

Brussels, Friday 25 May 2012

## Top News from the European Commission 26 May – 23 June 2012

Background notes from the Spokespersons' service for journalists.  
The European Commission reserves the right to make changes.

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## **Wednesday 30 May: Commission presents its 2012 Country-Specific Recommendations and conclusions of in-depth reviews**

### **The news:**

On 30 May, the European Commission will adopt its second annual set of policy recommendations to the 27 Member States, and to the euro area as a whole. The recommendations are based on a detailed assessment of the economic, employment and budgetary situation and policies in each country. Where required, the Commission will spell out further budgetary steps, structural reforms and growth-enhancing measures which Member States should adopt over the following 12 months. The recommendations are to be endorsed by the European Council on 28-29 June and formally adopted by the Council in July.

At the same time, the Commission will present the results of the in-depth reviews of 12 Member States which it has been carrying out in the context of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure.

### **The background:**

The presentation of the Country-Specific Recommendations is a key moment in the 'European Semester' of economic policy coordination. Taking the EU's growth strategy (called Europe 2020) as a starting point, the Commission sets out every year Europe's economic policy priorities (in the so-called "Annual Growth Survey"). The priorities presented in the 2012 Annual Growth Survey, adopted on 23 November 2011, were endorsed by the European Council on 1 March 2012. On that basis, the Member States submitted in April their medium-term budgetary plans (called Stability Programmes for euro area countries, Convergence Programmes for other Member States) and the structural reform measures planned for the following 12 months (National Reform Programmes). The Country-Specific Recommendations are the Commission's response to these.

The presentation of the results of the in-depth reviews of 12 Member States is the next step in the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure, following the Alert Mechanism report on 14 February. The Alert Mechanism Report concluded that the macroeconomic situation in Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK merited further investigation with a view to assessing the presence of specific imbalances. Where necessary, the Commission will also issue recommendations to take appropriate preventive or corrective action to address these.

### **The event:**

The Commission will adopt 28 sets of proposed recommendations at its meeting on 30 May, as well as the results of 12 in-depth reviews and potential associated recommendations. The key messages will be presented at a press conference the same day, followed by a technical briefing off-the-record (time to be confirmed).

IP and MEMOs will be available on the day, along with the text of the Communication adopted by the Commission, the 28 sets of recommendations and 28 Commission staff working documents containing the detailed analysis for each Member State and for the euro area as a whole, plus the outcomes of the 12 in-depth reviews.

 Available on EbS

### **The sources:**

Europe 2020 website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)

2011 country-specific recommendations and staff working documents:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/recommendations-2011/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/recommendations-2011/index_en.htm)

2012 National Reform Programmes and Stability or Convergence Programmes:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/national-programmes-2012/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/reaching-the-goals/monitoring-progress/national-programmes-2012/index_en.htm)

2011 Alert Mechanism Report:

[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/economic\\_governance/documents/alert\\_mechanism\\_report\\_2012\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/documents/alert_mechanism_report_2012_en.pdf)

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## Wednesday 30 May: Towards a Common European Asylum System: Commission presents a new EURODAC proposal

### The news:

The Commission will present a new proposal on EURODAC, the system which facilitates the quick and correct identification of the Member State responsible for assessing an asylum claim.

### The background:

The EURODAC database has been operating since 2003. It was the first instrument adopted in the field of asylum ([Regulation 2725/2000/EC](#)). The Commission is now proposing to ensure a more efficient use of the EURODAC database so as to better ensure the application of the Dublin Regulation;

The proposal provides clearer deadlines for transmission of data, ensures full compatibility with the latest asylum legislation and better addresses data protection requirements. It also foresees the possibility for national law enforcement authorities to consult the EURODAC database for the purpose of prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences, introducing all the necessary safeguards to protect asylum seekers and migrants fundamental rights and privacy concerns.

### The event:

IP and MEMO will be available on the day.

### The sources:

Homepage of Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/default\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/default_en.htm)

Homepage DG Home Affairs:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/index_en.htm)

 [I-063162](tel:+3222980963) European Asylum System

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## **Thursday 31 May: The Commission adopts its monthly infringements package**

### **The news:**

On Thursday 31 May 2012, the European Commission will adopt its monthly infringements package. These decisions cover all Member States and most of EU policies and seek to enforce EU law across Europe in the interest of both citizens and businesses.

### **The background:**

Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) gives the Commission the power to take legal action against a Member State that is not respecting its obligations under EU law.

There are three successive stages: Letter of formal notice, reasoned opinion and referral to the Court of Justice.

If, despite the ruling, a Member State still fails to act, the Commission may open a further infringement case under Article 260 of the TFEU. After only one written warning, Commission may refer a Member State back to the Court and it can propose that the Court imposes financial penalties based on the duration and severity on the infringement and the size of the Member State.

### **The event:**

Several IPs and MEMOs will be available on the day.

### **The sources:**

The IP and MEMO will be made available on the day on Rapid:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/>

### **The contacts:**

Overall coordination:

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On specific infringements, please contact the spokesperson in charge.

## Friday 1 June: The Commission presents 2011 Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum

### The news:

The Commission is presenting its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum

### The background:

The Annual Report presents a forward-looking analysis of EU policy on immigration and international protection based on developments in 2011, an important year for the UE in many respects with consequent impact also on migration policy. The Annual report also provides an overview of the migration picture in the EU from a statistical perspective.

The 2011 Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum is accompanied by a Eurobarometer on the European citizen's attitudes towards cross-border mobility, migration and security.

### The event:

IP and MEMO will be available on the day.

### The sources:

Homepage of Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner for Home Affairs

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/default\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/malmstrom/welcome/default_en.htm)

Homepage DG Home Affairs:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/index_en.htm)

 [I-069698](#) EU Migration Policy

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## Friday 1 June: Non-discrimination and development event

### The news:

On 1st June, the European Commission, together with representatives from the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, Members of European Parliament, private sector and NGOs will hold an event to look at how development policy can promote non-discrimination as an asset for development. The meeting will be an important opportunity to engage in a public debate on how development cooperation can be founded on cultural diversity for more open and tolerant societies able to effectively cope with intolerance, including discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

The event will be hosted by Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, together with MEP, Michael Cashman, and Hon. Alva Baptiste, St. Lucia's Foreign Minister and current President of the ACP Group of States.

Opening address will be delivered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights H. E Navi Pillay, and Mr Louis Michel, MEP and Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

The Commission is expected to launch its first ever initiative on promoting non-discrimination in development during the event.

### The background:

The Charter of Fundamental Rights, proclaimed in December 2000, reaffirms the European Union's commitment to the principle of non-discrimination.

The principles set out in the Charter should guide the development of policy in the EU and the policy implementation by the national authorities.

The Commission is committed to improve the dialogue and the understanding of partner countries on the fighting against discrimination and intolerance in all of its development policy worldwide. This includes respect of minorities, sexual orientation, freedom of religion and beliefs, indigenous people's rights and respect for the rights of women and girls.

### The event:

1 June, 8:30 to 13:00, Charlemagne building, Brussels

To register for a place please contact:

[wojtek.talko@ec.europa.eu](mailto:wojtek.talko@ec.europa.eu) or + 32 29 94153

Press point: VIP Corner, 11.30-12,00, Berlaymont building

### The sources:

Website of DG Development and Co-operation EuropeAid:

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

Website of the European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/piebalgs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm)

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## **Monday 4 June: Commission adopts proposed Regulation on eID and eSignature**

### **The news:**

The European Commission will adopt a draft Regulation aimed at ensuring cross-border legal recognition of electronic IDs, eSignatures and other electronic Authentication services in Europe (eIAS), as foreseen in the Digital Agenda for Europe. The measures will enhance trust in pan-European electronic transactions and enable electronic identification, authentication, signature and related trust services, as well as a high level of data protection and user empowerment in the Single Market.

### **The background:**

The draft Regulation will contain a review of the existing eSignature Directive to ensure harmonised application and simplification, in order to facilitate cross-border electronic transactions. The scope of the current Directive will be widened and will include mutual recognition of eIDs, so that all Member States recognise and accept all formally notified eIDs from other EU Member States.

Revising the current directive was one of the twelve key actions to unlock growth set out by the Commission in the Single Market Act (see [IP/11/469](#)) one year ago. Eleven of those proposals are already with the Council and the European Parliament and the set will be completed on adoption of this proposal.

### **The event:**

Technical briefing (to be confirmed).

IP and MEMO on the 4<sup>th</sup> June.

 Available on EbS

### **The sources:**

Current eSignature directive

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/esignature/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/esignature/index_en.htm)

Neelie Kroes' website

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/kroes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/kroes/index_en.htm)

Single Market Act

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/smact/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smact/index_en.htm)

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## Wednesday 6 June: Commission adopts Renewable Energy Communication

### The news:

The Commission's Communication analyses the state of play of the renewable energy market in Europe. It will take stock of the progress made and call for better reform of support schemes and the use of cooperation mechanisms in the Directive.

The document intends to start the process of building certainty and clarity beyond 2020, while ensuring that renewable energy production in Europe continues to grow in a sustainable, market integrated and cost-effective manner.

### The background:

The single market for renewables is in the making and while many Member States have achieved significant progress towards their 2020 targets continuous efforts are needed. However, the lack of certainty on the direction of future policies could hinder this process, as further substantial investment in the sector is needed.

### The event:

14.00 Press Conference of EU Energy Commissioner Oettinger, followed by a technical briefing.

IP available on the day.

 Available on EbS

### The sources:

The Commission's Communication on Renewables will be made available on:

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

Commissioner Oettinger's website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/oettinger/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/oettinger/index_en.htm)

 [I-063648](#) Green economy: Energy generation

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## Wednesday, 6 June tbc: Commission proposes a new framework for bank recovery and resolution

### The news:

As part of its work in creating a sounder and stronger financial system, the Commission will propose new bank crisis management measures. The new bank resolution regime is crucial for ensuring long term stability of the financial system and for minimising the potential impacts of possible future financial crises for the taxpayer and for economic growth. The aim is to avoid banks being bailed out with public money.

Key elements of the proposal:

- The framework will be based first on **prevention and reducing the risk of failure**. A key element will be **early intervention**. The powers of the supervisory authorities will be expanded in order to intervene at an early stage before problems in a bank become critical and its financial situation deteriorates irreparably.
- The proposal will ensure that national authorities and the European Banking Authority (EBA) have the **appropriate coordination tools** to ensure coherent procedures. This is particularly important in the context of cross-border banking groups.
- The framework will provide for **credible resolution tools** when a bank is no longer viable and allowing it to go bankrupt would be disruptive for essential financial services and overall stability. These tools will include 'bail-in' measures (the power to convert or write down the debt of failing banks).
- In order to be effective, sufficient funds should be available **to finance resolution**, for example to issue guarantees or provide short term loans to help a newly set up bridge bank to operate. Such funds would only serve to ensure the continuity of critical functions and not to bail out troubled institutions.

### The background:

The financial crisis revealed vulnerabilities in the regulation and supervision of the (European) banking system. It also provided clear evidence of the need for more comprehensive and effective arrangements to deal with failing banks at national level, as well as the need to put in place arrangements better able to cater for cross-border banking failures.

There have been a number of high profile banking failures during the crisis (Fortis, Lehman Brothers, Icelandic banks, IKB, Anglo Irish Bank, Dexia, WestLB) which have revealed serious shortcomings in the existing arrangements.

To safeguard financial stability and in the absence of mechanisms to organise an orderly wind down, EU Member States have had no choice other than to bail out their banking sector. The governments had to provide unprecedented support to the banking sector in many countries at considerable cost to taxpayers and economic growth. The new framework will enable authorities to intervene at an early stage to prevent crises. It will also give authorities robust tools to intervene in a crisis in order to safeguard deposits, preserve financial stability and minimise cost to taxpayers.

### The event:

Press conference by Commissioner Michel Barnier, responsible for Internal Market and Services, in the Berlaymont press room preceded by a technical briefing.

Press material will be available on the day.

### The sources:

Commissioner Barnier's website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/barnier/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/barnier/index_en.htm)

Commission's web site:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/bank/crisis\\_management/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/crisis_management/index_en.htm)

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[Audrey.Augier@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Audrey.Augier@ec.europa.eu)

## **Friday, 8 June (tbc): Better Governance for the Single Market & the Services Directive Package**

### **The news:**

In response to calls from the European Council and the Parliament to strengthen the governance of the Single Market and improve its implementation and enforcement, the Commission will adopt on 8 June 2012 a communication setting out actions and targets to make the Single Market effectively deliver more growth.

Much is already being done to boost growth and create jobs (e.g. Europe 2020 - see [IP/10/225](#), Single Market Act – see [IP/11/469](#)), but there is an urgent need to make what we have work better in practice. The **Communication for better governance for the Single Market** sets out an ambitious course of action to make progress on proper enforcement and application of EU law in priority areas with the greatest growth potential. It proposes measures to further improve the way Single Market rules are designed, implemented, applied and enforced - the 'governance cycle'.

On the same day, the Commission will also adopt a **Services Directive Package** consisting of a policy paper, accompanied by three staff working documents and their annexes. The reports will focus on: the implementation of the Services Directive; the results of the performance check exercise evaluating how well EU rules are applied to businesses on a day-to-day basis; and guidance on the application of Article 20(2) which concerns the non-discrimination of service recipients on the basis of nationality or country of residence. The policy paper will present a state of play and propose a set of actions to deliver much needed growth and jobs. Efforts will be focussed on those service sectors with significant economic weight, and with above average growth potential: construction, tourism, business and retail.

### **The background:**

Today's Single Market suffers from chequered implementation and uneven enforcement. Too often, EU Directives are not transposed in time. Furthermore, EU rules are frequently implemented in ways that run counter to EU law or impose unnecessary burdens on businesses and/or people. It has been calculated for instance that a more efficient transposition of EU legislation could reduce administrative burdens by 32%, leading to an overall cost saving of nearly 40 billion euro. And evidence shows that in many areas, Single Market rules are not properly understood, applied and enforced.

The Services Directive was adopted in 2006 to improve the regulatory environment in Member States and make it easier for businesses and consumers to benefit from the opportunities offered by the EU single market. It had to be implemented by all Member States by the end of 2009.

The Directive covers services accounting for more than 45% of EU GDP and consequently is vital for growth and job creation in Europe. The most recent assessment shows that the Services Directive brings significant economic benefits – and could bring even more if Member States were more ambitious in opening up their services markets. The Commission has looked at the work done by Member States and identified the main obstacles still remaining. It is proposing concrete measures to make the single market in services work better for both business and citizens.

### **The event:**

Press Conference by Commissioner Michel Barnier preceded by a technical briefing (times to be confirmed). Press conference available on EbS.

IP and MEMOs will be available on the day.

### **The sources:**

Information on the Services Directive:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/services/services-dir/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/index_en.htm)

Commissioner Michel Barnier's website:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/barnier/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/barnier/index_en.htm)

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## Date to be confirmed: Strategy for better use of Key Enabling Technologies by EU industry

### The news:

The European Commission will present a Communication on "A European Strategy for Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) – A bridge to growth and jobs". It will lay down how the KETS, notably micro- and nanoelectronics, advanced materials, industrial biotechnology, photonics, nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing systems, can be better used to give European industry the necessary boost to keep its technological leadership and to regain competitiveness.

KETs are the indispensable "technology bricks" to build a wide range of product applications to lead the technological leap forward for competitive advanced industrial production: whether it is the electric car, satellites, medical devices or advanced consumer goods, such as smartphones.

### The background:

KETs economic impact is considerable. Even more considerable are the applications of KETs that directly and indirectly boost competitiveness and generate jobs, growth and wealth in the economy. The Commission's European Competitiveness Report 2010 indicated a global current market volume of EUR 646 billion (around 2006/2008), which is projected to grow to over EUR 1 trillion by 2015.

The direct return on public investments from KETs is substantial as case studies show that it can quadruplicate the initial investment.

### The event:

Press conference: Presentation of the European Commission Communication on "A European Strategy for Key Enabling Technologies – A bridge to growth and jobs"

IP and MEMO will be available on the day.

 Available on EbS

### The sources:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/key\\_technologies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/ict/key_technologies/index_en.htm)

 [I-063780](#) EU high technology

 [I-072248](#) Biotechnology

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