Debate on CFP reform gets under way

By Anne Eckstein

Although the discussion by the fisheries ministers, meeting in Council in Luxembourg on 23 April, was relatively brief, the debate on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is already well under way, between the off-the-cuff reactions of French Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Michel Barnier (see Europolitics 3740) and the proposals tabled by Danish Minister Eva Kjer Hansen. The two positions seem totally contradictory – which suggests a lively debate ahead – but according to both the Danish minister and a senior official of DG MARE, they are not irreconcilable.

Barely 24 hours after its adoption by the European Commission, the green paper on reform of the CFP (3738) was presented officially to the Council by Fisheries Commissioner Joe Borg. The presentation was not followed by a formal airing of views, although some delegations insisted on commenting. The Czech EU Presidency announced an initial detailed debate at the next Council (25-26 May). The document met with a “positive reaction on the whole,” said a source close to the Commission. As expected, the tough issues will be reform of the TACs (total allowable catches) and quotas system, capacity reduction and subsidies.

QUOTAS A MAIN CONCERN

The question of quotas is already emerging as the main concern, particularly following the problems being encountered by fishermen in northern France. After the Council, Michel Barnier commented on this key issue and on the green paper’s suggestion of introducing individual quotas. He said he agrees with the principle of individualised and pooled quotas but is opposed to transferable quotas and determined to keep management in the hands of the public authorities.

Eva Kjer Hansen submitted a working document to the Council proposing a reform of which the first pillar would be to switch from quotas based on volumes landed (the present system) to quotas based on real catches. This would make fishermen more accountable and oblige them to adapt their investments, capacities and fishing gear, she explained. It would also lead to a reduction in discards. Copenhagen has been using this system since 2007 and has launched in this connection a pilot project of camera surveillance aboard six fishing vessels. This operational supervision matched with the obligation for fishermen to provide precise catch data has demonstrated its worth, noted the Danish minister, who distributed a study on the system to her fellow ministers.

She would like to bring the seven Baltic rim countries into the project to test it on a larger scale. The second pillar of the Danish proposal – also already being applied by Danish... (continued on page 5)
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Two reports adopted by MEPs in Strasbourg, on 24 April, are to deregulate the electronic money market and lower cross-border direct debit fees to national levels. The two reports - by EPP-ED deputy John Purvis on e-money and ALDE MEP Margarita Starkeviciute on cross-border payments - aim to implement the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), which was brought into force by the Payment Services Directive in 2007. The deadline for implementation of the directive is November this year.

Since January 2008, all credit transfers within the eurozone have been simplified into a new instrument, the SEPA credit transfer, which aims to lower costs. Direct debits and credit and debit cards are to follow, but deadlines are being hampered by a slowdown of the SEPA project, according to the European Central Bank. It said in a November 2008 report that motivation in the industry has been “fading away” and a “downbeat attitude” has emerged.

E-MONEY

Money stored in electronic form, such as Proton, Paypal, electronic gift vouchers and mobile phone top-ups, should be safeguarded after MEPs voted by 364 votes in favour to 30 against on John Purvis’s report. The result, which will amend the current e-money directive (2000/46/EC), is based on a compromise endorsed by EU ambassadors in Coreper, on 25 March.

E-money differs from regular electronic transactions in that it is not held in an account but pre-paid into physical instruments like the Oyster card used on the London Underground. Banks, and especially the ECB, have traditionally been dubious about how to regulate e-money, but the Commission has more recently been keen to promote its use. It says that in 2007, there was only €1 billion of e-money in circulation as opposed to €637 billion in cash, but predicts this figure could rise to €10 billion in 2012.

Financial institutions issuing e-money will now only require initial capital of €350,000 to enter the market (compared to €1 million previously), customers will be able to redeem any e-money outstanding into cash (although they may be charged for it) and capital requirements for companies will stand at 2% of the total e-money they have in circulation. Because money converted to e-money will now be considered a ‘float’ rather than a deposit, institutions holding the floats will not be able to use the cash as credit and will therefore not pose as much of a risk - either to consumers or the financial sector. According to Purvis, “All in all this is a very cautious step forward. It is not perfect but compromises seldom are. It will almost certainly have to be revisited in three or four years’ time but by that time I hope [...] that doubtful regulators, banks [...] and even the ECB will have become reconciled to the fact that this is a beneficial user-friendly service which holds no risks for the European economy”.

CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

Under an agreement reached on cross-border payments - based on a Commission proposal (COD/2008/0194) released on 13 October last year - direct debits will now be subject to equal charges, meaning that EU citizens will pay the same fees on domestic and cross-border euro transactions. Credit card transactions, ATM withdrawals and credit transfers were already covered under a previous regulation (2560/2001). The move (passed by 396 votes to two) was essential to meet a 1 November deadline for direct debits to come under a new SEPA instrument.

To help the industry, the Commission will phase out statistical reporting requirements for payments under €50,000 and sets a temporary fallback fee of €0.088 to be paid between banks on direct debits (the multilateral interchange fee). The European Commission’s anti-trust services are currently investigating both MasterCard and Visa for charging excessive MIFs on credit card transactions.

There is also a requirement on member states to set up a complaints and out-of-court redress system for breaches of the new rules.

By Sarah Collins

FINANCIAL SERVICES

EP agrees relaxed rules on e-money, new fees for direct debits
fishermen – is the transferability of individual quotas. Transfers can involve not only the buying and selling of quotas, but also trading by species between fishermen in the same area, explains a Danish expert.

Hansen does not take offence at Michel Barnier’s categorical rejection of this aspect: quota management is an internal matter for the member states, she noted. It will not be a problem if France rejects transferable quotas. What is most important is to switch from quotas based on landings to quotas based on catches. This position seems to please the Commission: the Danish proposal makes it possible to address the problem of discards, one of the main failures of the current CFP. As for management proper of the quota system, the Commission’s green paper recommends decentralisation and a senior official commented that it should be possible, if Paris insists, to maintain the option of public management of quotas.

AQUACULTURE

The debate was considerably less concrete on the Commission’s communication on development of a competitive and sustainable European aquaculture (3732). The Czech EU Presidency – which noted that the question is one of its priorities – hopes to have conclusions adopted at the June Council.

President Petr Gandalovic admitted, however, that “there is a lot of work ahead” to achieve that goal. Although there is consensus on the main points – competitiveness and sustainability - the delegations brought up a number of problems. On the protection of biodiversity, several delegations seek more coherence between environmental policies and aquaculture. On the promotion and marketing of aquaculture products, some delegations warn against the dangers of protectionism. They argue that it would be better to require non-EU countries to meet the standards applied in the EU, notably sanitary standards. On financing, there is no Community fund available in the current budget (2007-2013) for promotion actions at European level, meaning private funds would have to be found. Some delegations also expressed concerns about the use of medicines and the risks of diseases in fish farms (Spain), the necessity of developing the concept of ‘green aquaculture’ (Nordic countries) and the question of the feeding of fish (Germany, Britain): it is not really logical to fish three kilograms of fish with low market value to produce one kilogram of farmed fish, noted these delegations.

SHARK ACTION PLAN

In its only formal decision, the Council adopted conclusions endorsing the Community action plan for the conservation and management of sharks. The ministers approve of its general approach and specific objectives and call on the Commission to ensure that the measures adopted are simple, proportionate, cost-effective and take account of the species found in each fishing area.

FISHERIES

MEPs approve rules to control recreational fishing

By Patrick Veillard

Greater control over recreational fishing is the gist of the measures approved, on 22 April, by the European Parliament (consultation procedure) in revising the Common Fisheries Policy’s community control system. MEPs backed rapporteur Raül Romeva I Rueda (Greens-EFA, Spain), whose report (see Europolitics 3728) stresses that “it would be discriminatory to subject commercial fisheries to strict controls and limits while largely exempting non-commercial fisheries”.

Recreational fishing is defined as “non-commercial fishing activities for recreation or sport and including, for instance, recreational angling”. This measure will put commercial and recreational fishing on an equal footing. In the case of commercial fishing, catches will be set against the state’s quotas. These checks on fishing are for a stock subject to a multiannual plan, as well as fishing from a vessel (but not fishing with rod and reel from shore).

As for checks on commercial fishing, the Parliament settled on adding provisions allowing the transfer of a member state’s unused quotas. The initial plan gave the Commission the power to refuse these transfers if the quota had been exceeded as well as to reduce or even ban fishing by the member state concerned. MEPs believed that that could harm relations between member states.

MEPs confirmed the wide range of sanctions provided for in the draft regulation for breaching the CFP, in particular fines (from €5,000 to €300,000) and giving ‘penalty points’ to the ships and captains concerned. In the most serious cases, the latter would be excluded from receiving national public aid or Community subsidies from the European Fisheries Fund. Repeat offenders would also risk having their fishing permits suspended or withdrawn, while the points of those who did not commit another offence would disappear after three years. Data registered electronically will as of now be kept for ten years, instead of three, as was the case before for paper records.

This new regulation, which must now be approved by the Council, will round off the control system, which already includes regulations on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and on fishing authorisations.
INFORMAL REGIONAL POLICY COUNCIL

Svoboda: Cohesion policy is everyone’s concern

By Isabelle Smets

“No member state should be excluded from the EU’s future cohesion policy, but assistance should be focused on the regions most in need.” Cyril Svoboda, the Czech minister for regional development, noted that all the participants in the informal meeting of EU ministers in charge of regional policy, on 23 April in Mariánské Lázne (Marienbad), agreed on these principles.

They are stated clearly in a press release adopted at the conclusion of the ministers’ meeting: “The ministers [...] believe that the primary focus of the cohesion policy should be put on the convergence of less prosperous areas. The ministers share the opinion that the cohesion policy should be implemented across the whole EU territory.”

The final declaration – which is a document approved by all the ministerial delegations and not a presidency’s declaration - should consequently reassure a number of regions that feared seeing the competitiveness objective of the European Structural Funds called into question (although those who agreed on the text are not those who will take decisions when the time comes).

It also singles out the new challenges regions will have to take up in the future - globalisation, climate change, demographics, energy – and notes that cohesion policy can help the regions to tackle these issues, which concern the entire EU.

What will the eligibility thresholds be? What treatment will be given to regions that move out of the ‘most in need’ group? There are no answers at this stage, although Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner said transitional provisions would be needed for regions that are promoted out of the convergence objective (ex-Objective 1). She also stressed financial engineering mechanisms, ie support taking forms other than the classic types of aid provided by the Structural Funds. These “could be further developed,” said Hübner. “We could make them available to other end beneficiaries.” The final declaration echoes that view: “The ministers believe that the cohesion policy should not rely exclusively on financial support in the form of grants, but should continue to examine and use in practice other forms of financing.”

MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

Consensus also emerged on the view that the core principles of present-day cohesion policy – multiannual programming, follow-up and evaluation, partnership, additionality – are “essential also for the next generation of the cohesion policy”. To the delight of the regional authorities, subsidiarity and multilevel governance are mentioned as an “asset,” together with partnership and shared management. The President of the EU Committee of the Regions, Luc Van den Brande, who was present in Mariánské Lázne, had argued to that effect.

Simplification is also a central demand. “Delivery mechanisms need a significant improvement towards real simplification,” states the final declaration. It urges the Commission to step up its work in this area for both the current and the next programming period (after 2013).

A question that comes up regularly, raised mainly by regional authorities, is whether or not a Council of ministers in charge of regional policy should be set up (these ministers meet only informally). Some delegations suggested this, said Svoboda, but “the idea may not be put into practice”. In other words, although the debate exists, consensus is nowhere in sight.

The next informal meeting of ministers in charge of regional policy is set for mid-December under the Swedish EU Presidency. According to State Secretary Jöran Hägglund, it will be in Kiruna (Swedish Lapland).

The ministers’ final declaration is available at www.europolitics.info > Search = 248727

AGRICULTURE

Denmark takes poor view of clearance of accounts

By Luc Vernet

The clearance of accounts under the European Agricultural Fund has, in the past few years, once again become a means of imposing penalties in the form of flat-rate corrections, even for minor deficiencies with a zero or very low financial risk for the EU budget, regrets Denmark in a memorandum submitted to the Agriculture Council, on 23 and 24 April in Luxembourg. The total amount of financial corrections rose from €221 million in 2002 to €985 million in 2008. The Union’s enlargement to 27 countries has not contributed much to this increase, according to the Danish memorandum, which adds that the flat-rate corrections imposed on member states are now the rule rather than the exception.

The concentration of EU funds in the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) creates an additional problem in that even a 2% correction, the lowest rate possible under the standard system used at present, can add up to very large amounts, continues the Danish memorandum. This country would therefore like to see the clearance procedures return to their original aim of prevention and correction, rather than serving as a means of imposing penalties.

Denmark also wishes to speed up these procedures so that member states can learn sooner of possible weaknesses in their systems and remedy them without delay. At present, four to five years can go by between the European Commission’s audit and its final decision. Denmark, which calls for a revision of the rates of these standard corrections, also asks whether there is a real financial risk for the Agricultural Fund with the SPS, since the credits available to each state are determined in the context of capped national budgets.
AGRICULTURE

Germany sets bad example on transparency of aid

By Luc Vernet

The European Commission threatened, on 23 April, to start legal proceedings against Germany if it refuses - as announced - to publish the list of beneficiaries of EU agricultural subsidies in its territory by the end of the month. “Germany is obliged to implement this legislation” on the transparency of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments and if it does not comply “we will react accordingly,” warned the agriculture commissioner. “This could mean starting infringement proceedings against Germany” before the EU Court of Justice, specified Mariann Fischer Boel. “This is taxpayers’ money, so it is very important that people know where it is being spent,” in order that we can guarantee an informed debate about the future of the CAP, added the commissioner.

A day earlier, German Agriculture Minister Ilse Aigner had announced her intention to abandon - for the time being - publishing the list of beneficiaries of CAP subsidies, giving as a reason a decision by the German court. An administrative court in Wiesbaden (centre) has just sided with German farmers, who contested this publication in the name of the protection of private data. The court ruled that it was a “serious attack on the fundamental right to the protection of [personal] data” and prohibited the circulation of information on agricultural aid in the regional State of Hesse, of which Wiesbaden is the capital. This analysis has been contested by the European Commission.

Berlin in favour of granting advance of funds

“Vis-à-vis market tensions, in particular in the dairy sector but also for other productions, such as cereals, EU farms are now finding themselves in a very difficult situation, meaning that their liquidity is no longer assured. Hence the absolute need for measures to improve it. The advance payment of the single payment may play an important role in this,” considered Germany in a note on various points discussed during the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers, on 24 April in Luxembourg.

Berlin is therefore calling on the European Commission “to authorise single payment advances for 2009 requests,” as permitted in the provisions of the CAP. These advance payments would be made “on the basis of information provided by applicants”. Once the checks on the eligibility criteria have been completed, a final payment will be granted during the normal period established by the regulation, i.e between 1 December 2009 and 30 June 2010. According to the German note, “this procedure would allow advance payment, while avoiding the risk of overpayment”.

ECODESIGN DIRECTIVE

Parliament votes to include energy-related products

By Dafydd ab Iago

By 394 votes in favour and 13 against with three abstentions, the European Parliament formally approved, on 24 April, the extension of the scope of Framework Directive 2005/32/EC on ecodesign to include not just energy-using items, such as hairdryers, computers, televisions and fridges, but also energy-related products. The European Commission had proposed the extension of the framework directive in July 2008. However, despite Parliament’s first-reading agreement with the Council, the Commission will only present a revised working plan for the Ecodesign Directive in 2011 when the current plan draws to an end. Only from then will the extension of the directive begin to affect energy-related products, such as shower heads, windows, construction products and insulation materials.

Rapporteur Magor Imre Csibi (ALDE, Romania) had pushed to broaden the scope for improvement are subject to mandatory ecodesign requirements. The technical measures for addressing specific products also need to be preceded by a preparatory study, consultation, impact assessment and then a vote by member state experts in the Ecodesign Regulatory Committee. This is then followed by a three-month scrutiny period, during which the European Parliament can reject the proposed measure.

Background

The Ecodesign framework directive does not introduce directly binding ecodesign requirements for energy-using, or now energy-related, products, but defines the conditions and criteria for setting such requirements. Additionally, following Article 15, only those products with a “significant” environmental impact, annual sales of above 200,000 units, and clear potential but had to accept only a very limited recast of the directive without substantial changes. Csibi would have liked to have seen an “immediate” extension of the scope to all products, except for means of transport for persons or goods. “An improved product design would avoid waste and provide consumers with more efficient, more reliable and longer lasting products,” said Csibi.

However, the Commission is only set, in 2012, to review the effectiveness of the Ecodesign Directive, and may or may not decide that there is a need to further extend its scope to products that are not energy-related. Stephen Russell, secretary-general of ANEC, a European consumer association specialised in standardisation, regrets the fact that the EP finally accepted the Commission’s proposal. “This continues to favour energy efficiency over chemical content or recycling potential,” said Russell. “Ecodesign means designing a product taking into account its environmental impacts during the whole life cycle,” he added.
COPYRIGHT

Parliament extends performer’s rights to 70 years

By Nathalie Vandystadt

The European Parliament decided to go halfway, after concluding that the extension of performers’ rights to 95 years was too long. It opted instead, in its vote on 23 April in Strasbourg (co-decision), to increase the term of copyright protection to 70 years, from 50 at present. Performers who are living longer but do not all live in the lap of luxury will thus be placed on the same footing as authors and composers.

The Socialist and Conservative groups agreed with rapporteur Brian Crowley (Sovereignists, Ireland) to amend the European Commission’s proposal along those lines. The original text had prompted doubts in the Council as to the relevance of the 95-year term, but many states were willing to accept a more moderate extension (see Europolitics 3651).

In contrast with what the sector was seeking, broadcast performers are not included. This question will be reviewed in an impact study by the Commission by January 2010, with a view to possible inclusion.

“We would have preferred 95 years and the inclusion of broadcast performers, but 70 years is better than 50,” reacted the Association of European Performers Organisations, AEPO-ARTIS, contacted by Europolitics. It noted that the text includes two key advances: it recognises the necessity of strengthening and supplementing performers’ rights and explicitly states that the question of recognition of performers – particularly in terms of the right to remuneration – must be studied with regard to the digital sector.

DEBATE ON WEB LIES AHEAD

The debate on online copyright is still in full swing at European level. “This is a measure in keeping with the action needed in Europe to reinforce intellectual property and the rights of all creators and content providers, which represent part of the development capacity of an economy founded on culture and knowledge,” commented Jacques Toubon (EPP-ED, France), who took part in the negotiations.

According to Brian Crowley, the legislation adopted will give “artists more bargaining power when renegotiating their contracts with companies”. The member states will have to allow performers to renegotiate certain clauses of their contract before the term of copyright is extended. This concerns in particular performers who transferred their rights in the 1960s and 1970s, and who consequently earn less than the following generations.

For studio musicians, who most often remain in the shadows, the EP favours a specific fund financed by producers’ contributions. The latter would be obliged to set aside, at least once a year, at least 20% of the revenues earned from the proposed extension of copyright term. The collecting societies that represent artists and producers would be charged with administering the annual supplementary remuneration.

The Commission’s initial proposal seemed too favourable to record companies. The European Consumers Organisation (BEUC) denounced its “erroneous message to society, at a time when reasonable rates and access conditions to legal and diversified content should be encouraged”. Here, too, to balance the score with artists, Parliament prevents the use of contract clauses that establish deductions on the new rights they will collect. According to Toubon, the directive “will not as such lead to higher prices for consumers”.

The Council still has to adopt the text. The Commission will have to report three years after the legislation enters into force, then every four years, to ensure that the extension of rights has indeed improved the social situation of performers. ■

CONSUMERS

ECJ finds Belgian commercial laws too strict

Member states may not adopt measures that are more restrictive than those defined by Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices - not even in cases when their aim is to ensure a higher level of consumer protection. This conclusion follows from a verdict by the EU Court of Justice in the cases VTB-VAB NV versus Total Belgium NV and Galatea BVBA versus Sanoma Magazines Belgium NV, announced on 23 April. According to the ECJ, Community law precludes national legislation which, without taking account of the specific circumstances, prohibits a combined offer made by a vendor to a consumer. The court has based its verdict on Directive 2005/29/EC, which establishes a general prohibition of unfair commercial practices that are likely to distort the consumer’s economic behaviour.

The relevant laws in Belgium - albeit with certain exceptions and without taking account of the specific circumstances - impose a general prohibition on combined offers made by a vendor to a consumer. Total Belgium and Sanoma Magazines were both brought to national court because they were accused of “combining offers”. In the case of Total, one of its shops in Belgium has been offering free breakdown services for a period of three weeks to consumers who are Total Club cardholders with every purchase of at least 25 litres of fuel for a care. Flair, part of Sanoma Magazines, introduced in one of its publications a voucher entitling the holder to a price reduction on products sold in various lingerie shops. The ECJ judged that “by establishing a presumption of unlawfulness of combined offers, national legislation such as that at issue in the main proceedings does not meet the requirements of the directive”.

The ECJ ruling is available at www.europolitics.info > Search = 248718
MEPs approve new rights for coach passengers

By Isabelle Smets

Just like air, rail and sea passengers, people travelling by bus or coach will soon have new rights relating to cancellations or long delays. On 23 April in Strasbourg, the European Parliament’s plenary session dealt with that very issue (first reading, co-decision procedure), which was at the heart of a proposal for a regulation presented by the European Commission in December 2008 (COM(2008)817). The report that the MEPs adopted by a very large majority (drafted by Gabriele Albertini, EPP-ED, Italy, and adopted by 557 in favour, 30 against and 23 abstentions) allows passengers whose journeys are cancelled, overbooked or delayed by more than two hours to be reimbursed for their ticket, unless they accept alternative transport services. If the bus or coach company does not offer them alternative transport, passengers will also benefit from compensation amounting to half of the initial price of the ticket (the Commission first proposed compensation amounting to the full price of the ticket). This compensation will also be due, but without reimbursement, if passengers accept the replacement solution put forward by the companies.

In this context, a delay refers to the planned arrival time. The rules will therefore apply even if the bus or coach leaves on time but has a long delay during the journey (technical failure, for example). However, the transport company will not be liable if the delay or the cancellation is due to the fault of a passenger or due to external circumstances that the company “could not avoid”.

As for other means of transport, the proposal being examined also provides for special – and free – assistance for passengers with reduced mobility. They cannot be refused boarding because of their disability, except for security reasons. Companies are also obliged to provide special training for their staff, and member states will have to designate bus and coach stations where assistance will be provided for people with disabilities or reduced mobility. The list of stations will be published on the internet and will guarantee “access to services in most geographical areas”.

These new rights will mainly apply to long-distance or international services. An amendment allows member states to exclude urban, suburban and regional services from the scope of the text. MEPs thought that these services had very specific characteristics (no advance reservation, use of daily, weekly, monthly and annual tickets, many stops).
EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS

New directive boosts worker power in big firms

By Marianne Slegers

Workers’ representatives at European level will from now on be better informed and consulted in case of “international changes” so they can play their full role in anticipating and managing these changes. The Council adopted, on 23 April, a revised directive on European works councils (EWCs) following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament in December 2008. The EWCs will now be “strengthened to better inform and consult workers during restructuring.” Under the new directive, transnational information and consultation rights of workers should be “effective to improve legal certainty,” for example during mergers and takeovers. These works councils should also “clarify” the link between the different levels of labour representation. The revision aims to increase the presence of EWCs across the Union.

This is “particularly important” in the “current economic climate,” said the European Commission. Within a few weeks, the new directive will be published in the EU’s Official Journal and it will enter into force 20 days later. Member states have two years to implement the new rules at national level.

An informal compromise concluded by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 4 December 2008 cleared the way for the document’s first-reading adoption. The EP plenary agreed to this informal deal, on 16 December. Vladimir Spidla, the commissioner for employment and social affairs, said back then that he was “delighted” by the “rapid” agreement between the Parliament and the Council.

The new directive does not prescribe a threshold of 50 workers as a minimum requirement for creating special negotiating bodies (as a first step toward constituting EWCs). The aim here is to avoid discriminating against the smaller member states, which would have difficulty reaching this threshold. The amendment to this effect was submitted by the Socialist group (PES) to the EP (see Europolitics 3658).

The new text offers a “clearer” definition for sanctions in case of non-compliance or breach of obligations. The Commission originally proposed that in such cases the member states should take “appropriate” measures. However, under the final agreement, sanctions have to be “effective, appropriate and dissuasive,” as per another PES amendment (3658). The new directive introduces a definition for ‘information’ and “clarifies” the meaning of ‘consultation’. It says that if the structure of a company or group of companies changes significantly (due to a merger, acquisition or division, for example), the arrangements of the existing European works council must be adapted.

Furthermore, the competence and scope of action of an EWC is limited to ‘transnational’ matters. Topics are considered to be transnational if they concern the entire undertaking or group or at least two member states. These include matters which, regardless of the number of member states involved, are of importance for the European workforce in terms of the scope of their potential effect or which involve transfers or activities between member states.

In addition, EWCs’ agreements must enable information and consultation links between national and European employee representation bodies. In absence of such arrangements, the member states must ensure that the information and consultation process duly takes place in both the EWCs and the national employee representation bodies. Lastly, “in so far as this is necessary” for the exercise of their representative duties in an international environment, the members of EWCs are entitled to receive training without loss of wages.

Background

Today, there are an estimated 820 EWCs in the EU, representing 14.5 million workers at transnational level. However, EWCs have so far been set up only in 36% of companies falling within the scope of the directive. The new directive (and also the current directive) covers all companies with at least 1,000 employees within the European Economic Area (EEA) and at least 150 employees in each of at least two member states.

EDUCATION

Students want greater cooperation with world of work

By Eric van Puyvelde

Access to higher education should be facilitated and cooperation strengthened between universities and enterprises. These are two of the priorities of European students, according to the results of a Eurobarometer survey published on 22 April by the European Commission.

A large majority agree that it is important for higher education institutions to foster innovation and an entrepreneurial mindset among students and staff, and that there should be the possibility to undertake work placements in private enterprises as part of a study programme. Lifelong learning should also be encouraged.

Moreover, more students want to study abroad and a majority want additional information about the quality of higher education institutions in order to inform their study choices.

The survey was carried out in February among students from 31 European countries - all EU member states plus Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey. The findings echo the opinions of academic staff, who were surveyed two years ago. The results cover access to higher education, costs of higher education, higher education institutions and their study programmes, purposes of higher education, quality and transparency of higher education institutions, studying abroad and cooperation between universities and businesses and plans after graduation. The figures are available in a memo published in parallel and in the summary of the survey.

The main results of the survey are available at www.europolitics.info > Search = 248695
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EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL

Moldova, Belarus and Iran on agenda

By Fabrice Randoux

Sending an EU mission to Moldova, where the opposition continues to contest the Communists’ electoral victory and denounce human rights abuses, will be one of the main topics at the meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers, on 27 April in Luxembourg. Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek said he favoured such a mission, as did the Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, though she said that “the terms of reference” needed to be discussed (see Europolitics 3740).

The situation is all the more sensitive as the Moldovan President, Vladimir Voronin, along with five other leaders from ex-Soviet republics (Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), is due to take part in the summit, on 7 May in Prague, launching the Eastern Partnership, which is aimed at strengthening ties between these countries and the EU. Another thorny issue in preparing for this summit is Belarus. The EU officially invited the country, while at the same time hoping that its President, Alexander Lukashenko, often termed the “last dictator in Europe,” would send a representative so as not to spoil the family photo. Czech President Václav Klaus has already let it be known that he “will not shake hands with Mr Lukashenko”. The latter is offended by the European attitude. “If you want Belarus to be present and not Lukashenko, say so openly. You don’t have to do so rudely,” he said before the Belarus parliament.

CROATIA AND BURMA

The ministers will also debate the difficult economic and political situation in Ukraine and the blocking of Croatia’s accession talks by Slovenia, and they will renew the economic sanctions against the Burmese (Myanmar) government for one year (3740). In their conclusions, they will invite Iran to “seize the opportunity” created by the new American policy to reach a negotiated solution on the nuclear issue. The Group of Six (United States, Germany, China, France, Britain and Russia) wanted to resume talks – frozen since September - on 8 April in order to convince Iran to suspend its nuclear programme. Iran responded favourably to this demand by the large powers, while at the same time confirming that it would continue its nuclear activities. Iran is continuing with its uranium enrichment programme despite five UN Security Council resolutions, including three involving sanctions, demanding it be suspended.

An EU-Egypt Association Council meeting will take place on 27 April on the margins of the ministers’ meeting. The following day there will be a troika meeting with the African Union as well as a Permanent Partnership Council with Russia. Russia will be represented by its Foreign Affairs Minister, Sergei Lavrov, and that will definitely be an opportunity to come back to Moldova and the Eastern Partnership, of which Russia takes a dim view.


EU/SOMALIA/PIRACY

Council concerned about European fishermen’s safety

By Anne Eckstein

In the three days between 21 and 24 March, there were at least ten attacks by pirates south of Somalia, around 500 miles from Dar-es-Salaam in the Seychelles exclusive economic zone and northwest of Madagascar. These areas where Community fishermen operate regularly, which is why Spain has already decided to step up protection of its tuna fishing fleet. Its delegation also raised the matter of the safety of the fishing fleet at the Council of Fisheries Ministers, in Luxembourg on 23 April.

Madrid called for “appropriate” measures to be taken quickly to protect the interests of Community fleets (commercial and fishing) operating in the region, for example, an extension of the scope of Operation Atalanta.

Commissioner Joe Borg (fisheries and maritime affairs) said that fishermen’s safety is essential for the EU and that, while the Gulf of Aden and the northern Indian Ocean are not the only dangerous areas, they are the greatest source of concern for the moment. “We encourage skippers to take all necessary precautions, including registering with the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), managed by the EUNAVFOR Atalanta operation,” he said. “We are going to see what can be done to ensure fishermen’s safety and protection in these areas,” he had commented the day before, as he presented the green paper on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. He nevertheless added that “we do not yet have fisheries agreements with Somalia or with the neighbouring countries”.

The commissioner confirmed that he would be in the Seychelles and in Australia in May. Piracy is not the main reason for the trip but he plans to take advantage of the opportunity to discuss with the local authorities the nature and origin of the problems and the development of cooperation to combat piracy more effectively and protect fleets in the area.

In terms of competences, Joe Borg noted that this issue concerns the second pillar, in other words that it is the responsibility of the member states (and not the European Commission) to manage it within the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

He will therefore contact External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner to voice the Fisheries Council’s concerns, to suggest an extension of Operation Atalanta and to ask her to submit the matter to the Council’s competent configurations.

The Commission has declared that it “is unaware” of any illegal fishing activities by EU vessels in Somali waters, contrary to what Somali officials claim. “If evidence is provided, we will open an investigation,” noted César Deben, director for fisheries policy.
**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

**Donors raise 165 mn euro for peacekeeping in Somalia**

The international donors’ conference for Somalia, held in Brussels on 23 April, reached its target of US$213 million or €165 million, pledged by the international community to support the African Union’s peacekeeping mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the creation of a Somali police force.

The amount pledged is one third of what was initially sought by the United Nations (see separate article on fisheries problem).

**MAJOR EU FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

More than half this amount will come from the EU. Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel announced that €72 million would be released out of the EU budget: €60 million for AMISOM and €12 million for the police force (a year’s training and salaries for the 10,000 Somali police officers).

On top of that amount will come another €15 million from the EU member states (Spain €6 million, Italy €4 mn, Netherlands €1.4 mn, Belgium €500,000). The European Commission will also provide support of €18 million for Somalia out of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for rule of law and €48 million in humanitarian aid (financed by ECHO).

The Arab League pledged US$18 million over a six-month period, to be paid directly to the government of Somalia for its security forces (military and law enforcement). Several countries also announced aid in kind. France will train 500 Somali military troops in Djibouti. Egypt plans to send 10,000 police uniforms.

**SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, CFSP High Representative Javier Solana and African Union Commission President Jean Ping all stressed the importance of a stable government in Somalia for restoring peace to the region and facilitating the fight against piracy.

“Piracy is a real business,” noted Jean Ping. “The Somalis are victims of unscrupulous businessmen. Helping the government will make it possible to tackle the roots of the problem. […] Sheikh Sharif [the Somali president] has the legitimacy and legality required because he was elected by the Somali people”. Louis Michel shares this approach. “The current government has real assets and can be successful where earlier governments failed. Somalia has a credible government for the first time,” he said. The country’s President, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a moderate Islamist, expressed his “gratitude for the international community’s assistance and attention” and his determination to make his country a “haven of peace on land and at sea”.

**REMOVAL FROM TERRORIST LIST?**

The question of removing certain Somali Islamists from the terrorist list (Al-Qaida, Taliban) applicable in the Union was not officially discussed at this conference. However, a number of officials are well aware that the matter is bound to come up in the drive to stabilise the Somali regime and launch a national reconciliation process.

The main Islamist opposition leader, Sheikh Aweys, who had sought refuge in Eritrea, has just returned to Somalia where he gave a press conference before his supporters in Mogadishu, the capital. He makes the withdrawal of AMISOM a condition for inter-Somali dialogue. His removal from the terrorist list is also a condition for the resumption of dialogue, said an expert.

Speaking to journalists after the conference, Louis Michel observed that “the question of the removal from the terrorist list of certain Somali figures who carry political weight in the country will have to be addressed”. It would come with a trade-off, explained the commissioner, being conditional upon a commitment to reinforce rule of law in Somalia.

“We should be ready to make a gesture if that can help strengthen the country’s stability.”

**Questioned by Europolitics, both Ban Ki-moon and Javier Solana remained very cautious about such an eventualty.**

“This is a matter that has to be discussed by the Security Council at the right time,” said the UN secretary-general. That view was confirmed by the Union’s high representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, who was slightly more prolix. “A decision will be taken when the time comes. It is true that the government of Somalia wishes to set up a reconciliation mechanism. Doing so will depend on everyone’s behaviour.”

The Somali President, Sheikh Sharif, refused to answer the question.

The UN’s terrorist lists, used by the EU, include: the Islamist movement Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya – considered by the United States as having ties to Al-Qaida – and two of its leaders, Hassan Dahir Aweys, from the Hawiyé clan, and Hassan Abdullah Hersi Al-Turki, from the Ogaden clan.

The latter is particularly suspected of being involved in attacks against the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998. Two other people active in Somalia are on the list: Somali national Ali Ahmed Nur Jim’ale and Comorian-Kenyan Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, who was assumed to be dead in 2007 but is still alive.

**Absence of Czech EU Presidency**

Although all the international institutions (UN, EU and Arab League) were represented at the final press conference at the highest level, the Czech EU Presidency was absent. The EU was represented by CFSP High Representative Javier Solana and by Commissioner Louis Michel. Can this be taken as a prefiguration of the Lisbon Treaty? The Czech representative, Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Kohout, in charge of cooperation and humanitarian aid, spoke only at the donors’ conference. He is being mentioned as the future foreign minister in the transitional Czech government (see Europolitics 3740)
**Visa facilitation with Ukraine**

Despite the EU’s visa facilitation agreement with Ukraine (among other Eastern European countries, except Russia), which entered into force in January 2008, Ukrainians regularly complain that they are the target of humiliating bureaucracy in European consulates. Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, however, declared himself opposed to the restoration of a visa regime for European Union countries, an idea mentioned by his administration, which criticised these reciprocity problems anticipated by the agreement. “We must not enter into conflict [...] engage in retaliation because this will only harm us,” declared the head of state during a press conference, on 22 April. “I am convinced that the stay in Ukraine of tourists, diplomats and European politicians will bring more money to the country than consular payments from the Foreign Affairs Ministry,” he added. (NVA)

**Industrial new orders down**

In the EU, industrial new orders declined by 1.4% in February 2009, after dropping by 3.5% in January. Compared with February 2008, they decreased by 33.3%, indicated Eurostat, on 23 April. In February 2009, compared with January 2009, total manufacturing working on orders rose in seven member states and fell in twelve. The highest increases were registered in Romania (+8.7%), Lithuania (+6.3%) and France (+4.8%), and the largest decreases in Latvia (-28.7%), Bulgaria (-11.9%) and Hungary (-5.2%).

**EIB loan in Wales**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending GBP75 million to Finance Wales plc to provide risk capital to small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales under the EU’s JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) initiative. The initiative combines EIB finance from other sources, including the European Commission under the European Regional Development Fund to encourage effective investment in small businesses in the EU’s least developed regions.

**EU election mission in Lebanon**

The EU will be sending an election observation mission to Lebanon for the legislative elections on 7 June. The mission will consist of around 90 observers led by Spanish MEP José Ignacio Salafranca (EPP). The mission’s core group, made up of the chief observer and six experts, arrived in Lebanon, on 18 April. Thirty long-term observers will be deployed to assess the campaign period and pre-election preparations around the country. Approximately 50 short-term observers, along with a delegation of MEPs, will be deployed during the election period to observe voting, ballot counting and the tabulation of results. The Union has made available some €4.7 million from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights to finance the mission.

**Latvian guarantee scheme authorised**

The European Commission authorised, on 23 April, a Latvian scheme allowing the granting to enterprises of subsidised guarantees for initial investment and working capital loans concluded by 31 December 2009. It meets the conditions of the Commission’s temporary framework for state aid measures to support access to finance during the crisis because it is limited in time (two years), respects the relevant thresholds and applies only to companies that were not in difficulty on 1 July 2008 (ie before the credit crunch).

**Banking JV cleared**

The European Commission granted clearance, on 22 April, to the acquisition of joint control of Raiffeisen Banca pentru Locuinte S.A. (RBL, Romania), a newly created company constituting a joint venture, by Raiffeisen Bausparkasse G.m.b.H (Austria), Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall A.G. (Germany) and Raiffeisen Bank S.A. (RBR, Romania). RBL will operate a saving and lending business for housing purposes in Romania.
People

Lucian Sârb/Euronews
The Executive Board of Euronews S.A appointed, on 15 April, Romanian journalist Lucian Sârb (41) as the channel’s new director of news and programmes. With 15 years’ experience in journalism, Lucian Sârb will take over, on 4 May, as head of the editorial department and the 350 staff journalists comprising the eight language teams of Euronews. Sârb began working for TVR (Televiziunea Româna), the Romanian public broadcaster in 1994.

Jean Todt/eSafetyAware
Jean Todt, the former CEO of Ferrari, was elected, on 20 April, as the new president of eSafetyAware, a Brussels-based non-profit international organisation that promotes intelligent vehicle safety technologies. Jean Todt will lead the campaign to promote consumer awareness of e-safety technologies like electronic stability control (ESC). “Reducing road accidents needs to be a key priority for Europe,” Todt said.

P. Taverne, T. de Saint Maurice/Commission
The European Commission decided upon several appointments in April. Philippe Taverne has been appointed, as of 1 June, to the position of deputy director-general and chief accounting officer of the Commission and the European Development Fund at DG Budget. Thierry de Saint Maurice, currently director of the External Service Directorate at DG External Relations, has been appointed head of delegation in the Ivory Coast.
DOSSIERS

- EU Court of auditors turns 30: 3394, 17/10/07
- EU-Russia summit: 3400, 25/10/07
- EU-Africa summit: 3428, 6/12/07
- Kosovo: 3452 and 3453, 21 and 22/01/08
- Energy-climate change package: 3455, 24/01/08
- VAT package: 3469, 13/01/08
- EU-NATO: 3509, 14/04/08
- EU-Japan: 3515, 22/04/08
- EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine Mission: 3516, 23/04/08
- EU Chad-CAR Mission: 3517, 24/04/08
- EU-US – Climate change: 3524, 7/05/08
- Return directive: 3531, 19/05/08
- Brazilian beef breeders planning full return to EU markets: 3532, 20/05/08
- Remuneration of directors: 3536, 26/05/08
- EU-Bosnia-Herzegovina – EESC at 50: 3538, 28/05/08
- REACH: 3540, 30/05/08
- Irish referendum: 3548, 11/06/08
- Territorial cooperation: 3552, 17/06/08
- Back to Nice: 3554, 19/06/08
- Galileo: 3557, 24/06/08
- Lamassoure report on citizens’ Europe: 3559, 26/06/08
- Small Business Act: 3561, 30/06/08
- Security and defence strategy: 3563, 2/07/08
- Cyprus reunification process: 3569, 10/07/08
- Energy liberalisation: 3576, 21/07/08
- Telecoms package: 3579, 25/07/08
- Community Fisheries Control Agency: 3580, 28/07/08
- Customs Union: 3594, 12/09/08
- Citizens’ access to law and justice in Europe: 3598, 18/09/08
- Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy: 3604, 26/09/08
- Pact on immigration and asylum: 3617, 15/10/08
- Enlargement report: 3632, 5/11/08
- Regions and migration: 3645, 26/11/08
- Poznan conference: 3649, 2/12/08
- ESDP Mission in Georgia: 3664, 23/12/08
- EU-US – Barack Obama: Chances and challenges: 3674, 19/01/09
- The crisis: A test for Europe: 3699, 23/02/09
- Water, a global challenge: 3712, 12/03/09
- European Parliament’s priorities in run-up to elections: 3709, 09/03/09
- Solana: 3717, 19/03/09
- Airbus A400M: 3722, 26/03/09

SPECIAL EDITIONS

- French EU Presidency: New horizons: 3562, 01/07/08
- European Parliament of Enterprises: supplement, 14/10/08
- European Parliament turns 50 — Anniversary special: 3494, 19/03/08
- Slovenian EU Presidency: 3441, 04/01/08
- Europe facing climate change: 3423, 30/11/07
- Lisbon Treaty: Here is what changes: 3407, 07/11/07
- Tomorrow’s Europe: 1957-2007 – What’s next?: 3270, 19/03/07
EU Agenda

Week from 27 April to 3 May

Monday 27 April

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

THE PRESIDENT’S DIARY

Vilnius, Lithuania

- 19:45: Meeting with Arunas Valinskas, Speaker of the Seimas
- 20:30: Meeting with Andrius Kubilius, Prime Minister of Lithuania

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT

15:00 - 18:30, Brussels, ASP 5G3
- Grounding the Africa-EU partnership in mutual benefit - Presentation by Prof. Paul Collier, Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies - University of Oxford
- Parliament’s right of scrutiny on the Development Cooperation Instrument - Discussion - Possibly, adoption of a motion for a resolution

COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

15:00 - 18:30, Brussels, JAN 4Q1
- Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on the multiannual financial framework (amendment) - Vote on report by Reimer Böge (EPP-ED, DE)

Amending budget 5/2009: budgeting the surplus from the implementation of the budget year 2008 - Vote on report by Jutta Haug (PES, DE)

COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

15:00 - 18:30, Brussels, PHS 3C050

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

15:00 - 18:30, Brussels, JAN 6Q2
- FRONTEX: state of play and future - Presentation by Ilkka Laitinen, Executive Director of Frontex
- Public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents - Presentation of the opinion of the EP Legal Service and proposals by the rapporteur to the Plenary, Discussion with the EDPS and Nikiforos Diamandouros (European Ombudsman) in the presence of the Council Presidency and the Commission
- European Refugee Fund for the period 2008-2013 (amendment of Decision No 573/2007/EC) (COD) - Vote on report by Bárbara Dührkop Dührkop (PES, ES)
- Establishment of a European Asylum Support Office (COD) - Vote on report by Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA, UK)
- Minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers (recast version) (COD) - Vote on report by Antonio Masip Hidalgo (PES, ES)
- Establishment of ‘Eurodac’ for the comparison of fingerprints (recast version) (COD) - Nicolae Vlad Popa (EPP-ED, RO)
- Application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast version) (COD) - Vote on report by Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert (ALDE, NL)

DELEGATIONS

EP DELEGATION TO OBSERVE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN ECUADOR

23-28 April, Ecuador

A delegation of seven MEPs, led by Renate Weber (ALDE, RO), travels to Ecuador to monitor the presidential elections on Sunday. Before the elections MEPs will meet several of the presidential candidates. The presidential candidates will include Diego Delgado Jara, of the Movimiento de Integración y Transformación social (MITS – Lista 151) and Carlos González, of the Movimiento Independiente Justo y Solidario (MIJS – Lista 40). MEPs are also scheduled to meet Fernando Cordero, a candidate to be Member of Parliament for the Movimiento Alianza País (Lista 35) and current speaker of the National Assembly. On Sunday 26 April, Ms Weber and Mr Evans will observe the vote in the town of Guayaquil; the other members of the delegation will monitor the elections in the capital, Quito.

MEPs will take part in the press conference of the EU election monitoring mission, led by Portuguese MEP Jose Ribeiro e Castro (EPP-ED). This will take place in the Swissotel, Quito.

The other members of the EP delegation led by Renate Weber (ALDE, RO) are Agustín Díaz De Mera García Consuegra (EPP-ED, ES), Fernando Fernandez Martin (EPP-ED, ES), Robert Evans (PES, UK), Emilio Menendez Del Valle (PES, ES) and Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón (PES, ES).

Contact: Thomas Dudrap: (32-2) 28 44524 (BXL), (33-3) 881 77015 (STR), (32) 498.985.284, foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu

MOLDOVA: AMID CONCERN AT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

26-29, April, Chisinau, Moldova

The allegations of human rights violations that followed the publication of results of the elections of 5 April in Moldova will be the main focus of concern for a delegation of four MEPs, led by Marianne Mikko (PES, EE), who visit Moldova from 26 to 29 April on a fact-finding mission.

In Chisinau, MEPs will visit police stations and prison number 13 (Tuesday 28th). NGOs on the ground have denounced human rights violations and the inhumane detention conditions of demonstrators.

The delegation’s programme includes meetings with the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections known as “Coalition 2009”, the Anti-Torture Alliance, the Soros Foundation, the Moldovan branch of Amnesty International, the National Council for the Prevention of Torture and the UN human rights adviser (Monday 27th).

MEPs will also have meetings with the Moldovan authorities. Talks may also be take place with the President of Moldova, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister and some ministers (Tuesday 28th).

Marianne Ikko is chair of the EP
Delegation for relations with Moldova. Other members of the delegation are Marie-Anne Isler-Béguin (Greens/EFA, FR), Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP-ED, RO) and Cristian Busoi (ALDE, RO). Contact: Thomas Dudrap: (32-2) 28 44524 (BXL), (33-3) 881 77015 (STR), (32) 498.983.284, foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL (GAERC)
27-28 April, Luxembourg

SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK IN EUROPE IN THE 21ST CENTURY
Prague
The international conference on occupational safety and health (OSH) issues will focus on the fulfilment of the Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work. Contact: Jana Rihová, Tel.: +420 221 922 249, GSM: +420 725 761 147, E-mail: jana.rihova@mpsv.cz

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP ‘MARITIME CLUSTERS IN LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES’
Prague
The issue is very simple and yet, today, of crucial importance: how can landlocked EU Member States like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria or Luxembourg contribute as subcontractors to the innovative development of the maritime industry in Europe, thus promoting growth and employment at national as well as European level? Contact: David Chmelík, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic - chmelik.david@eu2009.cz, tel.: 224 00 2520, mobile: 725 818 416

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “BUILDING MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS”
27-28 April, Prague
The ambition of the Ministerial Conference is, through joint preparatory activities, to elaborate a new set of conclusions and ministerial recommendations which will enable the participating states to qualitatively improve joint relations towards genuine migration partnerships. Contact: Jana Zacios, Tel. +420 974 832 472, E-mail: zacios@mvcr.cz

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON HERBAL MEDICINAL PRODUCTS
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF WORKING GROUP C UNDERGROUND WATER
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS
27-28 April, Prague

ASSOCIATION COUNCIL EU - EGYPT
27-28 April, Luxembourg

CONFERENCE “RESEARCHERS IN EUROPE WITHOUT BARRIERS”
27-29 April, Prague
The conference will focus on the research climate and the attractiveness of the European Research Area (ERA), on creating a better environment for researchers in Europe, on fostering young talents for research and their engagement in ERA and on developing research skills and an entrepreneurial mindset among young researchers.
www.era mobility .cz

FORUM ON SOCIAL POLICY AND MIGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
27-30 April, Prague
Organiser of the Event: Caritas Czech Republic Contact: Ing. Mgr. Oldrich Haicman, Caritas Czech Republic sekretariat@charita.cz

COMMITTEE FOR VETERINARY MEDICAL PRODUCTS
26-28 April, Brno (Czech Republic)

INFORMAL CMD(V) MEETING
26-28 April, Brno (Czech Republic)

EUFASA CONFERENCE (EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOUSES’ ASSOCIATIONS)
26 to 28 April, Prague

A. EUPAN: HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING GROUP
B. EUPAN: CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE
26-30 April, Prague

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TRAVEL AND VISITS
- Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso in Athens: meets with Mr Konstandinos Karamanlis, Greek Prime Minister; participates in the conference on Biodiversity protection – beyond 2010
- Mr Siim Kallas in Tallinn, Estonia: delivers a speech at the European Executive Policing Conference (Reval Hotel Olimpia); delivers a speech at the Architecture Conference “State as our Home” (Kumu Art Museum)
- Ms Viviane Reding in Tallinn (27-28): participates in the ministerial conference on critical information infrastructure protection (27). Attends the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on eCall by the Government of Estonia, meets Mr Juhan Parts, Minister of Economic Affairs and Communication of Estonia and meets the EU Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament (28)
- Mr Stavros Dimas participates in A future vision for Biodiversity Conference (27-28, Athens)
- Mrs Danuta Hübner receives Mr Henri Emmanuelli, President of the Landes General Council
- Ms Danuta Hübner receives Mr Ulrich Schroder, CEO of KfW Bankengruppe
- Ms Danuta Hübner in the UK (27-28): visits the East Midlands Development Agency (27). Visits Environment Technology Centre project, and meets regional partners of East Midlands Development Agency; visits BioCity project; visits CURVE, Leicester Performing Arts Centre (28)
- Mr Joe Borg in the Czech Republic: speech at the Conference and Workshop on Maritime Clusters in Landlocked Countries (Prague); visit to aquaculture plants (Trebon, Southern Bohemia)
- Mr Ján Figel’ attends the European Bicycle Tour (In front of the EP Building)
- Mr Ján Figel’ participates in the AmCham conference and press conference
on Creativity and Innovation (Softel)
• Mr Vladimir Spidla in Prague (27-28): attends an employment workshop on “Maintaining employment, creating jobs and promoting mobility” – Preparation of Employment Summit in May; gives a press conference at the conference on Health and Safety (27). Gives a keynote speech at the European Patent Forum and Patinnova 2009 and hands over awards at a gala dinner (28)
• Ms Meglena Kuneva in Portugal (27-29): delivers an opening speech at a seminar on Financial Services and Consumer Interests organised by DECO; participates in a Second life’s event together with Ms Paula Casaca, MEP; meets Mr Rui Vilar, President of the Gulbenkian Foundation; meets Mr Vitor Constancio, President of the Bank of Portugal; meets representatives of MAPiNET (Civil Movement against online Piracy); meets representatives of the Consumer organization AMD (27, Lisbon). Meets Mr Carlos Manuel Martins Do Vale Cesar, President of the Azores Islands; delivers a speech at a conference “Challenges and opportunities in telecommunications, e-commerce and consumer protection in Autonomous region of Azores”; visits the tea plantation “Gorreana” (28, Azores Islands). Delivers a closing speech at the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) Assembly (29, Lisbon)
• Mr Leonard Orban in Spain (27-28): visits the Ikastola San Fermin; with the Mayoress of Pamplona, Ms Yolanda Barcina; meeting with the Navarra Government and with the Regional Minister of Education at Navarra Government Mr Carlos Pérez-Nievas; with Ms Elena Torres Miranda, President of the Parliament of Navarra and meeting with the EP Cultural Education Committee; visit to the Public University of Navarra and meeting with Mr Julio Lafrunete, Chancellor of the Public University of Navarra, with Mr Jesus Mª Pintor, Vice-chancellor of Education; meeting to the Centro Javier Zulaica Lazoz, President of Centro UNESCO of Navarra /UNESCOVA; visit to the Euskaratidea/Navarra institute of the euskera organisation of the Government, competent in linguistic policy and meeting with Mr Angel Gomez Morotinho, Chancellor of Navarra University (27). Meeting with Mr Carlos Pérez-Nievas and participation in the Road Show EP Campaign (28)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE
Lisbon, Portugal
• Joint conference with the Portuguese ESC, the European Council and the EESC on the subject: “Social cohesion and human rights”

27-28 April, Croatia
• CCMI hearing: how the current financial crisis is affecting industrial sectors of Central and Eastern Europe’s transition economy

27-28 April, Istanbul (Turkey)
• 26th meeting of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

27-28 April, Athens (Greece)
• Participation of Mr. Ribbe to the conference on “Biodiversity Protection ¬ Beyond 2010”

Brussels, at the EESC
• 13th SDO Meeting

CONFERENCES AND SEMINAR
27 April, Brussels, 12:30-18:15
• EU Seminar: The Regulatory Challenges Facing the ICT, Financial Services and New Energies Sectors

FUNDRAISER
Subject: The objective of the three workshops attended by prominent European Commission and European Parliament officials, is to provide an outlook on the core regulatory challenges facing the ICT, financial services and new energies sectors, whilst enjoying the unique opportunity to meet key policy-officials.
Organisers: Ihmisten Eurooppa ry (The People’s Europe) and hosted by MEP Sirpa Pietikainen
Contact: Shradha Bhagnetar:
• 32.484.739.022,sirpa.pietikainen-assistant@europarl.europa.eu
Venue: Microsoft Executive Briefing Center for European Innovation Avenue des Nerviens 85 - 1040 Brussels

Tuesday 28 April
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
THE PRESIDENT’S DIARY
Vilnius, Lithuania
• 10:15 - Meeting with Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania
• 12:00 - Baltic Citizen’s Forum
Warsaw, Poland
• 16:15-17:13: Speech at the opening of the EPP-ED Group Study Days

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
18:00 - 19:00, Brussels, ASP 5G2
Discussion with Jan Kohout, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and acting President-in-Office of Council on the results of the Results of the GAERC meeting of 27-28 April 2009

DELEGATIONS
EP DELEGATION TO OBSERVE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN ECUADOR
23-28 April, Ecuador
More info on Monday 27 April

MOLDOVA: AMID CONCERN AT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, MEPS
26-29, April, Chisinau, Moldova
More info on Monday 27 April

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COUNCIL (GAERC)
27-28 April, Luxembourg

INFORMAL MEETING OF TRANSPORT MINISTERS
28-30 April, Litomerice, Czech Republic
On the agenda of the informal meeting will be the issue of “Intelligent Transport Systems” (ITS). Among other issues, the Ministers will discuss obstacles impeding mass implementation of intelligent transport systems in road transport.
MEETING OF THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (PSC)
Brussels

EU-TROIKA - US JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTERIAL MEETING
Prague
The meeting will deal with issues such as the fight against terrorism, visa policy and border protection and, last but not least, one of the priorities of the Czech Presidency – child protection.

STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION COUNCIL EU - CROATIA
Luxembourg

GBE (GREEN BUDGET EUROPE) STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
28-29 April, Prague

CONFERENCE ‘MINERAL RESOURCES FOR EUROPE’
28-29 April, Prague
Including the ministerial meeting - Mineral Resource Forum.
Contact: Mgr. Milena Sandová - sandova@tezebi-unicz.cz,

INFORMAL MEETING OF DIRECTORS GENERAL FOR SPORT
28-29 April, Prague

GALA EVENING: EUROPEAN INVENTOR OF THE YEAR
28-30 April, Prague
Contact: Ing. Josef Dvornák, Industrial Property Office - jdvornak@upv.cz

E UROPEAN PATENT FORUM
28-30 April, Prague
Contact: Ing. Josef Dvornák, Industrial Property Office - jdvornak@upv.cz

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE “BUILDING MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS”
27-28 April, Prague
More info on Monday 27 April

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON HERBAL MEDICINAL PRODUCTS
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMMITTEE (PSC)
Brussels

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27-28 April, Prague
More info on Monday 27 April

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON HERBAL MEDICINAL PRODUCTS
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF WORKING GROUP C UNDERGROUND WATER
27-28 April, Prague

MEETING OF BUDGET AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEES CHAIRPERSONS
27-28 April,

ASSOCIATION COUNCIL EU - EGYPT
27-28 April, Luxembourg

CONFERENCE “RESEARCHERS IN EUROPE WITHOUT BARRIERS”
27-29 April, Prague
More info on Monday 27 April

FORUM ON SOCIAL POLICY AND MIGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
27-30 April, Prague
Organiser of the Event: Caritas Czech Republic
Contact: Ing. Mgr. Oldrich Haicman, Caritas Czech Republic - sekretariat@charita.cz

COMMITTEE FOR VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCTS
26-28 April, Brno (Czech Republic)

INFORMAL CMD(V) MEETING
26-28 April, Brno (Czech Republic)

EUFASA CONFERENCE (EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOUSES’ ASSOCIATIONS)
26-28 April, Prague

A. EUPAN: HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING GROUP
B. EUPAN: CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE
26-30 April, Prague

Mr Louis Michel participates in the European Union – African Union Troika (Luxembourg)
Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso receives Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan + VIP corner
Mr Antonio Tajani in Warsaw, Poland (28-30): participates in the international visitors programme organised by the Centre of European Studies (28). Takes part in the Congress of the European People’s Party (30)
Mrs Viviane Reding in Warsaw (28-30): participates in the First Plenary Session of the EPP Congress; meets Ms Anna Strezynska, President of UKE (Office of Electronic Communications) (30)
Mr Joaquín Almunia at the hearing before the Committee on the “Toledo Pact’ at the Spanish Parliament (Madrid)
Mr Joe Borg visits the European Seafood 2009 Exhibition (Heysel)
Mr Janek Potocnik participates in the Conference “Researchers in Europe without Barriers”, organized by the Czech Presidency (Prague)
Mr Ján Figel’ participates in the 2009 Ministerial Conference - Bologna Process (28-29, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve)
Mr Olli Rehn in Berlin: meeting with Mr Frank Walter Steinmeier, Foreign Minister of Germany; delivers a keynote speech at Conference on “5 Jahre erweiterte EU”
Mrs Mariann Fischer Boel receives the Rural Affairs and Agriculture Committee of the Scottish parliament
Mr Andris Piebalgs delivers a speech at the conference “Seeking for a common resolution for energy security” (Istanbul)
does not exercise effective control - Recognition and enforcement by the court of another Member State of a decision given by a Cypriot court sitting in the area of effective control and relating to land situated outside that area. Advocate General: Kokott.


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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

**Brussels, at the EESC**

- Extraordinary meeting of the Bureau with the participation of M. Felipe Gonzales Marquez – Wise men Group on the Future of Europe.

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**Wednesday 29 April**

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**THE PRESIDENT’S DIARY**

**Warsaw, Poland**

- 8:30: Meeting with Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of Poland
- 10:00: Panel discussion “European Foreign Relations: the Challenges Ahead”

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**COMMITTEE OF THE REGION**

- 17th meeting of the RELEX Commission (Commission for External Relations and Decentralised Cooperation)
  
  **Location:** at the Committee building, 101 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels (room JDE 50), 15:30-17:30

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**CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

**28-30 April, Prague**

- **European Patent Inventor of the Year 2009 European Patent Forum + PATINNOVA 2009**

  Subject: The patent conference asks the question: “Intellectual Property (IP) in rapidly developing industries - does it stimulate innovation?” It will examine the impact of the continuing digital revolution on the industrial property system, especially the protection of innovation through patents.

  28 April 2009: European Inventor of the Year 2009 Award Gala / Prague Castle.

  The President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus, EU Commissioner Vladimir Spidla and EPO President Alison Brimelow will present the coveted European Inventor of the Year award in four categories.

  Organisers: The European Commission and the European Patent Office (EPO)


  **Venue:** Hilton Hotel Prague

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**OTHER EVENTS**

**WORKSHOP ON PALESTINE 2009: HOW TO BREAK THE VICIOUS CIRCLE?**

**9:00-16:00, Brussels, ASP 5E2**

Humanitarian and legal issues as well as political issues regarding the future of the Palestinian territories will be debated by MEPs from the Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council in a Workshop entitled “Palestine 2009: how to break the vicious circle?”

The panel humanitarian/legal issues will be moderated by Proinsias de Rossa, Vice-Chairman of the Delegation for relations with the PLC.

Guests include John Ging, Director of UNWRA, the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees. Hossam Zaki, Ambassador and Spokesman of the Egyptian Foreign Minister; Richard Howitt, Vice-Chair of the EP Subcommittee on Human Rights; Raji Sourani, The Arab league of States; David Nichols, Amnesty International; Gerard Horton, Defence Children international; Aladdin Jaradat, Addameer; Dr Daud Abdullah, The palestinian Return Center; Daniel Machover, Attorney-London; Dr Arafat Shoukry, European campaign to end the siege of Gaza.

The afternoon panel will look at political questions will be chaired by Luisa Morgantini, EP Vice-president and member of the DPLC.

A representative from the league of Arab States will take part in this panel along with Leila Chahid, General Delegate of Palestine, Véronique de Keyser and Annemie Neyts, members of the EP Subcommittees on Human Rights, International Cooperation and External Relations and Decentralised Cooperation.

**Venue:** at the Committee building, 101 rue Belliard, 1040 Brussels (room JDE 50), 15:30-17:30

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

INFORMAL MEETING OF TRANSPORT MINISTERS
28-30 April, Litomerice - Czech Republic

MEETING OF THE COREPER I
Brussels

MEETING OF THE COREPER II
Brussels

EU-GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING
Oman, Muscat

ICT BROKERAGE EVENT 2009
29-30 April, Brno, Czech Republic

MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF ARCHIVES OF THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE EU AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS
29-30 April, Prague

MEETING OF THE HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINAL PRODUCTS WORKING GROUP
29-30 April, Prague

MEETING OF NATIONAL DRUG COORDINATORS FOLLOWED BY A CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL EXPERTS ON METHAMPHETAMINE
29-30 April, Prague

GBE (GREEN BUDGET EUROPE) STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
28-29 April, Prague

CONFERENCE ‘MINERAL RESOURCES FOR EUROPE’
28-29 April, Prague
Including the ministerial meeting - Mineral Resource Forum.
Contact: Mgr. Milena Sandová - sandova@tezebni-unic.cz,

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28-29 April, Prague

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27 -29 April, Prague
More info on Monday 27 April

FORUM ON SOCIAL POLICY AND MIGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
27-30 April, Prague
Organiser of the Event: Caritas Czech Republic
Contact: Ing. Mgr. Oldrich Haicman, Caritas Czech Republic - sekretaria@charita.cz

A. EUPAN: HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING GROUP
B. EUPAN: CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE
26-30 April, Prague

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

WEEKLY MEETING
Brussels, 9:00
On the agenda:
- EU Preliminary Draft Budget for 2010
- Communication “Facing the consequences of an ageing EU population”
- Communication on retail investment products
- Directive establishing regulatory standards for hedge funds, private equity and other systematically important market players
- Recommendation on remuneration in the financial services sector
- Recommendation on remuneration of directors

TRAVEL AND VISITS
- Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner participates in the EU-GCC Ministerial meeting (Muscat, Oman)
- Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso and Mrs Margot Wallström receive Mr José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Spanish Prime Minister
- Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso participates in the EPP 2009 European Elections Congress (29-30, Warsaw)
- Mr Jacques Barrot participates in the 50th anniversary of the Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature (Bordeaux)
- Mr Stavros Dimas receives Mr Richard Brown, Chief Executive of Eurostar
- Closing remarks by Mr Joaquín Almunia at the EU-China Macroeconomic Dialogue (Brussels)
- Mr Olli Rehn receives Mr Branko Crvenkovski, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia + Press point
- Mr Louis Michel participates in the International Summit “Outlook Africa: Investing in Africa’s Growth and Health” (Brussels)
- Speech of Mrs Mariann Fischer Boel at the Conference “Polish Rural Areas and Agriculture: Five years since Poland’s Accession to the European Union” (Warsaw, Poland)
- Mr Andris Piebalgs delivers a speech at the Energy Efficiency Global Forum (Paris)

COURT OF JUSTICE

Grand Chamber
9:30
- Hearing C-246/07 Commission v Sweden. External relations. Failure of a Member State to fulfil its obligations - Breach of Articles 10 and 300(1) EC - Unilateral proposal to add a substance, perfluorooctane sulphate, to Annex A to the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants.

COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE

First Chamber
15:00
- Hearing T-446/07 Royal Appliance International v OHMI - BSH Bosch und Siemens Hausgeräte (Centrixx). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action brought by the applicant for the word mark ‘Centrixx’ in respect of goods in Class 7 for annulment of Decision R 572/2006-4 of the Fourth Board of Appeal of the Office
for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) of 3 October 2007 annulling the decision of the Opposition Division which rejected the opposition filed by the proprietor of the national word mark ‘sensix’ in respect of goods in Class 7.

Second Chamber
9:30
■ Judgement T-81/08 Enercon v OHMI (E-Ship). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Annulment of Decision R 319/2007-1 of the First Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) of 4 December 2007 dismissing the appeal against the examiner’s decision refusing registration of the word mark ‘E-ship’ for goods and services in classes 7, 9, 12 and 39.

Fourth Chamber
9:30
■ Judgement T-430/07 Bodegas Montebello v OHMI - Montebello (MONTEBELLO RHUM AGRICOLE). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action brought by the proprietor of the national word mark ‘MONTEBELLO’ for goods in Class 33 for annulment of Decision R 223/2007-2 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) of 7 September 2007 annulling the decision of the Opposition Division rejecting the application for registration of a coloured figurative mark containing figurative elements (representation of a parchment on which is printed a picture of an old sailing boat at sea viewed from behind palm trees) and the word elements ‘MONTEBELLO RHUM AGRICOLE’ for goods in Class 33 in the context of the opposition brought by the applicant.

Fifth Chamber
9:30
■ Hearing T-258/06 Germany v Commission. Company law. Annulment of the Commission’s interpretative communication of 23 June 2006 on the Community law applicable to contract awards not or not fully subject to the provisions of the public procurement directives (OJ 2006 C 179, p. 2)

Sixth Chamber
9:30

■ Hearing T-240/08 Procter & Gamble v OHMI - Laboratorios Alcala Farma (oli). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action for annulment brought by the holder of the Community word mark ‘OLAY’ for goods in Classes 3 and 5, against Decision R 1481/2007-2 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs) (OHIM) of 2 April 2008 dismissing the action brought against the decision of the Opposition Division dismissing the opposition proceedings brought by the applicant against the application for registration of the figurative mark ‘oli’ for goods in Classes 3 and 5.

11:00
■ Hearing T-366/07 Procter & Gamble v OHMI - Prestige Cosmetics (P&G PRESTIGE BEAUTE). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action brought by the applicant for the word mark “P&G PRESTIGE BEAUTE” for, inter alia, goods in Class 3 against Decision R 681/2006-2 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) of 19 July 2007, dismissing the appeal against the decision of the Opposition Division refusing in part registration of the said trade mark in the opposition proceedings brought by the proprietor of the national figurative marks “prestige” for goods in Class 3.

Seventh Chamber
9:30
■ Hearing T-291/07 VIñedos y Bodegas Príncipe Alfonso de Hohenlohe v OHMI - Byass (ALFONSO). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action for annulment brought by the holder of Community and national word marks ‘PRÍNCIPE ALFONSO’ for goods in Class 33, of the decision R 1110/2006-2 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM), of 29 May 2007, annulling the decision of the Opposition Division partly refusing the application for registration of the word mark ‘ALFONSO’ for goods in Classes 30, 32 and 33, in opposition proceedings brought by the applicant.
Roundtable
Wednesday, April 29: Can We Protect Africa from the Economic Crisis?
Thursday, April 30: Session I: Fine-Tuning EU-Africa Trade and Investment
Session II: Getting Africa’s Infrastructure Right
Session III: Report Card on Overcoming Africa’s Healthcare Challenges
Organisers: Friends of Europe
Contact: +32 (0)2 738 7595 or ringaile.trakymaite@friendsofeurope.org
Venue: Bibliothèque Solvay, Brussels www.friendsofeurope.org

Thursday 30 April

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE
09:00-11:30, Brussels, ASP 5C3
• State of Play of ongoing International Trade Negotiations - Discussion with Catherine Ashton, Commissioner for Trade

COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
09:00-12:30, Brussels, PHS 1A2
• Presentation by Fokion Fotiadis, Director-General DG MARE, of the Communication from the Commission of 8 April 2009 on a strategy for the sustainable development of aquaculture and the Green Paper of 21 April 2009 on the reform of the CFP

COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS
09:30-12:30, Brussels, PHS 7C050
• Request for defence of the immunity of Aldo Patriciello (EPP-ED, IT) (IMM) - Vote on report by Aloyzas Sakalas (PES, LT)
• Request for defence of the immunity of Umberto Bossi (IMM) - Vote on report by Klaus-Heiner Lehne (EPP-ED, DE)
• Presentation of a study by Karel Van Hulle, Internal Market and Services, European Commission: “Compensation of victims of cross-border road traffic accidents in the EU: Comparison of national practices, analysis of problems and evaluation of options for improving the position of cross-border victims”
• Discussion with Wubbo de Boer, President of the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
09:00-12:30, Brussels, PHS 3C50
• The Balance Sheet of the Legislature - Discussion with Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission, responsible for Constitutional Affairs
• Democracy in Europe - Discussion with Professor Dimitris Tsatsos, former MEP

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY
09:00-11:00, Bruxelles, ASP 3G2
• The role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life (See Public Hearings)

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
15:00-18:30, Brussels, ASP 3G3

PUBLIC HEARINGS

WOMEN IN TURKEY
09:00-11:00, Brussels, ASP 3G2
The Women’s Rights committee is organising a public hearing on “The role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life”. Among the participants: Nimet Cubuçu, State Minister of Women’s and Children’s Affairs, Yakin Ertiltir, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Women and Professor at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Yessim Arat, Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Nebahat Akkoç, President of KA-MER and Emine Bozkurt (PES, NL), EP rapporteur on Women’s rights in Turkey. The meeting will be chaired by Anna Záborská (EPP-ED, SK).
Contact: Nora Chaal: (32-2) 28 31151 (BXL), (32) 498.983.402, femm-press@europarl.europa.eu

EUROPEAN COMMISSION TRAVEL AND VISITS
Mrs Margot Wallström participates in exchange of views with the members of the EP Constitutional Affairs Committee
Ms Catherine Ashton addresses the
Committee on International Trade (INTA) (EP)
- Mr Andris Piebalgs takes part in the EU – Russia Permanent Partnership Council meeting (Moscow)
- Mr Louis Michel participates in the European Union’s Political and Security Committee (PSC) (Brussels)
- Mrs Mariann Fischer Boel receives representatives of the European Milk Board
- Mrs Mariann Fischer Boel receives Mr Robert Guicherd, President, and a delegation of CIUS (Committee of Industrial Users of Sugar)
- Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner visits Qatar (30-01)
- Mr Vladimir Spidla attends the vernissage of Czech art exhibition (BERL)
- Ms Meglena Kuneva delivers a speech “Consumers in recession” at a conference hosted by the European Policy Centre (Brussels)
- Mrs Androulla Vassiliou in the United States (30-01): has bilateral meetings with Congress people and Senators; meets US Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Ron Kirk; attends working dinner at the residence of the Head of EU’s Delegation in the USA, Mr John Bruton (30). Attends lunch conference with Chief Executive Officer of American Association for retired people (AARD), Mr Barry RAND; meets Mr Tom Vilsock, Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

COURT OF JUSTICE

First Chamber
9:30


- Opinion C-103/08 Gottwald. Principles of preliminary ruling - Unabhängiger Verwaltungssenat des Landes Vorarlberg (Austria) - Interpretation of Article 12 of the EC Treaty - Discrimination on grounds of nationality - National legislation under which a toll disc made available free of charge to disabled persons is granted only to persons resident or ordinarily resident in national territory. Advocate General: Mazák.

- Hearing C-247/08 Gaz de France - Berliner Investissement. Free movement of capital. Reference for a preliminary ruling - Finanzgericht Köln (Germany) - Interpretation of Articles 45 EC, 48 EC, 56(1) EC and 58(1)(a) and (3) EC, and Article 2(a) and paragraph (f) of the Annex to Council Directive 90/435/EEC of 23 July 1990 on the common system of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries of different Member States (OJ 1990 L 225, p. 6) - Concept of ‘company of a Member State’ - Refusal, in the Member State of the subsidiary, to grant an exemption from withholding tax to a parent company taking the legal form of a ‘société par actions simplifiée’ in French law, that form of company does not, at the material time, appear on the list in the annex to the directive.

Second Chamber
9:30

- Judgement C-531/07 Fachverband der Buch- und Medienwirtschaft. Free movement of goods. Reference for a preliminary ruling - Oberster Gerichtshof (Austria) - Interpretation of Articles 3(1) EC, 10 EC, 28 EC, 30 EC, 81 EC and 151 EC - National legislation requiring importers of German language books to fix a retail sales price which cannot be lower than that fixed for the country of origin. Advocate General: Trstenjak.

- Opinion C-301/07 PAGO International. Intellectual property. Interpretation of Article 9(1)(c) of Council Regulation (EC) No 40/94 of 20 December 1993 on the Community trade mark (OJ 1994 L 1, p. 1) - Rights of the proprietor of a trade mark having a reputation in the Community - Trade mark having a reputation only in one Member State - Protection of the trade mark in the whole of the Community or only in one Member State. Advocate General: Sharpston.

Fourth Chamber
9:30

Appeal against the order of the Court of First Instance (Second Chamber) of 29 August 2007 in Case T-186/05 SELEX Sistemi Integrati SpA v Commission, by which the Court of First Instance dismissed as in part manifestly inadmissible and in part manifestly without foundation in law the claim for damages for the loss purportedly suffered by the appellant as a result of the Commission’s decision of 12 February 2004 rejecting the appellant’s complaint relating to an alleged infringement by Eurocontrol of the EC Treaty provisions on competition.

**Eighth Chamber**

9:30

- **Judgement C-256/08 Commission v United Kingdom. Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. Failure of a Member State to fulfil obligations - Failure to adopt, within the prescribed period, the provisions necessary to comply with Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted (OJ 2004 L 304, p. 12). Advocate General: Bot.**


**Sixth Chamber**

9:30

- **Hearing C-481/07 P SELEX Sistemi Integrati v Commission. Competition.**

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**COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE**

**Fifth Chamber**

15:00

- **Hearing T-386/07 Peek & Cloppenburg v OHMI - Redfil (Agile). Intellectual property. Community trade mark - Action for annulment by the proprietor of the Community and national word marks ‘Aygill’s’, for goods in Classes 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28, of Decision R 1324/2006 2, of 26 July 2007 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM), annulling the Opposition Division’s decision refusing, in opposition proceedings brought by the applicant, registration of the figurative trade mark ‘Agile’ for goods in Classes 18, 25 and 28.**

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**Seventh Chamber**

9:30

- **Hearing T-341/07 Sison v Council. Common foreign and security policy. First, an application for annulment in part of Council Decision of 28 June 2007 implementing Article 2(3) of Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001 on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism and repealing Decisions 2006/379/EC and 2006/1008/EC (OJ 2007 L 169, p. 58) and, second, an application for damages to obtain compensation for the damage allegedly suffered by the applicant as a result of the adoption of the contested decision.**

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**Eighth Chamber**

9:30


- **Judgement T-12/03 Itochu v Commission. Competition. The text is not available in English.**
Judgement T-13/03 Nintendo and Nintendo of Europe v Commission. Competition. Cancellation or, in the alternative, reduction of the fine imposed on the applicants by Article 3 of the Commission's decision of 30 October 2002 relating to a proceeding pursuant to Article 81 of the EC Treaty (COMP/35.587 PO Video Games, COMP/35.706 PO Nintendo Distribution and COMP/36.321 Omega - Nintendo doc. C(2002) 4072) concerning a complex of agreements and concerted practices on the market for Nintendo consoles and cartridges for video games compatible with the Nintendo console designed to limit parallel exports of those consoles and cartridges.


Hearing Joined Cases T-5/08, T-6/08, T-7/08 Nestlé v OHMI - Master Beverage Industries (Golden Eagle). Intellectual property, Community trade mark - Action for annulment brought by the proprietor of the international verbal mark 'Red Cup' and the national verbal mark 'Gold Blend', and of Community, international and national figurative marks representing a cup for, inter alia, coffee, against Decision R 563/2006-2 of the Second Board of Appeal of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) of 1 October 2007 dismissing the appeal brought against the decision of the Opposition Division rejecting the opposition lodged by the applicant against registration of the figurative mark 'Golden Eagle' for goods in class 30.

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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Brussels, at the EESC

- Participation of Mr Sarró at a Conference on fisheries agreements with third countries, organised by the LDRAC (NAT)

**CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

30 April, Brussels

- RUR@CT, European Regions for Rural Innovation: proposals for the territorial cohesion
  Subject: Gathering 50 European Regions from 15 Member States whose aim is the operational transfer of good practices for the rural innovation, RUR@CT will present its strategic proposals for the territorial cohesion, and its tools for the transfer of good practices.
  Organiser: RUR@CT
  Further Information: www.ruract.eu
  Venue: Representation of the Free State of Bavaria, Rue Wiertz 77, Brussels, 11:00-12:30

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**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**TRAVEL AND VISITS**

- Mr Ján Figel’ and Mr Olli Rehn participate in the High-level conference on the occasion of the Fifth anniversary of the 2004 enlargement “From the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 to the Enlargement of the European Union in 2004 – the Role of Civil Society and the Idea of Europe in Democratic Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe” (Prague)

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**Saturday 2 May**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**TRAVEL AND VISITS**

- Mrs Meglena Kuneva and Mrs Viviane Reding participate in the presentation of the new eYOU Guide (Sofia, Bulgaria)

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**Sunday 3 May**

**COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

**INFORMAL MEETING OF MINISTERS FOR COMPETITIVENESS**

3-5 May, Prague

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**Friday 1 May**

**COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

**FROM THE FALL OF THE IRON CURTAIN IN 1989 TO THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2004**

Prague

The conference will look back on the events of 1989 and highlight their impact on the European integration process. Different panels of the conference with a number of high-level speakers will focus on themes such as the role of the EU enlargement in the unification of Europe, the restoration of democracy in Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the importance of civil society and democratic values for the functioning of democracies, and preserving the memory of the past.

Organisers: DG for Education and Culture, DG for Enlargement, Czech Presidency of the European Union NGO Opona, o.p.s
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