

Brussels, Friday 1 June 2012

Top News from the European Commission 2– 30 June 2012

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

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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:

11.00 Technical briefing on the record in the Berlaymont press room.

IP and MEMO on the 4th June.

 Available on EbS

The sources:

Current eSignature directive

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

Single Market Act

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smact/index_en.htm

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Tuesday 5 June: Commission gathers high-level input on resource-efficient growth

The news:

Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik is launching a platform to provide high-level guidance and advice on policy measures designed to nudge the European economy towards a more sustainable path. The European Resource Efficiency Platform will provide direction and support in the EU's efforts to move towards a more resource-efficient economic system, focusing on the key resources, sectors and policy areas defined in the Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe.

The background:

Resource efficiency, which provides the sustainability dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy, is a top priority for the European Commission, combining an environmental and climate policy agenda with key economic and social objectives. The intention is to combine the Platform's members' backgrounds and skills to provide useful guidance to the European Commission, Member States and market actors on resource efficiency.

The Platform is chaired by John Bruton, a former prime minister of Ireland and EU Ambassador to the US. Its 34 members include Commissioner Potočnik, Vice-President Tajani, Commissioners Hedegaard, Šemeta and Rehn, four Members of the European Parliament, nine business leaders from various sectors, environment ministers from Denmark, Estonia, Italy, and Germany, and members of international organisations, civil society and academia.

The event:

15.00 Press conference by Commissioner Janez Potočnik in the Berlaymont press room.

The first plenary meeting of the Platform will be held on 5 June 2012.

IP will be available on the day.

 Available on EbS

The sources:

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/resource_efficiency/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

Commissioner Oettinger's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/oettinger/index_en.htm

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

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Wednesday 6 June: 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:

Tuesday 5 May at 12:45: Technical briefing off the record in the Berlaymont press room on Banking regulation, crisis management and resolution.

Wednesday 6 June at 11.15: Press conference by Commissioner Michel Barnier, responsible for Internal Market and Services, in the Berlaymont press room.

Press material will be available on the day.

 Available on EbS

The sources:

Commissioner Barnier's website:

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

 [I-068615](#) Financial Sector and EU Financial Supervisory Bodies

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Friday 8 June (date to be confirmed): 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:

12.30 Press Conference by Commissioner Michel Barnier preceded by a technical briefing at 11.30.

IP and MEMOs will be available on the day.

 Available on EbS

The sources:

Information on the Services Directive:

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

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Thursday 14 June: RegioStars Awards

The news:

On 14 June the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn will present the [2012 RegioStars Awards](#) to Europe's most innovative and inspiring projects. The objective of RegioStars is to identify good practice in regional development and to highlight original and innovative projects, supported under EU Regional Policy.

The background:

In the current 5th round of Awards, the European Commission received a record 107 applications, of which 24 were chosen as finalists. The independent jury will announce the winners on 14 June, which will be presented by Commissioner Hahn at the Awards Ceremony that evening, as part of the annual Regions for Economic Change conference.

There are five **RegioStars Award categories for 2012:**

- **SMART GROWTH:** Innovative projects or schemes supporting service innovation in its different forms.
- **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH:** Investments in ecosystem services and green infrastructure leading to sustainable regional development.
- **INCLUSIVE GROWTH:** Strategies, initiatives or projects addressing the challenge of demographic change and supporting active ageing. (2012 is the "European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations")
- **CITYSTAR CATEGORY:** Integrated strategies for the development of deprived urban areas.
- **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CATEGORY:** Informing the public on the internet about projects benefiting from EU Regional policy.

The event:

Commissioner Hahn will be accompanied by President of the RegioStars Jury, Luc van den Brande, (former Committee of the Regions President) to present the 2012 RegioStars awards at the Plaza Hotel, 118-126 Blvd Adolphe Max, 1000 Brussels on 14 June at 19.00.

A briefing introducing the winners (**under embargo**) will take place on the same day at 17.00, also in the Plaza Hotel

The Regions for Economic Change (RfEC) conference entitled "Transforming Regional Economies: the Power of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation" will take place on 15 June in Brussels. The event will be a discussion forum for the challenges and benefits of implementing smart specialisation strategies through EU Structural Funds and how to best fit these smart strategies into different national and regional contexts.

The sources:

For more details, including the RfEC conference [programme](#) visit the [conference website](#)

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Thursday 21 June: The Commission adopts its monthly infringements package

The news:

On Thursday 21 June 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:

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On specific infringements, please contact the spokesperson in charge.

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

 [I-063780](#) EU high technology

 [I-072248](#) Biotechnology

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