



Highlights

Economy, finance and tax

● **Unemployment continues to rise** (30/11/2011)

The unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points in October in the EU and the euro area to 9.8% and 10.3% respectively. Spain recorded the highest rate at 22.8%.

● **Euro Plus Pact: tax issues for discussion** (30/11/2011)

Tax policy coordination between the member states participating in the Euro Plus Pact is ready to be stepped up, after the finance ministers of the participating 23 member states on 30 November adopted a report which outlines the issues that need to be coordinated between them in future.

● **€ 2.5 billions to boost business competitiveness and SMEs 2014 - 2020** (30/11/2011)

With a budget of € 2.5 billions over the period 2014-2020, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs, COSME is a funding instrument, which is largely continuing the activities under the current Competitiveness and Innovation programme (CIP).

● **Horizon 2020: Commission proposes €80 billion investment in research and innovation** (30/11/2011)

Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn has presented the Horizon 2020 programme today, an €80 billion programme for investment in research and innovation 2014 - 2020.

● **Economic Sentiment back in decline** (29/11/2011)

The indicator fell by 1.0 point to 92.8 in the EU and by 1.1 points to 93.7 in the euro area. Confidence dropped significantly in the services and retail trade sectors.

● **New action for growth, governance and stability** (23/11/2011)

The European Commission is accelerating its efforts for economic renewal, with moves to address three interwoven challenges facing the EU and the euro area in particular: a divergent but generally lacklustre growth and employment performance; insufficiently coordinated and disciplined budgetary policies; and unstable sovereign debt markets suffering from a lack of liquidity.

● **September 2011 compared with August 2011: Industrial new orders down by 6.4% in euro area - Down by 2.3% in EU27** (23/11/2011)

In September 2011 compared with August 2011, the euro area (EA17) industrial new orders index fell by 6.4%. In August the index rose by 1.4%. In the EU27 new orders decreased by 2.3% in September 2011, after a fall of 0.3% in August.

● **An agenda for growth** (23/11/2011)

Package of economic and budgetary recommendations sets priorities for 2012 and includes new measures to reinforce eurozone financial governance and stability.

● **Hungary makes request for “precautionary” financial assistance** (21/11/2011)

The Commission will now examine Hungary's request in consultation with member countries and the IMF. A similar request was also sent to the IMF.

● **Eurofound presents overview of restructuring activities in Europe** (21/11/2011)

The report includes an online database of measures taken in the EU 27 and Norway. It aims to inform governments, social partners and others about support offered to mitigate negative restructuring effects.

● **Toward a closer, stronger economic union** (17/11/2011)

Eurozone governments should move quickly to support the common currency, end the debt crisis and forge a deeper economic union, says Commission President José Manuel Barroso, announcing plans for new proposals.

● **Making credit rating agencies more accountable** (17/11/2011)

EU seeks to strengthen oversight of credit ratings agencies as part of ongoing financial market reforms.

● **ESMA advises on rules for alternative investment fund managers** (16/11/2011)

The financial authority's advice will help the Commission prepare implementing measures for the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive.

● **Parliament seals ban on sovereign debt speculation and short selling limitations** (15/11/2011)

Parliament voted into law a regulation to curb short selling and trading in credit default swaps (CDS), a financial product for insuring against default. The rules will impose much more transparency and virtually ban certain CDS trades, thereby making speculation on a country's default more difficult.

● **Gibraltar's tax reform is incompatible with internal market, Court says** (15/11/2011)

In upholding the Commission's decision on the reform, the Court says Gibraltar's proposals are designed so that offshore companies without a physical presence would avoid taxation.

● **September 2011 compared with August 2011: Industrial production down by 2.0% in euro area** (14/11/2011)

In September 2011 compared with August 2011, seasonally adjusted industrial production fell by 2.0% in the euro area (EA17) and by 1.3% in the EU27. In August production rose by 1.4% and 1.0% respectively.

● **Ending double taxation in the single market** (11/11/2011)

The Commission outlines the main problems of double taxation and the concrete measures it intends to take against this major obstacle facing the interior market. A proposal was also adopted to improve the rules on interest and royalties.

● **Financial transaction tax proposal on the Council's table** (10/11/2011)

On 8 November, the economic and financial affairs ministers took note of a presentation by the Commission of its proposal to tax financial transactions in the European Union.

● **Autumn economic forecast – recovery stops** (10/11/2011)

The recovery of the EU economy has stopped. Sharply deteriorated confidence is affecting investment and consumption, weakening global growth is holding back exports, and urgent fiscal consolidation is weighing on domestic demand.

● **Council adopts rules to strengthen financial sector supervision** (08/11/2011)

The rules adapt the supervision of financial conglomerates to the EU's new oversight structure. They include sector-specific and supplementary supervision of a conglomerate's parent.

● **EU adopts new economic governance measures** (08/11/2011)

The so-called "six-pack" of measures aims to improve budgetary discipline, ensure a decline of public debt and deficits, and broaden surveillance of economic policies in the EU and euro area.

Euro

● **Eurogroup: go-ahead for the next tranche of loans to Greece and Ireland** (30/11/2011)

On 29 November, euro area finance ministers endorsed the disbursement of further assistance for Greece, whereby the funds will be available by mid-December. Ministers also approved the terms and conditions to

enlarge the capacity of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) by introducing sovereign bond partial risk participation and co-investment funds.

● **Eurogroup agrees to increase capacity of EFSF** (29/11/2011)

Euro area finance ministers approve the introduction of sovereign bond partial risk participation and a co-investment approach to ensure the European Financial Stability Facility can be used efficiently.

● **Task force for Greece expresses ‘cautious optimism’** (17/11/2011)

The task force’s first report sets out three priorities for work: sustaining economic activity, ensuring efficient tax collection and improving public administration.

● **Portugal’s economic programme on track says review mission** (16/11/2011)

The Commission, European Central Bank and IMF say the programme’s success depends on continued implementation of reforms to restore competitiveness and maintain financial stability.

● **Eurogroup: two options for leveraging the EFSF** (07/11/2011)

Finance ministers of the euro area progressed on the follow-up to the decisions taken by the euro area summit on 26 October, including work to maximise the capacity of the European Financial Stability Facility.

● **ECB cuts euro area interest rates** (03/11/2011)

The European Central Bank has decreased interest rates on the main refinancing operations, the marginal lending facility and the deposit facility by 25 basis points to 1.25%, 2% and 0.5% respectively.

Business

● **Euro area business climate worsens for ninth month in a row** (29/11/2011)

The indicator fell mainly due to a gloomier assessment of production trends and an increased pessimism about order books. Managers were more optimistic in their stock assessments.

● **New approach would reduce red tape for small businesses** (23/11/2011)

The Commission will also try to exempt micro-enterprises from EU legislation or introduce special measures when possible. Input from small businesses will be sought when formulating new initiatives.

● **'EU business day' brings Dutch SMEs and the EU closer** (21/11/2011)

On 10 November, the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce organised the first 'EU business day'. The objective of this event was to bring Dutch small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the EU closer together and to enhance mutual understanding.

● **European network to promote female entrepreneurship launched** (15/11/2011)

The European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs has been inaugurated in Warsaw, Poland under a Polish Presidency event on 15 November 2011. 17 CIP countries will be welcomed to the Mentors Network: Albania, Belgium, Cyprus, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

● **From mass to tailor made tourism – ICT platform opens the door to global market** (09/11/2011)

SMEs working in tourist niche markets should better participate in the digital value chain. Therefore the European Commission proposed today to establish an ICT and tourism platform.

● **Opening the world for small and medium sized enterprises to enhance EU growth** (09/11/2011)

European small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) should better profit from fast growing emerging markets. This is the key issue to overcome the crisis addressed in the European Commission communication ‘Small Business, Big World - a new partnership to help SMEs seize global opportunities’.

● **Supporting EU businesses in the international market** (09/11/2011)

A new Commission strategy aims to help small and medium businesses profit from fast growing emerging markets such as China, India and Russia. This should increase competitiveness and create employment.

Governance

- **Commission adopts 2012 Work Programme for European Renewal** (15/11/2011)
Brussels, 15 November 2011: The European Commission has adopted a Work Programme for the coming year, "Delivering European renewal".

EU affairs

- **Council approves 2012 EU budget** (30/11/2011)
EU finance ministers approve the budget with payments amounting to €129.088bn, an increase of 1.86% compared with 2011. The European Parliament must now approve the agreement.
- **Agreement on EU budget 2012** (18/11/2011)
The Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the budget for 2012 at their meeting in the Conciliation Committee. The agreement limits the increase of payments to 1.86% compared to the 2011 budget.
- **Next long-term budget framework: the debate goes on** (16/11/2011)
At the meeting of the General Affairs Council on 16 November 2011, ministers continued the debate over the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), begun at their meeting on 12 September. The next MFF will cover the period running from 2014 to 2020.
- **MEPs show support for single European rail area** (16/11/2011)
Parliament approves the Commission's proposal to liberalise rail services and calls for a plan for managing rail infrastructure and services, and the opening of rail passenger markets to competition.
- **Commission proposes 40% increase for Home Affairs budget** (15/11/2011)
A €10.7bn budget would be available for the 2014-20 funding period to manage migration flows and address security threats. The rules will also be simplified to cut red tape and ensure faster results.

Employment and social policies

- **Council adopts position on single permits for third-country nationals** (24/11/2011)
The new rules would simplify admission procedures for third-country nationals to reside and work in the EU and facilitate the control of their status. Parliament must now formally adopt the directive.
- **Court clarifies rules on accumulation of paid annual leave** (22/11/2011)
National rules may set a time limit on the expiry of the accumulation of annual paid leave as long as the carry over period is substantially longer than the period in which it is granted.
- **ECHA doubles the number of trainees as the first step of its new graduate scheme for EU chemicals regulations** (16/11/2011)
The graduate scheme has been established to respond to the high industry demand for REACH and CLP specialists and to assist young graduates to find employment as regulatory scientists and professionals in the field of chemical regulations.
- **Mobile Bulgarian and Romanian workers add to EU's economic growth** (11/11/2011)
Mobile workers from Bulgaria and Romania have filled vacancies in sectors with labour shortages and contributed to the skill mix, a Commission report shows.
- **Entrepreneurship education and skills key for competitiveness and jobs** (11/11/2011)
Europe needs more entrepreneurs, more innovation and more jobs. One important aspect is to match the offer and the demand in the labor market providing the right skills and education.

External relations and foreign affairs

- **Victoria Espinel: closer US-EU cooperation for the protection of intellectual property rights online** (29/11/2011)

"The Internet doesn't have any borders, and neither does intellectual property!", said Marielle Gallo MEP at the opening of her IP Forum, which 200 people attended on November 22, including MEPs, representatives from the European Commission and consumer and industry organisations.

- **Significant economic benefits from a Doha deal** (04/11/2011)

A new study shows that the economic benefits arising from the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations in the World Trade Organisation amount to an increase of world exports of \$359 billion on an annual basis from a deal on the liberalisation of industrial goods, agriculture, services and on the removal of red tape.

- **EU at G20: "tackling the accelerated implementation of the eurozone decisions"** (04/11/2011)

The leaders of twenty major advanced and emerging economies hailed "the euro area's determination to bring its full resources and entire institutional capacity to bear in restoring confidence and financial stability, and in ensuring the proper functioning of money and financial markets". They called for a swift implementation of the plan adopted at the Euro summit on 26 October.