



Top News from the European Commission 2 – 27 February 2015

Brussels, 30 January 2015

Background notes from the Spokesperson's service for journalists

The European Commission reserves the right to make changes

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2-6 February: 8th round of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

The news:

On 2-6 February 2015, the eighth round of negotiations for a [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership \(TTIP\)](#) between the EU and the US will take place in Brussels.

The background:

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a comprehensive free trade and investment treaty currently being negotiated between the European Union and the US. **The main goal of TTIP is to remove regulatory tariff and non-tariff barriers leading to more growth and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic and global standards.**

The event:

Friday 30 January, 10:15-11:00: Technical briefing off-the-record by the EU chief negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercero before the round, Berlaymont Press Room.

Monday 2 Feb, ca. 10:15: Photo opportunity: Handshake between the chief negotiators (Berlaymont VIP corner)

Wednesday 4 Feb, 11:00: Stakeholder event

Friday 6 Feb, 15:30 (tbc): Closing press conference by the chief negotiators

The sources:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/>

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Tuesday 3 February: European Consultation of the World Humanitarian Summit starts in Budapest

The news:

Christos Stylianides, the EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, will join humanitarian stakeholders from 54 countries in Budapest for the "Europe and Others' consultation leading to the UN [World Humanitarian Summit \(WHS\)](#). This regional conference marks a major milestone in the

two-year process, announced by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 and set to culminate in Istanbul in May 2016.

The background:

WHS will bring together all stakeholders – donors, relief organisations, private sector, aid beneficiaries and more – with a view to jointly reshape the global humanitarian system for the years to come. High-level participants include the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, Valerie Amos; Director-General International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ambassador William Lacy Swing; Secretary-General International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Elhadj As SY, and many others.

The event

Commissioner Stylianides delivers a speech at the opening of the European Consultation of the World Humanitarian Summit.

- Available on EBS

The sources:

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/>

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Wednesday 4 February: European Commission adopts proposal to increase pre-financing to promote youth employment

The news:

The European Commission will present a proposal to increase the amount of pre-funding made available to Member States to promote youth employment and provide support to young persons not in employment, education or training in the most affected regions. Currently, Member States are facing difficulties to provide the necessary payments for the implementation of operations under the Youth Employment Initiative. The situation is particularly acute in the Member States with the highest levels of youth unemployment since they are also the ones which are facing more budgetary constraints and lack of funding. Increasing the amount of pre-funding will contribute to the integration of young people into the labour market and support the efforts of providing an immediate and quick response to the unacceptably high level of youth unemployment in the EU.

The background:

The Youth Employment Initiative was adopted following a call from the European Council of February 2013 to address the unprecedented levels of youth unemployment in certain regions of the European Union. The purpose of the Youth Employment Initiative is to provide additional funding for promoting youth employment to the regions most affected by youth unemployment.

The event:

Wednesday 4 February: press conference in the Commission's press room. Press release and memo will be available on the day in the Press Release Database: <http://europa.eu/rapid/>.

- Available on Ebs

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Thursday 5 February: The Commission publishes Winter European Economic Forecast

The news:

On 5 February, the European Commission will publish its Winter European Economic Forecast. It will cover 2014, 2015 and 2016 and will include data on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, employment and public budget deficits and debt, amongst others. These forecasts focus on all 28 EU

Member States, plus the candidate countries as well as some non-EU countries.

The background:

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Monetary Affairs produces short-term macroeconomic forecasts three times year: in the spring, autumn and in the winter. They serve as a basis for various economic surveillance procedures, such as in the context of the European Semester.

The event

Thursday 5 February: Press conference on the Winter European Economic Forecast (details to follow). Press release available on the day.

- Available on EBS

The sources:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/index_en.htm

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February: Commission adopts Communication on a Global Partnership to deliver the post-2015 development agenda

The news

In February the European Commission will present its Communication on a Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015. The post-2015 process has entered a new and decisive phase, with the launch of intergovernmental negotiations in New York in January 2015, which will continue in the coming months, along with the negotiations for the Financing for Development Conference in July 2015 in Addis Ababa. The talks are expected to lead to the adoption of a post-2015 agenda at a UN Summit in September. The Communication will present a vision for the new, universal global partnership, outlining a set of principles and proposing means of implementation (covering both financing and policy measures) to be pursued by all countries, according to their respective capabilities.

The background

The Millennium Development Goals, agreed in 2000, will expire this year. The debate on a post-2015 agenda is converging into a single framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development, which will notably include a new set of Sustainable Development Goals.

As the world's largest donor of development assistance and champion of sustainable development, the EU is committed to play a constructive and influential role in the upcoming negotiations. The EU needs a common approach for its engagement in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations ahead of the Financing for Development (FFD) Conference and the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda, in order to provide coordinated and timely inputs.

The Communication which will be published in February is expected to lead to Council Conclusions later in spring.

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Wednesday 18 February: A Capital Markets Union to unlock investments in Europe

The news:

On 18 February, the European Commission will launch a Green Paper consultation on the Capital Markets Union (CMU) for all 28 EU Member States. This consultation follows a first orientation debate at the College of Commissioners which was positive and supportive of the project (see [IP/15/3800](http://ec.europa.eu/ip15/3800)).

The background:

The CMU is one of the flagship projects of this Commission and ties in with the ambition to boost jobs

and growth in the EU. It aims to create a single market for capital for all 28 Member States by removing barriers to cross-border investment and lower costs of funding within the EU. It is designed to help businesses to tap into a greater diversity of sources of capital from anywhere in the EU and offer investors and savers additional opportunities to put their money to work. Well-functioning capital markets will also facilitate the mobilisation of private financing in the context of the Investment Plan for Europe.

In many parts of Europe businesses - especially SMEs - remain heavily reliant on banks for their funding needs. A key objective of the CMU will be to increase sources of funding so that businesses have easier access to credit through capital markets as well as banks, including cross border access.

The Commission aims to make its consultation phase broad and inclusive: it will call for input from the European Parliament, national parliaments, Member States, citizens, SMEs, end users, the non-governmental sector as well from as the financial sector. Based on the feedback it receives, the Commission will unveil an Action Plan on the CMU during third quarter of 2015.

The event:

Jonathan Hill, EU Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, will give a press conference at the midday briefing in the Commission's press room (timing TBC). A press release, a MEMO as well as the Green Paper will be issued on the day.

An 'off-the-record' technical briefing will also be organised in the morning in the press room (timing TBC).

- Available on EbS

The sources:

Information on financial services:

http://ec.europa.eu/finance/index_en.htm

Information on Commissioner Jonathan Hill:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/hill_en

[Speech](#) on "Capital Markets Union – finance serving the economy"

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Wednesday 25 February (date tbc): Commission presents Energy Union Strategy

The news:

The European Commission will adopt a Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy. The Energy Union is one of the key priorities of the new Commission as laid down by President Juncker in his political guidelines.

The Energy Union Strategy will go hand in hand with a Climate Communication "Road to Paris" and a Communication reporting on the electricity interconnection target of 10%.

The background:

Much has been done in the field of energy over the last years. The EU has started to build the most integrated, competitive and sustainable Internal Energy Market in the world. Still the current energy policies are unsustainable in every sense of the term and don't deliver all benefits that citizens and companies can expect.

Some few examples:

The fact that most of the EU's energy comes from outside the EU, notably from a few countries which use their energy supply as a political bargain puts the EU at constant risk for disruptions. Energy systems in Europe are fragmented into 28 national silos and some parts of the EU are still insufficiently integrated in the energy system.

EU companies are facing gas prices which are no less than three times higher than those enjoyed by their American counterparts. This is a huge burden for industry and EU's economy overall.

And when it comes to low-carbon technology: among the top 10 solar energy companies, none is

European. Still too much energy is wasted, and the EU has not yet built the low-carbon economy and society.

The event:

Wednesday 25 February (date tbc): Press conference with Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and EU-Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete (details to follow).

Press release and MEMOs available on the day.

The sources:

More information about the Commission's priorities:

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/energy-union/index_en.htm

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AGENDA/15/3941

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