



Business Support on Your Doorstep

Nr. 12
6 March 2009

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EU NEWS

Economic crisis: the Commission proposes a comprehensive reform of the financial system.

The European Commission adopted a Communication (COM (2009)114), which aims at giving to citizens and business that there is a way out of the crisis. The document, entitled 'Driving European Recovery', will be officially presented at the coming Spring Summit, which will bring together the leaders of the 27 Member States. The EU highest representatives intend to lay the ground for April's meeting of the Group of 20 industrialised and developing nations in London. Regulatory reform will be on the agenda, and the EU wants to make a united push to improve the global financial system.

The Communication takes into account the recommendations made by a group of banking experts and combines greater oversight at EU level with a stronger role for national supervisors. The European Commission agrees on the need to set up a pan-European authority to monitor economic risks and supports the adoption of common regulatory standards by the 27 Member Countries. Yet, national regulators will continue to look after individual banks. Besides, the plan outlines other measures to curb risk and restore trust in markets, including increased oversight of banks' pay policies.

Communication (COM (2009)114), 'Driving European Recovery'

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090304_en.pdf

Communication (COM(2009)114), Annexes

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090304_annx_en.pdf

Commission's proposal to get rid of accounting requirements for micro enterprises

The European Commission has put forward a new proposal, which would allow Member States to completely abolish financial reporting obligations for the EU's smallest companies. In a deteriorating economic climate, the new rules are designed to alleviate the regulatory burden on micro entities.

The aggregate administrative burden reduction potential is estimated at around €6.3 billion. The proposal, which was flagged in the European Economic Recovery Plan in November 2008, now passes to the European Parliament and to the Council of Ministers for consideration. Subject to this approval, the proposal is expected to come into effect during the first half of 2010.

An information package with a press release, Frequently Asked Questions, the Directive proposal, impact assessment and summaries is available on the website of DG Internal Market and Services:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/accounting/news/index_en.htm

Public consultation on the review of the 'Accounting Directives'

This project is the third step in the simplification of accounting rules for SMEs and other companies in the scope of the Fourth and Seventh Company Law Directives ('Accounting Directives'), which began with a fast-track proposal in 2008. It has been launched simultaneously with the Commission's proposal which would allow Member States to completely abolish financial reporting obligations for the EU's smallest companies (see previous article).

The current public consultation aims at raising issues related to the modernisation and simplification of the Accounting Directives. Positive effects of the review will include a reduction of burden mainly for small companies as well as qualitative improvements for all companies within the scope of these Directives. An additional objective is to increase the clarity of the text for lawmakers and users in general.

Citizens, organisations as well as public authorities can send their contribution. You could use this public consultation to organise a business panel (company panel out of the scope of the 'SME panels' organised within the Specific Action) with your local SMEs or other stakeholders and directly send your contribution by post or by e-mail until 30 April 2009 to DG Internal Market.

Information on how to submit contributions is available on the website of DG Internal Market and Services:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2009/company_law_dir_en.htm

For any further information send an e-mail to the following functional mailbox markt-review-consultation@ec.europa.eu

The European Commission and the retail sector have launched a Retail Forum to promote more sustainable consumption

The Commission and the European retail sector launched a Retail Forum, which involves producers, consumers and environment groups. The Forum aims to generate a better understanding of the practical measures needed to promote sustainable consumption and production. Over time, the result should be greater availability of environment-friendly and energy-efficient products in the shops and better information to consumers on how to use products in the most ecological way.

Membership of the Forum is voluntary and open to all retailers who join the Retailers' Environmental Action Plan (REAP) which includes many company-specific environmental commitments. Participation in the Forum is open to all relevant stakeholders wishing to contribute to its work, such as producers, suppliers and consumer and environmental organisations.

The Forum will be co-chaired by DG Environment, which will also monitor the retailers' achievements, and the two EU-level organisations representing the retail sector, EuroCommerce and the European Retail Round Table (ERRT). The Forum will meet every quarter. Its first working meeting is scheduled for 1 April 2009.

To ensure transparency, all documents and other material related to the Forum will be posted on DG Environment's Sustainable Consumption and Production page http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/escp_en.htm

Manual for application for customs actions in the field of IPR available online

The Commission has released a manual whose purpose is to provide a tool to promote a better understanding of how the IPR application procedure works. It is also a tool to better ensure a harmonised approach on the Community IPR applications and an equal treatment of all right-holders in the whole Community.

This manual does not constitute a legally binding act. It provides with both guidance on questions as well as on the standard information that customs expect IPR holders to present in order to obtain an application for customs action. The manual will be updated whenever new developments in the IPR application systems make this necessary.

The manual and the related documents and forms are available in English, French and German. You will find them along with contact details of competent customs authorities in the Counterfeiting section of the website of DG Taxation and Customs Union

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_controls/counterfeit_piracy/right_holders/index_en.htm

InnovAccess launches a new website

InnovAccess, the information website of the network of the National Patent Offices, which deals with general intellectual property (IP) issues in Europe (e.g. registration procedures, costs, etc.), has just restyled its internet page. This website goes hand-in-hand with the new IPR-Helpdesk, which has been recently presented. They are both constituent parts of the IPeuropAware project, which is financed by the European Commission within the CIP programme under the responsibility of the EACI.

InnovAccess' new website has two main sections on its homepage. Under 'You have an idea', on the left side, you can find general information on IP and three useful tools (why, how, cost). Under 'Protect your creation in Europe', on the right side, there are specific pieces of information about the different IP protection procedures in each EU country and in Turkey. This information is provided directly by National Patent Offices, by the Office for the Harmonization of the Internal Market (OHIM) and by the European Patent Office (EPO).

Besides, on the website you can find the presentations made during the last seminar organised by IPeuropAware: 'IP Management and Enforcement: Good practices for SMEs'. A video of this event is also available.

InnovAccess website


<http://www.innovaccess.eu/home.html>

To see the video and download all the documents presented during the event 'IP Management and Enforcement: Good practices for SMEs', please go to

<http://www.innovaccess.eu/2008-12-11-brussels.html>

Assessment Report on the Open Method of Coordination recently published

The Expert Group for the follow-up of the research aspects of the revised Lisbon strategy (LEG) has recently released a report on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) entitled 'The OMC in Research Policy: Assessment and Recommendations'. The LEG has been created by the European Commission, DG Research in 2006 to provide support in analysing and monitoring the research aspects of the revised Lisbon strategy.



The OMC is a policy instrument created in 2000 to make Member States progress jointly toward the goals of the Lisbon strategy. The launch of the 3 percent action plan in 2003 led to a dedicated OMC process in the field of research policy. As a consequence, a European Expert Group in the Field of Knowledge Transfer (CREST) was appointed to oversee its implementation.

Expert Group for the follow-up of the research aspects of the revised Lisbon strategy (LEG)
http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/monitoring/leg_strategy_en.htm

Southeast Asian countries plan EU-style union by 2015

The leaders of ten Southeast Asian countries have signed a declaration to integrate their economies and construct an economic and political union modelled on that of the European Union by 2015. The heads of ten Asian countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) agreed to the Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009-2015).

The plan looks to build a single market - although without a euro-style common currency - within six years. The region is slightly bigger than the European Union in terms of population, the former being home to around 570 million people and the latter some 500 million, but their economies bear no comparison. ASEAN has a combined annual GDP of €870 billion, while the EU's GDP clocks in at over €12 trillion.

To know more
<http://euobserver.com/24/27699>

MEETINGS, FAIRS & EVENTS

EU Finance Days for SMEs: information about spring events

As you know, the European Commission has a set of financial instruments to help finance innovative and growing SMEs, among which the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework programme (CIP) and the European Investment Fund (EIF).

The EU Finance Day for SMEs are events organised by the European Commission in the Member States and in some third countries, with the aim to inform stakeholders about the EU financial instruments for SMEs together with the national financial intermediaries that implement these instruments locally. The main objective is to raise awareness about different sources of finance and provide a forum for sharing good practices in helping innovative SMEs get easier access to finance. In many cases, the Enterprise Europe Network is involved in the organisation of these events.

The next finance Days will take place in Vienna (10th March 2009), in Oslo (23 April 2009) in Helsinki (20th April 2009) and in Prague (12 May 2009).

For more information and registration to the coming events
<http://www.sme-finance-day.eu/index.php?id=10>

Technology-Enhanced Learning: ICT 'Call 5' Information Day, Luxembourg – 24 March 2009

This event is organised by the European Commission to address questions related to the 5th information and communication technologies (ICT) call for proposals. The call, expected to be published on 31 July 2009, will be dedicated to technology-enhanced learning.

This event is intended for candidates interested in submitting project proposals. It aims to help participants to understand the work programme and the criteria for the evaluation of the proposals, to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experience and to make potential partners meet in order to form project consortia.

Participants will have the possibility to present posters in order to find project partners or discuss their proposal ideas in bilateral meetings with Commission staff.

The deadline for registration is: 18 March 2009

Organiser: European Commission

Where: European Commission, Jean Monnet Building, Conference Centre
Rue Alcide de Gasperi – Luxembourg (Kirchberg)

When: 24 March 2009

Contact: info-telearn@ec.europa.eu

Draft Agenda

ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/ict/docs/telearn/20090324-call5-infoday-programme_en.pdf

For further information and registration, please consult

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/telearn-digicult/telearn-call5-infodays_en.html

The list of the events advertised in the EU and Services Bulletin is not exhaustive. Therefore, you are kindly invited to visit the events page on the events section of the intranet or the Enterprise Europe Network website.

TRAININGS

'Developing a creative culture through lateral thinking', St. Julians – 25 and 26 June 2009

The registration for the decentralised training session on 'Developing a creative culture through lateral thinking' is now open. Through this training, participants will learn how to think creatively, turn problems into opportunities and find alternative solutions. The training has a high degree of participation from the floor. Off-site discussions are also envisaged where cultural artifacts are utilized.

Organiser: Malta Enterprise.

Where: St. Julians - Malta

When: 25 and 26 June 2009

Contact: Ms Brigitte Tanti - Malta Enterprise, e-mail: brigitte.tanti@maltaenterprise.com



For any further information about the training activities organised or supported by the EACI send an e-mail to the "Training-Team" functional mailbox on FirstClass.

MEMBERS' CORNER

IPeuropAware seminar on Counterfeiting for SMEs, Athens - 23 March 2009

The Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI), in co-operation with the National Documentation Centre (NDC), Enterprise Europe Network - Hellas Coordinator, is organising a seminar on IPR and enforcement 'Protecting products from counterfeiting - protection in Greece and in China'. The seminar takes place in the framework of the EU-funded project IPeuropAware.

The seminar aims to provide Greek SMEs with information on how to protect their products, both in Greece and in China and how to fight counterfeiting. The seminar includes speeches on all the areas of the IPR field: patents, designs, trade mark and intellectual property, as well as matters having to do with customs and special financial investigation services.

To see the program and register
<http://www.obl.gr/obi/?tabid=60&nclid=2&ncode=33>

IPeuropAware seminar on Counterfeiting for SMEs, Madrid – 25 March 2009

In the framework of the EU-funded project IPeuropAware, the Spanish Patent and Trademark Office (OEPM) is organising a seminar entitled 'Defensa de Derechos de Propiedad Industrial'. This event is organised in cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network partner from Madrid, Madri+d.

The event aims to provide information to help SMEs to enforce their intellectual property rights against counterfeiting and piracy, and will include a special focus on trade with China. Experts from the public and private sector and representatives from SMEs with expertise in this field will participate in this event.

To see the program and register
http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/events/events_3209.en.xml.html



PUBLICATIONS

Market Access Newsletter – February 2009

In this issue, the work and activities of the Enterprise Europe Network to assist SMEs that want to access international markets are highlighted. The Newsletter also focuses on technical barriers to trade, Thailand, the fourth meeting of the market access working group on medical devices, the withdrawal by Canadian Province of Ontario of a proposal for more complex labelling rules on stuffed articles and easier licensing procedures for certain Indian steel products.

Market Access Newsletter, February 2009

http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/february/tradoc_142376.pdf

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Please, mention 'Subscribe/Unsubscribe Market Access Newsletter' in the subject line.

China IPR SME Helpdesk's newsletter available online

The new issue of the information sheet of the China IPR SME Helpdesk focuses on copyrights by taking into account all aspects of the topic.

To read the newsletter, you need to subscribe to it by filling an online form
<http://www.china-iprhelpdesk.eu/newsletter.php>

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