



Business Support on Your Doorstep

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## EU NEWS

### **Serbia joined EU Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) of Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP)**

European Commission vice-president Günter Verheugen and Deputy Prime Minister Mladjan Dinkic have signed on 27 November 2008 in Belgrade the memorandum of understanding formalising Serbia's entry in the EU Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) of the CIP.

Serbia is the sixth country of the group of candidate and potential candidate countries to join the EIP following Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2007, and Turkey, Montenegro and Albania earlier in 2008. The backbone of the Serbian economy is formed by a large and expanding sector of small companies. The groundwork on developing a favourable regulatory framework for SME's has almost been completed through participation, since 2003, in the European Charter for Small Enterprises.

DG Enlargement: relations between Serbia and the EU

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/serbia/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/serbia/index_en.htm)

Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Serbia

<http://www.europa.org.yu/code/navigate.php?Id=683>

Contact details

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/serbia/links\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/serbia/links_en.htm)

### **Commission's public consultation on the functioning of the current regime for the assessment of horizontal cooperation agreements under EU antitrust rules**

The consultation concerns in particular the Specialisation and Research & Development Block Exemption Regulations and the accompanying Horizontal Guidelines. The EC Treaty prohibits agreements between companies and other restrictive business practices that would result in distortions of competition in the Single Market. But it allows the Commission to exempt under certain conditions agreements or practices that promote trade or innovation from the general prohibition, such as the Specialisation and Research & Development Block Exemption Regulations. The speed of technological progress and the generally more dynamic nature of markets mean that there is an even greater need to share risks, save costs, pool know-how and launch innovation faster and co-operation can be particularly important for SMEs.

In order to prepare the regime to be applied after the expiry of the current rules on 31st December 2010, the Commission invites stakeholders such as the business community and business associations to share their experiences in practice in applying the two block exemption Regulations and the guidelines. The Commission welcomes comments up to 30th January 2009.

Consultation questionnaire with explanatory remarks (available in English) and contact details

[http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2009\\_horizontal\\_agreements/index.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2009_horizontal_agreements/index.html)

Press Release

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1887&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

DG Competition: text of the Regulations and Guidelines

<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/legislation/horizontal.html>

### **25 Years of Avoiding Unnecessary Barriers to Intra EU-Trade**

For 25 years, the notification procedure under Directive 98/34/EC has obliged Member States to provide information on any draft technical regulations on products and information society services before they are adopted at the national level. This system allows the Commission as well as the other Member States to examine draft regulations during standstill periods and to prevent unnecessary trade barriers before these regulations are adopted at national level. Therefore, the Directive 98/34/EC can be considered a success story in improving the free movement of goods in the internal market.

Also enterprises can actively contribute to the fight against unnecessary administrative burdens and trade obstacles by making use of this notification procedure. Stakeholders can enter the legislative proposals of the Member States, in which they are interested or that may impact on their business, onto the EU's TRIS database, a free service available on the Europa portal and updated daily. Most of the notified regulations can be viewed in all EU languages.

Press release

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1691&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

TRIS database

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm)

### **China IPR SME Helpdesk**

As already announced on FirstClass, the China IPR SME Helpdesk is a project funded by the European Commission with the aim to introduce European SMEs to the knowledge and business tools required to develop the value of their intellectual property rights, to manage related risks, to protect and enforce their IPR in China.

The Helpdesk provides European SMEs with a broad range of free services, such as information, first-line advice and training support. Services are offered in the premises of the Helpdesk by appointment, through telephone and on-line enquiry points. In the future, there will also be a range of practical training tools available in web-based forms and through training workshops in Europe and China. A newsletter is published on a regular basis and is available for free under subscription.

The EACI met his representative to present the Network. Therefore, if you contact them and present yourself as Network partner, you will be more than welcome!

China IPR SME Helpdesk webpage

<http://www.china-iprhelppdesk.eu/>

### **Practical Guide to EU Funding Opportunities for Research and Innovation**

The European Commission has published the 'Practical Guide to EU funding opportunities for Research and Innovation' to help all stakeholders to find their way into the 7<sup>th</sup> Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the EU Structural Funds. For the moment, the Practical Guide is available only in English. Translations into other languages will follow.

Cordis webpage: Guide to EU funding

[http://cordis.europa.eu/eu-funding-guide/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/eu-funding-guide/home_en.html)

### **Promote R&D Activities for Free via CORDIS**

The national R&D service, which is available on the CORDIS webpage, keeps users update on the initiatives at national level. The service outlines the national policies and frameworks undertaken by the Member States and by the candidate countries in the field of R&D.

Greece has already published a leaflet concerning its R&D activities (see [ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/guidance/docs/cordis-greekbrochure08\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/guidance/docs/cordis-greekbrochure08_en.pdf) ).

If you are interested in promoting your regional and national R&D activities, please contact [marketing@cordis.europa.eu](mailto:marketing@cordis.europa.eu)

### **SMEs set out vision for 'innovation utopia'**

A new report describes a vision of the perfect environment to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in Europe's SMEs. Entitled 'Dreaming of EUtopia: constructing a vision of an entrepreneurial idyll', the report was produced by the Association for Competitive Technology (ACT), which represents the interest of SMEs working in the ICT (information and communication technologies) sector worldwide. It was launched at the Intellectual Property (IP) Summit in Brussels, Belgium on 4 December.

Instead of setting out policy recommendations designed to boost innovation, the report outlines a vision of the ideal 'habitat' for entrepreneurship and innovation against which policy proposals in a range of fields can be judged.

For more information and to download the report, please visit

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN\\_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=30214](http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=30214)

or

Association for Competitive Technology (ACT)

<http://www.actonline.org/>



## MEETINGS, FAIRS & EVENTS

### EU Finance Days for SMEs

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

In the context of the recent financial crisis, it is important to make finance systems more SME friendly, facilitating finance of start-ups, innovation and growth as well as measures to generate more risk capital investments. That is why, the European Commission is organising a series of events, i.e. the EU Finance Day for SMEs, in the Member States to inform stakeholders about the EU financial instruments for SMEs together with the national financial intermediaries that implement these instruments locally. The aim 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.

The last EU Finance Days took place in Rome (27<sup>th</sup> November) and in Budapest (4<sup>th</sup> December).

EU Finance Day webpage

<http://www.sme-finance-day.eu/index.php?id=10>

### European Sustainable Energy Week

In the beginning of 2009, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport organises a 3rd edition of Europe's key forum on sustainable energy. Dozens of conferences, workshops, seminars and media events will be organised in Brussels and other places up and down the EU. The core events will take place on the week of 9-13 February 2009, although many side events are foreseen during the weeks immediately before and after.

Enterprise Europe Network is actively involved in that event. The 'Intelligent Energy' Sector Group will present a workshop on 'Business Cooperation in the Energy Sector – how can SMEs get best value?' The other programmes managed by the EACI, namely Marco Polo, Intelligent Energy Europe and Eco-innovation will be represented. A presentation on 'The potential of Eco-innovation for SMEs' will be given.

For a registration and detailed agenda click on the link below. European Sustainable Energy Week is an open and free of charge event.

EUSEW webpage

<http://www.eusew.eu/>



## MEMBERS' CORNER

### Profile of the European Community Project Managers' Association (ECPMA)

Formed in February 2005 and based in the UK, ECPMA supports individuals who are active in the management of European Framework Programme (FP) research projects. The aim of the association is to share best practice and innovation within a supportive environment.

To be a member of the association, an individual needs to be directly involved in the day-to-day management of an FP project. ECPMA's members are involved in FP6 and FP7.

For more information, visit the ECPMA webpage  
<http://www.ecpma.eu/>

## PUBLICATIONS

### The latest SOLVIT Newsletter n°4 of October 2008 is available

SOLVIT is an on-line problem solving network coordinated by the Commission (DG Internal Market and Services) in which EU Member States work together to solve without legal proceedings problems caused by the misapplication of Internal Market law by public authorities. There is a SOLVIT centre in every EU Member State as well as in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. SOLVIT Centres can help with handling complaints from both citizens and businesses.

The SOLVIT Newsletter is available in 8 EU languages. Issue n°4 includes success stories, an article on achieving structural solutions for recurrent problems and another one on improved accessibility to EU public assistance services.

SOLVIT website

[http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm)

SOLVIT n°4 Newsletter

[http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/newsletters/archive/newsletter4/newsletter\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/newsletters/archive/newsletter4/newsletter_en.htm)

If you want any further information about SOLVIT or would like to send your comments or suggestions, you can contact the Commission SOLVIT team at: [SOLVIT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:SOLVIT@ec.europa.eu)



**The English version of the latest issue 2008-IV of 'Single Market News' is available**

Single Market News (SMN) is an official publication of the Internal Market and services DG published four to five times a year. It covers the areas this DG is responsible for. Thematic sections are: free movement of services, free movement of capital, financial services, diplomas and professional qualifications, postal services, company law and financial reporting, public procurement, intellectual and industrial property, media and information society, dialogue with citizens and enterprises.

It is free of charge and is produced in three separate versions, in English, French and German. It is available in PDF and in paper. The French and German versions of issue 2008-IV will be available in due course.

If you wish to receive the paper edition of 'SMN', you need to subscribe through an online form available on the webpage of the DG Internal Market and Services

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/smn/index\\_en.htm#smn\\_online](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smn/index_en.htm#smn_online)

Contact details of DG Internal Market and Services

[http://ec.europa.eu/contact/dg\\_en.htm#Market](http://ec.europa.eu/contact/dg_en.htm#Market)

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