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<p><b>EU integration process in CEE countries</b></p>	<p><b>EU-Georgia: 3rd meeting of the Association Council on 2 December</b> The Association Council will discuss relations between the EU and Georgia, specifically on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political dialogue and reform, political association;</li> <li>- Economic and sectoral cooperation, as well as trade and trade-related matters, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)</li> <li>- Foreign and security policy: peaceful conflict resolution, including non-recognition and engagement.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/12/02-eu-georgia-association/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/12/02-eu-georgia-association/</a></p> <p><b>EU-Turkey relations: “We are entering a new phase”</b> More than 10 years after EU-Turkey accession talks started, MEPs adopted a resolution on 24 November calling for the negotiations to be suspended until the Turkish government ended its disproportionate and repressive response to July's failed coup. Ankara replied by threatening to let thousands of migrants pass through to Europe. Greek EPP member Manolis Kefalogiannis, head of Parliament's delegation to Turkey, commented: “We are entering a new phase in EU-Turkey relations”.</p> <p><a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161128STO53408/eu-turkey-relations-%E2%80%9Cwe-are-entering-a-new-phase%E2%80%9D">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161128STO53408/eu-turkey-relations-%E2%80%9Cwe-are-entering-a-new-phase%E2%80%9D</a></p>
<p><b>Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership</b></p>	<p><b>Road transport: Commission refers Poland to the Court of Justice of the EU on the system of permits for the use of the roads by certain trucks</b> Road transport: Commission refers Poland to the Court of Justice of the EU on the system of permits for the use of the roads by certain trucks The European Commission has decided to refer Poland to the Court of Justice of the EU for the incorrect implementation of Council Directive 96/53/EC on maximum weights and dimensions of certain road vehicles. In particular, Poland restricts the freedom to use its road network to certain trucks even if they comply with EU standards.</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3649_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3649_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>General development of the EU</b></p>	<p><b>An EU strategy on cooperative, connected and automated mobility</b> Today the European Commission adopted a European Strategy on Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS), a milestone initiative towards cooperative, connected and automated mobility. The Strategy will make it possible to deploy vehicles that can “talk” to each other and to the transport infrastructure on EU roads as of 2019. The market potential of cooperative, connected and automated driving is estimated to be worth dozens of billions of euro annually and to lead to the creation of many new jobs.</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3933_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3933_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>

	<p><b>2017 EU budget gets Council approval</b>  The 2017 EU budget is a blueprint for the future. It is sound, focused and shows solidarity. It delivers on citizens' main concerns by tackling the migration challenges, reinforcing security, boosting growth and creating jobs. And it provides for significant increases to programmes such as Erasmus+ that benefit young people in particular", said Ivan Lesay, State Secretary for Finance of Slovakia and President of the Council.  <a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/11/28-eu-budget/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/11/28-eu-budget/</a></p> <p><b>State aid: Commission approves Greek support scheme for renewable electricity and cogeneration</b>  The European Commission has found the new Greek support scheme for renewable electricity and high efficiency cogeneration to be in line with EU state aid rules. The scheme will help Greece to reduce CO2 emissions, in line with EU energy and climate goals, without unduly distorting competition.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3707_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3707_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</b></p>	<p><b>Services: Commission requests 9 Member States to remove excessive and unjustified obstacles to cross-border activities</b>  The European Commission is taking further steps with regard to Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Spain on the grounds that their national rules include excessive and unjustified obstacles to the provision of services across the internal market. The Commission considers that the requirements imposed on certain service providers in these Member States run counter to the Services Directive (Directive 2006/123/EC). At the same time, the Commission has decided to close the case against Luxembourg following its positive actions to align relevant legislation with EU law.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3646_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3646_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to EU law</b></p>	<p><b>November infringements package: key decisions</b>  The key decisions taken by the Commission (including 3 letters of formal notice, 32 reasoned opinions, 8 referrals to the Court of Justice of the European Union, and a closure) are presented below and grouped by policy area. The Commission is also closing 78 cases in which the issues with the Member States concerned have been solved without the Commission needing to pursue the procedure further.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3644_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3644_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Decentralized management of EU funds</b></p>	<p><b>State aid: Commission clears RON 447.8 million Romanian support for closing coal mines</b>  The European Commission has found Romania's plans to provide RON 447.8 million of support to alleviate the social and environmental impact of closing two uncompetitive coal mines by 2018 to be in line with EU state aid rules. The Commission concluded the support would not unduly distort competition.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3981_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3981_en.htm?locale=en</a></p> <p><b>Commission gives boost to start-ups in Europe</b>  The Commission's Start-up and Scale-up Initiative aims to give Europe's many</p>

	<p>innovative entrepreneurs every opportunity to become world leading companies. It pulls together all the possibilities that the EU already offers and adds a new focus on venture capital investment, insolvency law and taxation. There is no lack of innovative ideas and entrepreneurial spirit in Europe. But many new firms don't make it beyond the critical first few years, or they try their luck in a third country instead of tapping into the EU's potential 500 million customer base. The European Commission is determined to change that and help start-ups deliver their full innovation and job creation potential.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3882_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3882_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Multi-level governance</b></p>	<p><b>Eurostat publications- Sustainable development: a glance at where the European Union stands- A publication for professionals complemented with a citizen's guide</b></p> <p>Sustainable development aims to achieve a continuous improvement in citizens' quality of life and well-being. This involves the pursuit of economic progress, while safeguarding the natural environment and promoting social justice. For these reasons, sustainable development is a fundamental and overarching objective of the European Union (EU). Since 2005 and up to 2015, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, has produced biennial monitoring reports of the EU sustainable development strategy, based on the EU set of sustainable development indicators.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/news-releases">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/news-releases</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</b></p>	<p><b>European Defence Action Plan: Towards a European Defence Fund</b></p> <p>The European Commission proposes a European Defence Fund and other actions to support Member States' more efficient spending in joint defence capabilities, strengthen European citizens' security and foster a competitive and innovative industrial base.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/20372">http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/20372</a></p> <p><b>Reducing food waste: the EU's response to a global challenge</b></p> <p>Around 88 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in the EU – around 20% of all food produced, with associated costs estimated at 143 billion euros. We are looking for every opportunity to prevent food waste and strengthen sustainability of the food system.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3989_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3989_en.htm?locale=en</a></p> <p><b>Second quarter 2016 compared with first quarter 2016- 1 in 5 unemployed persons in the EU found a job</b></p> <p>Out of all persons in the European Union (EU) who were unemployed in the first quarter 2016, 63.2% (12.6 million persons) remained unemployed in the second quarter 2016, while 19.5% (3.9 million) moved into employment and 17.3% (3.5 million) towards economic inactivity. Economically inactive individuals are those neither employed nor unemployed. Examples are students, pensioners and housewives or -men, provided that they are not working at all and not available or looking for work either.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/news-releases">http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/news/news-releases</a></p> <p><b>Commission publishes results of Call for Evidence on EU financial services</b></p>

	<p>It received hundreds of responses from stakeholders, which confirmed that the overall framework is working well and supports financial stability, increased transparency and protection of investors and consumers. The results of the Call for Evidence will build on this framework to support growth and help legislation work better. The feedback received has supported some key reforms to improve access to finance for SMEs and investment projects.</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3750_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3750_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Specific issues relating to the</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>European arrest warrant,</b></li> <li>• <b>Stockholm programme</b></li> <li>• <b>Third pillar</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Recognition of professional qualifications</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable Development: EU sets out its priorities</b></p> <p>A first Communication on the next steps for a sustainable European future explains how the Commission's 10 political priorities contribute to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how the EU will meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the future. A second Communication on a new European Consensus on Development proposes a shared vision and framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States, aligned with the 2030 Agenda. A third Communication on a renewed partnership with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries proposes building blocks for a new, sustainable phase in EU-ACP relations after the Cotonou Partnership Agreement expires in 2020.</p> <p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3883_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-3883_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</b></p>	<p><b>European Committee of the Regions launches European Entrepreneurial Region award 2018</b></p> <p>The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is looking for cities and regions which are ready to create and implement an ambitious and outstanding strategy to support their SMEs and entrepreneurs. Applications for the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) award 2018 are accepted until 7 April 2017.</p> <p><a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/eer_launch_2016.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/eer_launch_2016.aspx</a>  <a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/takepart/eeer/Pages/eeer.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/takepart/eeer/Pages/eeer.aspx</a></p> <p><b>We cannot accept the declining of rural areas</b></p> <p>EESC and CoR call for a plain territorial approach to policy making. Exactly 20 years since the first Cork Declaration, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) organised a joint conference on balanced territorial development under the title "Cork+20: leaving rural areas behind is no longer an option". At stake was the European Commission's new rural development strategy, which will have to get its inspiration from the Cork 2.0 Declaration.</p> <p><a href="http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.40822">http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.40822</a></p>
<p><b>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</b></p>	<p><b>Transposition of the European law – the key challenge to business activity</b></p> <p>Zagreb, Croatia, 56th December</p> <p>The EESC Employers' Group is organizing a seminar on "Transposition of the European law – the key challenge to business activity" taking place on 6 December in Zagreb and jointly organized with the Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts and the Croatian Employers' Association (HUP).</p> <p><a href="http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-transposition-">http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-transposition-</a></p>

[business-programme](#)

### **The European Migration Forum**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2017

The European Migration Forum – the civil society dialogue platform on migration, asylum and migrant integration – will meet for the third time on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2017 at the EESC's headquarters. The event will have an interactive, participatory approach. The Forum will feature an opening and closing plenary, but the core of the event will consist of workshops, discussion islands and other opportunities to participate in the debate. The participants will include NGOs (selected through this public call for expressions of interest - deadline is 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016), practitioners from local and regional authorities, representatives of the Member States and members of the EESC Permanent Group on Immigration and Integration.

<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-european-migration-forum-3>

### **BALKANS – Boosting connections on the road to the EU**

07 December 2016, Bruxelles, Belgium

The EU has pledged to continue membership negotiations with countries in the Western Balkans. But the region faces many challenges, including lack of progress in restructuring the economic model to ensure that all countries are functioning market economies driven by export and investments rather than import and consumption.

<http://www.eu-events.eu/list-of-all-events/upcoming-events/5302-friend-of-europe-new-skills-agenda-for-europe-addressing-the-digital-skills-shortage-2.html?date=2016-12-07-09-30>

### **A practical approach on Horizon 2020 Proposal Writing**

13 December 2016, Bruxelles, Belgium

The EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – HORIZON 2020 – came into force in 1 January 2014 and its first calls for proposals were already published since 11 December 2013. Just like with every newly established Framework Programme, the financial rules and regulations governing Horizon 2020 have changed a lot!

<http://www.eu-events.eu/list-of-all-events/upcoming-events/5246-a-practical-approach-on-horizon-2020-proposal-writing.html?date=2016-12-13-09-00>

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