strengthen civil societies in the EU's neighbouring countries (in Eastern Europe and Caucasus in particular) and exchange best practice regarding cooperation and mobility opportunities with third countries in the youth field. ■

CHEMICALS INDUSTRY**Five years of REACH: First stock-taking exercise***By Jakub Iwaniuk in Warsaw*

Representatives of the chemicals industry and of the EU institutions met, on 23-24 November in Warsaw, Poland, on the initiative of the Polish EU Council Presidency. Their aim was to take stock of the first five years of implementation of REACH, the regulation on chemical products in the internal market (see also interview).

During the first period of chemicals registration, the deadline for which was one year ago, the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) received 26,585 applications and has to date registered 5,211 substances. A review is under way by the European Commission to draw the first conclusions from this implementing period. The next deadline for submitting applications is 31 May 2013.

In the EU institutions, the success of this first implementing period is unanimously applauded. "The registration period that ended in 2010 was a success thanks to the industry, which took its new responsibilities very seriously. It showed that it can be trusted in assessing chemicals and managing their risk," said a European Commission representative speaking on behalf of Commissioner Antonio Tajani, who was unable to attend the conference. The ECHA and DG ENVI echoed that view, mentioning "industry's excellent commitment".

Representatives of the EU authorities nevertheless singled out certain problems that have emerged. On the one hand, they receive a number of "low quality" applications. "We receive applications which, by way of studies, submit responses that have clearly been found on Google," confided a European source who preferred to remain anonymous. "Their number is hard to estimate for now. But considering the costs of studies for companies, some are tempted to

"We receive applications which, by way of studies, submit responses that have clearly been found on Google"

fill in the boxes with help from the internet, which paves the way to false data."

Another major flaw of the legislation is that qualitative controls are conducted on only a very small share of the applications processed. The regulation makes provision for 5% of applications to be put through the second stage of control, which checks the accuracy of the data in terms of substance. "This is quite frustrating, because during the first stage of control, carried out on all applications, the official sets aside his role as engineer and simply enters data into boxes, without checking their verac-

ity," said the same European source. At the Commission, it is recognised that "REACH cannot be limited to registering data. It has to play its role of evaluating, authorising and restricting, and these objectives are gradually reaching cruising speed".

SMEs NEED HELP

The conference also gave the industry a chance to share experiences in terms of putting the regulation into practice. Participants described the problems they have encountered, related mainly to the high costs of implementation (studies, legal assistance, staff training, etc). To cope with these problems, "working as a consortium offers a number of advantages," said the head of a Polish SME. The message from enterprises was clear: they do not want the review to result in a revision of the regulation.

The EU authorities intend to boost support for SMEs. "A lot has already been done to support SMEs, for example the reduction of registration fees. But more can still be done. According to our studies, the costs for SMEs tend to be disproportionate. All possible options to rebalance the share of registration costs need to be considered," said a Commission representative. The EU executive will present the results of its review in June 2012. "On that basis, we will consider whether an amendment to REACH is needed or not," it concluded. ■

INTERVIEW WITH HUBERT MANDERY, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CEFIC

REACH should remain a review, not a revision

By Jakub Iwaniuk in Warsaw

Hubert Mandery, director-general of the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), talked to Europolitics on the margins of the 'On the REACH road' conference, held in Warsaw, Poland, on 23-24 November. He looked back over the first five years of implementation of the REACH Regulation and discussed the challenges ahead for the chemicals industry.

How would you assess the five years of implementation of REACH?

Well, as I said in my presentation today, it's a marathon and we have just made the first few kilometers. We made it successfully. It is quite a huge task for the companies involved, also for the authorities involved, especially ECHA (European Chemicals Agency). We are doing a remarkable job, we are learning by doing as well, because this type of legislation was never done before on that scale. So looking at those few kilometers, things are running decently well, but we can anticipate that if we encounter more complexity, if the challenge is increased, especially for small and medium-sized companies, we will have to smooth the processes, reduce complexity and make it work better, the whole system, especially for SMEs if we want to continue to be successful.

Is the balance more positive or negative?

It is neutral at this stage because it is a requirement to comply with. Our society expects us to comply with it and therefore we urge our companies to do their best to be compliant. I personally hope that at the end of this process, European society will think that it knows enough about chemicals and we are confident that the authorities and the industry will handle them safely.

How much did these five years cost the chemical industry?

This would be difficult to answer in absence of a detailed analysis. But it is fair to say that the original estimate of the European Commission - €2.5 billion - was not far off the mark.



Mandery: "We have to make this system work"

The European Commission has complained recently that a large number of "low quality dossiers" had been filed. What do you think explains this?

I think it was nicely explained by the ECHA official this morning at the conference. If you receive more than 20,000 dossiers from all actors around the market - from big and small companies, including the importers - it's no surprise that you end up facing quality issues. But I have to stress that the best part of these dossiers is of excellent quality. There is, of course, no excuse for low quality dossiers. There is a clear need for improvement there. On the other hand, I think everyone understands that this exercise is done in such a scale for the first time. It was also a first for many companies, several of which had no experience with

high production quality chemical substances, let alone the procedures. So it's no surprise that ECHA would find problems regarding the level of quality. My recommendation here would be for ECHA to return the "low quality" applications and ask those who submitted them to make the necessary improvements.

The Commission also regrets the lack of quality check. In fact, only 5% of the dossiers are checked for quality. Do you consider this a problem?

At this stage I don't think that this is a problem. This whole exercise is not about collecting data like you would collect stamps or coins. It is about collecting information on chemicals in order to assess their properties, to figure out what are they used for and to use this information to conduct a proper risk assessment. In other words, the collection of data should provide the basis for the evaluation and authorisation process. This is the whole point here.

What do you expect from the ongoing review and what do you think are the main challenges that lie ahead?

I expect the review to remain a review. It should not evolve into a revision because it is far too early to change this complex procedure after this short period of having seen it in practice. We are still learning this implementation.

As for the future: all the actors involved should redouble their efforts to meet the widely recognised goals.

One specific challenge would be to help inexperienced SMEs comply with the regulation - be they importers or manufacturers of chemical substances. They should be made aware of REACH's requirements and should be assisted in meeting the deadlines.

The message is clear: we have to make this system work. ■

STATE AID TO FINANCIAL SECTOR**Commission prolongs existing scheme and clarifies rules**By *Sophie Mosca*

The worsening sovereign debt crisis and continuing tension on a fragile banking system justify a prolongation of the temporary framework for state aid measures for the banking sector, according to the European Commission. On 1 December, it will spell out the terms and conditions for this extension.

Competition Commissioner Joaquin Almunia had already announced that he planned to ask the College of Commissioners to prolong the existing framework (see *Europolitics* 4268). He confirmed that this was in progress, speaking to members of the European Parliament's Committee on Economic Affairs (ECON), on 22 November (4312).

The future communication on state aid for the banking sector in the context of the financial crisis - obtained by *Europolitics* - ties in with the five previous communications (see box) and with the approach decided by member states, at the 26 October summit, for strengthening financial guarantees for European banks. The communications on banks and on recapitalisation measures and impaired assets will therefore be prolonged from 1 January 2012.

However, to take account of market developments and make the measures more effective, the communication adds more detailed information than that

contained in the previous texts.

On recapitalisation measures, the 2008 communication concerned fixed-yield capital instruments but the new communication takes account of shares, for which dividends and capital gains are variable by nature and whose level cannot be anticipated. The member states will have to base their estimate on the share issue price, except for shares in unlisted banks, for which an estimate based on a recognised market approach will be required.

The Commission insists that such recapitalisation measures must be matched with incentives aimed at phasing out such measures as quickly as possible, eg for banks to buy back shares issued by states. It will continue to oblige assisted banks to draw up a restructuring plan or to update an existing plan and will assess the banks' long-term viability, taking account of elements that provide evidence of such viability without the need for major restructuring, in particular when the lack of capital stems essentially from a crisis of confidence in the sovereign debt.

State guarantees may concern new claims apart from instruments likened to capital and may only cover a general debt with maturity of one to five years - seven in the case of covered bonds - to meet banks' medium-term financing needs. When guarantees cover liabilities in a currency

other than the national currency, a supplement will take account of the exchange risk.

The Commission has revised its method of evaluating guarantees by establishing an equalisation that factors in the growing gaps in rates for credit default swaps (CDS) that have determined the evaluation of bank guarantees in recent years and the lower risk of such debts compared with the risk of a non-guaranteed debt. To ensure that banks that receive such guarantees pay a fair fee to the state in exchange, it will oblige the states, when notifying a new guarantee (or extending an existing scheme), to indicate the fees due by the beneficiary bank evaluated ex ante at market price and, within three months following implementation of the guarantee, a re-evaluation of these fees in terms of market developments. ■

Background

The temporary framework for state aid for the banking sector, put in place in autumn 2008, comprises five texts:

- financial institutions
- recapitalisation measures
- impaired assets
- bank restructurings
- extension of the existing scheme in December 2010

EUROGROUP**Finance ministers meet as pressure mounts on single currency**By *Sarah Collins*

The eurozone's finance ministers are to meet, on 29 November, to sign off on changes to the zone's rescue fund amid heightened pressure on the single currency. Ministers will ink the changes to allow the fund to intervene more forcefully in government bond markets, ringfence funds for bank recapitalisation and offer pre-emptive credit lines to ailing states, all with a leveraged envelope of up to €1 trillion, as long as the fund can attract outside financing.

The changes were agreed at a summit, on 27 October, to boost the firepower in

the €440 billion fund, which needs sufficient resources to reassure investors that it is fit for purpose, and so it can take over from the European Central Bank by purchasing government bonds on secondary markets, a programme that has cost the bank €194.7 billion as of last week.

The EFSF changes come amid newspaper reports that the International Monetary Fund was preparing a bailout for Italy, a fact it denied, on 28 November. "There are no discussions with the Italian authorities on a programme for IMF financing," the Washington-based fund said in a statement. However, the rumour also comes

as Franco-German talks on closer fiscal integration in the eurozone progress at speed ahead of a summit of EU leaders, on 8-9 December. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy are drawing up sweeping treaty changes to allow greater control over national budgets in the eurozone as the debt crisis intensifies.

The Eurogroup meeting will be followed by talks between all 27 finance ministers on capital requirements, short-selling, the Commission's second governance package, tax coordination and investor compensation schemes. ■

EUROZONE

Echoes of the crisis

■ **Rehn welcomes agreement on Belgian budget:** On 27 November, an agreement was reached in Belgium on the federal budget for 2012-2014 between the Socialist, Christian Democrat and Liberal partners, both Francophone and Flemish.

The head of the Francophone Belgian Socialists, Elio Di Rupo, who led the negotiations, said he hoped to form a government this week. "I welcome the agreement presented by Mr Elio Di Rupo today on the measures to underpin the Belgian federal budget with the aim of bringing the general government deficit to 2.8% of GDP in 2012, as recommended by the EU Council, and of paving the way for further consolidation in 2013 and 2014," said the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Olli Rehn. He added that he had also taken note of the structural reforms announced, "especially those intended to restore fiscal discipline and enhance competitiveness whilst preserving social fairness. These will be assessed in due time against the EU's country-specific recommendations, in the context of the 'European semester'." On 26 November, Belgium was downgraded from 'AA+' to 'AA' rating by Standard and Poor's.

■ **Berlin under pressure:** Germany's financial means "are not infinite," warned the spokesperson of Chancellor Angela Merkel in response to the pressure Germany is receiving from all sides to do more to save the eurozone. "We also have our own debt to reduce," said the spokesperson, on 28 November. Europe "cannot claim to have a financial strike force which it does not in fact have," added the spokesperson - markets would soon punish it if it did.

Germany's partners are pressuring the country to let go of its scruples regarding a massive European Central Bank intervention and a pooling of the debt via the issuance of eurobonds - given that the debt crisis has spread to nearly the entire eurozone.

■ **Germany: 'No' to 'triple A bonds' but 'yes' to treaty change:** The Germany Ministry of Finance denied, on

28 November, a report saying that it was considering common bonds for the eurozone countries rated 'AAA' by the rating agencies. Germany also repeated that the solution to the crisis is to modify the EU treaties.

"There is no plan for 'triple A bonds' or 'elite bonds'," according to a statement issued to deny what was reported earlier in the daily *Die Welt*.

According to the newspaper, these bonds, which have been nicknamed 'elite bonds', could be jointly issued by

OECD warns of spreading eurozone recession

eurozone countries that have the best rating ('triple A') from credit rating agencies - their interest rate would thus be lower, possibly ranging from 2% to 5%. The financial means thus gathered could then be used by the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). The idea has been under discussion for the last few weeks, according to *Die Welt*.

"We are working intensively on a stability union," which should be achieved "by means of treaty changes in which we suggest that member states' budgets respect firm debt limits," recalls the ministry.

"This is the way to win back the confidence of the markets," and "all that has nothing to do with 'triple A' or 'elite bonds'," added Berlin, confirming that this project was not broached during last week's meeting between Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble and his Finnish and Dutch counterparts, nor in talks with the Brits.

■ **Italian loan:** On 28 November, the Italian Treasury raised €567 million in bonds indexed to eurozone inflation due in 2023 but the rate jumped to over 7%, the Bank of Italy announced. The offer was high, at around €1.225 billion. However, in a clear sign of investors' wariness, the yield of these bonds jumped to 7.3%, from 4.6% for the last similar operation - the date of which was not specified by the Bank of Italy.

This record-high yield came as no surprise, since it is at the general level at which long-term yields are currently set in Italy.

■ **Belgian loan:** Belgium raised €2.005 billion in bonds in its last bond auction of the year, but had to pay much higher interest rates than for its last similar operation, the country's national debt agency announced, on 28 November. The figure raised is at the high end of what the Belgian state initially intended to raise - between €1 billion and €2 billion. The yield on ten-year bonds reached 5.65%, compared to 4.37% when last issued on 31 October, according to the agency.

■ **Moody's warning:** The "rapid escalation" of the debt crisis in the entire eurozone is threatening the credit standing of all European states, the US rating agency Moody's warned, on 27 November.

In a new "special comment" on European countries, the agency said that it continued to consider that the eurozone would maintain its unity with only a Greek default but notes that this "positive scenario" carried very negative countries for the ratings of European countries.

■ **OECD warning:** The eurozone seems to be in a "slight recession" and its economy is set to nearly stagnate in 2012 because of the debt crisis, which, in case of a "large negative event," could have "devastating" consequences for all rich countries, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) warned, on 28 November. In its quarterly report on the economic outlook, the OECD lowered its previsions considerably, as compared to the last report, in May.

According to the OECD, the eurozone is set for growth of 1.6% in 2011 (instead of 2%), and just 0.2% in 2012. Previsions for 2013 point to a slow recovery with 1.4% growth.

The OECD is the first international body to announce that the eurozone is entering a recession ■

TAXATION**Switzerland at centre of EU's radar screen**

By Tanguy Verhoosel

Swiss canton-level parliamentarians, visiting Brussels on 24-25 November, yielded to the facts: the European Union, which in recent months has shown restraint towards Switzerland because of the country's general elections in October, is now ready to get back down to business. In two reports to be examined on 30 November by the 27 finance ministers, it threatens to slap retaliation measures on Berne if the country fails to comply, by mid-2012, with EU rules on good governance in corporate taxation.

The first report assesses application of the code of conduct agreed by the 27 in this sector. It has already obliged states to dismantle around 100 tax measures considered as "harmful to competition" because they encourage corporate relocation.

The second report concerns reinforcement of tax policy coordination among the 24 countries that have adopted the 'Euro plus pact' (all EU member states except the United Kingdom, Sweden, Hungary and the Czech Republic). It will be submitted to the 27 heads of state and government, meeting on 8-9 December (see *Europolitics* 4307).

Their content is unequivocal: now that the Swiss federal elections are out of the way, the time for games is over and Switzerland has to fall into line.

This same message was relayed to the Swiss representatives by Gianluca Grippa of the External Action Service and the French Ambassador to the EU, Philippe Etienne.

They turned a deaf ear to Berne's usual discourse focused on the importance of economic relations between Switzerland (the EU's third largest trading partner after the United States and China) and the Union, and confirmed that the "grace period is over". "The language was clear," said Gabriel Lucien Barrillier, representing Geneva. Apart from the touchy issue of the institutionalisation of bilateralism, "the stumbling block is taxation," a subject that is ultra-sensitive in the eurozone owing to the debt crisis, added André Schoenenweid (Fribourg). "We are at the centre of the radar screen."

"RETALIATION MEASURES"

The Union, which has a long-standing disagreement with Switzerland over canton-level tax schemes and is concerned about tax measures under the new Swiss regional policy, wishes to compel Berne to apply the "principles and criteria" of its code of conduct on corporate taxation. To date, Switzerland has agreed only to engage in a "dialogue" on the conditions for an "in-depth dialogue" on this question, which annoys the EU. It wishes to shift into

higher gear by identifying with Berne all Swiss tax measures that may cause distortions of competition and then working out a compromise on how to abolish them. "If satisfactory progress is not made in this dialogue before the end of the Danish EU Presidency [first half of 2012]," notes the draft report submitted to Ecofin, "other approaches will be taken, including unilateral evaluation of the schemes".

According to a high-ranking diplomat, this means that if Switzerland continues to quibble and fails to take action, "we will examine the possibility of taking retaliation measures".

This eventuality is written down in black and white in the second European report, on reinforcing coordination of tax policies, drafted by the Polish EU Presidency. The Union's number one priority, it states, is "the elimination of harmful practices" in the area of corporate taxation.

Accordingly, "application of the principles of the code of conduct by third countries should be promoted. Special attention should be given to potentially harmful measures introduced by Switzerland".

The one and only idea being advanced to convince these third countries to apply the EU principles of good governance in tax matters is "the review of possible counter-measures". ■

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PARTNERSHIP INSTRUMENT**Fresh funds for border management and regional cooperation**

By Eric van Puyvelde

The European Commission adopted, on 28 November, the second part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for 2011 with a total allocation of €62.5 million. It will address challenges in the following areas: integrated border management (€26.5 million); territorial cooperation (€5.5 million); youth (€5.5 million); climate change (€18 million); and transport (€7 million).

Actions to be taken will consist of border management support on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border as well as the Moldavian-

Ukrainian border; wider territorial cooperation programmes between border regions of the EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries; regional cooperation in the field of youth work; the fostering of improved climate change policies in the whole neighbourhood area and Russia; and the provision of technical support to the beneficiary countries to improve the connection between the Trans-European Transport Network and EU's Eastern neighbours.

Faced with globalisation and progressive trade liberalisation, the Commission explained, the countries in the Eastern part of the European neighbourhood and Russia

are challenged to revitalise and diversify their economies while maintaining fiscal and macroeconomic stability. Climate change or programmes for young people are further pressing problems. Socially, most countries in the Eastern part of the European neighbourhood and Russia are faced with security issues either on their borders or inside the country.

The EU policy responses to the challenges of the ENPI Eastern region are guided by the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia) and the bilateral relations between the EU and each of the countries concerned. ■

EXTERNAL AID

Revision of financial instruments: Formal agreement in Council

By Manon Malhère

The Council of Ministers formally approved the results of the conciliation that amended the four draft regulations amending the three financial instruments for developing countries¹, on 28 November.

After heated negotiations, Parliament and the Council agreed to strengthen MEPs' right of scrutiny over the strategic guidelines for these instruments (see *Europolitics* 4294).

This mid-term review (2007-2013) will

be put to the vote at the EP plenary, on 1 December in Brussels.

The changes primarily concern two texts. The first amends the development cooperation financing instrument that establishes a temporary programme (2010-2013) of support measures for African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states in the banana sector. The instrument provides for an allocation of €190 million until 2013 for ten ACP states.

The second text amends the financing instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries and territories, which aims primarily to

promote economic partnerships. Available funds amount to €176 million for 2007-2013. These funds can now be allocated to developing countries in addition to the original 46 countries in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

The Council also made technical amendments to the draft regulations amending the development cooperation instrument and the European instrument for democracy and human rights. ■

(1) *Regulations 1905/2006, 1889/2006 and 1934/2006*

EU/UN/CLIMATE CHANGE

Korolec on role as Council president in Durban

By Jakub Iwaniuk in Warsaw

Poland's new Environment Minister, Marcin Korolec, assures that he will play to the full his role as EU Council president at the global climate conference that opened on 28 November in Durban, South Africa. He added that there is no risk of dissonance between his position and that of Climate Action Commissioner Connie Hedegaard: "We have agreed on the coordination of our positions. I see no dangers as far as that is concerned," he said in Warsaw, on 25 November, in his first contact with the media.

As EU Council Presidency, Poland represents the Union in these negotiations, together with Hedegaard, under the negotiating brief adopted at the 10 October Environment Council.

"Only a global agreement that includes all emitters will lead to fair competition on a global scale," said the new minister. "The policy of reducing CO₂ in one part of the planet cannot lead to increasing it elsewhere. That is why the global dimension of the agreement is a necessary condition for the success of the process."

"The negotiating brief is our common denominator," added the minister. He expressed the firm intention to play his role as president, and not to speak on behalf of Poland. But he defined his country's position within the common

position: "Poland's position in the Council is that we cannot set up a system in Durban that goes beyond the commitments we have already made in the EU. We cannot accept elements that would weaken our income level."

As for the risk of cacophony among the 27, which cost the EU dearly at the Copenhagen conference, the minister replied frankly: "It is hard for me to answer that question because I do not know all the ministers personally and my first meeting with them will be in Durban. [...] There will have to be a European position at the conference, agreed unanimously, on everything not in the brief".

Although the head of the EU's representation changed just ahead of the conference, the team of Polish experts who prepared the negotiations remains in place, including Undersecretary of State Joanna Mackowiak-Pandera. She acknowledges that the Europeans have a particularly tough task ahead. "The conference promises to be problematic, because the main CO₂ emitters are not ready to advance. If Durban ends in failure, I think that the EU will have to examine very seriously whether its climate policy is effective and whether it is really resulting in a decrease in emissions at global level." Her statement has the ring of a warning. ■

Marcin Korolec

Immediately upon being appointed, Poland's new environment minister explained how he sees his new portfolio: "I will work on the principle of balanced development, which takes into account the interests of both the environment and the economy in this period of crisis". As former state secretary for energy at the Economy Ministry, his previous job was to defend the interests of Polish industry, including those of its powerful coal lobby. Korolec is recognised for his competences, though. "He is unquestionably one of the most expe-

rienced Polish officials in energy and climate matters," according to Krzysztof Blusz, deputy head of the Polish think tank Demos Europa. "He is well versed in negotiation processes at European and global level." Trained as a lawyer, he served as an adviser to Danuta Hübner when she headed the EU integration committee. "He is a technocrat in the noble sense of the term," sums up one of his aides. "His appointment reflects a global trend of putting the accent on the economic dimension in political discourse in this period of crisis," added Blusz.

DEVELOPMENT**EU to urge China to commit to transparency in Busan**

By Sébastien Falletti in Seoul

The EU will urge China and other leading emerging economies to commit to a set of international standards when they give development aid to poor countries, during a key United Nations-led ministerial meeting in Busan, on 29 November-1 December. Transparency and good governance will be the most contentious issues to be discussed during the 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) to be held in South Korea's second largest city. Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and several ministers from key member states will push for global aid standards and pledge better coordination among European donors in order to improve aid effectiveness amid concerns from NGOs that the EU is not doing enough. The Busan meeting will be opened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and will bring together key figures, such as US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Tony Blair, former UK prime minister, and a high-ranking government official from China.

This conference will build on the progress achieved during previous conferences aimed at setting global standards for aid effectiveness (Paris in 2005 and Accra in 2008). Development actors see the Busan meeting as critical as it is the last major international get-together before the target date for meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in 2015. The EU will use the meeting to call on new emerging donors, such as China, Mexico, Brazil, South Korea or South Africa, to put their development policy in line with several basic principles, such as transparency or good governance. On 30 November, the Commission and the member states will push in favour of an ambitious Busan joint declaration, which will aim at establishing a "new paradigm for development," according to the South Korean organisers. Commission officials are upbeat and believe that Beijing is moving in the right direction and will not block a final compromise in Beijing. "The Chinese are making progress, but we want more," a senior official from the Commission told *Europolitics* ahead of the meeting. For the

first time, Beijing accepted, during the preparatory meeting among sherpas, to discuss and include the principle of 'transparency' in the document, *Europolitics* understands. But discussions about good governance, democracy and human rights are likely to be more controversial. The EU's debt crisis could also undermine its prestige and political clout vis-à-vis the new Asian economic powerhouses, although the European bloc remains by far the largest world donor. The EU accounts for 60% of the world's development aid budget. The Commission also counts on the support of Hillary Clinton to challenge emerging countries. Under the Obama administration, the EU and the US have narrowed down their differences over development aid.

However, NGOs, which will be massively represented in Busan, have criticised the EU's lack of ambition. "Rather than taking the lead, the EU is heading to Busan behaving like an observer," warned Gideon Rabinowitz, chair of CONCORD AidWatch, a European coalition of development NGOs that monitors the EU's aid performance. ■

In Brief

Graham Watson elected ELDR president

As announced by *Europolitics*, British MEP Graham Watson was elected ELDR (European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party) president for the next two years during the annual party congress in Palermo, Italy, on 24 November. Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck (ALDE, Belgium), who has been president since 2005, will step down after having served for three two-year mandates - the maximum amount of time under internal ELDR rules. The ELDR party also elected five vice-presidents. While Marc Guerrero (Spain), Louisewies van der Laan (Netherlands) and Leoluca Orlando (Italy) were re-elected for another term; Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE, Germany) and Astrid Thors (Finland) are new additions to the ELDR Party Bureau.

Pharmaceuticals JV authorised

The European Commission granted clearance, on 28 November, to the acquisition by Carlyle and Hellman & Friedman (H&F) of joint control of US Pharmaceutical Product Development (PPDI). PPDI provides laboratory and clinical development services to the pharmaceutical industry. Carlyle is a global alternative asset manager, which sponsors funds that invest globally across investment disciplines in a range of industries. H&F is a private equity investment firm, which invests in industries including health care, business and marketing services.

Danish capitals of culture in 2017

The selection board responsible for evaluating the applications for the European Capital of Culture 2017 recommended, on 25 November, that

Aarhus and Sonderborg, two Danish cities, should be preselected for the title. Once this recommendation has been confirmed by Denmark, the preselected cities will have to flesh out and complete their applications by the summer of 2012. According to the decision establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event, Denmark and Cyprus are the two member states hosting the event in 2017. The preselection meeting in Cyprus will be held in mid-December 2011. Following Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) this year, the next capitals of culture will be Guimaraes (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia) in 2012, followed by Marseilles (France) and Kosice (Slovakia) in 2013, Umea (Sweden) and Riga (Latvia) in 2014, then Mons (Belgium) and Plzen (Czech Republic) in 2015.

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EU Agenda

**Tuesday
29 November**

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE PRESIDENT'S DIARY

12:00 - 19:00 Brussels

- 12:00 Meeting with COREPER - Council
- 14:00 Opening speech at the Covenant of Mayors Ceremony: Restoring faith in Europe's future - Plenary Chamber
- 17:45 Event to mark "Romania's National Day" - Altiero Spinelli building, 3rd floor, Espace balcony
- 18:00 Meeting with the think thank RAND Europe - Rue de la Loi, 155

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

14:00 - 15:45 Brussels, *József Antall (JAN) building, room 2Q2*

- In association with the Delegation to the European Union-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee Discussion with Nikola Popovski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (14:00 - 15:00)
- Discussion with with Lobsang Sangay, Prime Minister of the Central Tibetan Administration (15:00 - 15:45)

COMMITTEE ON BUDGETARY CONTROL

09:00 - 18:30 Brussels, *Altiero Spinelli (ASP) building, room 3G3*

- European Court of Auditors Special Report: "The efficiency and effectiveness of EU contributions channelled through United Nations Organisations in conflict-affected countries" - Rapporteur Ingeborg Gräßle (EPP, DE) - Discussion with a Member of the Court responsible
- Discussion on the reform of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) - Rapporteur Ingeborg Gräßle (EPP, DE) 15:00- 17:30

- Discussion on the annual report 2011 of the European Anti-Fraud Office with Giovanni Kessler, Director General of Olaf - Rapporteur Zigmantas Balcytis (S&D, LT)

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

09h00 - 12h30 Brussels, *Paul-Henri Spaak building (PHS), room 1A002*

- Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) (CNS) - Consideration of draft report by Marianne Thyssen (EPP, BE) (09h40 - 11h00)

COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

15:00 - 18:30 Brussels, *Building József Antall (JAN), room 6Q2*

- Energy efficiency, repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC (COD) - Discussion with experts on report by Claude Turmes (The greens/EFA, LU)

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

09:00 - 18:30 Brussels, Paul-Henri Spaak building (PHS), room 3C50

- State of the drugs problem in Europe - European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) 2011 annual report - presentation by Wolfgang Götz, Director of EMCDDA (09.00-09.45)
- Establishment of an evaluation mechanism to verify application of the Schengen acquis (COD) - orientation vote on report by Carlos Coelho (EPP, PT) (11.00-11.30)
- Financial programmes in the area of Home Affairs for 2014-2020 - presentation of the Commission proposals by Stefano Maservisi, Director-General of European Commission Home Affairs Directorate-General (11.30-12.30)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

09:00 - 18:30 Brussels, *Altiero Spinelli (ASP) building, room 1G3*

- Discussion on Human Rights situation in South East Asia with special focus on West

Papua, Indonesia

- Discussion with EEAS on Human Rights situation in Burma
- Updates by Maciej Popowski, deputy Secretary General of the EEAS regarding the Human Rights policy review and the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy (15.00)
- In association with the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries : Egypt: Update on human rights developments following recent EP resolutions and in the aftermath of elections
- Discussion on Human Rights situation in Swaziland, particularly women's rights, including Universal Periodic Review
- Discussion with Christian Ehler, Chairman of the Delegation for Relations with Korean Peninsula on Delegation's visit to North and South Korea (28 October - 5 November 2011)
- Information on Human Rights situation in Guinea Conakry

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE

09:00 - 18:00 Brussels, *Altiero Spinelli (ASP) building, room 3 E 2*

- With the Council and Commission and EEAS, jointly with the Committee on Foreign Affairs
- Peace and security architecture in Africa Discussion with :
 - Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union
 - Nicholas Westcott, Managing Director for Africa (EEAS)
- The EU Strategy for the Sahel region Discussion with:
 - Gilles De Kerchove, EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
 - Manuel Lopez Blanco, Director EEAS, West and Central Africa
- European Air Transport Command (Eindhoven) as an example of "Pooling and Sharing" - Discussion with Major General Jochen Both, Commander EATC (16.30- 18.00)

PUBLIC HEARINGS**THE RIGHT OF ASSOCIATION IN THE ARMED FORCES IN THE EU**

14:30 - 16:30 Brussels, *Altiero Spinelli building (ASP) room 3E2*

•Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence will hold a hearing on "the right of association within the armed forces in the EU", with the following speakers: Mr Emmanuel JACOB, President of the European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL), Mr Bernhard GERTZ, Honorary Chairman, Deutscher Bundeswehrverband (German Armed Forces Association) and Mr Emilio Ammiraglia, President of

OTHER EVENTS**STOA ANNUAL LECTURE: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

10:30 - 19:00 Brussels, *József Antall (JAN) building, room 4Q2*

•The Science and Technology Options Assessment unit of the European Parliament is organising its 10th annual lecture, which will take place on Tuesday and will focus on sustainable management of natural resources. International speakers from different universities will discuss, among others, possibilities of better water management in agriculture, future of metals, sustainability as an education issue and communicating about natural resources. Speakers include:

- Harry Kroto, Florida State University, Nobel Prize for Chemistry 1996
- Koji Omi, Founder and Chairman, Science and Technology in Society forum
- John Anthony Allan, Professor Emeritus at King's College London, Stockholm Water Prize 2008
- Peter A. Wilderer, director of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Sustainability, Technical University of Munich, Stockholm Water Prize 2003
- David Wilkinson, director of the EU Joint Research Centre
- Mathis Wackernagel, Founder and Executive Director of Global Footprint Network
- Thomas E. Graedel, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University
- Martin Parry, Visiting Professor at the Centre for Environmental Policy, and Visiting Research Fellow at the Grantham Institute, Imperial College London

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE ARAB SPRING

14:00 - 18:00 Brussels, *Paul-Henri Spaak (PHS) Building, Room 04B001*

•Seminar for journalist about the recent upheavals in the Arab world and transition to democracy in the Mediterranean and the Middle East brings together media representatives, activists and decision makers from both sides of the Mediterranean. The aim of the seminar is to create a shared platform to improve communication and information on the approaches how the European institutions and media can best support the emergence of democracy in this region. The seminar is organised by Parliament's DG Communication in cooperation with the European Commission. Journalists from both sides of the Mediterranean will have an opportunity to learn about the European institutions' communication tools and projects, with a particular focus on Euro-Mediterranean relations, and to discuss the issues with MEPs and media professionals.

DELEGATIONS**EP DELEGATION TO OBSERVE ELECTIONS IN CONGO**

25-30 November, *Republic of Congo*

•A six-member delegation of MEPs, led by Anne Delvaux (EPP, BE), will visit the Democratic Republic of Congo from 25 to 30 November to observe the legislative and presidential elections which take place on Monday, 28 November. The delegation, which forms part of the overall EU Electoral Observation Mission (EU EOM) in DRC, will observe the elections in Kinshasa and surrounding area, in Bandundu and in Bas Congo (Mbanza Ngungu). The Chief Observer of the EU EOM, Mariya Nedelcheva, and the Head of the EP Delegation, Anne Delvaux, (EP, BE) will hold a joint press conference to announce their preliminary findings on Wednesday, 30 November.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**EUROGROUP**

Brussels

POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (PSC)

Bruxelles

Venue: Justus Lipsius, Rue de la Loi 175

EDUCATION, YOUTH, CULTURE AND SPORT COUNCIL

28-29 November, *Brussels*

Day 1: Education and youth. Day 2: audiovisual issues, culture and sport.

Day 2

•Audio-visual: a Council Decision concerning the signing of the European Convention on the legal protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access will be adopted. Council Conclusions on the protection of children in a digital world are also expected.

•Culture: adoption by the Council of Conclusions regarding cultural and creative competences and their role in the creation of European intellectual capital.

•A ministerial debate on the prospects for obtaining reliable and comparable statistical data regarding the role played by culture in contributing to growth, job creation and social development in the European Union is also planned.

•A meeting of Ministers for Sport from the EU Member States will be held as part of this event.

Sports: adopting the conclusions on sports volunteering, a resolution on the representation of the EU in WADA and the coordination of the EU position prior to the meetings of WADA, and the conclusions on the fixing of the results in sporting events.

•The meeting of Ministers for Sport will be preceded by a working lunch meeting with sports movement.

Venue: Justus Lipsius, Rue de la Loi 175

1ST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP OF THE PARTIES TO THE PROTOCOL

28-29 November, *Geneva*

The aim of the meeting is to review implementation of the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) Protocol, in particular issues surrounding sources of funding for implementation of the PRTR Protocol, a work plan for 2011-2014, technical support mechanism and the long-term strategic plan.

Organiser: Aarhus Convention Secretariat (UNECE)

Contact : Justyna Grzywacz (Presidency), e-mail: j.grzywacz@gios.gov.pl, tel.: 0048 22 57 92 748

SEMINAR OF EFSA EXPERTS*Lodz, Poland*

Issues connected with food and health claims from the standpoint of legal requirements, science and industry. Participants: experts, scientists and industry representatives. Lectures by experts from the ESFA and experts associated with the work of the NDA Panel on dietetic products, food and allergy as well as scientists involved with these questions and individuals applying the claims in practice.

31ST STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE BERN CONVENTION*29 November - 2 December, Strasbourg*

The Parties to the Convention adopt recommendations concerning the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats.

Contact : Ewa Pisarczyk, ewa.pisarczyk@gdos.gov.pl, tel.: 0048 22 57 92 156

ESPON WEEK: ESPON CONTACT POINT MEETING*28 November - 2 December, Krakow, Poland*

The ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) is an investigatory program that provides analyses as well as new and comparative knowledge about trends in the territorial development of Europe and the effect of the implemented policies on the regions and areas of Europe. At the meeting there will be a discussion about the tasks for the ESPON program arising from the assumption of ATUE as well as a discussion of the ESPON program after 2013, from the point of view of the tasks for the national contact points.

STRATEGIC ENERGY TECHNOLOGY PLAN*28 - 29 November, Warsaw*

Around 400 people will take part in the conference, representing the European energy industry, public offices and administration as well as EU institutes and organisations. The aim of the conference is to present the current achievements of the European Industrial Initiatives as well as the effects of the implementation plans it introduced. There will also be discussion about a new European Industrial Initiative called Smart Cities, energy infrastructure and the means of financing the technology for the SET-Plan in the upcoming financial situation.

EHEALTH EXPERT CONFERENCE*28 - 29 November, Warsaw*

The aim of the conference is to share eHealth experience, define eHealth development milestones, and present all solutions under projects implemented in Poland. Other topics to be debated include the safety and quality of medical information, and the broad use of diagnosis and treatment tools and technologies for European Union citizens as part of the Digital Europe programme.

17TH SESSION OF COP TO THE UNFCCC, WITH THE 7TH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL*28 November - 9 December, Durban, Republic of South Africa*

Given the limited progress in negotiating the agreement to outline activities to protect the climate after 2012, it is expected that only the RSA summit (COP 17) shall result in a new climate-related agreement. The meeting shall be attended by ministers of States - Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), representatives of ministries competent in climate change in member states of the European Union, representatives of the European Commission, the Union's chief negotiators on climate change, and by representatives of other countries - Parties to the Climate Convention, including major global economies: USA, China, Japan, and Russia. Organiser: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of the Republic of South Africa, Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Organiser for Poland: Ministry of Environment.

Contact : Rafal Szymanski (Ministry of Environment), e-mail: rafal.szymanski@mos.gov.pl, tel.: 0048 22 57 92 617.

ACCOUNTING AND EUROPEAN UNION INTEGRATION*Warsaw*

The conference is addressed to the accounting regulators and accounting organisations from other EU countries. Organisers: Accountants Association in Poland, Accounting Standards Committee, National Chamber of Statutory Auditors, Polish Economic Society. www.skwp.pl

FIGHTING AGAINST CORRUPTION*28 November – 1 December, Lublin, Poland*

Raising awareness of the importance of a transparency-based organisational culture in the justice system for their perception by the public as entities actively engaging in the struggle against corruption. Education in the skill of applying international co-operation and standards to the end of efficiency in preventing corruptive behaviour.

PROMOTION OF THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE – A NEW APPROACH*Warsaw*

At the conference, the Commission will outline the proposals on amendment of the rules and regulations alongside the support scheme for promotional measures and information provision in the markets of selected agricultural products and the outcomes of public consultation, on the future of the above-mentioned support scheme based on guidelines given in the Green Paper. Another issue to be discussed is the effectiveness of promotional measures in the European market of dairy and meat products, as well as in the fruit and vegetables market in view of this year's disturbances which occurred in this market.

5TH EUROPEAN FOOD QUALITY FORUM, Q FACTOR*- Agriculture and Quality, values for a new Europe**29-30 November, Brussels*

The forum will focus on a debate on the currently amended food sector regulations. All topics will be presented by panelists playing a key role in the food and agriculture sector, including representatives of the Horeca sector, manufacturer groups, and non-governmental organisations active in the food and agriculture industry. Paolo De Castro, President of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, other Committee members and agriculture ministry representatives from Poland, Italy, and the United Kingdom have been invited to present their views in the course of the discussion. Dacian Ciolos, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, has also been invited to attend.

Venue : Espace Banca Monte Paschi Belgio, Avenue d'Auderghem 22-28

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

TRAVEL AND VISITS

- Viviane Reding in Paris: delivers the opening speech at the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) Europe Data Protection Congress; delivers the closing address at a conference on 'The EU Digital Agenda, New Frontiers for Social Media Marketing' organised by The Economist Group
- Joaquín Almunia gives a speech at European Policy Summit on "Europe and China: Rivals or Strategic Partners?" (Brussels)
- Joaquín Almunia receives Jutta Urpilainen, Finnish Minister of Finance
- Siim Kallas participates in the TEN-T Days (Antwerp)
- Antonio Tajani participates in the launch of the "Toy Safety Christmas campaign" in the toy shop Dreamland (Groot-Bijgaarden, Belgium)
- Antonio Tajani delivers a speech at the First Conference of EU Heads of Delegation, EUSR and Chargés d'affaires in EEAS Headquarter (Brussels)
- Maros Sefcovic delivers a keynote speech at the conference on "Transparency and citizen friendly Europe", ("The Centre", Brussels)
- Janez Potocnik receives Fatmir Mediu, Albanese Minister for Environment
- Michel Barnier participates in the conference "Solvency II" organized by the French Federation of Insurance Companies (FFSA) (Paris)
- Michel Barnier meets Jean-Rene Buisson, President of the National Association of Food Industries (ANIA) (Paris)
- Michel Barnier participates in the high-level forum on the agribusiness, organized by DG ENTR (Berlaymont, Brussels)
- Karel De Gucht participates in the Transatlantic Economic Council (Washington, USA)
- John Dalli attends the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity (Brussels)
- John Dalli attends the Forum Alto Livello Agroalimentare (Berlaymont, Brussels)
- Janusz Lewandowski receives Stanislaw Tillich, Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony
- Maria Damanaki receives representatives

of the main marine NGOs

- Maria Damanaki receives Kikis Kazamias, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Cyprus
- Kristalina Georgieva in Munich; meets with Joachim Hermann, Bavarian Minister of Interior; gives a speech at "Disaster Response in Europe - prevention and solidarity" Conference
- Günther Oettinger attends the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) (Washington)
- Johannes Hahn receives Gianni Alemanno, Mayor of Rome
- Johannes Hahn receives Bojan Suvorow, Slovenian State Secretary of Slovenia
- Johannes Hahn attends and holds speech at the Covenant of Mayors Ceremony (Brussels)
- Johannes Hahn receives Tomislav Donchev, Bulgarian Minister for EU Funds
- Connie Hedegaard participates in the Awards ceremony for World Challenge 2011, hosted by BBC World News (Amsterdam)
- Stefan Füle receives representatives of the Belarus opposition
- Stefan Füle receives Sadullah Ergin, Turkish Minister of Justice
- Stefan Füle meets Igor Luksic, Prime Minister of Montenegro
- László Andor receives Egemen Batis, Minister for EU Affairs of Turkey
- László Andor receives Hanne Bjurström, Minister for Employment of Norway
- Dacian Cioloș addresses Coldiretti's Conference (Rome)

COURT OF JUSTICE

09:30

Grand Chamber

- Hearing C-337/09 P, Commercial policy Council v Zhejiang Xinan Chemical Industrial Group
Appeal against the judgment of 17 June 2009 of the Court of First Instance (Fourth Chamber) in Case T498/04 Zhejiang Xinan Chemical Industrial Group v Council annulling, in so far as it concerns Zhejiang Xinan Chemical Industrial Group Co. Ltd., Article 1 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/2004 of 24 September 2004 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of glyphosate originating in the People's Republic of China (OJ 2004 L 303, p. 1) – Interpretation of Article

2(7)(c) of Council Regulation (EC) No 384/96 of 22 December 1995 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the European Community (OJ 1996 L 56, p. 1) – Status of undertaking operating under market economy conditions

09:30

Grand Chamber

- Opinion C-307/10 Intellectual property The Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys Reference for a preliminary ruling - High Court of Justice (Queen's Bench Division) - Interpretation of Directive 2008/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 to approximate the laws of the Member States relating to trade marks (Codified version) (OJ 2008 L 299, p. 25) - Classification of goods or services for the purposes of registration - Degree of clarity and precision required as regards the identification of the goods or services covered by a trade mark
Advocate General : Bot

09:30

Grand Chamber

- Judgment C-371/10 Freedom of establishment National Grid Indus
The text is not available in English
Advocate General : Kokott

09:30

Grand Chamber

- Opinion C-376/10 P, Common foreign and security policy Tay Za v Council
Appeal brought against the judgment of the General Court (Eighth Chamber) of 19 May 2010 in Case T-181/08 Tay Za v Council, by which the Court dismissed an application for partial annulment of Council Regulation (EC) No 194/2008 of 25 February 2008 renewing and strengthening the restrictive measures in respect of Burma/Myanmar and repealing Regulation (EC) No 817/2006 (OJ 2008 L 66, p. 1), in so far as the applicant's name appears on the list of persons, entities or bodies to which the regulation applies
Advocate General : Mengozzi

09:30

Grand Chamber

- Opinion C-406/10 Intellectual property SAS Institute

Reference for a preliminary ruling - High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) - Interpretation of Articles 2(1) and 5(3) of Council Directive 91/250/EEC of 14 May 1991 on the legal protection of computer programs (OJ 1991 L 122, p. 42 – Extent of protection – Creation, directly or via a process such as decompilation of the object code, to create another computer program which replicates the functions of another computer program, protected by copyright, without access to the source code of the latter program.

Advocate General : Bot

09:30

First Chamber

■ Opinion C-453/10

Perenicová and Perenic

Reference for a preliminary ruling – Okresný súd Prešov – Interpretation of Arts 4(1) and 6(1) of Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993 on unfair terms in consumer contracts (OJ 1993 L 95, p. 29), and of European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/29/EC of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive')(OJ 2005 L 149, p. 22) – Consumer credit contract stipulating a usurious interest rate – Impact of unfair commercial practices and abusive clauses on the overall validity of the contract
Advocate General : Trstenjak

09:30

Second Chamber

■ Opinion C-606/10 Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

Association nationale d'assistance aux frontières pour les étrangers

Reference for a preliminary ruling – Conseil d'État – Interpretation of Art. 5(4)(a) and Art. 13 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code) (OJ 2006 L 105, p. 1) – National rules prohibiting third-country nationals holding a provisional residence permit from re-

entering the territory of the Member State which issued that permit where they do not have a re-entry visa issued by the consular or prefectural authorities – Concept of a 're-entry visa' – Permissibility of transitional measures for such nationals who have left the territory – Principles of legal certainty and protection of legitimate expectations
Advocate General : Trstenjak

GENERAL COURT

09:30

Fourth Chamber

■ Hearing T-344/08

EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg v Commission

Annulment of the Commission's decision of 16 June 2008 refusing to grant the applicant access to the administrative file of a proceeding under Article 81 EC and Article 53 EEA (Case COMP/F/38.899 – Gas insulated switchgear) concerning a cartel in the industry for gas insulated switchgear projects

09:30

Third Chamber

■ Hearing Joined cases T-366/09, T-110/10 Arbitration clause

Insula v Commission

Action on the basis of an arbitration clause seeking a declaration of non-compliance of debit notes of 8 July 2009, by which the Commission demands reimbursement of the advances paid to the applicant, with clauses in the EL HIERRO, ECRES, OPET I, OPET II, OPET OLA, 'Sustainable Communities', Respire, ISLANDS 2010 and Virtual Campus contracts, concluded under the specific programme for research, technological development and demonstration on energy, environment and sustainable development and under the ALTENER II programme, and, in the alternative, a claim for damages

15:00

Appeals Chamber

■ Hearing, Joined cases T-441/10 P, T-442/10 P, T-443/10 P, Staff Regulations of Officials

Kurrer v Commission, Magazzu v

Commission, Sotgia v Commission

Appeal against the judgment of the Civil Service Tribunal (Second Chamber) of 8 July 2010 in Case F-139/06 Kurrer v

Commission, dismissing an application for the partial annulment of the Commission decision: (i) appointing the appellant, a former member of the temporary staff, as an official in grade A* 6 following an open competition published prior to the entry into force of the new Staff Regulations; and (ii) not maintaining his promotion points.

CIVIL SERVICE TRIBUNAL

09:30

Third Chamber

■ Judgment F-119/10 Staff Regulations of Officials

Di Tullio v Commission

Civil service – Application for annulment of OLAf's decision refusing to assign the applicant leave for national service under Article 18 of the Conditions of Employment of other Servants

09:30

First Chamber

■ Hearing F-11/11 Staff Regulations of Officials

Bouillez and Others v Council

Staff case – Application for annulment of the decision of the appointing authority not to promote the applicants to a higher grade for the promotions year 2010.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

09:00-18:00

Eastern Partnership Civ. Soc. Forum n°3,

09:00-17:30

Seminar Polis, JDE62, 63

09:00-17:30

Joint Conference GHG-TransPoRD: Workshop & Final Conference, VM3

09:00-17:30

4th Extraordinary Gr II meeting, ESEC, Place d'Iéna 9 (FR Paris)

09:00-13:00

Presentation of opinion REX322 - Rural development and employment in the Western Balkans - in Belgrade

09:00-18:00

Fact finding mission to Japan - 25-29 November 2011 – Tokyo, Hrs siège

14:00-17:30

European Panel Federation Working Group “Environment”, JDE60

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Conference

GREEN INVESTMENTS TO THE RESCUE

- How the new Cohesion Policy can steer Europe's regions towards a sustainable economy

Brussels

Public conference, with participants including representatives from European regions, local authorities, the European Parliament, the European Commission, Member States, the European Investment Bank and cross sectoral stakeholders. Scope: new investments fields and opportunities of the next Cohesion Policy that can foster sustainable regional development.

Organisers: environmental NGOs: BirdLife International, CEE Bankwatch Network, Friends of the Earth Europe, Transport & Environment, WWF. Registration: Xavier Sol, xavier.sol@bankwatch.org

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors building, room JDE 52, 14:00-18:00

Associations

REGLEG GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2011

29-30 November, Brussels

Organiser: Regleg
www.regleg.eu

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Roundtable

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS:

what has been achieved and what are the challenges?

29 November, Brussels, 14:00 -16:00

With:

Maros Sefcovic, Vice-President of the

European Commission and responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration; Mats Persson, Director, Open Europe; Diana Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament. The European institutions are hugely influential political and legislative actors, whose decisions have a profound impact on citizens' everyday life. As with all public bodies, it is vital that the European institutions are transparent and accountable. Have the Commission's recent positive initiatives, such as the launch of the joint transparency register, changes to the Staff Regulations, and the Commissioner's tour of national capitals, succeeded in boosting transparency and accountability? Where is there still room for improvement within the Commission and other EU institutions, such as the European Parliament and European Council? Are there other areas that the Commission should review, such as salaries, expenses, and its communication with citizens and the media, in order to strengthen trust in the EU and its institutions?

Venue: Edelman - The Centre, Avenue Marnix 22, B-1000 Brussels
Registration: meet@thecentre.eu, or contact Pieter Cleppe, Open Europe Brussels office, at 0032 477 68 46 08

Meeting

THE FRIENDLY MEETING OF FRENCH IN BRUSSELS

30 November, Brussels

The next friendly meeting of the French in Brussels will take place on the occasion of the release of the special issue Volume 3 “Moving and living well in Belgium” of the Juliette & Victor Magazine.

Venue: Hotel Sofitel, Place Jourdan, Brussels 1-1040, 18:30 - 20:30
Respond before 29 November: medef.brux@skynet.be

Debate

PARTNERS IN DIALOGUE - “SECURE, AFFORDABLE AND GREEN ENERGY FLOWS IN EUROPE: HOW FAR FROM REALITY?”

30 November, Brussels, 18:15

Participants: Claude Turmes, MEP, Vice-Chair of the Group of the Greens/ European Free Alliance and Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy; Filippo Lombardi, Swiss MP (Council of States), Member of

the Committees on Transportation and Telecommunications; Jean-Arnold Vinois, Acting Director Internal Energy Market, DG ENER, European Commission
Venue: Mission of Switzerland to the EU, Place du Luxembourg 1, 1050 Brussels
Registration: sarah.jaquier@eda.admin.ch
www.eda.admin.ch/mission_eu

Conference

WE CARE, HOW CAN EU CARE?

9 December, Brussels

Our vision of CARE that respects the rights of individuals, guarantees access to services and promotes social inclusion
Why should you attend?

- Understand and discuss fundamental rights of care users
- Learn how to promote quality employment and decent working conditions in the care sector
- Discuss how to ensure an adequate balance between care, work, family and private life for men and women and between generations
- Explore the benefits of investing in the care sector

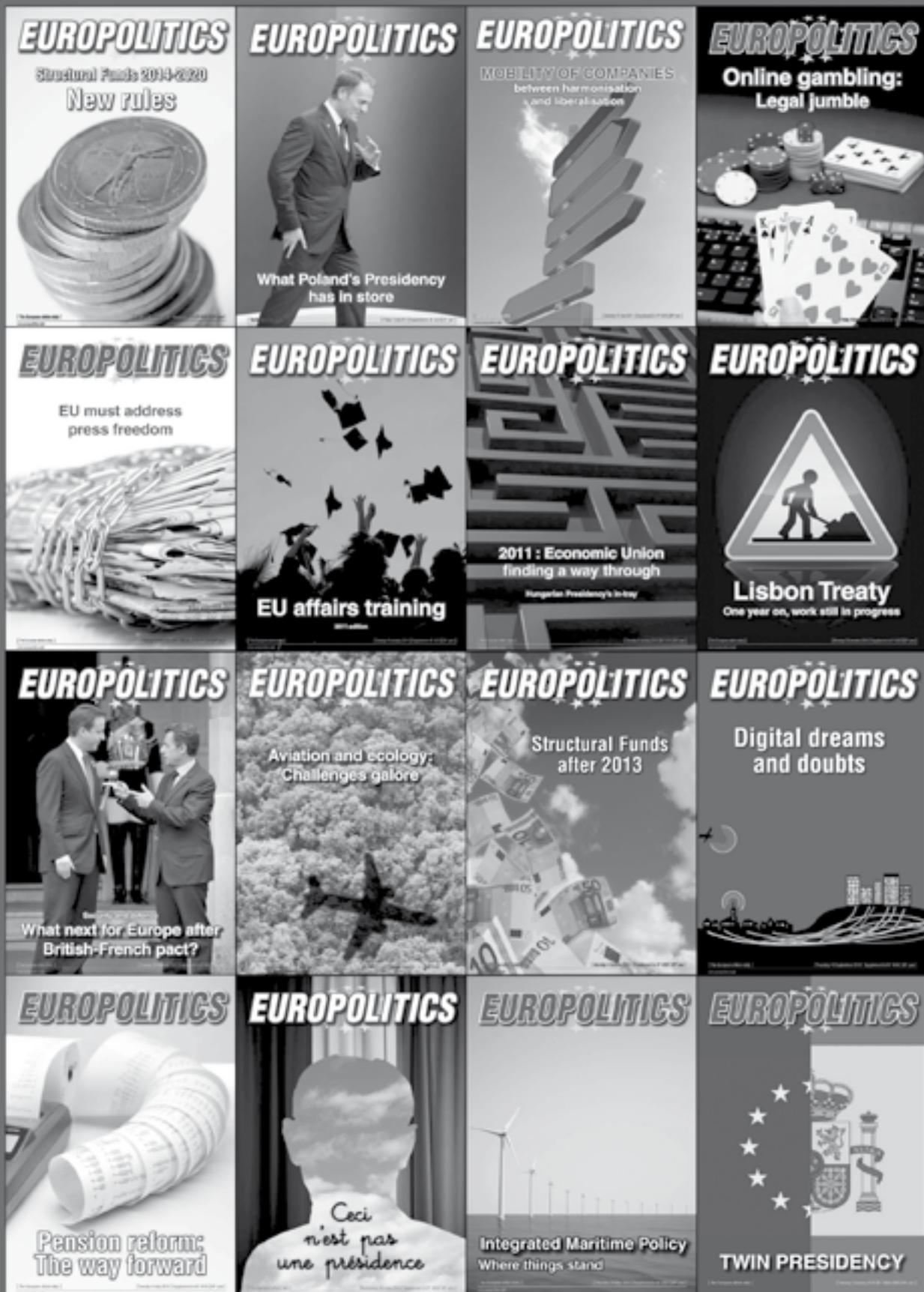
Speakers include:

- László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
 - Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director, Employment, Lisbon Strategy, International affairs, DG Employment, European Commission
 - Claudia Menne, Confederal Secretary, ETUC
 - Staffan Nilsson, President, European Economic and Social Committee (TBC)
 - Guillaume Cravero, Adviser for Social Affairs, Business Europe
 - Françoise Castex, MEP, Chair of the Public Services Intergroup European Parliament
- Venue: The International Auditorium, Brussels, Boulevard du Roi Albert II, No. 5
Registration: platform@socialplatform.org
www.socialplatform.org

To announce your events on these pages, contact: agenda@europolitics.info

EUROPOLITICS

Special Editions



EUROPE NEEDS A GLOBAL VISION FOR ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

The agreement now concluded between Parliament, Council and Commission on six legislative measures to strengthen macro-economic surveillance represents a major step towards improving economic governance in the EU. But it is not enough on its own. There needs to be a broadly accepted vision and agreed plan for deeper economic and fiscal policy coordination in the Union that includes a central role for the European Commission as the defender of the common interest, interconnection with the Euro Plus Pact for competitiveness and growth, a single voice in international fora, the recapitalisation of banks and a common European bond market.

President Barroso committed himself before Parliament on 28th September to table proposals to this effect in the coming weeks. In particular he must convince the European Council, at the summit on 17th-18th October, of the same urgency to push ahead with economic integration in order to end the financial speculation and uncertainty afflicting Europe.

It is now time to move beyond declarations of intent and take decisive action.



www.alde.eu

OPEN FORUM**Turkish experience for Europe: Invest in democracy**

By H.E. Egemen Bağış

We are passing through a very special era in the history of our globe. The global economic crisis is changing the architecture of the world economy and politics. What started as a financial crisis has begun to turn into a political one especially in some European countries, such as Greece and Italy. Technocratic governments came into power in those countries when the elected governments resigned.

Next to the capability of the European Union to overcome the global financial crisis, the question whether the European Union sees the current democratic deficit as legitimate while struggling with the economic deficits is a big concern now. The recent experiences of Greece and Italy cause some doubts about the EU's sincerity on that issue. What we are witnessing is economic coups overthrowing the democratic and elected governments. It seems to be a real test in the near future for the EU how to sustain the balance between democracy and economy. Turkey sincerely warns the European friends that the EU can do nothing but undermine its own rules and values by moving away from the democratic framework.

The only legitimate and effective tool to overcome the economic crisis is true democracy. Our experience in Turkey for nine years is inspirational. The two magic words behind Turkey's great economic transformation are stability and confidence. Our strong and stable democratic government has been implementing a spectacular political and economic reform campaign during nine years in power. Our political programme envisages an upgraded democracy, a transparent and accountable administration, better governance and a developed civil society. Actually, the AK Party is the most reformist and most liberal government in Turkish history, which has brought

Turkey into a more powerful position in the global problems. Turkey is now one of the leading countries in its region. The most important achievement of ours is investment we made in democracy in the last nine years. Now Turkey has been putting its imprint on the global stage with its impressive economic development and political stability.



Bağış: "Turkey will enlarge the size of the cake"

Turkey has a lot to contribute to world welfare as well as to Europe's. Thanks to the structural reforms following the 2001 crisis, Turkey is now enjoying a remarkable economic performance. The most important ingredient when solving our crises was a strong and stable democratic government, which enjoyed the confidence of our citizens and global investors. Currently, Turkey is the 16th largest economy in the world and the 6th largest economy in Europe. The OECD estimates that Turkey will be the second highest growing country after China by 2017. The Turkish economy, which grew by 8.9% in 2010 and by 10.2% during the first half of 2011, is fuelled by direct global investments.

What is interesting is that 85% of all global investments in Turkey and 92% of investments made in the first half of 2011 have come from EU member countries. This is a clear indication that the business and economic decision makers of Europe are much ahead of their political counterparts.

Turkey's demographic structure can be regarded as the "missing part of the European puzzle".

Turkey has a young, dynamic, well-educated and multicultural population. According to the UN, Turkey entered into a period of "demographic window of opportunity," which is expected to continue until the mid-21st century. This will certainly be a boost period for the Turkish economy as a whole by creating a complementary circle of "consuming more, producing more and growing more," which will be a golden opportunity for Europe, too.

Alongside her large and growing domestic market, mature and dynamic private sector, leading role in the region, liberal and secure investment environment, supply of high quality and cost-effective labor force, developed infrastructure and institutionalised economy, Turkey offers considerable opportunities and economic gains for the EU.

As a natural bridge between both East-West and North-South, Turkey is an easy access point to natural and energy resources and to global markets especially including the large markets of the Balkans, Eurasia, the Middle East and North Africa. Some 70% of the energy resources are located in the South and the East of Turkey, while the largest energy consumer, Europe, is located in the West.

Turkey's accession will increase the size of the European internal market as well as the competitiveness of the EU in the global economy. We have already proved that Turkey does not downsize the slices that the EU members get from the EU cake. On the contrary, Turkey will enlarge the size of the cake as a whole when she becomes an EU member. ■

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