

April 2015 II



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<p>EU integration process in CEE countries</p>	<p>Serbia set to join the EU Civil Protection Mechanism Serbia and the European Union signed today an agreement which clears the way for the membership of Serbia in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Once national ratification has been completed, Serbia will become the 33rd participating state in the European cooperation framework for disaster management and response to emergencies. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-15-4789_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina: political commitment is key to path towards EU Foreign affairs MEPs underlined the need for inclusive, constructive and sustainable political dialogue on reforms and for greater cooperation between the political forces in Albania and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413IPR41661/html/Albania-and-Bosnia-Herzegovina-political-commitment-is-key-to-path-towards-EU</p>
<p>Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership</p>	<p>Latvian Presidency welcomes the vote of the European Parliament on its negotiating position on the regulation on the EFSI The European fund for strategic investments (EFSI) is the main priority of the Latvian Presidency. It is a new instrument in order to test if and how we can use the public resources more efficiently, but it clearly relies on the private financing. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1329-latvian-presidency-welcomes-the-vote-of-the-ep-on-its-negotiating-position-on-the-regulation-on-the-efsi</p> <p>EU remains world's largest aid donor in 2014 The European Union and its member states kept the place as the world's largest aid donor in 2014, according to a press release issued by the European Commission here on Wednesday. According to the data published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), EU collective Official Development Assistance (ODA) reached 0.42 percent of EU Gross National Income in 2014, increasing to 58.2 billion euros with a 2.4 percent increase compared with 2013. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/08/c_134134651.htm</p>
<p>General development of the EU</p>	<p>Five a day: how the EU will help children to learn about healthy eating Children are eating fewer and fewer fruit, vegetables and dairy products in Europe, but a new proposal could help them to adopt a healthier diet. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413STO41754/html/Five-a-day-how-the-EU-will-help-children-to-learn-about-healthy-eating</p> <p>EU-US trade deal: 14 EP committees have their say The European Parliament is working on its position on the EU-US trade deal known as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150220STO24366/html/EU-US-trade-deal-14-EP-committees-have-their-say</p> <p>Solidarity and Strategic Investments: the price of Europe's future <i>"The economic crisis has torn us apart: if solidarity and socio-economic cohesion are not high on the agenda, the danger for Europe is now to dislocate",</i> said Georges Dassis, President of the EESC Workers' Group in its opening speech at the Workers' extraordinary meeting in Riga</p>

	<p>on 1 April. “ http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.35327</p> <p>Europe's future is digital <i>Speech by Commissioner Oettinger at Hannover Messe</i> http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-4772_en.htm</p>
Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning	<p>Opening of April session in Brussels MEPs held a minute's silence for migrants drowned in Mediterranean and victims of the Al Shabab attack in Kenya at the start of the session. President Schulz called for international efforts to ease the plight of refugees in Yarmouk http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413IPR41670/html/Opening-of-April-session-in-Brussels</p> <p>A brand new publication from Eurostat What it means to be young in the European Union today Facts and figures on youth and children in the EU How many children live in the European Union (EU)? And how has their share in the population evolved and is expected to change in the future? http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-4787_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>From rapporteur to coordinator: the different roles taken on by MEPs Being an MEP involves more than just debating and voting on legislative proposals. They can also be tasked with drawing up a report to represent the Parliament's position on a legislative proposal or any other matter. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150328STO39002/html/From-rapporteur-to-coordinator-the-different-roles-taken-on-by-MEPs</p>
Introduction to EU law	<p>Commission publishes new vine planting rules aimed at giving EU sector more flexibility to meet growing world demand New EU rules for a <u>new scheme of authorisations for vine plantings</u>, allowing for a yearly limited expansion in the EU's wine area, have been published by the European Commission http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4752_en.htm?locale=en</p>
Decentralised management of EU funds	<p>EP backs carry-over of EU funding from 2014 for late-starter Operational Programmes European Parliament agreed to change the ceilings in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2014-2017. http://insideeuropa.eu/node/554</p> <p>Regions and Cities: €315bn EU Plan must reduce disparity Regions and cities want EU investment to contribute to achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. "Clear references to the territorial dimension of the Juncker Plan are needed. We must also consider how to reduce investment gaps and pay more attention to less developed and isolated regions" CoR President Markku Markkula stressed. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/delivering-innovative-projects-on-the-ground.aspx</p> <p>CoR calls for further regionalising and decentralising reform in enlargement countries The European Committee of the Regions adopted its recommendations for European Union's enlargement strategy. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/CoR-calls-for-further-regionalising-and-decentralising-reform-in-enlargement-countries.aspx</p>
Multi-level governance	<p>CoR calls for further regionalising and decentralising reform in enlargement countries The European Committee of the Regions adopted its recommendations for European Union's enlargement strategy. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/CoR-calls-for-further-regionalising-and-decentralising-reform-in-enlargement-countries.aspx</p>

	reform-in-enlargement-countries.aspx
<p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters Chapter 1: Free movement of goods Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services Chapter 4: Free movement of capital Chapter 5: Public procurement Chapter 6: Company Law Chapter 7: Intellectual property law Chapter 8: Competition Chapter 9: Financial services Chapter 10: Information society and media Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy Chapter 13: Fisheries Chapter 14: Transport policy Chapter 15: Energy Chapter 16: Taxation Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy Chapter 18: Statistics Chapter 19: Social policy and employment Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy Chapter 21: Trans-European networks Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security Chapter 25: Research and development Chapter 26: Education and culture Chapter 27: Environment Chapter 28: Consumer and</p>	<p>Legal affairs MEPs back plans to facilitate recovery of small debts Plans to improve and broaden the use of a simplified procedure for low-value cross-border claims to recover money from abroad, so as to cut costs and paperwork for both consumers and businesses, were backed by the legal affairs committee on Thursday. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150416IPR42449/html/Legal-affairs-MEPs-back-plans-to-facilitate-recovery-of-small-debts</p> <p>EP backs carry-over of EU funding to 2015-2017 for late-starter national programmes Parliament agreed to changes to ceilings in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 on Wednesday, to help fund 300 state-managed programmes, in all EU member states, that started too late to qualify for EU funding in 2014. These changes would allow €21.1 billion in unused commitment appropriations to be carried over from 2014 to 2015-17. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413IPR41699/html/EP-backs-carry-over-of-EU-funding-for-late-starter-national-programmes</p> <p>Milk and fruit in schools: agriculture MEPs promote healthy eating The EU and its member states must invest more effort and money in promoting healthy eating and the consumption of local foodstuffs amongst children, said the agriculture committee said on Tuesday when it amended draft rules on schemes to provide fruit, vegetables and milk in schools. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41819/html/Milk-and-fruit-in-schools-agriculture-MEPs-promote-healthy-eating</p> <p>Trade MEPs beef up rules to stem flow of conflict mineral money to armed groups EU smelters and refiners importing „conflict“ minerals and metals would have to be certified by the EU in order to help stem the flow of revenue to armed groups, under a draft law as amended by the International Trade Committee on Tuesday. Other amendments lay down conditions for EU recognition of industry self-certification schemes, and labelling requirements. All these amendments still need to be approved by Parliament as a whole. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413IPR41655/html/Trade-MEPs-beef-up-rules-to-stem-flow-of-conflict-mineral-money-to-armed-groups</p> <p>Health MEPs propose blueprint for safer healthcare Suggested measures to improve patient safety, inter alia by tackling growing resistance to human and veterinary antibiotics by using existing treatments more responsibly and promoting innovation, are set out in a Health Committee resolution voted on Tuesday. MEPs note that between 8 and 12% of patients admitted to hospitals in the EU suffer adverse events such as healthcare-related infections, which place a heavy burden on limited health service budgets. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41844/html/Health-MEPs-propose-blueprint-for-safer-healthcare</p> <p>Five a day: how the EU will help children to learn about healthy eating Children are eating fewer and fewer fruit, vegetables and dairy products in Europe, but a new proposal could help them to adopt a healthier diet. Under the plan two existing EU schemes for handing out fresh milk, fruit and vegetables to pupils would be combined, reducing the administrative burden and creating more opportunities for teaching children about balanced diets. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-</p>

<p><i>health protection</i> Chapter 29: Customs union Chapter 30: External relations Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy Chapter 32: Financial control Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions</p>	<p>room/content/20150413STO41754/html/Five-a-day-how-the-EU-will-help-children-to-learn-about-healthy-eating</p> <p>Conflict minerals: preventing military groups from funding their activities Military groups in conflict areas such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo often use the sale of minerals found in their territory to fund their activities. A new EU proposal aims to put an end to this by setting up an EU system of self-certification to encourage importers, smelters and refiners to source their minerals responsibly. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150413STO41613/html/Conflict-minerals-preventing-military-groups-from-funding-their-activities</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant, • Stockholm programme: Europe of rights, Europe of justice, Europe that protects, Access to Europe, Europe of solidarity, Europe in a globalised world • 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>Terrorism: tackling the threats to the EU's security Terrorism continues to pose a threat to Europe's security, but what is the best way to tackle it? The Parliament's civil liberties committee held a hearing on 14 April to discuss with experts the evolving terrorist threats, the fight against extremism and radicalisation and what the EU could do to help. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150416STO42480/html/Terrorism-tackling-the-threats-to-the-EU's-security</p> <p>MEPs debate how to fight human trafficking More than twenty million women, children and men are estimated to be victims of human trafficking worldwide. The Parliament's human rights subcommittee holds a hearing on Thursday 16 April to discuss what the EU can do to tackle the issue when dealing with other countries. They will be joined by representatives from NGOs and international organisations. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414STO41830/html/Live-MEPs-debate-how-to-fight-human-trafficking</p> <p>MEPs urge end to Roma discrimination and recognition of Roma Genocide Day Parliament called for more efforts to end discrimination, hate crime and hate speech against Roma people and for 2 August to be recognised as Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, to commemorate the Roma genocide in World War II, in a resolution passed on Wednesday. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150414IPR41851/html/MEPs-urge-end-to-Roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-Roma-Genocide-Day</p> <p>International Roma Day: celebrating Europe's largest ethnic minority International Roma Day is held every year on 8 April to celebrate Romani culture and raise awareness of the issues facing Roma people. Europe's largest ethnic minority - an estimated 10 million Roma live in Europe and six million within the EU - is often subject to discrimination and social exclusion. On 25 March MEPs debated current Roma discrimination and EU recognition of the Roma genocide in WWII. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150324STO37305/html/International-Roma-Day-celebrating-Europe's-largest-ethnic-minority</p> <p>World Health Day: "Basic healthcare services need to be accessible to all" World Health Day is marked every year on 7 April, the ideal opportunity to highlight what still needs to be improved. "Basic healthcare services need to be accessible to all, regardless of income," said UK S&D member Linda McAvan, chair of the Parliament's development committee. Over the years the Parliament has tried to help strengthen healthcare systems in different parts of the world. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150328STO39001/html/World-Health-Day-Basic-healthcare-services-need-to-be-accessible-to-all</p>

Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).

EU Solidarity Fund: €66.5 million for Bulgaria, Italy and Romania after severe flooding

The Commission granted aid worth €66.5 million from the European Union Solidarity Fund to Bulgaria, Italy and Romania following three natural disasters in 2014.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4746_en.htm

EU MINISTERS FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY TO SEEK SOLUTIONS ON PROMOTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE TO CREATE HIGH-QUALITY JOBS

On 21-22 April, the Minister for Welfare, Uldis Augulis, will chair the informal meeting of the European Union Ministers for Labour and Social Policy in Riga at the National Library of Latvia. Representatives from the European employees' and employers' organisations will also take part in the discussions. The event will focus on the development of social dialogue as a tool for ensuring inclusive growth, increasing employment and provision of high-quality jobs.

<https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1294-eu-ministers-for-labour-and-social-policy-to-seek-solutions-on-promoting-social-dialogue-to-create-high-quality-jobs>

HEALTH MINISTERS IN RIGA DISCUSS FUTURE HEALTH SECTOR CHALLENGES

On 20-21 April the informal meeting of Health Ministers and Heads of Delegation from the European Union, European Free Trade Association and European Union candidate countries will take place in Riga to discuss factors affecting public health.

<https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1293-health-ministers-in-riga-discuss-future-health-sector-challenges>

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA AND INNOVATION POLICY AT THE CENTRE OF DISCUSSIONS IN RIGA

On 16-17 April 2015 the Latvian Presidency hosts the meeting of the Working Party on Research, which takes place back-to-back with the 26th Plenary Meeting of the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC). 107 participants from 43 countries will work at *Radisson Blu Hotel Latvia* in two sessions, focusing on innovation policy and development of the European Research Area (ERA) roadmap.

<https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1287-european-research-area-and-innovation-policy-at-the-centre-of-discussions-in-riga>

MINISTERS STRESS IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION IN OTHER POLICIES

On 14 April, the meeting of the Environment Ministers opened the three-day informal meeting of the European Union Environment and Energy Ministers. The Environment Ministers focused on biodiversity preservation and the international climate change negotiations aimed towards reaching a new global agreement on post-2020 climate change mitigation at the Paris Climate Change Conference in December. The informal meeting takes place under the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

<https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1255-ministers-stress-importance-of-integrating-biodiversity-preservation-in-other-policies>

BIG BUSINESS USING TRADE GROUPS TO LOBBY AGAINST EU CLIMATE POLICY

When we embarked on our research into how trade groups are lobbying on EU climate policy, we knew trade associations were likely to be influential. However, we were surprised at just how important they are to companies, and how ferociously opposed some have been to recent progressive European Union climate policies.

These EU policies include attempts to strengthen the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and targets on energy efficiency and renewable power.

EASTERN EUROPE IS BOOSTING MILITARY BUDGETS, BUT US IS STILL THE BIG SPENDER

Russia and its Nato neighbours in the Baltic have agreed dramatic increases in their military budgets, in marked contrast to countries that are further west and away from potential conflict zones, according to a report published by a leading thinktank.

	http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/13/eastern-europe-is-boosting-military-budgets-but-us-is-still-the-big-spender
Promotion of EU upcoming events and news	<p>Energy Cities Annual Conference Many European cities are facing globalisation and economic crisis while following the linear “take-make-consume and dispose” pattern of growth. What role can and do local authorities play in doing things differently to foster community resilience? The conference will take on from the 22nd to the 27th of April, in Aberdeen, UK. http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/energy-cities-annual-conference/</p> <p>REAL CORP 2015, 20th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society Ruimte Vlaanderen, CORP association (Competence Center of Urban and Regional Planning) and ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) are cooperating to organize CORP 2015, the 20th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society from the 5th to the 7th of May 2015 in Gent, Belgium. http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/real-corp-2015-20th-international-conference-on-urban-planning-and-regional-development-in-the-info/</p> <p>URBACT City Festival The URBACT programme invites to join for a unique three day Festival of in-depth conversations and idea generation about the future of cities in Europe. The City Festival will take on from the 6th to the 9th of May, in Riga, Latvia. http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/urbact-city-festival/</p> <p>Living cities – sustainable growth and quality of life EUROCITIES annual conference 2015, Copenhagen/Malmö Date: 4-6 November 2015 This year’s annual conference, taking place in Copenhagen and Malmö on 4-6 November, will focus on ‘Living cities – sustainable urban growth and quality of life’. Participants will explore new ways of promoting sustainable economic growth, creating jobs and improving quality of life for citizens. http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/eirocities-annual-conference-2015.aspx</p>

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