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Creation date: 23-02-2020
Unfair trading practices in the food supply chain

Publication type Briefing
Date 06-05-2019
Author PATRICK KELLY
Policy area Agriculture and Rural Development | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council
Keyword perishable goods | consumer protection | supply | restriction on competition | chain store | small and medium-sized enterprises | impact study | unfair terms of contract | food industry | report | supplier | agri-foodstuffs | proposal (EU)
Summary The food supply chain ensures that food and drink products are delivered to the public. It affects all consumers in the EU. The final price paid by the consumer is impacted by the number of participants in the food supply chain. While the single market has brought benefits to operators in the supply chain through more market opportunities and a larger customer base, it has also brought challenges. Structural changes have occurred, leading to different levels of bargaining power and imbalances between actors in the chain. The abuse of such differences may lead to unfair trading practices. To strengthen the position of smaller operators (farmers) in the food supply chain, in April 2018 the European Commission proposed a new directive on unfair trading practices. Trilogue discussions began in October 2018 after a successful vote in plenary. The final agreed text was adopted by both Parliament and Council at first reading, and signed on 17 April. Member States must now incorporate its provisions into national law, and apply them by 1 November 2021.

Amending capital requirements: The 'CRD-V package'

Publication type Briefing
Date 15-04-2019
Author CARLA STAMEGNA
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council
Keyword economic stabilisation | financial solvency | monetary crisis | directive (EU) | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial services | interest | financial intervention | credit institution | company in difficulties | financial aid | proposal (EU) | liquidity control | investment company
Summary In December 2018, the European Parliament and the Council (the co-legislators) reached a political agreement on the legislative proposals amending the current Capital Requirements Directive and Regulation (the 'CRD-IV package'), which establish the prudential framework for financial institutions operating in the EU. The amendments to the package implement the most recent regulatory standards for banks, set at international level ('Basel III framework'). They also address some regulatory shortcomings and aim to contribute to sustainable bank financing of the economy. Parliament is due to vote on adopting the proposals during the April II plenary session.

Enabling SMEs' access to capital markets

Publication type Briefing
Date 09-04-2019
Author IOANNIS AGAMEMNON ZACHARIADIS
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword economic growth | bond | issue of securities | investment protection | stock-exchange listing | report | start-up | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial instrument | capital market | proposal (EU) | investment company
Summary Making it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access financing through public markets lies at the heart of the capital markets union – the plan to mobilise capital in Europe. Among the various reasons for going ahead with this union is the fact that existing requirements and listing costs in both regulated and multilateral trading venues continue to be disproportionate to the size and level of sophistication of SMEs. To further respond to this situation, the Commission has proposed adopting a regulation to address the administrative burden placed on SMEs when listing or issuing equity and bonds, with the aim to increase liquidity on SME growth markets. The latter are a new category of multilateral trading facilities, which was established under the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive II. To this end, the proposal provides for targeted amendments to two key pieces of financial services legislation, namely the Market Abuse Regulation (MAR) and the Prospectus Regulation. Following interinstitutional negotiations the co-legislators reached a provisional agreement on the proposal on 6 March 2019, and this is due to be voted in Parliament during the April II plenary session.
Global and regional value chains: Opportunities for European SMEs’ internationalisation and growth

**Publication type**: Briefing  
**Date**: 14-02-2019  
**Author**: IOANNIS AGAMEMNON ZACHARIADIS  
**Policy area**: International Trade | Industry  
**Keyword**: value chain | productivity | world economy | small and medium-sized enterprises | globalisation  
**Summary**: International value chains have emerged as the new paradigm for the organisation of production globally. Today, most production processes across the world are vertically fragmented as a result of the increased unbundling of tasks and functions and their sourcing from different geographical locations. The extent to which this expansion in supply-chain trade is global in character (which some describe as the ‘Factory World’ phenomenon), or is rather based on more inter-regional ties clustered around Europe, Asia and the Americas, is still being debated in the literature. Notwithstanding their geographical characteristics, international value chains offer increased opportunities for enterprises, by fostering their growth and internationalisation irrespective of their scale and size. To SMEs, they offer a broader range of channels through which they can participate more actively in global markets. By linking with international supply chains, SMEs can take a first step up the ladder, which – through spill-overs and knowledge transfers – can often give them access to assignments of higher added value. With greater interconnectedness, however, comes greater complexity. Not all SMEs are able to take advantage of the opportunities and link with international value chains in an effective way. More importantly, however, for those that do manage to integrate into international production chains, the magnitude and nature of the benefits will critically depend on the SMEs’ entry point and position in global production networks and the links they can develop within those networks.

**Briefing**  
**EN**

International Agreements in Progress: Bilateral trade deal with Japan – largest to date for EU

**Publication type**: Briefing  
**Date**: 01-02-2019  
**Author**: Krisztina Binder  
**Policy area**: International Trade | Foreign Affairs  
**Keyword**: corporate governance | economic growth | agreement on government procurement | liberalisation of trade | bilateral agreement | Japan | investment protection | trade agreement (EU) | designation of origin | data protection | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access  
**Summary**: Following the signature of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in July 2018, and the conclusion of the ratification procedures by both partners at the end of 2018, the agreement entered into force on 1 February 2019. The agreement is the EU’s largest bilateral trade agreement to date. It establishes a free trade area with a combined market of around 640 million consumers, accounting for roughly a third of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP). The European Commission’s analysis of the economic impact of the agreement, published in June 2018, indicated that the EU’s GDP could rise by approximately 0.14 %, and EU exports to Japan by around €13 billion by the time the EPA is fully implemented in 2035. The agreement will provide for significant economic opportunities for sectors such as agri-food and textiles, and it is predicted that no EU sector will be impacted by noticeable losses. In addition to exploiting the untapped potential of bilateral trade and strengthening the EU’s economic presence in the Asia-Pacific region, the EPA, together with the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), will provide a platform for stronger relations between the EU and Japan. The agreement also conveys a strong message on the parties’ commitment to promoting a free and fair trading system and to rejecting trade protectionism.

**Briefing**  
**EN**

Research for AGRI Committee - The CAP support beyond 2020 - Assessing the future structure of direct payments and the rural development interventions in the light of the EU agricultural and environmental challenges

**Publication type**: Study  
**Date**: 15-10-2018  
**External author**: R.A. Jongeneel; H. Silvis; K. Poppe - Wageningen UR  
**Policy area**: Budget | Environment | Agriculture and Rural Development | Regional Development | EU Law: Legal System and Acts  
**Keyword**: aid to agriculture | environmental protection | agricultural trade | small and medium-sized enterprises | young farmer | rural development | cotton | sustainable agriculture | climate change policy | farmers’ income | farming sector | EU direct payments | risk management  
**Summary**: This study provides an assessment of the structure and type of interventions as proposed by the European Commission on the CAP beyond 2020 (Title III of the proposal COM(2018) 392). All Direct Payment and Rural development interventions have been examined in the context of the main agricultural and environmental challenges the EU faces. A set of recommendation is made for the improvement of specific instruments and to address policy priorities and level playing field concerns.

**Study**  
**EN**
Research for AGRI Committee - The sectoral approach in the CAP beyond 2020 and possible options to improve the EU food value chain

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-10-2018

External author: Tomás García Azcárate, Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography, (Spanish Research Council - CSIC)


Keyword: climate change policy | data collection | aid to agriculture | environmental protection | farming sector | agricultural trade | common agricultural policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | farmer | rural development

Summary: This study addresses the current rules both the current European rules applicable to the Common Agricultural Market Organisation and the recent proposal of the Commission in the CAP beyond 2020. It also suggests possible improvements of the proposal. It was presented to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 15 October 2018.

Study EN

Supporting the single market beyond 2020

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 28-09-2018

Author: Marcin SZCZEPANSKI

Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council

Keyword: single market | impact study | data collection | competitiveness | EU financing | EU programme | small and medium-sized enterprises | EU statistics | proposal (EU)

Summary: For the next long-term EU budget framework (2021-2027), the Commission is proposing a new, dedicated €4 billion programme aimed at empowering and protecting consumers, and enabling Europe’s many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to take better advantage of a well-functioning single market. The financial envelope will be supplemented with the additional allocation of €2 billion under the InvestEU Fund, in particular through its SME window. The new programme aims to strengthen and streamline the governance of the EU’s internal market. It will support the competitiveness of business, and promote human, animal and plant health and a safe food chain, as well as financing European statistics to provide reliable data relevant to the single market. The proposal consolidates and streamlines a wide range of activities that were previously financed separately, and bundles them into one programme. The aim here is to generate benefits in terms of flexibility, simplification and synergies, and eliminate overlaps.

Briefing EN

European Artificial Intelligence (AI) leadership, the path for an integrated vision

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-09-2018

External author: Laura DELPONTE

Policy area: Research Policy | Forward Planning | Social Policy | Employment | Industry

Keyword: regulation (EU) | digital single market | third country | EU Member State | artificial intelligence | research and development | small and medium-sized enterprises | code of conduct

Summary: As a general-purpose technology Artificial Intelligence (AI) is expected to bring about far-reaching effects on business and society. Worldwide, governments have launched ambitious programmes to support the development of AI-based technologies and achieve technology leadership. Against this background, this study was commissioned by the Policy Department A upon request of the ITRE Committee to feed into the general debate on how Europe could seize the opportunity of progress made in AI.

Study EN

The added value of European cohesion policy

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 06-09-2018

Author: KLAUS MULLER

Policy area: European Added Value | Social Policy | Employment | Regional Development

Keyword: co-financing | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund | European Structural and Investment Funds | EAFRD | European Social Fund | Cohesion Fund | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: Cohesion policy provides the largest EU financial support, amounting to € 638 billion together with national co-financing for the period 2014-2020. Cohesion policy will help more than 7.4 million people find a job and over 8.9 million people gain new qualifications. 6.8 million children will get access to new or modernised schools and childcare facilities. For the European Parliament it is important that Cohesion Policy remains visible all over Europe.

Briefing EN
Directive 2011/7/EU on late payments in commercial transactions

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 11-07-2018  
Author: Jan Mikolaj TYMOWSKI

Policy area: Transposition and Implementation of Law | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Internal Market and Customs Union | Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Financial and Banking Issues  
Keyword: public contract | statistics | unfair terms of contract | competitiveness | administrative formalities | EU Member State | directive (EU) | trading operation | payment | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: Directive 2011/7/EU on late payments in commercial transactions (Late Payment Directive, (LPD)) strengthened European regulations first introduced in 2000 in favour of creditors. In addition to statutory interest, the application of which is still not automatic, maximum periods were established for payments in business-to-business transactions and those with public authorities, limiting contractual freedom, which is often abused by stronger companies. Following the largely correct transposition into national law, the situation continues to vary between Member States with regard to average payment periods (especially from public authorities), and the level of implementation of additional voluntary measures (such as prompt payment codes). In the absence of harmonised measurement methods, business surveys and consultations indicate improving practices, but the attribution of this development to the LPD cannot be separated from broader economic contexts and cultural aspects easily. Further exchange of best practices and better monitoring of their effectiveness might facilitate future developments in the area of late payments, including legislative action.

In-Depth Analysis  EN

Unfair trading practices in the food supply chain

Publication type: Briefing  
Date: 05-07-2018  
Author: Vera VIKOLAINEN

Policy area: Agriculture and Rural Development | Internal Market and Customs Union | Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law  
Keyword: perishable goods | impact study | unfair terms of contract | consumer protection | restriction on competition | supply | food industry | chain store | small and medium-sized enterprises | agri-foodstuffs | supplier | proposal (EU)

Summary: The Commission proposal aims to strengthen the resilience of weaker operators in the food supply chain and improve its functioning. The supporting impact assessment appears to be substantially constrained by the limited evidence base. The data on the scale of the problem seems limited and precise quantifications of costs and benefits of the option packages was not feasible. The stakeholder consultation activities, on the other hand, have largely followed the requirements of the Better Regulation Guidelines.

Briefing  EN

New technologies and regional policy: Towards the next cohesion policy framework

Publication type: Study  
Date: 04-07-2018  
External author: Jan Annerstedt (Copenhagen Business School)  
We are grateful to Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for STOA, and to Constanze Kreht and Lambert Van Nistelrooij, Members of the European Parliament - REGI Committee, who supported this study, offering their valuable contribution during the workshop, providing inputs to this publication.

Policy area: Research Policy | Transport | Social Policy | Employment | Agriculture and Rural Development | Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues | Regional Development | Industry  
Keyword: co-financing | Structural Funds | cross-border cooperation | Framework Programme for Research and Development | research and development | innovation | diffusion of innovations | small and medium-sized enterprises | new technology

Summary: This study aims at highlighting the importance of the territorial dimension and structures for economic growth at European level. It focuses on the role and potential of the existing cohesion policy funding in planning and implementing ICT infrastructures in the regions, and in accompanying the efforts to digitalise European economy and society. In the same context, the study also highlights the role and potential of cohesion policy funding in planning and implementing integrated science and technology parks.

Study  EN  
Annex I  EN
Establishing a basis for European crowdfunding service providers

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 05-06-2018

Author: Angelos DELIVORIAS

Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council

Keyword: crowdfunding | approximation of laws | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial services | European Securities and Markets Authority | Internet | financial legislation | innovation | start-up | provision of services | proposal (EU) | investment company

Summary: Crowdfunding, an open call to the wider public for raising money online, can help ensure that both individuals and companies get access to finance, especially in the seed and early growth stages of their projects or business. Member States with a developed crowdfunding market have designed bespoke regulatory regimes that differ from each other with regard to the conditions under which platforms can operate, their scope of permitted activities and the licensing requirements applicable to them. As a result of this diversity, cross-border flows remain limited and crowdfunding service providers face challenges in scaling up their operations. To remedy this, the Commission has proposed a regulation providing for uniform, proportionate and directly applicable requirements for the authorisation and supervision of crowdfunding platforms, together with a single point of supervision, and a directive exempting crowdfunding service providers from the scope of MiFID II. First edition. The 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the legislative procedure.

European crowdfunding service providers for business

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 29-05-2018

Author: Esther KRAMER

Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues

Keyword: impact study | crowdfunding | approximation of laws | early-stage capital | financial legislation | innovation | investment | provision of services | start-up | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial services | proposal (EU)

Summary: This briefing provides an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's impact assessment (IA) accompanying the above-mentioned proposal, published on 8 March 2018 and referred to Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). The strengthening of the capital markets to boost long-term investment in the EU is a priority EU goal. In this context, the Commission's 2017 mid-term review of the capital markets union (CMU) action plan noted that access to finance for small, innovative businesses is a challenge in all EU countries, even those where access to bank finance has remained stable during the financial crisis. Start-ups and other unlisted firms lack risk finance to invest in innovation and growth, in particular in the early stages of their development (IA, p. 6, 8). In view of closing this gap and complementing bank financing, the Commission supports alternative sources of financing, including technology-enabled financial services, the largest part of which consists in crowdfunding. In this context, crowdfunding is defined as an 'open call for the collecting of resources ... from the wider public through an internet-based platform for a specific project' (IA, p. 8). A 2016 Commission staff working document noted that crowdfunding has been developing rapidly since 2013, but remained concentrated in a few EU countries, with 81 % market share in the United Kingdom (UK) (IA, p. 16). Some Member States introduced national rules to regulate their online platforms and/or apply elements of existing EU legislation on financial services to specific types of crowdfunding, while others leave some aspects of the activity unregulated. This regulatory patchwork hinders cross-border crowdfunding and creates considerable market fragmentation (IA, pp. 26-30).

Proceedings of the Workshop on the Public Procurement Strategy Package

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-05-2018

External author: Luis Carlos Matos


Keyword: single market | investment policy | public contract | cross-border cooperation | economic growth | public procurement | competitiveness | public authorities | digital technology | corruption | small and medium-sized enterprises | proposal (EU)

Summary: This report summarises the discussion which took place at the workshop “Public Procurement Strategy Package”. Public procurement is a complex issue with the potential to strongly influence the EU economy. With the aim of discussing the main challenges related to this topic and the recently proposed draft regulation of the European Commission, the workshop was hosted by Mr Carlos Coelho, MEP. This document was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection.
Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027: Commission Proposal - Initial comparison with the current MFF

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 04-05-2018
Author: Alina DOBREVA

Policy area: Budget
Keyword: co-financing | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund | European Structural and Investment Funds | Economic and Monetary Union | EAFRD | European Social Fund | Cohesion Fund | sustainable development | small and medium-sized enterprises | common security and defence policy | EU environmental policy | climate change policy | EU migration policy | trans-European network

Summary: On 2 May, the Commission presented its proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2021-2027 period (2021-2027 MFF), outlining the structure of the EU budget and the policy priorities of the EU for a period of seven years, together with proposals on own resources financing the EU budget and a proposal to link the EU budget and the rule of law. A series of further legislative proposals presenting the individual spending programmes is expected later in May and June. The Commission proposes that the 2021-2027 MFF (commitment appropriations) amounts to €1135 billion in 2018 prices or 1.11% of EU GNI. The previous MFF, converted into 2018 prices and including the European Development Fund (EDF) for comparative purposes, amounted to €1138 billion or 1.03% of EU GNI. Note, however, that this comparison does not take account of the various changes in programmes proposed or the impact of Brexit. The number of headings grows from the 2014-2020 MFF to 2021-2027 MFF, from five to seven, and some programmes change place from one heading to another. Regarding the structure of the 2021-2027 MFF, the Commission proposals have the ambition to align the budget closer to the political priorities, to simplify the structure of the EU budget (i.e. a reduced number of programmes), and to increase the flexibility within and between programmes.

State Aid and EU funding: are they compatible?

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 16-04-2018
External author: Professor Phedon Nicolaides
Policy area: Budget | Competition law and regulation | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Budgetary Control
Keyword: control of State aid | State aid | EU Member State | economic policy | European Investment Bank | distribution of EU funding | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: State aid involves the transfer of state resources. These are resources which are controlled by public authorities. EU funds which are granted directly to undertakings without coming under the control of a public authority of a Member State cannot be considered to be state resources. However, EU funds channelled through managing authorities become state resources and can constitute state aid if all the other criteria of Article 107(1) TFEU are satisfied.

Common (consolidated) corporate tax base

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 06-03-2018
Author: Cécile REMEUR | Angelos DELIVORIAS
Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword: single market | corporation tax | multinational enterprise | approximation of laws | double taxation | cross-border dimension | European tax cooperation | tax law | basis of tax assessment | tax avoidance | small and medium-sized enterprises | tax harmonisation

Summary: In 2016, the Commission decided to re-launch the common consolidated corporate tax base proposal, but this time in a two-step approach, with two interconnected proposals. Parliament, which is only consulted, is due to vote on the proposals during its March plenary session.
European Fund for Strategic Investments – EFSI 2.0

**Publication type** Briefing
**Date** 15-02-2018
**Author** Matthew PARRY | Angelos DELIVORIAS

**Policy area** Budget | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
**Keyword** transport infrastructure | financing | EU investment | operation of the Institutions | investment project | EU growth strategy | European Investment Bank | European Fund for Strategic Investments | fund (EU) | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | proposal (EU)

**Summary** On 14 September 2016, the Commission proposed an extension of the duration of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) until end-2020, and the introduction of technical enhancements for that fund and the European Investment Advisory Hub. Under the new regulation, (EFSI 2.0), steps are taken to increase support for small-scale projects; Parliament can send a (non-voting) expert to EFSI’s steering board, and EFSI’s scoreboard will be publicly available after a project is signed. The increase in the financial allocation needed to deliver the higher investment targeted will come from an increase in the EU budget guarantee from €16 billion to €26 billion, and an increase in the EIB contribution from €5 billion to €7.5 billion. However, the provisioning rate for the guarantee is reduced to 35%, giving a total contribution from the EU budget of €9.1 billion, compared to an initial contribution of €8 billion. Parliament managed to reduce the share of this increased contribution financed via redeployments from the Connecting Europe Facility programme, by instead drawing more heavily on EFSI-assigned revenues and investment reflows. The agreed text was adopted on 12 December 2017.

General principles of EU industrial policy

**Publication type** EU Fact Sheets
**Date** 01-02-2018
**Author** Frederic GOUARDERES

**Policy area** Industry
**Keyword** simplification of legislation | single market | competitiveness | economic policy | industry-research relations | space policy | EU industrial policy | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | raw material | European standard | intellectual property

**Summary** The EU’s industrial policy aims to make European industry more competitive so that it can maintain its role as a driver of sustainable growth and employment in Europe. Various strategies have been adopted in order to ensure better framework conditions for EU industry, the most recent being described in the communication ‘For a European Industrial Renaissance’, of January 2014.

Small and medium-sized enterprises

**Publication type** EU Fact Sheets
**Date** 01-01-2018
**Author** Frederic GOUARDERES

**Policy area** Industry
**Keyword** single market | intellectual capital | eligibility criteria | aid to undertakings | tax relief | competitiveness | knowledge economy | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance

**Summary** Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute 99% of companies in the EU. They provide two thirds of private sector jobs and contribute to more than half of the total added value created by businesses in the EU. Various action programmes have been adopted to support SMEs, such as the Small Business Act, Horizon 2020 and the COSME programme. Their aim is to increase the competitiveness of SMEs through research and innovation, and to provide better access to finance for SMEs.

EFSI – Extension of duration (‘EFSI 2.0’)

**Publication type** At a Glance
**Date** 05-12-2017
**Author** Matthew PARRY | Angelos DELIVORIAS

**Policy area** Budget | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
**Keyword** project evaluation | EU financing arrangements | EU investment | transparency in decision-making | investment project | investment protection | European Investment Bank | European Fund for Strategic Investments | EU budget | European Investment Fund | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance

**Summary** On 14 September 2016, the Commission proposed to extend the duration of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) until 31 December 2020, entailing changes in its governance and financial capacity. The agreement achieved in trilogue is due to be voted during the December plenary.
European Accessibility Act
Publication type: Briefing
Date: 10-11-2017
Author: Marie LECERF
Policy area: Social Policy | Gender Issues, Equality and Diversity | Internal Market and Customs Union | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council
Keyword: adoption of a law by vote | impact study | transport infrastructure | EU strategy | disabled person | population ageing | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises | facilities for the disabled | integration of the disabled
Summary: To ensure the full participation of people with disabilities in society and to reduce the fragmentation of legislation governing access to products and services, the European Commission has adopted a proposal for a directive – often referred to as the European Accessibility Act. This proposal provides for a common EU definition of, and implementation framework for, accessibility requirements for certain products and services. It also aims to use the same accessibility requirements to provide a clear definition of the existing general accessibility obligation laid down in European law.
Many stakeholders welcome the European Union’s wish to honour its responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but they have been divided on the means to reach this objective.
In the European Parliament, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted its report on 25 April 2017. The report was then discussed in plenary on 15 September. The amended text was approved by 537 votes to 12, with 89 abstentions. At the same time, Parliament gave a mandate to start negotiations with Council. Although the Council has published three progress reports, in June and December 2016 and in June 2017, it has yet to agree on its position.

Protection from dumped and subsidised imports
Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 08-11-2017
Author: Gisela GRIEGER
Policy area: International Trade | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council
Keyword: EU competition policy | common commercial policy | environmental standard | originating product | import (EU) | labour standard | dumping | small and medium-sized enterprises | anti-dumping legislation | anti-subsidy proceeding | China
Summary: Dumping and subsidising of exports by third countries are unfair trade practices, which may cause injury to the importing country. WTO law allows countering such injury by introducing specific duties called trade defence instruments (TDI). To enable EU TDIs to address current circumstances, notably overcapacity, in the international trading environment, the European Commission has proposed to amend the Anti-Dumping (AD) Regulation and Anti-Subsidy (AS) Regulation. The European Parliament is due to vote on the provisional agreement reached in trilogue during its November plenary session.

Provisioning policies for non-performing loans: How to best ensure a “clean balance sheet”?
Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 06-11-2017
External author: Elena Carletti; Bruno Brunella
Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: balance sheet | loan | European Banking Authority | credit institution | company in difficulties | regulatory policy | banking supervision | European Central Bank | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: Non-performing loans (NPLs) are still an important problem in Europe, in particular in the euro area. Provisioning is one way to address such a problem. Although coverage ratios have been increasing in recent years, banks’ provisioning policies are quite different across banks and countries. Various reasons, ranging from different collateral characteristics and enforcement systems to tax regimes, accounting methods, managerial and supervisory practises, contribute to explain the observed differences. Recent measures aimed at increasing transparency and disclosure rules and the adoption of new accounting rules are an important step forward. They have to be complemented, however, by appropriate early intervention measures and effective supervisory power.

Source: © European Union, 2020 - EP
EU trade with Latin America and the Caribbean: Overview and figures

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 26-10-2017
Author: Gisela GRIEGER | RODERICK EDWARD NOEL HARTE
Policy area: International Trade | Foreign Affairs
Keyword: third country | statistics | bilateral agreement | bilateral relations | investment abroad | small and medium-sized enterprises | Latin America | technical cooperation | Mercosur | regional cooperation | Andean Community | Central America | Cariforum | Caribbean Islands | international trade
Summary: This publication provides an overview of trade relations between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries and groupings. The EU has concluded fully fledged agreements with two Latin American groupings (Cariforum and the Central America group), a multiparty trade agreement with three members of the Andean Community (Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru), and bilateral agreements with Chile and Mexico. It is currently also modernising its agreement with Mexico and intends soon to start negotiations on modernising its agreement with Chile. The EU has also concluded framework agreements with Mercosur and its individual members (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay). The agreement with the former will be replaced, once the on-going negotiations on an EU-Mercosur association agreement have been completed. This publication provides recent data on trade relations between the EU and Latin American and Caribbean countries and groupings, compares the agreements governing trade relations that have already been concluded, and analyses the reasons behind the ongoing and planned negotiations on the EU-Mercosur, EU-Mexico and EU-Chile agreements. This is a revised and updated edition of a publication from March 2016 by Enrique Gomez Ramirez, Eleni Lazarou, Laura Puccio and Giulio Sabbati, PE 579.086.

International Agreements in Progress: EU-New Zealand free trade agreement - All set for the launch of negotiations

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 11-10-2017
Author: Krisztina BINDER
Policy area: International Trade | Agriculture and Rural Development
Keyword: dairy industry | New Zealand | statistics | negotiation of an agreement (EU) | mutual recognition principle | free-trade agreement | bilateral agreement | service industry | agricultural market | international trade | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: New Zealand already enjoys a number of bilateral trade cooperation agreements with the EU. These agreements pave the way for negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) between the EU and New Zealand. However, both sides are expected to raise several sensitive issues during negotiations, not least because New Zealand is a major and competitive producer and exporter of agricultural goods. The EU is committed to taking European agricultural sensitivities fully into consideration in its negotiating strategy, seeking to protect vulnerable sectors through specific provisions. In addition to facilitating trade and investment flows between the parties, the FTA would create a level playing field for the EU with other trading partners that have already concluded FTAs with New Zealand. The FTA would also strengthen the EU's position in Asia-Pacific value chains, and help to advance the trade policy interests of the EU in the region. On 13 September 2017, the European Commission presented draft negotiating directives for an FTA with New Zealand. This draft mandate, in line with the EU Court of Justice's recent opinion on the EU-Singapore FTA, covers only areas falling under the EU's exclusive competence. Therefore, the prospective agreement could be concluded by the EU on its own and could be ratified at EU level only. The Commission aims to finalise negotiations before the end of its mandate in late 2019.

Towards a circular economy-Waste management in the EU

Publication type: Study
Date: 25-09-2017
External author: EPRS, DG
Policy area: Environment
Keyword: green economy | EU law - national law | recycling technology | EU Member State | packaging | prevention of pollution | small and medium-sized enterprises | raw material | waste management | EU statistics | circular economy | waste
Summary: This STOA study explores waste management in the EU. Around one third of EU municipal waste was sent to landfill in 2012. To turn waste into a resource, waste management objectives must be aligned with the goals of a circular economy transition. This report highlights progress and challenges across Member States and in municipalities for (1) reducing waste, and (2) generating high-quality waste streams for re-use and recovery. It focuses on the current policy landscape, trends, and technologies for the five waste streams identified in the European Commission’s Circular Economy Action Plan. Employment opportunities for the different steps of the waste hierarchy as well as future policy options are identified and discussed.
The corporate sector purchase programme (CSPP): Effectiveness and challenges ahead

**Publication type**: In-Depth Analysis  
**Date**: 15-09-2017  
**External author**: Corrado MACCHIARELLI, Mara MONTI, Andrea VEDOLIN  
**Keyword**: financial market | bank | single monetary policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic analysis | loan | bond | EU investment | credit institution | investment promotion | financial stability | euro area | European Central Bank  
**Summary**: In March 2016 the ECB announced the launching of the Corporate Sector Purchase Programme (CSPP), enabling the direct purchase by the ECB of investment grade euro-denominated bonds issued by non-bank corporations based in the Euro area in the primary and secondary markets. Although a new monetary policy instrument in the Eurosystem, the CSPP is not a global innovation, since other central banks have resorted to similar initiatives since the onset of the Great Recession in 2008. While undoubtedly contributing to the smooth functioning of the transmission mechanism for monetary policy, CSPP also present challenges, like other aspects of the ECB’s Asset Purchase Programme. This note discusses the effectiveness of the programme and some options available to the ECB.

In-Depth Analysis EN

Gender Equality Policies in Croatia - Update

**Publication type**: Study  
**Date**: 14-07-2017  
**External author**: Nada BODOROGA-VUKOBRAT, Adrijana MARTINOVIĆ, Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka, Croatia  
**Policy area**: Social Policy | Gender Issues, Equality and Diversity | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice  
**Keyword**: economic independence | labour market | statistics | female unemployment | domestic policy | Croatia | sexual violence | domestic violence | work-life balance | political representation | women’s rights | gender equality | small and medium-sized enterprises | equal pay  
**Summary**: This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Committee on Women’s rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). It provides an overview of gender equality policies in Croatia. Apart from providing the history of institutional and political developments in Croatia in this area, it illustrates in particular issues related to gender equality in the labour market and employment, women entrepreneurs, women in decision-making positions, policies against violence against women, reconciliation of private and professional life, gender stereotypes, sexual health and rights, economic independence for women and men, pay and pension gap, as well as national policies on eradication of gender based violence.

Study EN

Liability in Subcontracting Chains: National Rules and the Need for a European Framework

**Publication type**: Study  
**Date**: 10-07-2017  
**External author**: Alexander Heinen; Dr. Axel Müller; Bernd Kessler  
**Keyword**: labour market | temporary employment | amendment of a law | EU Member State | social security legislation | directive (EU) | posted worker | subcontracting | occupational health | small and medium-sized enterprises | contractual liability  
**Summary**: This study was commissioned upon request by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, upon request of the Committee on Legal Affairs. It provides a comprehensive update on recent developments on a European and national level concerning liability in subcontracting chains and the protection of workers involved in subcontracting chains. A strong focus lies on the existing European legal framework and recent developments in that regard. By assessing the country reports and the findings on a European level, the study closes with “Policy Recommendations” and answers the question from its authors view, if the European Legislator should adopt (further) legislation.

Study EN

Review of EU-third country cooperation on policies falling within the ITRE domain in relation to Brexit

**Publication type**: Study  
**Date**: 15-06-2017  
**External author**: J. Scott MARCUS, Georgios PETROPOULOS, André SAPIR, Simone TAGLIAPIETRA, Alessio TERZI, Reinhilde VEUGELERS, Georg ZACHMANN  
**Policy area**: Research Policy | International Trade | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Energy | Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry  
**Keyword**: third country | United Kingdom | free-trade agreement | European Economic Area | renewable energy | bilateral relations | Framework Programme for Research and Development | small and medium-sized enterprises | EP Committee | climate change policy | energy policy | EFTA countries | withdrawal from the EU  
**Summary**: This study was prepared at the request of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). It provides a critical assessment of the implications of existing models of cooperation of third countries with the European Union in each of four thematic areas for which the ITRE is responsible (energy, electronic communications, research policy, and small business policy. The relative desirability to the EU of EEA membership, bilateral relationships (as with Switzerland), a new generation Free Trade Agreement (FTA), membership in the Energy Community, or participation in the Horizon 2020 or COSME programmes are considered.

Study EN
Helping European SMEs to grow: Start-up and scale-up initiatives for business ventures in the EU

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 06-06-2017  
Author: Marcin SZCZEPANSKI  
Policy area: Financial and Banking Issues | Industry  
Keyword: corporation tax | digital single market | digitisation | Framework Programme for Research and Development | retail selling | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic analysis | services company | job creation | tourism | bankruptcy | distribution of EU funding | industrial manufacturing | start-up  
Summary: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute 99 of every 100 businesses, and employ two out of three employees in Europe. Some of them are high-growth firms that generate a disproportionately high number of new jobs. However, SMEs often face obstacles specific to their smaller size that can hamper their growth potential. The main recent initiatives undertaken to help European SMEs grow fall within the flagship initiatives of the Commission: the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the single market strategy, the digital single market, and the capital markets union. The EU also supports SMEs through a range of long-term programmes running in the 2014-2020 period, such as COSME, Horizon 2020 and the structural and investment funds.

Preventive restructuring, second chance and efficient restructuring, insolvency and discharge procedures

Publication type: Briefing  
Date: 24-05-2017  
Author: Claudio COLLOVA  
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law  
Keyword: impact study | company law | liquidation | aid to undertakings | approximation of laws | financial solvency | harmonisation law | EU Member State | company in difficulties | aid for restructuring | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: This Commission impact assessment is based on a wealth of information drawing from both research and consultation. Research quoted spans the last decade and encompasses international organisation, academic and think tank work. The consultation performed by the Commission has been essential to prioritising the issues to be further harmonised and in choosing the detailed sub-options. Among the strengths of the IA, there is a genuine attempt to comply as much as possible with the Commission Better Regulation Guidelines and transparency in providing information. This is particularly evident in the broad range of options presented and in the presentation of the territorial impacts of the initiative. In this regard, for instance, the IA provides a useful legal analysis of the most important issues for most Member States. Nevertheless, economic impacts appear to be analysed more in depth than social and employment outcomes. Among the additional weaknesses, the numerous objectives identified are not time-bound and may be difficult to measure. Finally, although the IA states that Member States should not incur significant monitoring costs, the requirements in the IA appear to be shorter and less detailed than the ones in the Commission proposal.

The Impact on SMEs of the Proposal of Preventive Restructuring, Second Chance and Improvement Measures

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 20-05-2017  
Author: Stephan MADAUS  
Keyword: liquidation | aid to undertakings | approximation of laws | financial solvency | EU Member State | shareholding | aid for restructuring | small and medium-sized enterprises | registration of a company  
Summary: This study was commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee. It looks at the effects the recent Commission proposal might have both on micro and small and medium-sized enterprise, thus reflecting the diversity of SMEs. It identifies and explains the issues at stake of concerned SMEs related to their capacity as both debtors and creditors.

Source: © European Union, 2020 - EP
Skills development and employment: Apprenticeships, internships and volunteering

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-04-2017
External author: Simon Broeki, Terence Hogarth, Liga Baltina, Amerigo Lombardi (Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini)
Policy area: Forward Planning | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Employment | Education
Keyword: labour market | access to education | updating of skills | apprenticeship | job creation | Framework Programme for Research and Development | voluntary work | EU initiative | fight against unemployment | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This study discusses participation, outcomes, quality and challenges of apprenticeships, internships/traineeships and volunteering schemes. Though important, all three forms face challenges that need attention in the related existing and planned EU-level initiatives (such as the planned Quality Framework for Apprenticeships). Issues concern, for example, providing clarity on the employment status (mainly for apprenticeships) and on fair remuneration, thus limiting the risk of being sources for cheap labour.

The note was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) to support the Committee’s work on the New Skills Agenda.

EU support for social entrepreneurs

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 16-03-2017
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO
Policy area: Social Policy | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: single market | microfinance | small and medium-sized enterprises | private investment | business start-up | entrepreneur | early-stage capital | fund (EU) | distribution of EU funding | start-up | venture capital | social economy | EU statistics
Summary: Social enterprises combine social goals with entrepreneurial activity. They represent a business model focused on having a positive social or environmental impact rather than simply making profit for shareholders. Social enterprises make a valuable contribution to the economy and society, operating mainly in local communities and covering areas such as education, healthcare, social services, work integration and environmental protection. They are also an increasingly popular choice for outsourcing certain public services of general economic interest. Social enterprises encounter challenges in their operations, mostly related to regulatory obstacles and difficulties in accessing funding. At EU level the momentum gained by the Social Business Initiative of 2011 is currently being supplemented by regulatory changes such as the review of the regulation on the European Social Entrepreneurship Funds, improving access to public procurement and developing methodologies for measuring social impact. The EU is also making efforts to improve funding opportunities, for instance via the Social Impact Accelerator and the ‘microfinance and social entrepreneurship’ axis of the Employment and Social Innovation programme. Additional funding is made available under the European Structural and Investment Funds, as well as programmes tailored to small and medium-sized enterprises. Expansion of the social economy, however, requires further development of a supportive regulatory environment, a tailored financial ecosystem, and also increased visibility and recognition.

EU Economic Diplomacy Strategy

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 03-03-2017
Author: Florence BOUYALA IMBERT
Policy area: International Trade | Foreign Affairs
Keyword: parliamentary scrutiny | powers of the EP | EU Member State | international affairs | European Investment Bank | trade relations | European Commission | EU legal system | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises | European External Action Service | economic growth | EP Committee | trade promotion | interinstitutional cooperation (EU) | international trade | globalisation
Summary: The post-World War II order is undergoing profound changes with globalisation and the emergence of new economic powers. The economy has gradually taken over as the main driver of political influence and global now transcend the old national or regional divides. As the EU was emerging as a global economic player, the economic and financial crisis made the need to tap into foreign markets all the greater. The creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), incorporating the EU delegations, and the new EU competence for direct foreign investment under the Treaty of Lisbon have given the Union the tools to assume an independent identity in economic diplomacy. As a result, the EU’s business-promotion policy evolved into a much more sophisticated economic diplomacy strategy, handled in a more structured manner by the Commission and the EEAS. The European Parliament must now be involved, beyond its legislative and scrutiny roles, in devising this new strategy. Not only could the EP add to the debate but it can also help the Commission and the EEAS with its long-established tradition of parliamentary diplomacy.
A European Statute for Social and Solidarity-Based Enterprise

Publication type: Study  
Date: 15-02-2017  
External author: Antonio FICI (University of Molise, Italy)

Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | EU Law: Legal System and Acts  
Keyword: cooperative | EU Member State | European Fund for Strategic Investments | social economy | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: The study was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs and commissioned, overseen and published by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. Social enterprises (SE) are subject to ad hoc legislation in an increasing number of EU jurisdictions and legislative initiatives in this field are under consideration by EU institutions. This paper explains why tailor-made legislation on SE is essential for the development of this unconventional form of business organization. It describes and compares existing models of SE regulation and discusses the core elements of an SE’s legal identity, with the aim of providing recommendations on the potential forms and contents of an EU legal statute on this subject.

Study EN

European Semester: Assessing the 2017 priorities

Publication type: At a Glance  
Date: 07-02-2017  
Author: Andrej STUCHLIK

Policy area: European Semester | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues  
Keyword: single market | economic governance (EU) | stability pact | macroeconomics | employment policy | social dialogue (EU) | economic policy | European Semester | euro area | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: The European Semester is a key monitoring element of the EU's economic governance framework which aims to detect, prevent, and correct problematic economic trends such as excessive government deficits or public debt levels. As part of the annual evaluation cycle, three European Parliament Committees discuss the European Commission’s priority areas for 2017: boosting investment, pursuing structural reforms and ensuring responsible fiscal policies. The Committee reports assess the priorities from an economic, employment and single market point of view before the Commission presents dedicated country reports in late February. Plenary discussion on all three reports is planned for the February II part-session.

At a Glance EN

Crowdfunding in Europe: Introduction and state of play

Publication type: Briefing  
Date: 16-01-2017  
Author: Angelos DELIVORIAS

Policy area: Financial and Banking Issues  
Keyword: regulation of investments | financial legislation | start-up | small and medium-sized enterprises | financing method

Summary: Crowdfunding is a relatively 'young' form of financing – especially for SMEs and start-ups, but also for not-for-profit projects – that is developing fast in Europe. While researchers point out its benefits, among them the fact that project owners have greater control, and financial risk is spread among a larger number of people, they also note its drawbacks. The latter include a high cost of capital, occasional displays of a 'herd mentality', capable of depriving potentially worthier projects of adequate funding, and risks for investors from incompetence or fraud on the part of the project owners, and unclear regulations. The European Commission (through a communication and two reports) and the European Parliament (through three resolutions) have taken an active interest in this form of financing. As a result, the Commission recently conducted a study on the state of the European crowdfunding market. It found that, while crowdfunding is developing fast, it is still concentrated in a few countries (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands), which have introduced tailored domestic regimes, and that it remains, for the time being, a national phenomenon with limited cross-border activity. The study therefore concluded that for the moment there is no strong case for EU-level policy intervention. Nonetheless, given the encouraging trends and the potential of crowdfunding to become a key source of financing for SMEs over the long term, the Commission noted that it will maintain regular dialogue with European supervisory authorities, Member States and the crowdfunding sector to monitor and review its development.

Briefing EN
EFSI and ESI Funds: Complementarity or contradiction?

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 11-01-2017
Author: Vasileios MARGARAS

Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues | Regional Development
Keyword: European Structural and Investment Funds | EU regional policy | investment project | European Investment Bank | EU growth strategy | European Fund for Strategic Investments | small and medium-sized enterprises | transport infrastructure | financing | EU investment | operation of the Institutions | fund (EU) | innovation | proposal (EU)

Summary: Shortly after beginning its 2014-2019 mandate, the European Commission proposed a new investment Plan for Europe, often referred to as the 'Juncker Plan'. The Investment Plan was seen as a top priority for the European Commission, aimed at strengthening Europe's competitiveness and stimulating investment in order to create more jobs. It is based on three mutually reinforcing strands: firstly, the mobilisation of at least €315 billion in additional investment over the next three years, maximising the impact of public resources and unlocking private investment through the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI); secondly, targeted initiatives to ensure that this extra investment meets the needs of the real economy through strengthened transparency measures and advisory services; and thirdly, measures to provide greater regulatory predictability and to remove barriers to investment, making Europe more attractive and thereby multiplying the plan's impact. The European Parliament was generally positive regarding EFSI, however, there were criticisms regarding its scope, remit and overall output in the European economy. One of the issues raised in policy fora is the complex relationship between EFSI and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) as well as EFSI's overall impact on the territorial cohesion objective of European Union regional policy. Various stakeholders have also mentioned that EFSI may run contrary to the aims of the ESI Funds, thus creating a competitive relationship with EU regional policy.

Economic Dialogue with the Commission on the Launch of the 2017 European Semester Cycle

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 08-12-2016
Author: Jost ANGERER | Alice ZOPPÉ | Martin HRADISKY | Kajus HAGESTAM | MATTEO CIUCCI

Policy area: European Semester | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: single market | digital single market | economic governance (EU) | EU investment | economic growth | EU Member State | institutional reform | job creation | European Semester | short-term forecast | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: Vice-President Dombrovskis, Commissioner Moscovici and Commissioner Thyssen are participating in an Economic Dialogue on the "2017 European Semester Autumn Package", based on the provisions of the economic governance framework. This document gives an overview of the elements of the package and presents the next steps.

European venture capital and social entrepreneurship funds

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 07-12-2016
Author: Claudio COLLOVA

Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: single market | small and medium-sized enterprises | private investment | business start-up | entrepreneur | early-stage capital | fund (EU) | distribution of EU funding | general budget (EU) | start-up | venture capital | social economy | EU statistics

Summary: This initial appraisal concludes that the Commission's impact assessment is based on sound knowledge and on relevant data relating to the investment funds industry. However, the evidence regarding specifically the two fund frameworks under review - European venture capital funds and European social entrepreneurship funds - is, by the IA's own admission, limited. The IA and the review attached to it do not cover all the points listed in the review clauses of the two regulations, for instance the geographical and sectoral distribution of investments undertaken specifically by EuVECA and EuSEF funds. At first sight, it appears that different conclusions could be drawn using the same data provided in the IA, for instance regarding the low take-up and lower than expected performance of the funds. The range of options analysed in depth seems rather narrow. Finally, the purpose of the existing regulations is to enhance the growth of small and medium-size enterprises and of social businesses. The IA states that it is too early to judge whether these objectives have been achieved and excludes this issue from the scope of the analysis. Even so, an initial analysis of the public consultations undertaken shows that, despite the absence of more concrete evidence, a greater effort could have been made to integrate the voice of non-financial businesses, including SMEs and social enterprises, within the IA.
**Application of the European Order for Payment**

**Publication type** At a Glance  
**Date** 25-11-2016  
**Author** Rafał MAŃKO

**Policy area** Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | EU Law: Legal System and Acts  
**Keyword** judicial cooperation in civil matters in the EU | assessment | injunction | civil proceedings | European Commission | civil procedure | claim | report | small and medium-sized enterprises

**Summary** On 17 October 2016, Parliament’s Legal Affairs Committee adopted a report on the application of the European Order for Payment procedure. The report is very critical of the Commission’s belated implementation report and looks for the plenary to call upon the Commission to submit a fresh one.

**At a Glance** EN

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**Challenges and opportunities for Europe’s small transport firms**

**Publication type** At a Glance  
**Date** 15-11-2016  
**Author** Marketa PAPE

**Policy area** Transport | Employment | Tourism  
**Keyword** freedom to provide services | collaborative economy | Framework Programme for Research and Development | administrative supervision | technological change | transport regulations | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access

**Summary** The projected growth in demand for transport will magnify the challenges – such as congestion, decarbonisation and the digital transition – faced by the EU transport sector. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in this sector are confronted by these evolving trends but can also play a vital role in addressing them and building new business opportunities. The EP’s Committee on Transport and Tourism has adopted an own-initiative report on new opportunities for small transport businesses, including collaborative business models, to be debated during the November plenary session.

**At a Glance** EN

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**Proceedings of the Workshop on “Relations between Franchisors and Franchisees: Regulatory Framework and Current Challenges”**

**Publication type** Study  
**Date** 15-11-2016

**External author** Magda SCHUSTEROVÁ and Aneta WIEWIÓROWSKA-DOMAGALSKA (Osnabrück University, Germany)

**Policy area** Forward Planning | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council | EU Law: Legal System and Acts

**Keyword** EU competition policy | single market | unfair terms of contract | right of establishment | restriction on competition | vertical agreement | service industry | free movement of goods | retail selling | industrial property | franchising | small and medium-sized enterprises

**Summary** The workshop organised by the Policy Department A for the IMCO Committee aimed at discussing problems in the area of franchising and the impact of the EU rules on functioning of the franchising contract. It allowed exchange of views on market conditions in the EU as well as corrective legislative and regulatory actions.

**Study** EN

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**Investing in regions to boost jobs: Cohesion policy and job creation**

**Publication type** In-Depth Analysis  
**Date** 26-10-2016  
**Author** Agnieszka WIDUTO

**Policy area** Employment | Regional Development

**Keyword** impact study | economic and social cohesion | job creation | European Social Fund | Cohesion Fund | European Regional Development Fund | European Parliament | small and medium-sized enterprises | EU statistics

**Summary** In these times of post economic and financial crisis the EU is faced with numerous employment challenges, such as high overall unemployment and insufficient labour market participation by disadvantaged groups. Cohesion policy offers significant investment resources to address these issues and contribute to EU-wide employment goals. The EU regulations on the European Structural and Investment Funds, which form the legal basis of cohesion policy, lay down the rules for funding allocation and specify the priorities supported, including employment. The strategic implementation documents prepared by the Member States – Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes – describe concrete actions such as training, strengthening public employment services, and supporting entrepreneurship. Individual projects are then implemented on the ground. The impact of cohesion policy is analysed by means of evaluations based on a set of common indicators and methods. These provide the basis for assessing the efficiency of interventions and progress towards the objectives.

**In-Depth Analysis** DE, EN, FR
Study on the Use of Funds for Gender Equality in Selected Member States

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-10-2016
External author: Manuela SAMEK LODOVICI (IRS), Flavia PESCE (IRS) and Daniela Loi (IRS)
Policy area: Gender Issues, Equality and Diversity | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice
Keyword: European Structural and Investment Funds | EU Member State | European Social Fund | EU initiative | Framework Programme for Research and Development | EU programme | gender equality | small and medium-sized enterprises | multiannual financial framework | development policy | pre-accession aid | EU office or agency | European Regional Development Fund | educational exchange | gender mainstreaming
Summary: The focus of the study is to assess how gender mainstreaming is applied in the EU funds allocations for 2014-2020. The focus is on ESIFs funding for childcare and gender mainstreaming in the use of Horizon 2020 and the REC Programmes on the Gender Equality Objective and the follow-up of Daphne Programmes on VAW. The selected countries are: Croatia, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the UK, and the reference period is 2014-2016. The assessment shows that notwithstanding the commitment to gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting is not systematically applied in the EU general budget and the selected programmes.

Research for REGI Committee - Financial instruments in the 2014-20 programming period: First experiences of Member States

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-10-2016
External author: Györgyi NYIKOS (National University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary)
Policy area: Transposition and Implementation of Law | Regional Development
Keyword: control of State aid | State aid | EU financial instrument | EU Member State | EU initiative | European Investment Bank | European Fund for Strategic Investments | distribution of EU funding | small and medium-sized enterprises | multiannual financial framework
Summary: The aim of this study is to provide a synthetic input about the practical implementation of the legislative framework governing financial instruments in the 2014-2020 programming period. Based on the analysis of the previous and the current EU legislation, policy documents and the first experiences of Member States, this study presents recommendations on how to remove obstacles and on how to improve the use of financial instruments.

Health Promotion & Primary Prevention: Exchange of Good Practices

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-10-2016
External author: Yoline KUIPERS CAVACO, Matteo MASCOLO and Alicia MCNEILL
Policy area: European Added Value | Public Health
Keyword: EU office or agency | health care | Framework Programme for Research and Development | disease prevention | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This report summarises the presentations and discussions of a workshop on health promotion and primary prevention, held at the European Parliament in Brussels on Tuesday 29 November 2016. The aim of the workshop was to provide background and technical information and advice to the members of the ENVI Committee on the latest findings and trends in the field of preventive health, specifically concerning health promotion and the primary prevention of diseases and disabilities. The state of primary prevention and health promotion in Europe was highlighted during the first part of the workshop. Presentations focused on joining forces in the context of chronic diseases, the importance of primary care professionals’ clusters, health promotion from citizens’ perspective, and the role schools play in prevention. The second part of the workshop focused on examples of good practices. Various ongoing initiatives, coordinated by the European institutions, in the EU were presented. The activities of insurance industries were also highlighted, as well as the views of employers and trade unions on promoting healthy behaviours and creating healthy working environments.
This workshop and the respective document were prepared by the Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Workshop on How to support the internationalisation of SMEs and microenterprises

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-10-2016
External author: Mike Coyne, Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES)  Stephan Kreutzer, Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES)
Policy area: Energy | EU Law: Legal System and Acts
Keyword: third country | foreign market | aid to undertakings | sustainable development | EU programme | international trade | intergovernmental cooperation (EU) | small and medium-sized enterprises | globalisation
Summary: This paper summarises the discussions taking place during a workshop organised by the Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy for the ITRE Committee on how to support the internationalisation of SMEs and microenterprises. The focus lay on the challenges and barriers, and the drivers to SME internationalisation. Moreover, the success of, and SME participation in EU measures supporting access to new markets were debated.
## Legal Perspective of the Regulatory Framework and Challenges for Franchising in the EU

**Publication type** Study  
**Date** 30-09-2016  
**Author** Mariusz MACIEJEWSKI  
**External author** Dr Mark ABELL  
**Policy area** Public international law | EU Democracy, Institutional and Parliamentary Law | International Trade | Private international law and judicial cooperation in civil matters | Global Governance | Internal Market and Customs Union | Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection  
**Keyword** brand name | harmonisation law | EU Member State | retail trade | franchising | EU law | commercial contract | small and medium-sized enterprises  
**Summary** This paper considers how the regulatory environment of the European Union impacts upon franchising. It suggests that the failure of franchising to fulfil its full potential in the EU is due, at least in part, to the dysfunctionality of the EU’s regulatory environment. It concludes that in order to enable franchising to achieve its full potential it is necessary to re-engineer the EU’s regulatory environment, by way of a franchise focused European Legal Act, in respect of how it impacts upon franchising and makes concrete proposals as to how this should be done.

### Declaration

Study  EN

## Economic impact of Big Data

**Publication type** At a Glance  
**Date** 28-09-2016  
**Author** Eulalia CLAROS GIMENO  
**Policy area** Employment | Economics and Monetary Issues  
**Keyword** information technology industry | innovation | knowledge economy | small and medium-sized enterprises | information technology profession  
**Summary** An EP resolution of 10 March 2016 quotes the benefits of a data driven economy and its expected impact on GDP growth and on job creation according to different worldwide studies. While the volume and the variety of big data is increasing exponentially, its value for the European economy has been highlighted by the creation of the Big Data Public and Private Partnership, which was set up to support both technical and non-technical priority areas in the value chain. A number of indicators covering the European data market are presented in this infographic, in particular regarding its size and expected developments in terms of companies, employment and revenues with a 2020 horizon.

### Declaration

At a Glance  EN

## Research for REGI Committee - Greece: Regional Policy and Economic and Social Situation

**Publication type** In-Depth Analysis  
**Date** 15-09-2016  
**Author** Jacques LECARTE  
**Policy area** Regional Development  
**Keyword** poverty | Structural Funds | European Maritime and Fisheries Fund | European Structural and Investment Funds | EAFRD | EU regional policy | Cohesion Fund | EU initiative | small and medium-sized enterprises | regional aid | less-favoured region | employment policy | job creation | Greece | medium-term forecast  
**Summary** This in-depth analysis was prepared on the request of the Committee on Regional Development in the context of its visit to Greece. The analysis provides an overview of Greece’s regions (with a special attention to Attica and Central Macedonia) and of its political, economic and administrative system. In addition, this analyses focuses on the implementation of cohesion policy on the ground with a particular attention to the consequences of the recent amendment of the Common Provisions Regulation in respect of special measures for Greece, as well as to Greece’s participation in six European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

### Declaration

In-Depth Analysis  EN

## Boosting e-Commerce in the Digital Single Market: A Foundation for European Growth and Competitiveness

**Publication type** In-Depth Analysis  
**Date** 15-09-2016  
**External author** Anthony D. Williams  
**Keyword** single market | electronic commerce | freedom to provide services | digital single market | Internet | information society | information industry | entrepreneur | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic government | discrimination on the basis of nationality  
**Summary** This paper reviews global trends in e-commerce and provides an analysis of the opportunities a Digital Single Market (DSM) would create for European entrepreneurs. The paper argues that the economic impact of the DSM could be enhanced by placing greater attention on the enabling conditions for entrepreneurial success, particularly by ensuring entrepreneurs have access to anchor customers, an ample supply of growth capital, sophisticated management talent and well-coordinated supports for scale-ups and internationalization. This document was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the European Parliament’s Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

### Declaration

In-Depth Analysis  EN
Research for REGI Committee - Evaluation of the Report under Article 16(3) of the CPR

Publication type: Study
Date: 12-09-2016
Author: Filipa AZEVEDO | Diana HAASE
Policy area: Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Regional Development
Keyword: European Structural and Investment Funds | European territorial cooperation | Framework Programme for Research and Development | European Fund for Strategic Investments | European Semester | common agricultural policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | rural development | EU statistics
Summary: This analysis is a contribution to the ongoing EP Implementation report on the Commission Communication on "Investing in jobs and growth - maximising the contribution of European Structural and Investment Funds", the so-called "Article 16(3) report". The main findings included in this paper are based on recently published studies commissioned by the EP REGI Committee.

Study EN

Boosting the competitiveness of SMEs through the Structural and Investment Funds

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 06-09-2016
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO
Policy area: Regional Development
Keyword: European Structural and Investment Funds | competitiveness | job creation | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: SMEs play an important role in the EU economy as they account for 99% of all businesses and provide about two thirds of employment. In the 2014-2020 period, funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds focuses on 11 thematic objectives, with one of them dedicated to strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs.

At a Glance ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, PL

The European Accessibility Act

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-08-2016
Author: Ottavio MARZOCCHI | JONATHAN HARRIS
Policy area: Social Policy | Petitions to the European Parliament
Keyword: impact study | transport infrastructure | EU strategy | disabled person | population ageing | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises | facilities for the disabled | integration of the disabled
Summary: This paper, produced by the Policy Department on Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, looks into the Commission proposal for a European Accessibility Act. It briefly describes its contents, the Council discussions on the proposal, its Impact Assessment and the main points of contention, as well as the views of disability advocacy groups, as well as of the business and industry organisations, both on the act and on its articles. A series of suggestions and recommendations are proposed with the objective of ensuring that the Act can effectively achieve its declared aims: implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by fostering the integration of disabled persons in society and guaranteeing equal access to goods and services.

In-Depth Analysis EN

EU priorities for the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 12-07-2016
Author: Eric PICHON
Policy area: International Trade | Development and Humanitarian Aid
Keyword: the EU's international role | climate change policy | multilateral agreement | UN Conference | sustainable development | international trade | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: The 14th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIV) will take place in Nairobi (Kenya) from 17 to 22 July 2016. This quadrennial conference brings together Heads of State and Government, representatives from the private sector, civil society and the academic world, to discuss international trade and development issues. While the EU has reservations about UNCTAD's economic stance, it appreciates its technical expertise on these matters.

At a Glance EN
TTIP - Challenges and Opportunities
Publication type At a Glance
Date 29-06-2016
Author Mariusz MACIEJEWSKI
Keyword public contract | United States | originating product | free-trade agreement | investment protection | designation of origin | financial services | market access | small and medium-sized enterprises | technical barrier | negotiation of an agreement (EU) | Tertiary sector | plant health legislation | motor vehicle industry | trade agreement (EU)
Summary This leaflet provides short compilation of papers prepared by the European Parliament’s Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy in relation to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).
At a Glance EN

Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME)
Publication type Briefing
Date 09-06-2016
Author Martin SVASEK
Policy area Budget | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword project evaluation | competitiveness | administrative formalities | investment protection | entrepreneurship | EU financing | EU multi-level governance | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access | corporate finance
Summary COSME is a programme of the European Union which supports enterprises (in facilitating access to finance, supporting internationalisation, creating an environment favourable to competitiveness, encouraging entrepreneurship) in order to help them grow and create jobs.
Briefing EN

Barriers to SME growth in Europe
Publication type Briefing
Date 26-05-2016
Author Marcin SZCZEPANSKI
Policy area Employment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword corporation tax | economic consequence | aid to undertakings | overheads | administrative formalities | job creation | economic recession | company growth | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance
Summary Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent 99% of all businesses in the EU, play a pivotal role in its economy. Nevertheless, in comparison to larger firms, they often face significant obstacles – internal, administrative and financial – which affect them disproportionately. SMEs have been affected negatively by the economic crisis, which is manifested in a reduction in the sector’s employment figures. The financial and sovereign debt crises have also had a negative impact on the financing of SMEs, especially in the hardest-hit countries. Perhaps unsurprisingly, important differences exist in access to finance both within the euro area and between the ‘old’ (EU-15) and ‘new’ (EU-13) Member States. Concerning the recovery from the crises, the picture also remains mixed. Administrative and regulatory obstacles are often highlighted by SMEs as being a significant burden on their growth. It is substantially more costly for smaller firms to comply with regulations and few Member States actively support SMEs when it comes to tax provisions, or take their specific characteristics into account when drafting legislation. The European Parliament has been a long-standing advocate of an environment for SMEs that is conducive to growth.
Briefing EN

EU Innovation Policy – Part II: EU policies and instruments supporting innovation
Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 24-05-2016
Author Vincent REILLON
Policy area Research Policy | Economics and Monetary Issues | Industry
Keyword single market | multi-level governance | EU financing | EU industrial policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic commerce | economic and social cohesion | energy policy | entrepreneurship | EU research policy | company research | research and development | innovation | intellectual property
Summary This publication aims to provide an overview of the measures and instruments that make up the EU’s innovation policy mix. The paper focuses on current EU innovation initiatives and considers some issues limiting the development of an EU innovation policy. The EU innovation policy mix comprises, on the one hand, key policies targeting the actors of the innovation process (research and development, industrial, education and regional policy); on the other, it includes key framework conditions covering policies and instruments shaping the interactions and organising the flows of knowledge, skills and funds between the innovation players (funding, taxation, single market and competition, regulation, standards, intellectual property rights, etc.). Most measures taken at EU level aim to address the fragmentation of the European innovation landscape resulting from the diversity of national and regional policies. Although progress has been made in addressing the barriers created by fragmentation, there is a need to renew the governance of innovation policies in order for innovation to reach its full potential in Europe.
In-Depth Analysis DE, EN, FR
Non-tariff barriers in the Single Market

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 23-05-2016
Author: CHRISTIAN SCHEINERT
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword: single market | consumer | business policy | application of EU law | non-tariff barrier | goods and services | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: The Single Market was launched more than 20 years ago, yet a considerable number of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) still exist, despite the fact that this should no longer be the case. NTBs come in many, often disguised, forms and substantially reduce the benefits of the Single Market.

The Single Market Strategy

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 23-05-2016
Author: Jana VALANT
Policy area: Employment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues | Consumer Protection
Keyword: single market | freedom to provide services | VAT | EP Committee | financial solvency | economic convergence | European patent | EU situation | designation of origin | social security | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic analysis
Summary: Following the Commission Communication 'Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business', presented on 28 October 2015, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) adopted its own-initiative report on the Single Market Strategy on 21 April. The report is due to be discussed and voted in plenary in May.

Tailor-Made Support for SMEs towards Effective Implementation of the EU's Trade and Investment Strategy

Publication type: Study
Date: 02-05-2016
External author: Robert BLACKBURN
Policy area: International Trade | Employment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword: common commercial policy | intervention policy | Czechia | United Kingdom | Austria | economic statistics | Bavaria | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises | Italy | economic support | Spain | Germany | trade promotion | innovation | globalisation
Summary: A Workshop on Tailor-made support for SMEs towards effective implementation of the EU's trade and investment strategy took place in the European Parliament on 17 February 2016. Professor Blackburn gave an analysis on SME internationalisation and policy interventions, and representatives of SMEs shared their experiences in this field.

The European Investment Bank: Annual Report 2014 and outlook

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 26-04-2016
Author: Andrej STUCHLIK
Policy area: Budgetary Control | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: EIB loan | activity report | EU investment | economic and social cohesion | EU growth strategy | powers of the institutions (EU) | European Investment Fund | interinstitutional relations (EU) | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance
Summary: The European Union has not yet fully recovered from the global financial and economic crisis. GDP growth rates have begun to increase only slowly, and in most EU Member States investment activity lags behind pre-crisis levels – indicating sizable investment gaps. In fact, gross fixed capital formation in the euro area has declined by 15% since 2007. In 2014, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the EU's public bank and largest multilateral lending institution, contributed financing of €80.3 billion (including the EIF – the European Investment Fund). This was in the form of loans granted to projects in four strategic areas: innovation and skills, smaller enterprises, strategic infrastructure, climate action, as well as to projects outside the EU. In mid-2015, the European Commission introduced the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). As a coordinated effort by the European Commission and the EIB, its goal is to provide additional risk-sharing through public funds. By mid-March 2016, €10.6 billion of public money had been allocated, with the expectation that this would generate a total investment effect of €76.1 billion. The European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) reports on the work of the EIB on an annual basis. It 'welcomes' overall financing activity in 2014, but urges enhanced ex-post assessment. It regrets the lack of information on the number of projects/financial instruments related to operations supporting cohesion. While the EIB usually focuses on small numbers of large, low-risk projects, the introduction of EFSI might eventually lead to assuming more and riskier projects in the future.
New Financial Instruments and the Role of National Promotional Banks

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-04-2016

External author: Mark Whittle, Jack Malan and Danilo Bianchini (Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services LLP - CSES)

Policy area: Budget | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Budgetary Control | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues

Keyword: coordination of financing | State aid | EU Member State | investment protection | European Investment Bank | European Investment Fund | European Commission | development bank | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance | EU financing arrangements | aid to undertakings | EU financial instrument

Summary: This Paper examines the role played by National Promotional Banks and Regional Promotional Banks in implementing EU SME financial instruments across EU-28, to examine how far they are already involved in implementing these instruments and in what capacity they help to strengthen access to finance for SMEs. The focus is on instruments implemented under shared management, as well as on those implemented under direct management by the European Commission and indirect management by the EIB and the EIF on behalf of the EC.

Study EN

Non-Performing Loans in the Banking Union: Stocktaking and Challenges

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 18-03-2016

Author: Marcel MAGNUS | ALIENOR ANNE CLAIRE DUVILLET-MARGERIT | Cairen POWER | Benoit MESNARD

Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues

Keyword: impact study | financial solvency | economic growth | EU Member State | international loan | economic recession | banking | European Investment Bank | International Monetary Fund | anti-crisis plan | euro area | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: This briefing presents the state of play of non-performing loans (NPL) in the euro area, and provides an overview of the various measures implemented across Member States to facilitate their resolution.

Briefing EN

Industry 4.0

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 14-03-2016

Author: Frederic GOUARDERES

Policy area: Research Policy | Forward Planning | Industry

Keyword: social impact | automation | impact of information technology | industrial revolution | EU industrial policy | technological change | data protection | small and medium-sized enterprises | industrial data processing | professional qualifications

Summary: The study Industry 4.0 explores three key dimensions of change relevant to Industry 4.0: technological, social and the business paradigm, outlines policy implications and makes recommendations. This leaflet presents short summary of this study.


At a Glance EN

Research for REGI Committee - Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-02-2016

Author: Filipa AZEVEDO | Diana HAASE

Policy area: Forward Planning | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Regional Development | Industry

Keyword: Structural Funds | coordination of financing | aid evaluation | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance | regional development | operational programme | EU financing arrangements | economic and social cohesion | aid to undertakings | inter-company cooperation | administrative formalities | competitiveness

Summary: Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are essential to the economies of EU regions, both in terms of employment and competitiveness. In 2014, SMEs employed almost 90 million people and it has been estimated that for every km2 of land surface the EU has an average of 5 SMEs. Almost all SMEs (93%) are micro enterprises and employ less than 10 people and the majority of SMEs are active in the five following sectors: ‘wholesale and retail trade’, ‘manufacturing’, ‘construction’, ‘business services’ and ‘accommodation and food services’. For the 2014-2020 period the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) support investments in SMEs through all thematic objectives, particularly through Thematic Objective 3 (TO3) on enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMIF). In order to first evaluate the main challenges of the implementation of TO3, the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development (EP REGI) requested the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies to draw up this briefing in support of the ongoing implementation report on “Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs” (Rapporteur: Rosa D’Amato).

Briefing EN
A deeper and fairer Single Market: New opportunities for business and people

The Role of the European Investment Bank in Promoting Foreign Trade by SMEs

MFF 2014-2020: Background Note in View of Mid-Term Review/Revision - Specific Flexibility - Frontloading of Some Key Programmes

A deeper and fairer Single Market: New opportunities for business and people
**Conciliation agreement on the 2016 EU budget**

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 20-11-2015
Author: Alessandro D’ALFONSO

Policy area: Budget | Budgetary Control
Keyword: education grant | research expenditure (EU) | Community support framework | EU migration policy | student mobility | financial year | general budget (EU) | budgetary procedure | small and medium-sized enterprises | multiannual financial framework | interinstitutional agreement

Summary: On 14 November, European Parliament (EP) and Council negotiators reached a provisional deal on next year’s EU budget, setting commitments at €155 billion and payments at €143.88 billion. The compromise is now to be adopted by the Council and then voted by the EP in plenary.

At a Glance EN

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**Research for TRAN Committee - The Digitisation of Tourism Enterprises**

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 16-11-2015
External author: Ondrej Mitas, Marian van der Ent and Paul Peeters

Policy area: Transport | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice
Keyword: electronic commerce | impact of information technology | dominant position | tourism | market | information technology applications | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: This analysis synthesizes the effects of information technology developments on tourism SMEs in the European Union. The effects were found to be profoundly disruptive to traditional business models of tourism information and distribution. Policy developments supporting research, education and facilitating change in tourism SMEs are called for.

In-Depth Analysis EN

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Publication type: Briefing
Date: 09-11-2015
Author: Claudio COLLOVA

Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: financial policy | financial instrument | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance | impact study | simplification of legislation | legislative programme (EU) | capital movement | capital market | capital movement | capital market | financing method | investment company | proposal (EU)

Summary: This briefing seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying two Commission proposals for Regulations referred to Parliament’s Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs: Regulation laying down common rules on securitisation and creating a European framework for simple, transparent and standardised securitisation (COM (2015) 472); and Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms (COM (2015) 473). Securitisation refers to the process of packaging and converting loans into securities that can be sold to investors. The Commission recognises that securitisation of US subprime mortgages was one of the causes of the last financial crisis, but believes that properly structured securitisation can play a positive role in the EU economy. These are the first two legislative proposals of the Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union, one of the Commission's key priorities, aimed at strengthening the links between savings and growth. The European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on Building a Capital Markets Union expressed support for an initiative in this field, as part of a broad variety of avenues to be explored to improve SME financing.

Briefing EN

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**Horizon 2020 budget and implementation: A guide to the structure of the programme**

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 03-11-2015
Author: Vincent REILLON

Policy area: Research Policy
Keyword: implementation of the budget | public-private partnership | European Institute of Innovation and Technology | Framework Programme for Research and Development | European Commission | small and medium-sized enterprises | executive agency | research expenditure (EU) | operation of the Institutions | EU research policy | company research | Joint Research Centre | general budget (EU) | financing method

Summary: Horizon 2020, the current framework programme for research and innovation, inherited features from its predecessors, whilst simultaneously proposing a new architecture to support all activities in the research and innovation system – from blue-sky research to close-to-market applications. Including all these dimensions introduced several levels of complexity to the programme’s implementation. Following the distribution of the budget – from the nine Commission Directorates-General which oversee Horizon 2020, to the 22 bodies which manage its implementation, along three main pillars and two specific objectives – this document provides a guide to the programme exploring the multiple levels of complexity.

In-Depth Analysis DE, EN, FR
EU funding for culture: the regional dimension
Publication type At a Glance
Date 08-10-2015
Author Magdalena PASIKOWSKA-SCHNASS
Policy area Culture | Tourism
Keyword EU regional policy | culture industry | heritage protection | EU programme | cultural tourism | small and medium-sized enterprises | regional development | cross-border cooperation | EU financing arrangements | regional cooperation | right to culture | fund (EU) | research and development | innovation
Summary Although competence for culture policy lies with the Member States, various EU programmes and funds are available for cultural projects. The contribution of culture to regional development is increasingly recognised and EU regional funding can finance projects with a cultural dimension.

SME support in EU regions
Publication type Briefing
Date 01-10-2015
Author Agnieszka WIDUTO
Policy area Regional Development
Keyword aid to undertakings | economic and social cohesion | EU financing | credit guarantee | investment promotion | EU programme | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises | financing method | corporate finance
Summary The European Union supports businesses and entrepreneurship through a wide range of programmes. Specific focus is afforded to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), as they form the largest share of EU businesses and provide the majority of jobs and turnover. SMEs are also important for EU regional competitiveness, as they often operate on a local scale and play a crucial role in strong regional economies.

The Capital Markets Union package
Publication type At a Glance
Date 30-09-2015
Author Angelos DELIVORIAS
Policy area Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword single market | investment policy | private investment | financial market | financial solvency | market supervision | financial legislation | start-up | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises | capital market | corporate finance
Summary Despite the fact that the free movement of capital is one of the 'four freedoms', the integration of European capital markets is not complete and has even regressed during the latest financial crisis. Furthermore, European businesses remain heavily reliant on banks (about 80% of their financing comes from banks) and much less on capital markets (whereas in the US, the ratio is the opposite).
Tourism and the European Union: Recent trends and policy developments

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 25-09-2015
Author: Maria Niestadt
Policy area: Tourism
Keyword: travel | consumer protection | EU regional policy | economic statistics | admission of aliens | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic commerce | economic consequence | tourist exchange | consumer behaviour | tourism policy | common transport policy | EU competence | Treaty of Lisbon
Summary: Tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the European Union, making an important contribution to the EU economy and to job creation. Europe is the most visited region in the world. However, tourism in other regions is growing faster and Europe’s market share, in terms of international tourist arrivals and receipts, is shrinking. Tourism businesses in the EU are confronted with a number of changes in tourist profile and behaviour, for example in terms of age, country of origin, how they plan and buy their travel, or which mode of transport they use. Tourism policy remains a competence of the Member States. As the Treaties allow the EU only to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States, EU tourism policy has been rather limited, consisting mainly in providing financial support or legislating through other EU policies. The current framework for tourism policy is based upon a 2010 Communication; a revised strategy is expected to be adopted by the European Commission later in 2015.

In-Depth Analysis DE, EN, FR

Investment for jobs and growth in EU regions

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 02-09-2015
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO
Policy area: Employment | Regional Development
Keyword: investment policy | cross-border cooperation | economic growth | economic and social cohesion | EU regional policy | job creation | European Social Fund | Cohesion Fund | European Regional Development Fund | economic infrastructure | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: Cohesion policy is the EU’s main investment policy, with a budget of over €350 billion for the 2014-20 period. It supports investments in employment, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), environment and infrastructure. The sixth cohesion report, published by the European Commission in July 2014, analyses the impact, evolution and future prospects of cohesion policy.

At a Glance: ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, PL

Unfair Trading Practices in the Business-to-Business Food Supply Chain

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 14-08-2015
External author: Aneta Wiewiórowska-Domagalska (Osnabrück University, Germany)
Policy area: Area of Freedom, Security and Justice | International Trade | Internal Market and Customs Union | Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection
Keyword: unfair terms of contract | industrial product | restriction on competition | supply | drafting of EU law | wholesale trade | food industry | EU market | retail trade | distributor | small and medium-sized enterprises | agri-foodstuffs
Summary: Unfair trade practices imposed by the stronger party to a contract can have a profound impact on the functioning of the market, increasing costs and reducing revenues of the parties that experience them. This background paper reviews unfair trade practices that can appear on any side of the B2B (Business-to-Business) transaction, in any sector of the market. Recently unfair trading practices have been of particular interest to the EU in relation to food supply chains. Briefing concludes that any consideration concerning possible future action in the area of unfair trading practices must consider a number of issues such as: whether or not legislative action is needed, and if so, what scope and form should it take. However, the key element of any action is to ensure its subsequent effective enforcement.

Briefing: EN

Transposition and implementation of the Directive on Late Payments in commercial transactions: Implementation in Action

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-07-2015
Author: Stephane REYNOLDS
Policy area: Transposition and Implementation of Law | Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword: infringement procedure (EU) | public contract | deadline for payment | commercial transaction | EU Member State | directive (EU) | small and medium-sized enterprises | national implementing measure | debt | corporate finance
Summary: This in-depth analysis, produced by the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), aims to present an updated overview of the state of transposition of Directive 2011/7/EU on late payments in commercial transactions. An analysis of the state of implementation and on the operation in practice of the directive is also provided. It has been drafted following the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee’s first “scrutiny session” with the European Commission, on 23rd June 2015, focussing on this directive. Please click here for the full publication in PDF format

In-Depth Analysis: EN
Green growth opportunities for SMEs: Green Action Plan

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 25-06-2015
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO

Policy area: Environment | Industry
Keyword: standardisation | clean technology | EU initiative | sustainable development | public consultation | EU financing | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access

Summary: Green growth, as a way to reconcile economic growth with environmental sustainability, offers numerous business opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Depending on their profile and sector, companies can put environmental products and services on the fast-growing green market. They can also make environmental improvements in their operations to reduce costs and comply with regulatory requirements. Companies wishing to engage in greening, however, are often faced with a lack of specialist knowledge, difficulties in accessing finance and excessive regulatory burdens.

The Green Action Plan (GAP), proposed by the European Commission in 2014, is aimed at helping SMEs turn environmental challenges into opportunities. It focuses on resource efficiency, green entrepreneurship and green skills, eco-innovation, greener value chains, and facilitating market access for SMEs. It also provides tools for the internationalisation of European SMEs, taking advantage of Europe's leadership in green technologies. The Plan complements other EU initiatives, such as the Green Employment Initiative, a Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, Circular Economy and European Industrial Renaissance, and is intended to create synergies between them, using the financing under existing programmes. The actions proposed are intended not only to benefit SMEs and the economy, but also to help address environmental challenges related to resource scarcity, waste management and climate change.

Reactions to the Plan have been largely positive, with stakeholders pointing out the need to involve business associations, take into account the variety of SME models in Europe, and prioritise financing, knowledge transfer and a supportive regulatory environment. The European Parliament welcomed the Plan but pointed out areas requiring further effort.

State of play on the transposition of Directive 2011/7/EU on late payments in commercial transactions: Implementation Appraisal

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 23-06-2015
Author: Stephane REYNOLDS

Policy area: Transposition and Implementation of Law | Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword: public contract | deadline for payment | EU Member State | directive (EU) | small and medium-sized enterprises | national implementing measure

Summary: This briefing aims to present an initial overview of the state of transposition of Directive 2011/7/EU on late payments in commercial transactions. It has been drafted for the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee's first "scrutiny session" with the European Commission, on 23rd June 2015, focusing on this directive. Where available, an analysis on implementation and on the operation in practice of EU law on late payments has also been provided. It is produced by the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

EU-US negotiations on TTIP: A survey of current issues

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-06-2015
Author: Laura PUCCIO

Policy area: International Trade | Foreign Affairs
Keyword: public contract | United States | originating product | free-trade agreement | investment protection | designation of origin | financial services | market access | small and medium-sized enterprises | technical barrier | negotiation of an agreement (EU) | tertiary sector | plant health legislation | trade agreement (EU)

Summary: The negotiations on a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US aim at achieving a comprehensive trade agreement with renewed liberalisation efforts in trade, services and investments while at the same time aiming at regulatory cooperation and rule-based trade. Negotiations on TTIP have now completed their ninth round. Political debates on some of the outstanding issues are becoming more acute, as the European Parliament discusses its new recommendations to the European Commission on TTIP. The discussion and vote in plenary planned for 10 June was postponed in view of the large number of amendments submitted to the draft recommendations. This analysis looks at the different negotiation issues still outstanding.
Economic, Social and Territorial Situation of Sicily

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-06-2015
Author: Filipa AZEVEDO
Policy area: Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Regional Development
Keyword: autonomy | investment policy | labour market | regional parliament | economic statistics | unemployment | regional government | small and medium-sized enterprises | Italy | operational programme | economic and social cohesion | regional statistics | European Regional Development Fund | research and development | innovation | Sicily | economic situation | regional economy
Summary: This in-depth analysis was written for a delegation from the Committee on Regional Development visiting Sicily. The analysis provides an overview of the region of Sicily, its political, economic and administrative system, and of the Operational Programme for the period of 2014-2020.

In-Depth Analysis EN, FR, IT

TTIP: Opportunities and Challenges in the Area of Public Procurement

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-06-2015
External author: Stephen WOOLCOCK
Keyword: public contract | negotiation of an agreement (EU) | United States | free-trade agreement | business morals | protectionism | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access
Summary: In TTIP the EU has offensive interests in greater coverage of public procurement markets in the USA. Consumers stand to gain from lower prices and better use of public funds. There is an opportunity to negotiate better access for EU suppliers. EU smaller or medium sized suppliers would especially benefit from more transparent US state and city public procurement procedures.

In-Depth Analysis EN

Green growth and SMEs

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 11-05-2015
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO
Policy area: Environment | Industry
Keyword: clean technology | aid to undertakings | productivity | energy efficiency | sustainable development | EU financing | environmental impact | small and medium-sized enterprises | energy saving | corporate finance
Summary: Green growth – as a means to reconcile economic growth with environmental sustainability – offers a number of business opportunities for SMEs. Companies can benefit from putting environmental products and services on the market, and from greening their operations. To help overcome existing obstacles, and enable SMEs to tap into the potential of green growth, the European Commission has proposed a Green Action Plan for SMEs.

At a Glance ES, DE, EN, FR, IT, PL

EU Industrial Policy: Assessment of Recent Developments and Recommendations for Future Policies

Publication type: Study
Date: 02-03-2015
External author: Julie Pellerin (CSIL - Centre for Industrial Studies, Italy), Maria Letizia Giorgetti (University of Milan, Italy), Camilla Jensen (CASE, Poland) and Alberto Bolognini (Economisti Associati, Italy)
Policy area: Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Industry
Keyword: single market | EU competition policy | France | United Kingdom | industrial development | EU industrial policy | EU programme | small and medium-sized enterprises | Italy | Poland | Germany | productivity | economic and social cohesion | EU financial instrument | competitiveness | Greece | research and development | innovation | intellectual property | EU statistics
Summary: Following disregard in the 1980s, industrial policy has recently attracted policy attention at EU level. The objective of this study provided by Policy Department A at the request of the ITRE Committee, is to establish the state of the art of a coordinated and integrated EU industrial policy. It assesses current initiatives, policies and arrangements and proposes an overview of stakeholders’ positions at EU and national levels in order to feed into the debate on how to improve competitiveness and growth in Europe.

Study EN
Single-member private limited liability companies: Initial Appraisal of a European Commission Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 18-02-2015
Author: Alexia MANIAKI-GRIVA

Policy area: Public international law | Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Private international law and judicial cooperation in civil matters
Keyword: impact study | company law | principle of subsidiarity | drafting of EU law | principle of proportionality | small and medium-sized enterprises | agency abroad | electronic government | registration of a company | financial requirements | single-member private limited company

Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment accompanying the Commission proposal for a Directive on single-member private limited liability companies.

The context of the initiative is well presented. Efforts have been made to substantiate the problems identified and the various options considered are clearly described. Research and consultation appears to have been wide-ranging, although a breakdown of stakeholder views on each option would have been useful. The scope of the IA could have been broader, however. In particular, a more quantified and targeted cost-benefit analysis, especially with regard to costs for Member States and SMEs, and more data on how efficient different Member State measures have been in ensuring the smooth functioning of similar systems, would have strengthened the arguments. More specific evidence would also have been helpful with regard to the potential uptake of this initiative by the beneficiaries targeted.

State Aid to Banks and Credit for SMEs: Is There a Need for Conditionality?

Publication type: Study
Date: 16-02-2015
External author: Rym AYADI (CEPS), Willem Pieter DE GROEN (CEPS) and Peter THYRI (Vienna University of Business Economics, Austria)
Policy area: Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: bank | aid to undertakings | economic statistics | credit | EU Member State | banking policy | monetary crisis | credit policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance

Summary: This study assesses whether a condition which requires ailing banks or groups of ailing banks that receive State aid to maintain or to provide additional access to finance small and medium-sized enterprises legally justified and economically beneficial. The relevant cases have been examined and the link to SME lending has been analysed in a qualitative and a quantitative way. An overview table of the cases analysis is provided in the Annex.

This study was prepared by Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON).

Recovery of Rare Earths from Electronic Wastes: An Opportunity for High-Tech SMEs

Publication type: Study
Date: 05-02-2015
External author: Achilleas TSAMIS and Mike COYNE (Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services LLP)
Policy area: Research Policy | Industry
Keyword: security of supply | recycling technology | scientific cooperation | research and development | EU industrial policy | substitute product | waste recycling | environmental impact | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic waste | new technology

Summary: This document was prepared on behalf of Policy Department A at the request of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. It reviews the current level of technology development for the recovery of rare earths from electronic waste and examines the parameters that affect its development at the industrial scale and the opportunities arising for high tech SMEs. It also reviews the existing policy framework and provides a set of recommendations for improved implementation of existing actions and new policy measures.
Covered bonds – ripe for expansion?

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 09-01-2015
Author: Angelos DELIVORIAS

Policy area: Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword: bond | issue of securities | money-market liquidity | law of banking | monetary crisis | financial legislation | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial intervention | public borrowing | corporate finance

Summary: The covered bond is a debt instrument with a long history in Europe. There has never been a default of a covered bond, and they performed relatively well during the latest financial crisis. They are characterised by the double protection offered to their holders, the separation of collateralised assets in a cover pool that is dynamically managed, and strict regulatory and supervisory frameworks. The main issuers of covered bonds are banks and the debt they use is mainly mortgage or public-sector debt, although in the context of the current economic environment, many suggest extending them to include SME debt too. Covered bonds bring numerous benefits to all parties involved, although some researchers have pointed out certain drawbacks which can increase systemic risk and therefore need to be investigated more closely by regulators and supervisors. There is no single, harmonised, legal framework for covered bonds, and the legislation relating to them at EU level is interwoven in the provisions of different regulations and directives. However, some convergence has taken place following the development of the eligibility criteria for parliametary capital requirements under the Capital Requirements Directive (CRD IV). The European Commission, after consulting the European Banking Authority, intends to review the treatment of such bonds in this context. Taking into account the findings of this review, it is then expected to launch a study on the merits of introducing an EU framework for covered bonds in 2015.

Appliances burning gaseous fuels: Initial Appraisal of a European Commission Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 05-12-2014
Author: Alison DAVIES | Alina Alexandra GEORGESCU

Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection
Keyword: single market | simplification of legislation | impact study | product safety | drafting of EU law | public consultation | gas appliance | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying the above proposal for a Regulation on appliances burning gaseous fuels. This is a proposal to replace the Gas Appliances Directive 2009/142/EC (GAD) of 2009, which aims to permit the free movement of appliances and fittings burning gaseous fuels within the EU market while ensuring a high level of protection for consumers against risks. The Directive is an example of Union harmonisation legislation, and is said to have contributed considerably to the completion and operation of the single market. The Gas Appliances Directive (GAD) covers 'appliances burning gaseous fuels that are used for cooking, heating, hot water production, refrigeration, lighting or washing, [...] forced draft burners and heating bodies to be equipped with such burners', as well as 'fittings' such as safety, controlling or regulating devices. The document concludes that, as far as the form is concerned, the drafting and editing quality of the IA is poor in places and there is a great deal of repetition. Some of the information contained in the Annexes could usefully have been included in the body of the report, and more direct reference to the work of the external study would have been helpful. The assessment of the options by individual problem issue is not the clearest way to proceed and makes it difficult to gain an overview. As far as the substance is concerned, the IA report seems to suggest that there is a limit to how much analysis can realistically and usefully be made of what it repeatedly recalls are unlikely to be significant impacts. The assessment of those potential impacts is therefore equally limited. The choices of options is also very restricted. The external IA study apparently already carried out an in-depth analysis of the various suggestions coming out of the consultation process. As a result, any additional options which might have implied more far-reaching impacts, such as extension of the scope of the legislation, for example, had already been discarded, and are therefore not included in the assessment within the IA report itself. Both the external study and the IA report could perhaps usefully have considered addressing in more depth some of the impacts of the original directive identified by the ex-post evaluation. This note, prepared by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit for the Committee Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) of the European Parliament, analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission’s own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee(s) and Members more widely in their work.

Crowdfunding – an alternative financing option for SMEs

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 25-11-2014
Author: Agnieszka WIDUTO

Policy area: Industry
Keyword: public-private partnership | business start-up | approximation of laws | impact of information technology | virtual community | shareholding | start-up | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance

Summary: The economic and financial crisis has significantly reduced banks' lending to businesses. This gap in financing, coupled with the rise of social media and interactive online platforms, has contributed to the increased popularity of crowdfunding as a possible alternative source of funding. In this context, the European Commission adopted a communication on unleashing the potential of crowdfunding in the EU, as part of efforts to improve the long-term financing of enterprises and encourage innovation.
Stoiber Group on administrative burdens in EU law: better law-making in action

Publication type  At a Glance
Date 17-11-2014
Author Anita ORAV | Stephane REYNOLDS
Keyword simplification of legislation | impact study | advisory committee (EU) | administrative formalities | operation of the Institutions | drafting of EU law | small and medium-sized enterprises | action programme | national implementing measure
Summary The High-Level Group on Administrative Burdens or the Stoiber Group was established in 2007 as an independent body to advise the European Commission on its planned Action Programme for administrative burden reduction (ABR) in respect of EU legislation. The latter programme set a 25 per cent reduction target by 2012, covering 13 policy areas. On 14 October 2014, at the presentation of the group’s Final Report to then Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Mr Stoiber invited the Commission to continue its efforts to make EU law lighter, simpler and less costly. The Final Report acknowledges that there has been a recent shift in culture within the Commission and urges the Commission to go further, for example by seeking to calculate the total net cost of legislation as precisely as possible. EU member states should be tasked with indicating clearly where minimum requirements have been exceeded, with the aim of revealing any potentially unnecessary ‘gold-plating’ at national level. Background The Stoiber group’s work was organised in three successive rounds or ‘mandates’, and its final mandate came to an end on 31 October 2014, at the end of the five-year term of the second Barroso Commission. As explained in detail in the Final Report, the first mandate of the Stoiber Group helped the Commission to evaluate administrative burdens on business and other stakeholders, and to shape related proposals in the Action Programme. During its second mandate, the group focused on reducing administrative burdens through the better transposition of EU laws by the 28 member states, whilst during its third mandate, the group focussed on policy towards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in this field.

At a Glance  EN

Unconventional Monetary Policy and Financial Market Fragmentation in the Euro Area, Monetary Dialogue, November 2014

Publication type  In-Depth Analysis
Date 14-11-2014
External author Daniel GROS, Cinzia ALCIDI, Alessandro GIOVANNINI and Diego VALIANTE (Centre for European Policy Studies) ; Stefan COLLIGNON and Carlo MILANI (Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna and London School of Economics, Centro Europa Ricerche)
Policy area European Semester | Economics and Monetary Issues
Keyword economic forecasting | economic governance (EU) | financial market | EU Member State | Eurogroup (euro area) | European Central Bank | small and medium-sized enterprises | interest | Eurobond | monetary policy
Summary In this compilation of notes, key monetary policy experts analyse financial markets fragmentation in the euro area, comment on the role and constraints of the ECB in addressing problems in specific market segments/sectors/countries at challenging times for (conventional) monetary policy, assess whether the measures so far taken have achieved the envisaged objectives, and consider whether additional unconventional monetary measures shall be envisaged as the economic recovery is losing momentum. The notes have been requested by the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) of the European Parliament as an input for the November 2014 session of the Monetary Dialogue between the Members of the ECON Committee and the President of the ECB.

In-Depth Analysis  EN

Commitments Made at the Hearing of Jyrki Katainen - Commissioner-Designate

Publication type  Briefing
Date 04-11-2014
Author Dirk VERBEKEN
Policy area Budget | Transport | European Semester | Employment | Economics and Monetary Issues | Regional Development | Industry
Keyword investment policy | governance | Finland | public hearing | appointment of members | small and medium-sized enterprises | market economy | economic growth | EU investment | competitiveness | job creation | European Commissioner | interinstitutional cooperation (EU) | vice-president of an institution
Summary This Briefing summarises the commitments made at the hearing of JYRKI KATAINEN Vice-President of the Commission, Commissioner designate for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness.

Briefing  EN
Commitments Made at the Hearing of Carlos Moedas - Commissioner-Designate

Publication type Briefing
Date 04-11-2014
Author Frederic GOULARDES
Keyword applied research | Portugal | European Commissioner | public hearing | Framework Programme for Research and Development | industry-research relations | EU research policy | appointment of members | interinstitutional cooperation (EU) | innovation | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary This note summarises the commitments made at the hearing of Carlos Moedas Commissioner designate for Research and Innovation.

Commitments Made at the Hearing of Elżbieta Bieńkowska - Commissioner-Designate

Publication type Briefing
Date 04-11-2014
Author Carine PIAGUET
Policy area Environment | Research Policy | Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection | Regional Development | Public Health | Industry
Keyword single market | public contract | arms industry | public hearing | appointment of members | EU industrial policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | Poland | mutual recognition principle | European Commissioner | entrepreneurship | interest group | interinstitutional cooperation (EU) | intellectual property
Summary Briefing summarises commitments made at the hearing of Elżbieta Bieńkowska Commissioner designate for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME.

Cost of Non-Europe in the Single Market for transport and tourism: tourism policy and passenger rights (Annex III)

Publication type Study
Date 28-10-2014
External author This study has been written by Richard Weston and Nicholas Davies of the University of Central Lancashire and Anna Scuttari, Matthias Wagner and Harald Pechlaner of the European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano, at the request of the European Added Value Unit, of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, within the European Parliamentary Research service (EPRS) of the European Parliament.
Policy area European Added Value | Transport | Tourism
Keyword equitable tourism | single market | cost analysis | approximation of laws | disabled person | consumer protection | cultural tourism | rural tourism | small and medium-sized enterprises | traveller | cycle track | intra-EU transport | tourism policy | carriage of passengers | ticket | combined transport
Summary Cost of Non-Europe Reports identify the possibilities for economic or other gains and/or the realisation of a ‘public good’ through common action at EU level in specific policy areas and sectors. This Cost of Non-Europe Report seeks to analyse the costs for citizens, businesses and relevant stake-holders of remaining gaps and barriers in the Single Market in transports, as well as to examine the benefits from further action in the tourism sector. This particular study - the third in a series - looks at the cost of non-Europe in European tourism policy and passenger rights legislation. For passenger rights, it analyses existing legislation and policy measures, identifying specific gaps where legislation or further initiatives at European level could be beneficial. In the tourism area, it quantifies in economic terms the potential for efficiency gains and identifies the main areas, in which EU action would further support the development of tourism and help realise the potential gains identified.

The Long-Term Economic and Ecologic Impact of Larger Sustainable Aquaculture

Publication type Study
Date 15-10-2014
External author Alistair Lane, Courtney Hough and John Bostock
Policy area Fisheries
Keyword impact study | prospective technological studies | sustainable development | animal feedingstuffs | common fisheries policy | food substitute | aquaculture | environmental impact | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance
Summary The EU recognises aquaculture as an important contributor to the EU food basket and this study provides insights into the economic and ecological implications of increased EU aquaculture. Current production, classified by technology and by sector, is transposed into forecasts up to 2030 that identify the main future technologies, trends and sectoral challenges. An ecological impact assessment matrix is used to compare production systems. Feed requirements are presented, with observations on how these might impact EU fisheries. Public support and policy considerations are discussed.
Elżbieta Bieńkowska - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Hearings of European Commissioners-designate

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 25-09-2014
Author: Marcin SZCZEPANSKI
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry
Keyword: single market | Poland | EP Committee | competitiveness | European Commissioner | public hearing | entrepreneurship | appointment of members | EU industrial policy | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: The Commissioner-designate for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs is Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Poland. Her hearing will take place before the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) on Thursday 2 October at 13.30 hours.

Helping – or Not – European Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) Venture Abroad

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-09-2014
Author: Elfriede BIERBRAUER
Policy area: Budget | European Added Value | International Trade | Budgetary Control | Evaluation of Law and Policy in Practice | Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection
Keyword: common commercial policy | aid to undertakings | Asia | operation of the Institutions | trade promotion | EU financing | investment abroad | EU programme | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access | Latin America
Summary: Various EU initiatives to supporting the internationalisation of European SMEs fall short of the European Parliament's expectations. Although independent evaluations of the European Business Centres in India, China and Thailand suggested that bold decisions were necessary, the European Commission has only adopted some changes to the measures. Using budget appropriations from the previous budget framework, the Commission plans to support the current structures until the end of their contracts – which have been extended in some cases. The Commission also plans to geographically extend its business support in third countries – also financed by the ICI+ programme. Under the EU's budgetary procedure, the European Parliament has only oversight over the implementation of inefficient structures. As Member States require tailor-made support to turn-around declining exports, small and medium-sized enterprises should first be supported through the Member States, and then perhaps by the EU.

In-Depth Analysis EN

Remaining legislative demands of the european parliament’s 7th legislative term

Publication type: Study
Date: 01-08-2014
Keyword: common commercial policy | single market | EU law | common foreign and security policy | EU environmental policy | European social policy | employment policy | EU budget | digital technology | common agricultural policy | Economic and Monetary Union | citizens' Europe | consumer protection | area of freedom, security and justice | European tax cooperation | EU industrial policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial services | climate change policy | energy policy | telecommunications | common transport policy | interinstitutional cooperation (EU) | consumer policy | common fisheries policy | intellectual property
Study: EN

Update on the European Commission's REFIT Programme

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 16-06-2014
Author: Stephane REYNOLDS
Keyword: corporation tax | public contract | data collection | EU law | EU legal system | transport regulations | small and medium-sized enterprises | simplification of legislation | VAT | administrative formalities | recognition of vocational training qualifications | interinstitutional relations (EU) | electronic waste | intellectual property
Summary: In December 2012, the European Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) committed the institution to attempt to establish a simple, clear, stable and predictable regulatory framework for business, workers and citizens, as well as to ensure EU legislation brings benefits at the lowest cost and with the least bureaucracy. This short note, produced by the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit, analyses progress made in the implementation of the different measures covered by REFIT, following the Commission's Communication of 18 June 2014 on its state of play and outlook.

At a Glance EN
Review of the Air Quality Policy Framework: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-04-2014
Author: Alison DAVIES
Keyword: impact study | pollution control measures | environmental law | motor vehicle pollution | drafting of EU law | atmospheric pollutant | industrial pollution | diesel engine | power plant | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying a Communication on a Clean Air Programme for Europe, a proposal for a Directive regulating air emissions from Medium Combustion Plants, a proposal for a Directive on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, and a proposal for a Decision on the Amendment to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (COM (2013) 918; COM (2013) 919; COM (2013) 920; COM (2013) 917), submitted in January 2014. It analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission's own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee and Members more widely in their work.

Success Stories: Growth and Jobs Created Through the EU Budget

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 15-04-2014
Author: Barbara HERMANOWICZ
Policy area: Budget | Transposition and Implementation of Law | Employment
Keyword: implementation of the budget | transport infrastructure | economic growth | economic and social cohesion | powers of the EP | EU Member State | tourism | EU budget | investment promotion | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note summarises the results achieved in terms of growth and jobs from EU budget resources. It also describes the budgetary role played by the EP, both in terms of resources made available and in shaping the way such resources are spent.

Eurostars-2: support to research-performing SMEs

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 10-04-2014
Author: Christopher NEEDHAM
Policy area: Research Policy
Keyword: project evaluation | inter-company cooperation | company research | research and development | EU financing | EU programme | small and medium-sized enterprises | school-industry relations
Summary: The Commission proposes to support a second phase of the Eurostars joint programme which funds transnational research carried out by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It is hoped that resultant improvements in technology will bring growth for EU firms, who could then create jobs.

European Small Claims Procedure: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 14-03-2014
Author: Alexia MANIAKI-GRIVA
Keyword: impact study | judicial cooperation in civil matters in the EU | consumer protection | drafting of EU law | civil proceedings | trade dispute | legal expenses | civil procedure | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying its proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) n°861/2007 establishing a European Small Claims Procedure and Regulation (EC) n° 1896/2006 creating a European order for payment procedure (COM (2013) 794), submitted on 19 November 2013. It analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission's own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee and Members more widely in their work.
Maximum Authorized Dimensions and Weights of Certain Road Vehicles: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-01-2014
Author: Alison DAVIES
Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Transport
Keyword: impact study | container | energy efficiency | drafting of EU law | carrying capacity | commercial vehicle | weight and size | combined transport | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment accompanying its proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic (COM (2013) 195 final), submitted on 15 April 2013. It analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission's own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee and Members more widely in their work.

Lightweight Plastic Carrier Bags: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-01-2014
Author: Alison DAVIES
Policy area: Environment | Ex-ante Impact Assessment
Keyword: impact study | fight against wastage | drafting of EU law | plastics | packaging product | retail trade | economic instrument for the environment | legal basis | prevention of pollution | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment accompanying its proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags (COM (2013) 761 final, submitted on 4 November 2013). It analyses whether the principal criteria laid down in the Commission's own Impact Assessment Guidelines, as well as additional factors identified by the Parliament in its Impact Assessment Handbook, appear to be met by the IA. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee and Members more widely in their work.

Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons: Complementary Impact Assessment of the Proposed Horizontal Directive

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-01-2014
External author: Milieu Ltd.
Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Gender Issues, Equality and Diversity
Keyword: Romania | Czechia | cost-benefit analysis | facilities for the disabled | small and medium-sized enterprises | Spain | impact study | discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation | Germany | age discrimination | access to education | health care system | equal treatment | discrimination based on disability | social services | Sweden | proposal (EU)
Summary: In 2008, the European Commission presented a proposal for a Directive to address discrimination outside the workplace based on the grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation, and on religion or belief. While the European Parliament and Member States generally supported the proposal, some Member States have expressed concerns, among others, in relation to the potential costs of the proposed Directive, its lack of legal certainty and the lack of assessment of the costs and benefits that its implementation would place on service providers. This study has therefore been commissioned by the European Parliament to facilitate agreement on the proposal by providing insight into possible costs for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and public service providers. While most of the costs related to equal treatment measures will be very low, the assessment shows also that a range of costs for these actors have a potential to be significant.

Study

Finance Access of SMEs, Monetary Dialogue, July 2013
Publication type Study
Date 13-12-2013
External author Zsolt DARVAS (Bruegel, Brussels, Belgium), Karl WHELAN (University College Dublin), Stefan COLLIGNON (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa and Centro Europa Ricerche - CER, Rome, Italy, with research assistance performed by Piero ESPOSITO), Guillermo DE LA DEHESA (Centre for Economic Policy Research - CEPR) and Ansgar BELKE (IZA Bonn and University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany)
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues
Keyword European Investment Bank | powers of the institutions (EU) | credit policy | monetary crisis | Ireland | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance | Spain | economic consequence | Portugal | credit | Greece | banking system | European Central Bank
Summary The notes in this compilation examine the challenges stemming from the access to finance of SMEs and discuss available policy options to address the problem. The notes include a review of recent proposals put forward by the ECB, the European Investment Bank and the European Commission to support private lending to small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). Experts broadly agreed that the current fragmentation in financial markets is largely the result of severe market failures (externalities) in the allocation of key inputs, including finance. High unemployment and externalities would argue in favour of public intervention for a greater and easier access to finance for SMEs. However, past experiences have shown that without repairing bank balance sheets and resuming economic growth, targeted initiatives to help SME financing - particularly in distress EU countries - will have limited success. Ultimately, it is the improvement in financial markets and the return of trust that will make the difference. To this purpose, a rapid conclusion of a full and genuine banking union was considered to be key.
Study EN

SMEs Participation under Horizon 2020
Publication type Study
Date 15-11-2013
External author Michael Dinges (Joanneum Research), Helmut Gassler (Joanneum Research), Dieter Elixmann (WIK-Consult), Scott Marcus (WIK-Consult) and Christin-Isabel Gries (WIK-Consult)
Policy area Research Policy | Industry
Keyword competitiveness | Framework Programme for Research and Development | company research | research and development | EU financing | EU industrial policy | EU programme | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance
Summary This study focuses on an assessment of the future share and role of SMEs in Horizon 2020 and on an understanding of the proposed mechanisms for SME participation. To this end, the study explores the features that characterise the research context for SMEs, notably their current participation under FP7, the modalities and the benefits of their participation in research activities. Moreover, it provides facts and figures on the objectives, governance and functioning of the dedicated SME instruments and modalities foreseen under Horizon 2020.
Study EN

European Common Security and Defence Policy: Cost of Non-Europe Report
Publication type Study
Date 15-11-2013
Author Maria Blanca BALLESTER MARTINEZ
Policy area European Added Value | Security and Defence
Keyword public contract | European arms policy | military research | arms industry | military cooperation | Treaty of Lisbon | small and medium-sized enterprises | settlement of disputes | common security and defence policy
Summary The report 'Preparing for Complexity - The European Parliament in 2025', presented by the Secretary General of the European Parliament in January 2013, identified the core set of problematic issues in defence policy as a) duplication, b) lack of a common strategic view and c) lack of a clear vision for the future. The purpose of this paper is to develop these considerations and to focus on the benefits of greater cooperation at European level. Setting out the economic argument of the added value of Europe in defence, and the current cost to the Member States of 'non-Europe', can highlight the need to build on the structures, systems and under-utilised legal bases that have been put in place in recent years. Cost of Non-Europe reports examine policy areas or sectors of strategic importance where the possibilities for greater efficiency or the realisation of a 'public good' through common action at EU level are potentially significant. The case for more Europe is perhaps more compelling in defence than in almost any other policy area, given that no single Member State can achieve an optimal level of security without cooperation. The costs involved go beyond the purely economic, and include political and opportunity costs.
Study EN
Horizon 2020: boosting research and innovation

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 14-11-2013
Author: Marcin SZCZEPAŃSKI
Policy area: Research Policy | Industry
Keyword: research programme | research expenditure (EU) | European Institute of Innovation and Technology | EU financial instrument | industry-research relations | EU research policy | research and development | EU programme | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: Parliament and Council negotiators have reached a trilogue agreement on the Horizon 2020 framework research programme. This new instrument for European research and innovation funding seeks to simplify the rules for gaining funding, improve the commercialisation of research results and increase the participation of industry, SMEs and scientific community.

Unfair contract terms in EU law: Unfair Terms Directive and Common European Sales Law

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 19-09-2013
Author: Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law
Keyword: unfair terms of contract | sale | consumer protection | consumer behaviour | harmonisation law | case law (EU) | consumer policy | selling price | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: Standard terms contracts’ are an inevitable part of everyday transactions for both businesses and consumers. Parties using such contracts may, however, rely on their advantageous position in order to impose unfair terms on the other contracting party. This has prompted national courts and legislatures to implement measures aimed at combating such terms. In order to bring about harmonisation of such measures in consumer contracts, the EU enacted the Unfair Terms Directive in 1993. The Commission’s proposal for a Common European Sales Law (CESL) also addresses the issue of unfair terms, not only in consumer contracts, but also in transactions between businesses.

Aspect of Durability in the Assessment of Effectiveness of Support for Businesses under Structural and Cohesion Funds

Publication type: Study
Date: 16-09-2013
External author: Blomeyer & Sanz
Policy area: Budget | Budgetary Control | Financial and Banking Issues | Regional Development | Industry
Keyword: impact study | EU aid | Structural Funds | business activity | aid to undertakings | EU regional policy | Cohesion Fund | financial regulation | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This study reviews experience with the sustainability of business support interventions under the European Union’s Structural Funds (focus on experience under the programming period 2007-2013). Moreover, the study highlights best practices from selected Member States to contribute to further strengthening the sustainability of business support. Finally, a series of conclusions and recommendations focus on the regulation, measurement, and enforcement of sustainability. The study was conducted in the first half of 2013 on the basis of desk research, stakeholder consultations, surveys and case study work.
The EU's Contribution to Member States' Services Promoting Foreign Trade and Investment: Value
Added?

Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 03-09-2013
Author Eulalia CLAROS GIMENO | Elfriede BIERBRAUER
Policy area European Added Value | International Trade | Budgetary Control
Keyword common commercial policy | India | Japan | investment abroad | audit | market access | small and medium-sized enterprises | China | direct investment | operation of the Institutions | diversification of exports | investment promotion | Thailand | chamber of commerce and industry
Summary The European business centres in Asia – and notably those in India, China and Thailand, which are already active – have yet to demonstrate that they offer significant value-added for European enterprises wishing to engage in Asian markets. Instead of being welcomed as EU complementarities, they are generally considered as duplications of Member States' own promotion instruments, and this in a field in which the EU as such does not hold competence. It is questionable why the EU's efforts to facilitate market access for European enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, were not built on the best practises of existing institutions, notably the bilateral chambers of commerce. The timing is also questionable: additional structures were created long before any assessment was undertaken of what is already available in third markets. The lack of coherence of the different EU centres' work plans, priority clusters and time frames impedes Member States - also members of the consortiums of various EU centres – from integrating the EU centres into their own marketing activities. It is therefore little surprise that an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of these EU business centres in Asia revealed numerous flaws – an assessment that suggests the EU's strategy should be overhauled. It remains uncertain, however, whether and how the modest performance of the centres in India, China and Thailand will influence European Commission's plans for additional Asian centres.

Third countries' reciprocal access to EU public procurement: Detailed appraisal of the European Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type Briefing
Date 22-07-2013
Author Elke BALLON | Helmut WERNER
External author Authors of the Annexes:
Annex I - Methodological aspects, by Prof. Dr. Andrea Renda of the Centre for European Policy Studies
Annex II - Openness, job creation, administrative burdens, SMEs and thresholds, by by Máté Péter Vincze
Annex III - SME related impacts, thresholds and national legislation, by by Dr. Pedro Telles of Bangor University (UK)
Annex IV - Game theory considerations, by Prof. Nicola Dimitri of the Department of Political Economy and Statistics of the University of Siena (Italy)
Policy area Ex-ante Impact Assessment | International Trade | Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword impact study | public contract | market protection | administrative formalities | drafting of EU law | job creation | trade agreement (EU) | EU market | protectionism | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access
Summary The Ex-ante Impact Assessment Unit of DG Parliamentary Research Services was requested by the INTA and IMCO Committees to provide a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules on the access of third country goods and services to the European Union’s internal market in public procurement and procedures supporting negotiations on of European Union goods and services to the public procurement markets of third countries. As part of this process, the Unit has commissioned four research papers, drafted by specialist experts, on various aspects of the Commission’s IA. They are authored by: Prof. Dr. Andrea RENDA, CEPS, who addresses the questions put forward by the INTA and IMCO Committees from a methodological point of view, Mr. M &acutes; Péter VINCZE, MSc in Economics, who deals with the questions put forward by the INTA and IMCO committees, with a view to finding answers substantiated inter alia by data-mining in relevant databases. Dr. Pedro TELLES, Bangor University, UK, who focuses on impacts, thresholds and national legislation in respect to SMEs. Professor Dr. Nicola DIMITRI, University of Siena, Italy, who analyses reciprocity and retaliation questions, using a game theory approach. The experts were asked to provide an appraisal of the European Commission’s impact assessment, analysing, commenting and possibly complementing it with regard to eight topics: Openness of EU public procurement market; Potential benefits of market opening; Impact on job creation of the different options; Risk of retaliation and leverage creation; Administrative burden of assessed options; Impact on SMEs; Justification of thresholds; Existing national legislation restricting access to public procurement markets.

EU Trade Mark Regime: Initial Appraisal of the Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-07-2013
Author: Elke BALLON
Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Internal Market and Customs Union | EU Law: Legal System and Acts
Keyword: single market | impact study | registered trademark | approximation of laws | European Union Intellectual Property Office | product design | EU trade mark | designation of origin | trademark law | small and medium-sized enterprises

Potential Impact on SMEs of Certain EP Amendments to Two Proposed Public Procurement Directives

Publication type: Study
Date: 14-06-2013
Author: Helmut WERNER
Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword: impact study | public contract | public authorities | amendment | subcontracting | small and medium-sized enterprises | proposal (EU)
Summary: This paper contains an assessment of a set of amendments proposed by the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee of the European Parliament to the new Public Procurement Directives. The paper first gives a high-level assessment of all proposals that were initially considered relevant from the perspective of SMEs' access, which is followed by a more detailed assessment of those amendments that are likely to have a significant impact on SMEs.

Insolvency Proceedings: Initial Appraisal of the Commission’s Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-05-2013
Author: Elke BALLON
Policy area: Area of Freedom, Security and Justice | Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Adoption of Legislation by EP and Council
Keyword: impact study | judicial cooperation in civil matters in the EU | liquidation | composition | financial solvency | civil bankruptcy | competitiveness | jurisdiction | group of companies | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying the proposal for a revised Regulation on insolvency proceedings, submitted on 12 December 2012. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal. It is drafted for informational and background purposes to assist the relevant parliamentary committee(s) and Members more widely in their work.

The notion of ‘consumer’ in EU law

Publication type: At a Glance
Date: 06-05-2013
Author: Rafał MAŃKO
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection
Keyword: trade by product | business start-up | consumer protection | approximation of laws | consumer behaviour | liability | consumer policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | private international law | judgment of the Court (EU)
Summary: The notion of ‘consumer’ is a key concept de-limiting the application of consumer-pro-tection rules. However, not only is there no con-sis-tent and uniform definition in EU law, there are also divergences amongst the Member States.
SMEs in the Cohesion Policy Management Cycle

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-04-2013

External author: CSIL Centre for Industrial Studies (Italy) and PPMI Public Policy and Management Institute (Lithuania)

Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Financial and Banking Issues | Regional Development

Keyword: Structural Funds | EU financing arrangements | economic and social cohesion | administrative formalities | dissemination of EU information | audit | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial instrument | electronic government | corporate finance

Summary: This study explores the specific challenges faced by SMEs and SME support entities when they access and take advantage of funding made available through the Cohesion Policy. On the basis of a literature review, six case studies, an e-survey and in-depth interviews, this study tries to identify the critical issues encountered by SMEs and their support entities along all the phases of the Cohesion Policy programme and project management cycle, from programming to implementation. It draws conclusions about the improvements that are needed in order to ensure that SMEs take optimal advantage of Structural Funds and puts forward specific recommendations for the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament.

Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization in the Union: Initial Appraisal of the European Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 15-03-2013
Author: Elke BALLON

Policy area: Environment | Research Policy | Ex-ante Impact Assessment

Keyword: impact study | technology transfer | biodiversity | exploitation of resources | genetics | international agreement | research and development | small and medium-sized enterprises | proposal (EU)

Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment accompanying its Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization in the Union (COM (2012) 576).

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) – Peer Review

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-03-2013

External author: Study team: Ingrid Bauer, Christine Hamza and Herta Tödtling-Schönhofer (Metis GmbH)
Pear review experts: Giel Dubbeld, Manfred Horvat and Tea Petrin

Policy area: Budget | Research Policy | Budgetary Control | Industry

Keyword: project evaluation | aid to undertakings | evaluation method | competitiveness | entrepreneurship | EU financing | EU programme | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: The study summarises the results of a peer review of the CIP and EIP evaluation reports. The peer review was conducted in two stages: first, the general CIP evaluation and, second, a detailed review of the EIP evaluation with regard to the specific needs of SMEs and how the EIP programme has targeted these needs. The peer review process was conducted with consideration of the heterogeneity and complexity of the nature of SMEs. The conclusions and recommendations highlight themes for the focus of future evaluations and make suggestions for future SME support on a European level.


Publication type: Briefing
Date: 07-03-2013
Author: Elke BALLON

Policy area: Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry

Keyword: impact study | approval | technical barrier | competitiveness | administrative formalities | market supervision | telecommunications equipment | small and medium-sized enterprises | electromagnetic interference

Summary: This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission’s Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying the proposal for a Directive on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment.
Maritime Equipment: Initial Appraisal of the European Commission's Impact Assessment

Publication type Briefing
Date 01-03-2013
Author Laura ZANDERSONE
Policy area Ex-ante Impact Assessment | Transport | Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword simplification of legislation | impact study | approval | safety standard | competitiveness | vessel | market supervision | international standard | maritime safety | vehicle parts | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary This note seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on marine equipment. The Proposal attempts to align the existing Marine Equipment Directive from 1996 (MED) with the New Legislative Framework (NLF) for the marketing of products.

Proceedings of the Workshop "Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products"

Publication type Study
Date 15-02-2013
External author Ms Sabine Jülicher, DG Health and Consumers, European Commission
Prof. Stefaan Van Gool, Head of the Laboratory of Paediatric Immunology, University of Louvain (BE)
Dr Jacques Mallet, Director of “Recherche Emérite” CNRS, Institute for Brain and Spinal Cord (ICM), Paris; Adjunct Professor at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF); Member of the French Academy of Sciences (FR, US)
Dr Monica Ensini, Scientific Director, European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS)
Dr Panos Kanavos, Reader in International Health Policy in the Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics (LSE) and Programme Director of the Medical Technology Research Group (MTRG) at LSE Health (UK)
Dr Maria Luisa Nolli, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Areta International (IT)
Dr Christian K. Schneider, Chair, Committee for Advanced Therapies (CAT), European Medicine Agency
Policy area Research Policy | Internal Market and Customs Union | Public Health
Keyword medical research | therapeutics | health care | market approval | medicament | drug surveillance | diffusion of innovations | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary This report summarises the presentations and discussions at the Workshop on “Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products”, held at the European Parliament in Brussels, on Wednesday 20 February 2013. The aim of the workshop was to exchange views on the opportunities and challenges related to advanced therapies for the future of healthcare. The workshop was hosted by MEP Ms Glenis WILLMOTT (S&D, UK) and MEP Mr Alojz PETERLE (EPP, SL), Co-chairs of the Health Working Group within the ENVI Committee.

Improving governance of the Single Market

Publication type At a Glance
Date 31-01-2013
Author Marcin SZCZEPAŃSKI
Policy area Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword single market | governance | mutual recognition principle | administrative formalities | EU growth strategy | small and medium-sized enterprises | electronic government | national implementing measure
Summary Late implementation of directives by Member States (MS) is one of the main obstacles to the completion of the Single Market, according to the European Commission, which is seeking better governance of the Single Market.

Improving SMEs' access to finance

Publication type At a Glance
Date 31-01-2013
Author Christopher NEEDHAM
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues | Industry
Keyword EIB loan | EU financial instrument | credit institution | entrepreneurship | monetary crisis | financial regulation | investment | small and medium-sized enterprises | corporate finance
Summary Small and medium-sized enterprises are important to the EU economy, but are struggling due to lack of funding. In December 2011, the European Commission (EC) adopted a detailed non-legislative action plan (COM(2011) 870) presenting new ideas for finance and regulation as well as sharing of best practice. The EP is calling for support for a broader range of finance, in response to the problems of the credit crunch.
Harmonising patent law in Europe has been a constant goal since the 1960s. However significant challenges, particularly relating to languages and litigation of patent cases, have repeatedly blocked attempts. Now, 25 Member States have signed up to a compromise under enhanced cooperation. Spain and Italy abstained because of objections to the language rules.

Horizon 2020 will be one of the main European Union instruments aimed at achieving an "Innovation Union", one of the Europe 2020 growth goals. It will focus on research outputs and innovation, with the goal of accelerating the commercialisation and diffusion of innovation.

The European Commission published its strategy on cloud computing on 27 September 2012. It predicts annual gains of €160 billion to EU GDP and the creation of 2.5 million new jobs by 2020, if the strategy is fully implemented. However, a number of obstacles could slow down progress.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the European economy. This study reviews the effect of the current crisis on Europe’s economy, as well as measures taken by governments and social partners to support SMEs in the crisis. The study discusses in detail the experience and potential of two main types of measures (short-time working arrangements and skills development and training) for a number of Member States. Most of them have implemented measures in the form of packages rather than stand-alone individual measures. The study reviews recent experiences with such packages in Austria and Lithuania and ends with conclusions and recommendations.
Proceedings of the Workshop on "Effectiveness of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP)"

Publication type: Study  
Date: 15-08-2012  
External author: Mike Coyne (Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services, UK), Jari Romanainen (Tekes – the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, Finland), Erkko Autio (Imperial College, UK), Lena Tsipouri (University of Athens, Greece), Stefan Vratny (BIC Bratislava, Slovakia) and Robert Sanders (European Business & Innovation Centre Network, Belgium)  
Policy area: Research Policy | Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry  
Keyword: project evaluation | business start-up | EU financial instrument | competitiveness | entrepreneurship | EU programme | innovation | international competition | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: The workshop focused on the effectiveness of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), paying particular attention to the problems and challenges in its implementation. On the basis of CIP experience, the workshop also identified and assessed initiatives for the further improvement of the future COSME programme.

Study EN

The Regime of Remedies in the CESL – Suitable and Balanced for SMEs?  
Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 15-06-2012  
External author: Dora Szentpaly-Kleis (European Association of Crafts, small and medium-sized Enterprises, UEAPME)  
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection | Industry  
Keyword: contract terms | sale | consumer protection | indemnification | producer's liability | commercial contract | small and medium-sized enterprises | contractual liability  
Summary: This paper is based on the position of UEAPME members on the proposal for a regulation on the Common European Sales Law. It gives some general remarks on the proposal as such and focuses in the second part on the different remedies introduced from the point of view of SMEs, one of the main target groups of the proposal. If the aim to boost cross-border business activities is to be achieved, improvements in line with the remarks of this note are necessary.

In-Depth Analysis EN

Public Procurement and Cohesion Policy  
Publication type: Study  
Date: 15-06-2012  
External author: Jürgen Pucher, Christine Hamza, Michael Leckey and Herta Tödting-Schönhofer (Metis GmbH)  
Policy area: Regional Development | EU Law: Legal System and Acts  
Keyword: simplification of legislation | public contract | Structural Funds | public-private partnership | EU regional policy | fraud | financial control | competition | fraud against the EU | small and medium-sized enterprises | project management  
Summary: This study explores the connection between two major areas of public interest: Public procurement and Cohesion policy, starting with an explanation of how and where procurement is applied in the context of Cohesion policy, then analysing the current situation in the EU, the transposition of procurement regulations into national law and the ongoing reform of the legal framework. The significance of procurement in the EU Cohesion policy is the main focus of the study. Examples of representative practical experience are used to complement the information gained by desk research. A series of interviews with practitioners in Cohesion policy has facilitated the development of a number of recommendations of the study.

Study DE, EN, FR

Future of the Single Market Act  
Publication type: At a Glance  
Date: 08-06-2012  
Author: Kalin IVANOV  
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union  
Keyword: single market | consumer protection | EU action | economic growth | application of EU law | research and development | free movement of workers | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises | action programme  
Summary: The implementation of single market legislation within the Member States continues to face hurdles.

At a Glance EN
Differences and Similarities between CIP and COSME

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 16-04-2012
Author: Marion SCHMID-DRÜNER | Balazs MELLAR
Policy area: Research Policy | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry
Keyword: financing | information technology | competitiveness | Framework Programme for Research and Development | entrepreneurship | research and development | fund (EU) | EU programme | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access
Summary: This briefing note presents a comparison between the current Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the proposed programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) for 2014-2020. Particular emphasis is placed on the transfer of measures as well as the synergies with other funding opportunities, in particular in the field of research and innovation with the upcoming Horizon 2020 programme.

EU Competitiveness and Innovation Programme

Publication type: Briefing
Date: 29-03-2012
Author: Kalin IVANOV
Policy area: Research Policy | Energy | Economics and Monetary Issues | Industry
Keyword: project evaluation | business start-up | EU financial instrument | competitiveness | entrepreneurship | EU programme | innovation | international competition | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) seeks to help European enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones (SMEs), to become more competitive and innovative. It does so by improving access to finance and support services at regional level, and by encouraging better use of information and communications technologies (ICT). In addition, CIP fosters energy efficiency and renewable energy. With an overall budget of €3.6 billion from 2007 to 2013, the programme aims to act as a catalyst for further investment.

European SMEs and International Trade

Publication type: Study
Date: 23-02-2012
External author: ANTOLDI Fabio (Catholic University of Milan, Italy), SASS Magdolna (ICEG European Centre, Hungary) and SMALLBONE David (Kingston University London, United Kingdom)
Policy area: International Trade | Industry
Keyword: competitiveness | trade promotion | international competition | export subsidy | small and medium-sized enterprises | market access | globalisation
Summary: According to the Europe 2020 flagship Communication on an Integrated Industrial Policy and the review of the Small Business Act, supporting the internationalization process of the European SMEs is crucial to promote EU competitiveness. Recent data shows that 85% of new jobs, in the EU, between 2002 and 2010 were created by SMEs. However, a very small percentage of SMEs is active beyond the Single Market, notwithstanding rapidly growing market opportunities abroad.

The two key questions in the Workshop were: (1) what are the best policies supporting SMEs in accessing third markets and (2) is a better coordination between national and EU-level initiatives needed, and if so, how to accomplish this. The INTA Committee had requested the organization of the Workshop in order to explore proposals for implementing new strategies to improve the internationalization process.

EU Budget Support for Research and Innovation

Publication type: Study
Date: 15-02-2012
External author: PricewaterhouseCoopers Enterprise Advisory SCRL, Belgium, PricewaterhouseCoopers Advisory N.V., The Netherlands
Policy area: Budget | Research Policy | Budgetary Control | Industry
Keyword: EIB loan | coordination of financing | research programme | industry-research relations | EU research policy | research and development | innovation | general budget (EU) | research budget | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary: The aim of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) is to improve the efficiency of research and innovation funding at national and EU levels, primarily by bringing together, within a single unitary framework, the three main existing sources of funding for research and innovation – the FP7, the CIP and the EIT initiatives. The current study aims to provide a set of specific recommendations focused on reinforcing, streamlining, simplifying and synchronising the complementarity of all the above-mentioned instruments in one programme, while also paying attention to synergies with national programmes and other related policies and bodies.
Barriers for Applicants to Structural Funding

Publication type Study
Date 15-02-2012
External author Herta Tödtling–Schönhofer and Christine Hamza (Metis GmbH), Laura Polverari and John Bachtler (EPRC, University of Strathclyde)
Policy area Regional Development | Industry
Keyword co-financing | project evaluation | Structural Funds | dissemination of information | economic and social cohesion | EU regional policy | administrative formalities | regional and local authorities | audit | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary This study analyses the factors which facilitate or discourage local stakeholders' and businesses' decision to apply for support from Structural Funds (SF). In the current recession it is vital to attract as many applicants as possible. Through a wide-ranging literature review, case studies, questionnaires and interviews, this study tries to answer questions about what can be done to attract more applications, and how the participation of successful applicants can be made more effective. It puts forward a number of specific recommendations for policy makers at local, regional, national and EU level.

Study DE, EN, FR
Executive summary BG, ES, CS, DA, DE, ET, EL, EN, FR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, FI, SV

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMES) in the Southern Mediterranean

Publication type Study
Date 26-01-2012
External author Rym AYADI (CEPS, Brussels, Belgium)
Policy area Financial and Banking Issues | Industry
Keyword European neighbourhood policy | visa policy | EIB loan | employment structure | Mediterranean third countries | financial aid | investment abroad | Jordan | corruption | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary In the Southern Mediterranean, micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent a substantial share of registered companies and employ 25% of the labour force. In Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, MSMEs are concentrated in trade, light manufacturing and textiles. Widespread informality, corruption, insufficiently skilled labour force and difficulties in access to finance stand as the major obstacles faced by the region's small businesses. EU's and Member States development assistance flows have addressed these concerns only partially: between 1995 and 2009, aid flows for MSMEs accounted for 10% of total development assistance and was split among a high number of initiatives lacking a coherent strategy. The challenge of job creation has been highlighted by the 2011 upheavals and puts MSMEs at the centre of future economic strategies. In the context of the renewed European Neighbourhood Policy, this note focuses on Egypt, Jordan, Moroccan and Tunisian MSMEs and has four objectives. First, it seeks to provide with a description of MSMEs in these countries, their contribution to employment, the sectors in which they are active as well as the constraints they face. Second, it moves on to assess both EU's and Member States' development assistance commitments for MSME support. Third, it provides with a picture of foreign direct investments (FDI) and partnerships concluded between European and Egyptian, Jordanian, Moroccan and Tunisian SMEs. Fourth, it reviews the visa policies applying for business persons in the region. Finally, it provides with recommendations to support the development of MSMEs within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Study EN

Impact and effectiveness of Structural Funds and EU policies aimed at SMEs in the regions

Publication type Study
Date 15-11-2011
External author Metis GmbH: Herta Tödtling–Schönhofer, Christine Hamza, Franz Tödtling, Marlene Hahn, Andreas Resch
EPRC, University of Strathclyde: Laura Polverari, John Bachtler
Policy area Regional Development | Industry
Keyword impact study | coordination of financing | economic consequence | Structural Funds | EU regional policy | competitiveness | administrative formalities | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial instrument
Summary This study provides a description of the general nature of SMEs and their development factors as well as the support that Cohesion Policy and other EU policies provide to SMEs. It then assesses practical aspects and effects of Cohesion Policy on enterprises and SMEs on the basis of a review of published materials and eight case studies drawn from SME-relevant ERDF OPs from 2007-2013; where possible, it also includes lessons learnt from 2000-2006. The conclusions and policy recommendations put forward clearly highlight the complex relationship between EU policies and SMEs as final beneficiaries of support in the EU multilevel governance system.

Study EN

Proceedings of the workshop on 'Cyber Security in Europe' - Brussels, 31 August 2011

Summary
The general purpose of the workshop was to summarise existing and emerging threats that pose significant risks to networks and critical information, and to identify the drivers of these threats and to associate these key elements with security controls that can help to mitigate the risks. The workshop also sought to analyse possible European responses to challenges related to cyber security. Furthermore, the event aimed to facilitate an exchange of views and provide a forum for discussion with MEPs and all other participants.

Barriers and Best Practices in SME Test Implementation

Summary
This study presents findings on the current state of implementation of the SME test in Member States and the European Commission services. Furthermore, the study identifies challenges and barriers to implementation of SME test and identifies best practice examples that can drive forward implementation. The study concludes that there is a strong case for moving the implementation of the SME test forward in the European Union.

Small Business Act for Europe

Summary
The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), agreed in 2008, is an EU initiative based on ten principles and a number of concrete measures aimed at facilitating entrepreneurship. The Commission’s review, published in February, assesses the progress achieved and proposes new actions.

Improving EU public procurement policy

Summary
Public procurement is an important policy issue, not only in terms of the completion of the EU single market, but also in keeping Europe’s economy competitive, sustainable and social.
Lessons Learnt from the Implementation of the EU Mediation Directive : the Business Perspective

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 15-04-2011  
External author: VINCENT TILMAN (EUROCHAMBRES ; bMediation)  
Policy area: Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Industry  
Keyword: commercial arbitration | commercial law | civil proceedings | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: This briefing note deals with the use of mediation as a dispute resolution process by businesses. It analyses the impact of the Mediation Directive 2008/52/EC in the light of its three main objectives that are facilitation of access to alternative dispute resolution, promotion of mediation and balanced relationship between mediation and judicial proceedings. Moreover, recommendations are provided on how to enhance mediation uptake by SMEs.

Fisheries in Portugal

Publication type: Study  
Date: 15-03-2011  
Author: Jesus IBORRA MARTIN  
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union | Fisheries | Industry  
Keyword: fishing fleet | Portugal | region dependent on fishing | fishery resources | fishing statistics | fishing area | fishery management | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: Information note on the fisheries and aquaculture sector in Portugal for the Delegation of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries from 13 to 16 April 2011. The note describes fisheries in Portugal and related activities.

Implementation of the Directives on Health and Safety at Work as a Cost Factor

Publication type: Study  
Date: 15-10-2010  
External author: Janne Sylvest, Karin Gros Pedersen, Benita Kidmose Rytz and Mette Dambo (Rambøll Management Consulting, Denmark)  
Policy area: Transposition and Implementation of Law | Employment | Public Health  
Keyword: occupational disease | administrative formalities | occupational accident | working environment | occupational health | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: The study aims at better understanding the importance of Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) as a contributing factor to the economic viability of an organisation and looks into the potential effects of the proposals currently on the table for reducing administrative burdens in the field of health and safety at work. It considers the costs and benefits of compliance with OSH obligations, new and emerging risks and the need for new prevention measures to address these.

Reform of the European Investment Bank: How to Upgrade the EIB’s Role in Development

Publication type: Study  
Date: 27-05-2010  
External author: Prof. Stephany GRIFFITH-JONES, Columbia University ; Judith TYSON, UK  
Policy area: Budget | Development and Humanitarian Aid  
Keyword: EIB loan | investment policy | ACP countries | developing countries | operation of the Institutions | economic recession | financial aid | European Investment Bank | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: In this briefing paper we evaluate the performance of the EIB in its external lending and policies in relation to developing economies including its response to the financial crisis. We recommend policy changes including greater absolute levels of lending to developing economies and greater risk taking to achieve “more with less”. We also recommend tailoring the mandate and lending criteria for developing countries including greater flexibility of lending criteria and standards, a crisis mandate, country level priority objectives linked to MDGs and greater blending of grants and lending. In order to support such changes the need for greater and specialist resources including staff and capital is discussed including the possibility of extending cooperation with other IFIs and the MTR feasibility study for a dedicated subsidiary.

Study

Study
The Impact of the Crisis on SMEs
Publication type Study
Date 15-02-2010
External author António Saraiva (President of the Confederation of Portuguese Industry - CIP), Pontus Braunerhjelm (Managing Director of Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum), Maria Nowak (European Microfinance Network and ADIE, Paris, France), Yorgos Ioannidis (Visiting Fellow in the Department of Political and International Studies of Cambridge University, UK), Reinhiide Veugelers (Professor of Managerial Economics, Strategy and Innovation at KU Leuven and Senior Fellow, Bruegel) and Gerhard Huemer (Director of Economic and Fiscal Policy, UEAPME)
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry
Keyword EU aid | financial market | competitiveness | economic recession | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary A workshop on the "The Impact of the Crisis on SMEs" was held in the European Parliament in Brussels on 1 February 2010. This document contains the programme, presentations and proceedings of that workshop.
Study EN

Spread of the Crisis - Impact on Public Finances
Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 12-01-2010
External author Sylvester C.W. Eijffinger
Policy area Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry
Keyword labour market | State aid | financial market | economic recovery | purchasing power | public finance | banking | motor vehicle industry | public debt | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary We have reviewed the financial rescue and economic recovery measures taken in the EU at the end of 2008 and during 2009. Many member states have undertaken recapitalization efforts and provided debt guarantees to help systemically important institutions and restore confidence in financial markets. They have also stimulated purchasing power, pursued active labour market policies and spurred investment and business to fend off the recession. However, in doing so, some countries have not taken appropriate measures. Especially with regard to competitiveness on a EU (and even a global) level, the government rescue packages have done serious harm. This has occurred in the banking sector, but also in the automotive industry. The European Commission should give higher priority to creating a European level playing field, instead of focusing on the national level when considering the approval of state aid. Furthermore, several member states have not yet planned how to reverse the fiscal stimulus in the medium term and consolidate their financial budget. With worsening issuance conditions due to growing sovereign debt and higher interest rates, it may become more difficult to roll-over public debt in the future.
In-Depth Analysis EN

European Aquaculture Competitiveness : Limitations and Possible Strategies
Publication type Study
Date 15-09-2009
External author John Bostock (University of Stirling Institute of Aquaculture - UoS), Francis Murray (University of Stirling Institute of Aquaculture - UoS), James Muir (University of Stirling Institute of Aquaculture - UoS), Trevor Telfer (University of Stirling Institute of Aquaculture - UoS), Alistair Lane (European Aquaculture Society - EAS), Nikos Papanikos (APC Advanced Planning - Consulting SA - APC S.A), Philippos Papegeorgiou (APC Advanced Planning - Consulting SA - APC S.A) and Victoria Alday-Sanz
Policy area Internal Market and Customs Union | Fisheries | Industry
Keyword coastal region | food safety | conservation of fish stocks | environmental law | competitiveness | job creation | sea fish | aquaculture | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic analysis
Summary This study examines the competitiveness of the EU aquaculture sector, as a contribution to the wider review of EU aquaculture policy being carried out by the European Community institutions. EU aquaculture competes with its international equivalents, with outputs from capture fisheries, and more fundamentally within global food markets. With small exceptions, the sector invests in production within the EU, and as little of its product is exported, competition is somewhat defined within EU markets. Whilst EU aquatic food consumption has risen over the past 10 years, with stable or declining capture fisheries supply, most of this increase has come from imports rather than growth of EU aquaculture. To substantially increase aquaculture production at competitive prices for mainstream EU markets will require larger entities capable of scale economies, although small and micro-enterprises can also provide niche products and help sustain rural and coastal livelihoods. As spatial expansion is highly constrained by environmental regulation and conflicts with other resource users, productivity gains will be important in increasing output. Technological solutions are emerging, but are costly, so under current conditions, investments are more likely to be made in lower-cost production systems in third countries that export to the EU.
Study EN
Technological Synergies between the Automotive and the Aeronautics Sector and their Supply Chains

Publication type: Study  
Date: 10-03-2009  
External author: Maria Teresa FERNANDEZ PEÑA (FUNDACIÓN CIDAUT, Valladolid, Spain)  
Policy area: Research Policy | Transport | Industry  
Keyword: aeronautical industry | engine | supply | fuel | motor vehicle industry | materials technology | research and development | innovation | vehicle parts | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: The aeronautics and the automotive sector play a crucial role in maintaining Europe's industrial and technological base and its strong hold on the international market. These sectors also face similar challenges. Those challenges relate to rapid technological change, globalization and fighting climate change. The present study aims to identify the most promising technological synergies based on the available literature and explore the benefits of fostering those synergies and the R&D cooperation between the automotive and aeronautics sector.

Workshop Report on the Pre-commercial Procurement - An Untapped Opportunity for Driving Innovation

Publication type: Study  
Date: 10-11-2008  
External author: Max Rolfstam (Lund University), Stephan F.M. Corvers (Corvers Procurement Services), Laila Gide (Thales Group), Heinrich von Paulberg (GBR), Lieve Bos (DG INFOS, European Commission) and Michael Burnett (EIPA, European Institute of Public Administration)  
Policy area: Research Policy | Industry  
Keyword: public contract | research and development | innovation | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Study: EN

The Small Business Act for Europe - New Ideas to Boost SMEs

Publication type: Study  
Date: 03-11-2008  
External author: Janne Sylvest and Benita Kidmose Rytz (Ramboll Management, Copenhagen, Denmark)  
Policy area: Environment | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry  
Keyword: financing policy | environmental law | competitiveness | administrative formalities | credit guarantee | EU programme | financial regulation | small and medium-sized enterprises  
Summary: The Small Business Act for Europe was adopted by the European Commission in June 2008. It is an initiative by the European Commission to address the needs of Europe's small and medium-sized businesses, consisting of a set of 10 principles to guide the conception and implementation of policies at EU and Member State level. The aim of this study is to present the European Parliament with new ideas, food for thought and critical perspective for the Members of the ITRE Committee on the Small Business Act for Europe and the work leading to it, such as the Impact Assessment carried out in advance. The focus is put on three policy areas:  
• Cutting red tape and bureaucracy for SMEs  
• Improving access to finance for SMEs  
• SME participation in EU programmes. [...]  
Study: EN

SMEs and International Trade

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis  
Date: 29-10-2008  
External author: Carlo Altomonte  
Policy area: International Trade | Industry  
Keyword: export aid | export subsidy | small and medium-sized enterprises | expenditure  
Summary: Recent empirical evidence on the international activities of European firms shows that efficiency gains from exporting seem to accrue only to medium and large exporters, due to the presence of relevant fixed costs in the exporting activity. The surveyed policies on the status of SMEs in international trade practices have shown that fixed costs are likely to persist in the future, due to the increasing complexity of international trade operations, and the lack of a systematic policy related to SMEs within the multilateral negotiating framework. Even within a regional approach to economic integration (regionalism), the existence of significant costs of implementation in the rules of origin act as an important obstacle for the access of SMEs to the integrating area. Some proposals specifically related to SMEs start being discussed in international fora (specific provisions for SMEs within FTAs, or a special clause on SMEs needs within the WTO negotiations), but practical actions are still lacking. The same discussed changes to provisions on geographical indications of products or public procurement do not seem to be specifically centred on the needs of SMEs, and thus are not likely to significantly foster their involvement in international trade activities. In the absence of policies aimed at a systemic reduction of fixed costs for SMEs within the working of international markets, Governments have been trying to reduce the fixed costs of their international involvement via a number of export promotion policies. However, the results of these policy actions are not clear-cut, with the surveyed evidence pointing to mixed results obtained in terms of effective support for the internationalization of SMEs. [...]  
In-Depth Analysis: EN, FR, IT
Study on third-party testing of toys

Publication type Study
Date 15-10-2008
External author Janne Sylvest and Benita Kidmose Rytz (Ramboll Management - Denmark)
Policy area Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection | Industry
Keyword toy industry | consumer movement | product safety | market approval | testing | small and medium-sized enterprises | European standardisation body
Summary Executive summary
The European Toy Safety Directive 88/378/EEC (TSD) regulates the EU toy sector through safety criteria and essential requirements which toys must meet before being placed on the EU market. The European Commission has now put forward a proposal for a new TSD. One of the key questions during drafting of the proposal for a new Directive was whether to make it mandatory for all toys to be tested by an independent third-party tester, which is not the case today. However, based on an Impact Assessment carried out in 2004, the Commission decided not to include mandatory third-party testing of toys in the proposal for a new TSD.

The objective of this study is to outline the merits and drawbacks of mandatory third-party testing of toys, by providing facts on the current situation and different stakeholders’ opinions on mandatory third-party testing of toys.

Misleading practices of ‘directory companies’ in the context of current and future internal market legislation aimed at the protection of consumers and SMES

Publication type Study
Date 01-10-2008
External author Frank Alleweldt (project director), Jan Kabel, Susanne Augenhofer, Irmgard Griss, Aurea Suñol, José Massaguer, Leonie Kroon, Wendy van Poorten, Marzena Lipman, Senda Kara, Bilgin Ayata, Andrew McIlwraith (CIVIC CONSULTING, Berlin, Germany)
Policy area Transposition and Implementation of Law | Internal Market and Customs Union | Consumer Protection | Industry
Keyword consumer protection | information technology | fraud | advertising malpractice | application of EU law | financial loss | legal action | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary This study provides an overview of the extent of problems of ‘directory companies’ reported to apply misleading practices. It describes judicial and non-judicial measures taken by affected enterprises and discusses initiatives by Member States aimed at tackling these practices. The study further presents an overview of the current EU legal framework and its national implementation. Finally, the study concludes with a discussion of options for EU-level action.

Smes in European Contract Law

Publication type In-Depth Analysis
Date 05-07-2007
External author Prof. Dr. Martijn W Hesselink, Centre for the Study of European Contract Law, The University of Amsterdam
Policy area Contract Law, Commercial Law and Company Law | Consumer Protection | Industry
Keyword consumer protection | small and medium-sized enterprises | contract
Summary Smes in European Contract Law

New Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012 - Compilation of Briefing Notes

Publication type Study
Date 15-06-2007
External author Karl Kuhn (Froendenberg, Germany), Jorma Rantanen (Helsinki, Finlandand) and Jukka Takala (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Bilbao, Spain)
Policy area Employment | Public Health
Keyword older worker | labour inspectorate | European Agency for Safety and Health at Work | temporary employment | application of EU law | occupational accident | female work | occupational health | subcontracting | small and medium-sized enterprises
Summary Two briefing notes on the ‘New Strategy on Health and Safety at work 2007-2012’ focus on the comparability of data and statistics in occupational health and safety, implementation and simplification of OSH directives without reducing the level of protection, targeted measures and whether OSH legislation is applied at global level.
Ex-Post Evaluation of the MAP 2001-2005 Initiative and Suggestions for the CIP 2007-2013

Publication type: Study
Date: 31-08-2006
External author: Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels.
Policy area: Budget | Industry
Keyword: project evaluation | competitiveness | exchange of information | credit guarantee | investment promotion | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic support

Impact and Assessment of EU Directives in the field of "INFORMATION & CONSULTATION"

Publication type: Study
Date: 03-07-2006
External author: Applica sprl
37, Rue Van Campenhout
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Policy area: Employment | EU Law: Legal System and Acts
Keyword: redundancy | worker information | worker consultation | United Kingdom | social partners | application of EU law | European Works Council | small and medium-sized enterprises | EC Directive

The Role of Small and Medium Enterprises in Developing Countries

Publication type: Study
Date: 31-03-2006
External author: Bob Fitch, Enterplan
Policy area: Employment | Development and Humanitarian Aid | Industry
Keyword: developing countries | economic development | job creation | small and medium-sized enterprises | underground economy | social development | economic analysis | export
Summary: Development thinking towards small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has shifted in its emphasis over the years. In the 1980s, led by the World Bank's "Get your prices right" approach, small firm policy was focused on economic development through business development and access to capital. During this time SMEs were hailed, as had trade been before them (Lewis, 1954), as the new engine of growth for developing countries (DCs). By the 1990s the emphasis had shifted towards social development and therefore less interest was paid to fostering SMEs (CFED, 2004). In the last few years, however, a more holistic approach to dealing with inequities in the global economy has emerged, and SMEs are now viewed as a means of achieving both economic and social development through poverty reduction (CFED, 2004). During the first five years of this decade the World Bank has approved over $10 billion to support the growth of small firms, and indications from the Bank are that this support will continue (World Bank, 2002 and 2004).

Study EN

Implications of reach for the Developing Countries

Publication type: Study
Date: 05-03-2006
External author: Dr Frank Ackerman
Policy area: International Trade | Development and Humanitarian Aid | Industry
Keyword: regulation (EU) | multinational enterprise | ACP countries | developing countries | import (EU) | dangerous substance | chemical product | trade relations | small and medium-sized enterprises | economic analysis
Summary: The study deals with the proposed regulatory framework for chemicals (REACH, COM (2003) 644 final of 29 Oct.2003), which causes considerable unease among developing countries on account of the burden that REACH may impose on them in terms of their market access to the EU. The study explains the functioning of REACH and examines the socio-economic impact on the developing countries with special focus on the ACP States, in particular on South Africa, Mozambique, Jamaica, Ghana and Tanzania. It investigates possible changes in the patterns of competitiveness and trade flows. Particular emphasis is placed upon the role of multinationals compared to local producers. Furthermore the study highlights the macroeconomic impact of REACH as far as employment and government revenue are concerned. It also examines the cost and benefit of REACH for the ACP States. Finally, technical assistance, capacity building, access to information and direct support for small and medium enterprises are examined.

Study EN, FR
Implications of REACH for the Developing Countries

Publication type: Study
Date: 01-03-2006

External author: Dr Frank Ackerman, Global Development and Environmental Institute, Tufts University, Boston, USA.

Policy area: International Trade | Development and Humanitarian Aid | Industry
Keyword: multinational enterprise | ACP countries | developing countries | competitiveness | chemical industry | labelling | trade relations | cost-benefit analysis | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: The study deals with the proposed regulatory framework for chemicals (REACH, COM (2003) 644 final of 29 Oct.2003), which causes considerable unease among developing countries on account of the burden that REACH may impose on them in terms of their market access to the EU. The study explains the functioning of REACH and examines the socio-economic impact on the developing countries with special focus on the ACP States, in particular on South Africa, Mozambique, Jamaica, Ghana and Tanzania. It investigates possible changes in the patterns of competitiveness and trade flows.

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Study EN

Access to Finance and Venture Capital for Industrial SMEs

Publication type: Study
Date: 01-04-2005

External author: Prof. Dr. Thomas Heimer, Prof. Dr. Luise Kümpf, Dr. Matthias Ralf Werner
Policy area: Economics and Monetary Issues | Financial and Banking Issues | Industry
Keyword: self-financing | financial accounting | venture capital | small and medium-sized enterprises | tax system | capital market | debt

Study EN

The rates of VAT

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 01-07-2003
Author: Ben PATTERSON
Policy area: Internal Market and Customs Union
Keyword: tax relief | tax exemption | VAT rate | small and medium-sized enterprises | financial services | tax harmonisation

Summary: The Commission has recently announced that it will shortly be making proposals on the reduced rates of Value Added Tax. This Briefing summarises the current position on VAT rates and the problems to which it gives rise, including those stemming from exemption. Relevant Articles from the Sixth VAT Directive are appended.

In-Depth Analysis DE, EN, FR

Social Dumping in the Road Haulage Business by Operators From Third Countries

Publication type: In-Depth Analysis
Date: 01-04-2001
Author: Reinhart PABST
Policy area: Transport | Employment | Industry
Keyword: carriage of goods | third country | social dumping | road transport | moonlighting | restriction on competition | foreign enterprise | small and medium-sized enterprises

Summary: The increasing penetration of the European Union by third country road haulage businesses, availing themselves of the great difference in salaries and social charges, led to important distortions of competition jeopardising the existence of small and medium enterprises. The activities of third country businesses, some of which are linked to or part of EU-enterprises, are to a considerable extent illegal due to the illegal employment of third country drivers and/or...
The Impact of Electronic Commerce on the Competitiveness of SMEs in the EU

**Publication type**: Study

**Date**: 01-09-2000

**External author**: Puay Tang (SPRU, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK)

**Policy area**: Electronic commerce | Internet | Competitiveness | Intra-EU trade | Small and medium-sized enterprises

**Summary**: Electronic commerce (e-commerce), particularly over the Internet is widely argued to have the potential to transform the marketplace, and to provide small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) with a wider variety of opportunities to engage in this activity than hitherto. E-commerce, for the purposes of this report, treats it in terms of Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C). E-commerce activities, for this study, also refer to marketing activities and the provision of digital information. The primary objective of this study is to investigate how e-commerce may give a competitive advantage over larger companies attempting to participate in the burgeoning e-marketplace. In association with this, the study also reviewed the inhibitors to, and catalysts for e-commerce, and provided a general overview of the development of this digital marketplace. In an attempt to further substantiate the extant general findings on e-commerce and SMEs, the research interviewed a select sample of 23 SMEs in the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, the UK, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. A main reason for interviewing SMEs of the candidate countries was to provide further insights into the activities and opinions of SMEs. The report concludes with Policy Options that the European Parliament and European Commission may want to consider in their measures to foster the development and take-up of ecommerce. Our research found three main incentives for SMEs to undertake e-commerce. They are (1) new opportunities; (2) flexibility to respond to new opportunities; and (3) cost savings. In particular, new opportunities reveal the degree of comparative advantage that firms adopting e-commerce could develop over those that continue operating in the traditional way, or with a minimum of integration of processes. First mover advantage and new opportunities also show how companies may develop a competitive edge over those that are slow to adopt ecommerce.

Study **EN**

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Technology and Development

**Publication type**: Study

**Date**: 01-05-1999

**External author**: Luciano d'Andrea (Cerfe, Rome, Italy)

**Policy area**: Development and Humanitarian Aid | Industry

**Keyword**: Project evaluation | Technology transfer | Developing countries | Development aid | Industrial cooperation | Research and development | Economic integration | Small and medium-sized enterprises

**Summary**: The research on "Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Technology and Development. An assessment of the potential contribution of FIS to the diffusion of technology in less developed countries and of options for action by the European Union to promote this context of development and cooperation policies", carried out by the CERFE, was aimed at providing the means for evaluating EU programs in support of SMEs in developing countries and to provide an analysis of options for future EU policies in the field of technological development. The Final Report, divided into 7 chapters, provides a description of the main EU instruments and programmes in support of SMEs in third countries (CDI, ACP-EU Industrial and Business Fora, ECIP, AL-Invest, ASIA-Invest, MEDA); then, it analyses some trends affecting SMEs, mainly with regards to technology transfer. Some useful elements for evaluating EU programs, as they came from the interviews carried out, are then considered. Four main strategic key points requiring further analysis (lack of a unified strategy for programs in support of SMEs; risk of political and bureaucratic self-referencing; lack of control over the "micro" dimension; problems in the relations with European partners) as well as some problems concerning programmes' quality (timeframes, administrative procedures, quality of local intermediaries; services provided, etc.) are analysed and discussed. Moreover, four main strong points (programmes' capacity in developing networks and partnerships; integration at the regional level; dynamics; programmes' catalyst effects) are presented. The last part of the document sets out recommendations and provides some options for improving EU interventions in support of SMEs in third countries. Four main issues are considered: support to a unified EU policy on SMEs and technology transfer; improvement of the quality of programmes; integration of the intervention at various level; improvement of the loyalty of European business.

Study **EN**

Social Consequences of Deregulation and Liberalisation in the Transport Sector of the EU

**Publication type**: Study

**Date**: 01-01-1998

**External author**: TEMA, Grupo Consultor S.A., Madrid

**Policy area**: Environment | Transport | Employment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry

**Keyword**: Single market | Transport infrastructure | Transport safety | Liberalisation of the market | Environmental protection | Deregulation | Common transport policy | Working conditions | Competition | Small and medium-sized enterprises

**Summary**: The study covers this subject by mode of transport and by country.

Study **DE, EN, FR**

Executive summary **XL**
The European Union and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Publication type: Study
Date: 01-05-1997
External author: Valeria Biagiotti, Robert Schuman Scholar
Policy area: Employment | Internal Market and Customs Union | Industry
Keyword: single market | economic growth | competitiveness | EU industrial policy | small and medium-sized enterprises | globalisation

Summary: Internationalisation of SMEs is an important issue for the EU Commission. This document discusses its feasibility.

Executive summary: EN