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EU integration process in CEE countries

Foreign affairs MEPs assess reform progress in Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina

The key political and administrative reforms needed in Albania are progressing, but have yet to reach a stage at which EU accession negotiations could start, said Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs on Tuesday. Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent EU membership application was welcomed by MEPs, in a separate resolution <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160322IPR20404/Foreign-affairs-MEPs-assess-reform-progress-in-Albania-and-Bosnia-Herzegovina>

EU steps up humanitarian assistance for Ukraine by €20 million

The European Commission is increasing its humanitarian response to help people affected by the conflict in eastern Ukraine, with a new humanitarian aid package worth €20 million. The announcement comes as European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides arrives in the country for a visit from 16-18 March 2016 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-841_en.htm

European Commission proposes to lift visa obligations for citizens of Georgia

The European Commission is proposing to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the citizens of Georgia by transferring Georgia to the list of countries whose citizens can travel without a visa to the Schengen area. The proposal comes after the Commission gave a positive assessment last December, confirming that Georgia successfully met all benchmarks under the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-702_en.htm

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

European Semester 2016: Commission reminds Member States of fiscal obligations

As part of the 2016 European Semester and following up on its recent winter economic forecast, the Commission reminds Member States of the need to take measures necessary to meet their obligations under the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-704_en.htm

Approval of new express roads in Poland to overcome bottlenecks in trans-European infrastructure

The European Commission has approved ten major projects worth €3.3 billion for the construction of approximately 330km of new express roads in Poland. The projects will receive contributions from the Cohesion Fund of €1.2 billion and €493 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-842_en.htm

Relocation and Resettlement: EU Member States urgently need to deliver

The Commission is reporting on the implementation of the temporary emergency

	<p>relocation schemes and the European resettlement scheme. The report summarises the challenges and proposes recommendations to improve the implementation of these schemes.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-829_en.htm</p>
<p>General development of the EU</p>	<p>The European Commission grants the USA the equivalent regulatory regime for central counterparties as the European Union</p> <p>The European Commission has determined that the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) has the equivalent requirements as the EU in regulating central counterparties ('CCPs'). This follows the announcement of 10 February 2016 by Commissioner Hill and CFTC Chairman Timothy Massad on a common approach for transatlantic CCPs</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-807_en.htm</p> <p>Commission welcomes agreement reached by Member States for the automatic exchange of information on country-by-country reports of multinational companies</p> <p>The agreement was reached at a meeting of Economic and Financial Affairs ministers in Brussels, less than two months after the European Commission presented its ambitious proposal. Once implemented, all Member States will have the information they need to protect their tax bases and to effectively address companies that try to escape paying their fair share of taxes where they make their profits.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-663_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</p>	<p>President Juncker appoints EU Coordinator to organise operational implementation in Greece</p> <p>President Juncker has appointed Maarten Verwey to act as the EU Coordinator to implement the EU-Turkey statement. This follows the agreement by Heads of State or Government meeting in the European Council today that "the Commission will coordinate and organise together with Member States and Agencies the necessary support structures to implement it effectively."</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-942_en.htm</p> <p>Commission launches consultation on Transparency Register, inviting stakeholder views on a future mandatory system for all EU institutions</p> <p>On 1 March, the Commission is launching a 12-week public consultation to gather input on the current regime for registration of interest representatives who seek to influence the work of the EU institutions and on its development into a mandatory lobby register covering the European Parliament and Council of the European Union as well as the Commission.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-462_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>The Commission suggests policy measures to support the European steel sector to overcome its serious challenges, largely due to global overcapacity</p> <p>The European Commission has presented a Communication setting out how the European steel sector can overcome its short-term and long-term challenges with the support of Member States and the EU institutions. A joint effort is needed to overcome these serious challenges fuelled by global overcapacity, a dramatic increase of exports and an unprecedented wave of unfair trading practices.</p>

	<p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-804_en.htm</p> <p>European Commission activates exceptional measures to further support European farmers in crisis The European Commission is announcing an additional package of exceptional measures using all the tools made available in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to support EU farmers while safeguarding the EU internal market. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-806_en.htm</p>
<p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p>	<p>Investment Plan for Europe: more than EUR 1 billion of financing to Italian SMEs The counter-guarantee agreement will allow Fondo di Garanzia to support more than EUR 1 billion of financing to 20,000 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Italy over the next year. Fondo di Garanzia will support Italian SMEs through the Italian Confidi (mutual guarantee societies that provide guarantees to SMEs throughout Italy). http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-543_en.htm</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>Commission decentralises and simplifies technical conservation measures The European Commission presented a proposal for new conservation measures for fisheries in European seas. These are rules on how, where and when fishermen may fish, also determining gear, catch composition and ways to deal with accidental catches. Up until now, these rules have been decided at EU level through a lengthy adoption process, and over the years this regulatory structure has become highly complex. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-721_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p>	<p>Antitrust: e-commerce sector inquiry finds geo-blocking is widespread throughout EU Initial findings from the Commission's e-commerce sector inquiry show that geo-blocking is widespread in the EU. This is partly due to unilateral decisions by companies not to sell abroad but also contractual barriers set up by companies preventing consumers from shopping online across EU borders. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-922_en.htm</p> <p>Implementation of the European Agenda on Security The European Commission adopted the European Agenda on Security on 28 April 2015, setting out the main actions envisaged to ensure an effective EU response to security threats over the period 2015-2020. Since its adoption, significant progress has been made in its implementation. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1062_en.htm</p> <p>Commission makes immediate proposal to implement EU-Turkey agreement the Commission is adopting a proposal to amend a Council Decision to relocate people in need for international protection from Italy and Greece. With this amendment, 54,000 places which were foreseen for relocations will now be available for the purpose of resettling Syrians from Turkey to the EU. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-981_en.htm</p> <p>Commission presents reform of the Posting of Workers Directive – towards a</p>

	<p>deeper and fairer European labour market This revision translates a commitment of the Political Guidelines for this Commission to promote the principle that the same work at the same place should be remunerated in the same manner. It was announced in the 2016 Commission Work Programme http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-466_en.htm</p> <p>The European Commission adopted proposals to clarify the rules applicable to property regimes for international married couples or registered partnerships. These proposals will establish clear rules in cases of divorce or death and bring an end to parallel and possibly conflicting proceedings in various Member States, for instance on property or bank accounts. In short, it will bring more legal clarity for international couples. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-449_en.htm</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant, • Stockholm programme: • Third pillar: the pillar devoted to police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, which came under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union <p>Recognition of professional qualifications</p>	<p>Commission proposes new Emergency Assistance instrument for faster crisis response within the EU As the refugee crisis continues to put pressure on many European Member States, the Commission proposes a faster way for support to be provided to tackle wide-ranging humanitarian crises within the EU. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-482_en.htm</p> <p>Schengen: restoring the EU's passport-free zone Parliament's civil liberties committee discusses the proposed new strategy to restore Schengen with the European Commission on Monday 21 March. With efforts to strengthen the EU's external borders ongoing and following the deal struck with Turkey at the EU summit on 17-18 March, the Commission is keen to remove the temporary border controls imposed by several member states within the Schengen zone as soon as possible http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20160318STO20041/Schengen-restoring-the-EU%E2%80%99s-passport-free-zone</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</p>	<p>Spring Tripartite Social Summit focuses on "A strong partnership for job creation and inclusive growth – taking stock of the new start for social dialogue" 30 years after the beginning of the so-called "Val Duchesse" process, involving European social partners in building the internal market, the European Commission together with the social partners organised a high-level conference to kick off a "new start for social dialogue". The meeting launched a renewed partnership between social partners and the EU institutions to focus on a number of priorities to promote growth and create jobs. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-823_en.htm</p> <p>Commission launches a public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights the European Commission presents a first, preliminary outline of the European Pillar of Social Rights announced by President Juncker in September last year and launches a broad public consultation to gather views and feedback from other European institutions, national authorities and parliaments, social partners, stakeholders, civil society, experts from academia and citizens.</p>

	http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-544_en.htm
Promotion of EU upcoming events and news	<p>19-04-2016 - Empowering the national competition authorities</p> <p>The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) of the European Parliament and DG Competition of the European Commission are co-organising a Public Hearing on empowering national competition authorities to be more effective enforcers of the EU competition rules. It will take place on Tuesday 19 April 2016 from 9:00-12:30 in the Parliament's premises in Brussels</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/events.html?id=20160419CHE00081</p>

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