

May 2015 II



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

<p>EU integration process in CEE countries</p>	<p>Commission assesses the implementation of Visa Liberalisation Action Plans by Ukraine and Georgia</p> <p>Ahead of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga on 21-22 May, which will be an important milestone in the cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, the Commission is issuing two progress reports on the implementation by Georgia and Ukraine of their respective Visa Liberalisation Action Plans (VLAP). This is a sign of the Commission's commitment and of the pace of the measures being taken by the two countries.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4949_en.htm</p>
<p>Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership</p>	<p>Country-specific recommendations 2015: Further efforts needed to support a robust recovery</p> <p>The European Commission adopted on 13 May a country-specific economic policy recommendations for 2015 and 2016 asking for national actions to create jobs and stimulate growth.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4975_en.htm</p> <p>Commission recommends imposing a fine on Spain for misreporting of deficit data in Valencia</p> <p>Following the conclusion of the investigation related to the manipulation of statistics in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (Comunidad Valenciana), Spain, the European Commission has adopted a report and recommends to the Council to impose a fine.</p> <p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4939_en.htm</p> <p>Package holidays: "Holidaymakers' rights will be strengthened significantly"</p> <p>The internet has made it easier to book holidays online, however it has also added some difficulties. On 5 May the Parliament and the Council agreed a deal to update the current rules to give online buyers of such packages the same protection as those buying from traditional travel agents. We talked to German EPP member Birgit Collin-Langen, responsible for steering the new rules through Parliament, about the difference the legislation will make.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150511STO54549/html/Package-holidays-Holidaymakers'-rights-will-be-strengthened-significantly</p>
<p>General development of the EU</p>	<p>Martin Schulz receives International Charlemagne Prize</p> <p>Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament, received on Thursday 14 May the International Charlemagne Prize. The prize is awarded every year to recognise work in the service of European unification. The ceremony in Aachen was attended by eight heads of states as well as many former laureates such as Pat Cox and Jean-Claude Juncker. French president François Hollande and King Abdullah II of Jordan paid tribute to Schulz with a speech.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150511STO54590/html/Live-Martin-Schulz-receives-International-Charlemagne-Prize</p>

<p>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</p>	<p>EU Charter places fundamental rights at the heart of EU policies The 2014 report on the application of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights was published today by the European Commission. First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: "The Charter of fundamental rights lies at the heart of our Union and the Commission is committed to ensuring its full and effective application. Fundamental rights embody the values of a free, open and inclusive society, and we all share a responsibility to safeguard and promote them in all we do, every day. Our first Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights in October will raise awareness with a particular focus on encouraging tolerance and respect." http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4941_en.htm</p> <p>Commissioner Hill welcomes agreement on the revised Payment Services Directive The European Commission welcomes today's political agreement on the proposal for a revised Directive on Payment Services. The agreement follows so-called trilogue negotiations between the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The revised Payment Services Directive (known as PSD2) brings a number of new important elements and improvements to the EU payment market. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4916_en.htm</p>
<p>Introduction to EU law</p>	<p>MANAGING MIGRATION BETTER IN ALL ASPECTS: A EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION The European Commission presented a European Agenda on Migration outlining the immediate measures that will be taken in order to respond to the crisis situation in the Mediterranean as well as the steps to be taken in the coming years to better manage migration in all its aspects. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4956_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>ANTITRUST: COMMISSION ACCEPTS COMMITMENTS BY SKYTEAM MEMBERS AIR FRANCE/KLM, ALITALIA AND DELTA ON THREE TRANSATLANTIC ROUTES The European Commission has adopted a decision that renders legally binding commitments offered by Air France/KLM, Alitalia and Delta, members of the SkyTeam airline alliance, to lower barriers to entry or expansion on three transatlantic routes for a period of ten years.. The Commission had concerns that the cooperation between these airlines may harm competition. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4966_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>EU Council adopts conclusions on reinforcing youth work Ministers assessed the achievements of European cooperation in the field of education and training ("ET 2020") at the meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council in Brussels, and discussed its future development in preparation for the mid-term stocktaking and the 2015 Joint Report. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1767-eu-council-adopts-conclusions-on-reinforcing-youth-work</p>
<p>Decentralised management of EU funds</p>	<p>DECISIONS UNDER THE STABILITY AND GROWTH PACT The European Commission decided regarding the fiscal area to close the Excessive Deficit Procedures (EDP) for Malta and Poland, and to decide that the United Kingdom has not taken effective action in response to the Council recommendation of December 2009 and to recommend that the United Kingdom should correct its present excessive deficit by 2016-17 at the latest. The Commission has also prepared a report on Finland under Article 126(3) of the Treaty analysing breach of the deficit and debt criteria of the Treaty.</p>

	<p>http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-4971_en.htm?locale=en</p> <p>FIRST FINANCIAL TRANSACTION IN EUROPE UNDER THE INVESTMENT PLAN FOR EUROPE: EIF AND BPIFRANCE SIGN AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE FRENCH SMES AND MIDCAPS</p> <p>The European Investment Fund (EIF), the arm of the EIB Group specialising in risk capital instruments, risk financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and innovation, and Bpifrance, the French public investment bank, have signed a financial agreement to increase lending to innovative SMEs and mid-caps in France thanks to the guarantee financed from the EU budget under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The European Commission (EC) and the EIB Group will deploy the Investment Plan for Europe (IPE) via EFSI.</p> <p>http://www.eib.org/infocentre/press/releases/all/2015/2015-101-le-fei-et-bpifrance-signent-un-accord-pour-soutenir-les-pme-et-eti-francaises-innovantes.htm?media=rss&language=fr</p>
<p>Multi-level governance</p>	<p>EU regions, Latvian Presidency and Commission on cohesion policy assessment: time to simplify procedures and speed-up urban agenda</p> <p>The drastic simplification of cohesion policy's administrative procedures, a clearer vision of how new tools such as Integrated Territorial Investments should work, as well as the quick adoption of an EU urban agenda are the priorities highlighted by COTER members in a meeting held in Riga on 12 May. During the meeting the Minister for Regional Development, Kaspars Gerhards, also stressed the importance of the work being undertaken by the Latvian EU Presidency together with the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to assess the implementation of the EU reformed cohesion policy</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/EU-regions-Latvian-Presidency.aspx</p> <p>EU Civil Protection Mechanism: Commissioner Stylianides joins local leaders in debate on region's role in disaster management</p> <p>On Tuesday 5 May the European Committee of the Regions' (CoR) Commission for Natural Resources (NAT) will hold a debate on the role of local and regional authorities in disaster prevention, preparedness and response. New opportunities for cities and regions to engage with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism - launched to enable coordinated assistance from the participating states to victims of natural and man-made disasters in Europe and elsewhere - will be highlighted. During the NAT Commission meeting, CoR members will also hold an exchange of views on the future of European Aquaculture, led by rapporteur Jesús Gamallo Aller</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/commissioner-stylianides-joins-local-leaders-in-debate.aspx</p>
<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</p>	<p>EU needs to earmark money to withstand Russia, say Foreign Affairs MEPs</p> <p>As a return to "business as usual" with Russia is now out of the question, the EU should earmark specific funding to counter its propaganda and infiltration of EU politics and support independence movements there, say Foreign Affairs Committee MEPs in a resolution voted on Monday, May 11th. EU countries should refrain from doing bilateral deals with Russia and step up their own collective efforts to withstand it, whilst retaining a return to cooperation with Russia as a long-term goal, they add.</p> <p>http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150512IPR55015/html/EU-needs-to-earmark-money-to-withstand-Russia-say-Foreign-Affairs-MEPs</p> <p>Tax: warm welcome for whistleblowers and investigative journalists</p> <p>"Whistleblowers should receive protection when they reveal behaviour that</p>

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 health protection
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

goes against the public interest and not only when they reveal illegal activities. There should also be more openness about tax rulings and similar arrangements and countries which defraud other countries should be sanctioned", suggested Richard Brooks of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in a hearing with Parliament's Special Tax Rulings Committee on Monday, May 11th. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150511IPR54731/html/Tax-warm-welcome-for-whistleblowers-and-investigative-journalists>

Europe Day: Parliament opens its doors to visitors

To celebrate Europe Day, the European Parliament opened its doors to the public on 2 May in Strasbourg and on 9 May in Brussels and Luxembourg. In addition local EU offices in Europe and all over the world organised a variety of activities and events for all ages. More than 40,000 people visited the Parliament's events in all three cities.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150508STO54002/html/Europe-Day-Parliament-opens-its-doors-to-visitors>

TTIP: WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO ARBITRATE DISPUTES BETWEEN INVESTORS AND GOVERNMENTS?

The negotiations on a free-trade deal with the US continue to attract attention, especially a clause detailing how to resolve disputes between foreign investors and countries. The international trade committee organised a meeting on 6 May to discuss the issue with Cecilia Malmström, the commissioner responsible for foreign trade. To find out what they discussed, read our summary on Storify.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150507STO52602/html/TTIP-what-is-best-way-to-arbitrate-disputes-between-investors-and-governments>

MEPs vote to cap emissions of medium combustion plants

EU countries would have to enforce sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emission limits upon medium-sized combustion plants, such as electricity generators or heating systems for domestic, residential or industrial use, under draft plans approved by the Environment Committee on Wednesday. MEPs voted to adapt the scheme to match the plants' thermal input, so as to reduce the administrative burden on small businesses.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150506IPR51206/html/MEPs-vote-to-cap-emissions-of-medium-combustion-plants>

THE COST OF UNDECLARED WORK: EMPLOYMENT MEPS VOTE ON NEW MEASURES TO TACKLE PROBLEM

Undeclared work lead to countries missing out on taxes and social security contributions as well as to distortions in the labour market as it gives people who don't declare their services and goods an unfair advantage. Far from being a minor issue, undeclared work amounted to 18.4% of the EU's GDP in 2012. On 7 May the employment committee votes on a proposal to launch a new European organisation to help member states work together on it.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150507STO52601/html/The-cost-of-undeclared-work-employment-MEPs-vote-on-measures-to-tackle-issue>

APRIL GUEST PHOTOGRAPHER CONTEST TOPIC: HEALTH

Take part in our new guest photographer contest, inspired by 2015 being the European Year for Development. Every month until September we will be announcing a different topic linked to development. Send us your photo

	<p>inspired by the theme of that month, along with the submission form and you could be invited to Strasbourg to make a photo reportage. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150505STO50332/html/April-guest-photographer-contest-topic-health</p> <p>FROM GEO-BLOCKING TO CLOUD COMPUTING: PARLIAMENT’S GUIDE TO THE DIGITAL AGE</p> <p>Every day 315 million Europeans use the internet, but challenges still remain for consumers and companies alike. The European Commission presents its strategy for a digital single market on Wednesday 6 May. On the same day the EP's industry and research committee will discuss it with Andrus Ansip, who is the commissioner responsible for the strategy. Read on to find out more about the terminology and the remaining challenges. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150505STO50327/html/From-geo-blocking-to-cloud-computing-Parliament%E2%80%99s-guide-to-the-digital-age</p>
<p>Specific issues relating to the 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</p> <p>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> <p>Recognition of professional qualifications</p>	<p>@RealTimeWW1 wins 2015 European Charlemagne Youth Prize</p> <p>@RealTimeWW1, a Twitter project about the First World War, has been awarded first prize at the 2015 European Charlemagne Youth Prize ceremony, organised by the European Parliament and the International Charlemagne Prize Foundation on 12 May. Second prize goes to the Fronterras-European (border) line project and the third prize jointly to Austrian, Cypriot and Spanish participants. The prize is awarded every year to projects fostering a European identity and integration among young people. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150511STO54546/html/RealTimeWW1-wins-2015-European-Charlemagne-Youth-Prize</p> <p>Hearing: citizens' initiative to stop animal testing</p> <p>Should animal testing be banned? The Stop Vivisection citizens' initiative aims to repeal the European directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes and ask the European Commission to present a new proposal that does away with animal experimentation. The Parliament held a hearing on Monday 11 May, during which MEPs debated the issue with experts and the initiative's organisers. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150508STO54006/html/Hearing-citizens'-initiative-to-stop-animal-testing</p>
<p>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</p>	<p>COHESION POLICY: HELPING POORER REGIONS TO KICKSTART EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH</p> <p>The EU's cohesion strategy helps poorer regions catch up with richer ones by stimulating growth and employment. When European governments started to cut back spending due to the crisis, the EU's cohesion funding helped to support critical investment, according to the European Commission's sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion. The Parliament's regional development voted on its position on 4 May. Check out our chart to learn how the funding helped to make a difference. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150505STO50325/html/Cohesion-policy-helping-poorer-regions-to-kickstart-employment-and-growth</p> <p>MINISTERS AGREE TO INTRODUCE INNOVATIVE, DIGITAL, INCLUSIVE AND LABOUR MARKET-ORIENTED HIGHER EDUCATION</p> <p>The main higher education ministerial event in the last three years – the</p>

	<p>Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum – concluded today with an endorsement of the Yerevan Communiqué, an agreement which provides higher education priorities for the period up to 2018. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1738-ministers-agree-to-introduce-innovative-digital-inclusive-and-labour-market-oriented-higher-education</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS PROPOSE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO EU INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF MOBILITY AND THE DIASPORA</p> <p>On 11–12 May, a group of international experts proposed policy recommendations for European institutions on the issues of mobility and engagement with the diaspora at the conference entitled “How to Improve Intra-European Mobility and Circular Migration? Fostering Diaspora Engagement” which was convened under the auspices of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1698-international-experts-propose-policy-recommendations-to-eu-institutions-in-the-field-of-mobility-and-the-diaspora-at-a-conference-in-riga</p> <p>Conference discusses importance of simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy</p> <p>On 7-8 May, the 37th Conference of the Directors of EU Paying Agencies took place under the Latvian Presidency. The conference consisted of three working groups that discussed simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and prepared proposals which were then submitted to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council for consideration. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1677-conference-discusses-importance-of-simplifying-the-common-agricultural-policy</p> <p>EFSI: CO-LEGISLATORS COMMITTED TO REACH THE AGREEMENT BY END OF MAY</p> <p>On 13 May the Council and European Parliament held their fourth political meeting to discuss the legislative proposal on the set up of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), approaching a compromise on the use of the EU guarantee, which will provide the essential EFSI leverage for bringing new private investments to the Union. Progress was also made in the questions of governance and transparency and reporting. https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1708-efsi-co-legislators-committed-to-reach-the-agreement-by-end-of-may</p>
<p>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</p>	<p>Nature and Urban Wellbeing: Nature-Based Solutions to Societal Challenges</p> <p>In collaboration with the European Commission and under the auspices of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, ALTER-Net hosts an international conference on Nature-Based Solutions, on 18-20 May. Relevant to research in many disciplines and communities, to EU policies and to practitioners, 'Nature and Urban Wellbeing' offers rich possibilities to share, learn and connect. http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/nature-and-urban-wellbeing-nature-based-solutions-to-societal-challenges/</p> <p>Design, Social Media and Technology to Foster Civic Self-Organisation</p> <p>This conference is organised by the University of Hasselt in collaboration with the JPI Urban Europe project Play!UC and the TRADERS program, on 21-22 May. It addresses the role of design, social media and technology in fostering people's engagement in spatial issues. A selection of papers will be published in an edited volume via the inPlanning platform. http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/design-social-media-and-technology-to-foster-civic-self-organisation/</p>

Global Growth Agendas: Regions, Institutions and Sustainability

The Regional Studies Association organizes its 2015 Annual Conference in collaboration with the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Piacenza, on 24-27 May. Some of the themes that the conference will address are economic and community development, spatial planning and infrastructure and climate change. Abstracts can be submitted until the 30th of January 2015.

<http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/global-growth-agendas-regions-institutions-and-sustainability/>

High-Level Conference "A social agenda for transport" – 4 June 2015, Brussels

Save the date for the High-Level Conference "A social agenda for transport" which will be held in Brussels on 4 June 2015, on the initiative of Commissioner Bulc in charge of Transport, and Commissioner Thyssen in charge of Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility.

The conference will allow key players to exchange views on the social dimension of transport and will pave the way to future EU action in this field.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/media/events/2015-06-04-social-agenda-for-transport_en.htm

The Balkan and the Black Sea Area on the move: Perspective for Regional Authorities – 29.05.2015

This conference will provide an update on the prospects for developing the EU's policies in the South-East of Europe and present regional perspectives within this context.

<http://www.balkansblacksea.org/index.php?act=3%2c1%2c%2c30>

Europe level up = governance level down. Decentralisation and multilevel governance as key factors for a stronger Europe

04/06/2015

25 years ago in Poland the self-government level was restored as a result of political changes. This reform, subsequently continued by the government of Prof. Jerzy Buzek, has been considered to be one of the most successful transformations in the recent history in Poland. 30 years ago in Strasbourg the European Charter of Local self-government was adopted. By commemorating these two important events we want to open a discussion on condition of the European Union's self-government level. There is a need to continue financial decentralisation and reinforce regional and local level, also by introducing a multilevel governance principle, to make them a real partner contributing to European growth and jobs.

<http://eastpoland.eu/wydarzenie/3/13/conference-on-self-governance>

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.