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EU integration process in CEE countries	**Georgia joins Horizon 2020, the EU's Research and Innovation Programme** Researchers and innovators from Georgia will now be able to participate in Horizon 2020, the EU's framework programme for research and innovation, under the same conditions as their counterparts from EU Member States and other associated countries http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1630_en.htm **European Commission proposes visa-free travel for citizens of Ukraine** The European Commission is proposing to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the citizens of Ukraine by transferring Ukraine to the list of countries whose citizens can travel without a visa to the Schengen area. This proposal comes after the Commission gave a positive assessment last December, confirming that Ukraine successfully met all benchmarks under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP). http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1490_en.htm
Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership	**Commission authorises support for renewable energy in Italy** The European Commission has concluded that an Italian scheme aimed at supporting electricity generation from renewable energy sources is in line with EU state aid rules. The scheme will further EU energy and climate goals without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1605_en.htm **The April infringements' package: key decisions** In its monthly package of infringement decisions, the European Commission is pursuing legal action against Member States for failing to comply with their obligations under EU law. The key decisions taken by the Commission includes 2 letters of formal notice, 35 reasoned opinions and 6 referrals to the Court of Justice. The Commission is also closing 113 cases where the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1452_en.htm
General development of the EU	**Stronger and Smarter Borders in the EU: Commission proposes to establish an Entry-Exit System** The European Commission is today presenting its revised proposal for a Regulation on the establishment of an Entry-Exit System to speed-up, facilitate and reinforce border check procedures for non-EU nationals travelling to the EU. The Entry-Exit System will modernise external border management by improving the quality and efficiency of controls and support Member States with the increasing numbers of travellers entering and exiting the EU. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1247_en.htm

	A new integrated EU policy for the Arctic adopted The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission have adopted a policy proposal that will guide the actions of the European Union in the Arctic region. The European Union will step up its existing action and engagement in the region with 39 actions focussing on climate change, environmental protection, sustainable development and international cooperation. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1539_en.htm **Lack of visa reciprocity with the U.S., Canada and Brunei: European Commissions assesses state of play and discusses next steps** The European Commission adopted a political Communication on the state of play and way forward as regards the situation of non-reciprocity with certain third countries in the area of visa policy. While with Japan full reciprocity was achieved in December 2015 and with Australia in June 2015, the U.S., Canada and Brunei continue to apply visa requirements for citizens of some EU Member States, despite their citizens benefiting from an EU-wide visa waiver. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1345_en.htm
Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning	**European Commission appoints a new Director-General to the Publications Office of the European Union** The European Commission appointed Rudolf Strohmeier as Director-General of the Publications Office of the European Union as of 1 May. Mr Strohmeier, a German national, is currently Deputy Director-General in the European Commission's department for Research and Innovation (DG RTD). http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1591_en.htm
Introduction to EU law	**New EU rules for a simpler, faster and safer Customs Union** New customs rules come into force on Sunday 1 May that will make life simpler for businesses that trade in Europe and better protect consumers against illegal and counterfeit goods. The new rules aim to allow traders to clear customs procedures more simply and quickly, getting goods to consumers faster and more cheaply. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1629_en.htm **Commission welcomes European Parliament's backing for new rules to prevent manipulation of financial benchmarks** The adoption of the proposed Regulation on financial benchmarks was approved by a large majority in the plenary session and it follows a political agreement by the European Parliament and the Council in November 2015. The new rules will improve the governance of such benchmarks produced and used in the EU in financial instruments such as bonds, shares and derivatives. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1606_en.htm **The April infringements' package: key decisions** In its monthly package of infringement decisions, the European Commission is pursuing legal action against Member States for failing to comply with their obligations under EU law. These decisions, covering various sectors and EU policy areas (see Annex I and II), aim to ensure the proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses.

	http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1452_en.htm
Decentralized management of EU funds	**Support for SMEs and investment platforms are key to implement the European Fund for Strategic Investment at local level** The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is benefitting regional economies and communities mostly through massive support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and thanks to the first investment platforms involving local actors. This was the main message delivered by the Vice-President of the European Commission Jyrki Katainen to local leaders during the debate promoted on 22 April by the European Committee of the Regions' (CoR) commission for economic policy (ECON) to assess the EFSI impact at regional level. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/efsi_structured_dialogue_katainen.aspx **Use crowdfunding and EFSI financing to ensure high speed broadband coverage in rural areas** **Reaching the 2020 European Union targets for broadband coverage in rural and remote areas requires innovative ways of financing to bridge the estimated funding gap of at least 13 billion euros, according to a study presented at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on 20 April.** The study commissioned by CoR's Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC) focuses on obstacles that broadband deployment initiatives often face in rural, remote or sparsely populated areas, which are unattractive for private investors. The CoR has warned against the creation of digital divide between Europe's urban and more rural areas, pointing out the unquestionable socio-economic benefits of investment in ICT infrastructure. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/use-crowdfunding-and-efsi-financing-to-ensure-high-speed-broadband-coverage-in-rural-areas.aspx
Multi-level governance	**Sustainable smart regions and cities can drive Europe forward** Sustainable smart regions and cities can drive Europe forward, boost economic growth, create jobs and improve citizen's quality of life, stressed President of the European Committee of the Regions Markku Markkula and President of the Basque Country Iñigo Urkullu during their meeting in Bilbao April 27. Both leaders discussed cooperation between European regions and cities, the EU Urban Agenda, sustainable development and the next Climate Summit – COP22. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/President-of-Basque-Country.aspx **Regions and cities want the EU Urban Agenda to be a binding process** To boost sustainable growth, entrepreneurial and social development, as well as bottom-up innovation in cities, EU institutions and Member States are launching the EU Urban Agenda. The implementation phase will be kicked off on 30 May through the adoption of the "Pact of Amsterdam" by EU ministers. According to the Pact, Europe's main urban challenges will be addressed through a three-year action plan delivered through 12 thematic partnerships. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Regions-and-cities-want-the-EU-Urban-Agenda-to-be-a-binding-process.aspx

Introduction to different negotiation chapters	**Commission sets out path to digitise European industry** Delivering on its Strategy to create a Digital Single Market, the Commission unveiled its plans to help European industry, SMEs, researchers and public authorities make the most of new technologies. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1407_en.htm **Recognizing rights of domestic workers and carers in the EU** Domestic workers and careers, most of whom are migrant women, should be given an official status in the EU. Recognizing their work as "real" jobs would discourage exploitation, forced labour and human trafficking, say MEPs in a resolution voted. MEPs recommend establishing easy-to-manage models for legal employer-worker relationships, citing examples in Belgium and France, to end precariousness and undeclared domestic work. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160426IPR24779/Recognizing-rights-of-domestic-workers-and-carers-in-the-EU **Road map towards smart rural areas** "The concept of 'Smart City' has become the reference for sustainable economic development, but the huge growth potential of rural areas should not be forgotten. Failure to see rural areas as a vital resource could jeopardise the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets and undermine EU territorial cohesion", said Anthony Gerard BUCHANAN on behalf of Randal LÄNTS (EE/PES), rapporteur of the European Committee of the Regions and member of Viljandi City Council, at the 19 April conference on development policy in rural areas in post-2020 programming. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/ROAD-MAP-TOWARDS-SMART-RURAL-AREAS.aspx **A brighter future for energy consumers in Europe** Local leaders have given consumers a push to be at the heart of the new energy market in Europe. Facilitating access to information through ICT, developing a standard, detailed and easily understandable energy bill across Europe, protecting consumers against abusive practices and setting up price safeguards are amongst the key proposals adopted today in Brussels by EU's Assembly of regional and local authorities. European consumers' energy costs have consistently climbed over the past years. Electricity prices raised an annual average of 4% in households and 3.5% in industry between 2008 and 2012, according to Eurostat. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/A-brighter-future-for-energy-consumers-in-Europe.aspx

Specific issues relating to the • **European arrest warrant,** • **Stockholm programme** • **Third pillar** **Recognition of professional qualifications**	**EU proposes new approach to better support displaced people through its external action** European Commission puts forward new approach to change the way refugees and displaced people are supported in external action policies The European Commission set out a new strategic vision today regarding how its external action can best support refugees and displaced people in long lasting crises. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1585_en.htm
Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).	**Commission adopts proposal by social partners to improve the working conditions in the fishing sector** Following an agreement by social partners on working conditions in the fishing sector, the European Commission is translating the agreement into a legal proposal for a Directive. In 2013, the EU social partners in the fishing sector reached an agreement, which proposed to align EU law with the "Work in Fishing" Convention 2007 of the International Labour Organisation. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1601_en.htm
Promotion of EU upcoming events and news	**Open Day of the European Institutions** **28/05/2016 - 28/05/2016 10:00-18:00** On Saturday 28 May 2016, EU institutions open their doors to celebrate the Europe Day. Join the celebrations and learn more about the European Union. http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/Open-day.aspx **New financing solutions for companies – the Investment Plan for Europe** **Start date : 19/05/2016** **End date : 20/05/2016** Where: International Congress Centre, Katowice, Poland, European Investment Bank During this year's European Economic Congress held in Katowice, Poland, delegates of the European Investment Bank will participate in various panel sessions. The EIB will also organise a panel discussion dedicated to the Investment Plan for Europe. The format of the EIB panel session will be an open discussion on the new financial instruments that are available to corporates to support their growth and investments. Panelists will focus on topics such as quasi-equity, subordinated debt, mezzanine, bond structures and senior loans. We are open to suggestions from panelists regarding their speaking points. The discussion will be preceded by a short EIB presentation and introduction to the Investment Plan for Europe. http://www.eib.org/infocentre/events/all/new_financing_solutions_for_compani es_the_investment_plan_for_europe.htm **2016 Traineeship Programme – EFSA meets European universities** **Start date : 25/05/2016** **End date : 25/05/2016** Where: Brussels, Belgium EFSA is organising an info session in Brussels on 25 May 2016 intended for all interested parties from universities (e.g. researchers, staff members, members of alumni associations, students, etc.). Participation is limited to a maximum of 50 participants.

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/event/160525a

Innovation procurement workshop for public administration/e-government sector
31/05/2016
Where: Barcelona, Spain
The European Commission is pleased to invite you to this eafip workshop which targets public procurement authorities in general public services like public administration, and economic and financial affairs (ministries, regional and local authorities, public utility companies, etc.). A special focus will be on e-government solutions.
The aim of the event is to highlight the benefits of innovation procurement of ICT solutions through the Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) and Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions (PPI) approaches across Europe. The workshop is free of charge.
http://eafip.eu/events/workshops/general_sector_workshop/

Energy infrastructure forum
23 June 2016 to 24 June 2016
Location - Copenhagen
The Forum brings together, under the Commission's chairmanship, key stakeholders such as the members of the regional groups established for the TEN-E priority corridors (Member States, TSOs, NRAs, project promoters, ENTSO-E, ENTSO-G, ACER and EIB), along with the EU institutions (European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee who expressed their strong interest) and EU organisations (NGOs).
https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/energy-infrastructure-forum