



EU Policy Update 24th October 2008

Lancashire Brussels Office

For an explanation of European jargon visit: [the EU's Eurojargon Guide](#),
For explanations of technical and legal terms see: [the EU's Technical Glossary](#)

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Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of the Lancashire Brussels Office policy update. This edition includes proposals by the European Commission to revise the current rules governing the issuing of electronic money in the EU. This edition also covers the Erasmus Mundus II programme, which helps to enhance the quality of university teaching and attract the best students and academics from outside Europe.

In addition, this Policy Update outlines the European Parliament's proposals to promote the introduction of clean and energy efficient vehicles and the European Commission's unveiling of two packages to stop deforestation and logging.

The next Policy Update is due out in a fortnight; if you have any queries before then please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Anthony Monks
Assistant European Liaison Officer

24th October 2008



Review & Outlook

Review

This week saw MEPs in Strasbourg debate the conclusions of the last EU summit held on 15-16 October. The debate included the current financial crisis and the outcome of the EU summit on climate change. French President, Mr. Sarkozy, stressed the paramount importance of ongoing access to credit for both citizens and SMEs, investments in EU infrastructure and that the EU's climate change package must not be over-shadowed by the current economic crisis.

Moreover, during this week's plenary session, MEPs agreed on a common charge system for EU airports. Other debated issues were the 'safer internet' programme and the new rules regarding 'timeshares', both of which are covered in this edition.

Additionally, this week marked Baroness Catherine Ashton's first official activity as the new EU trade commissioner, as she faced questions from MEPs.

Outlook

The week ahead sees the Lancashire Brussels office finalise arrangements for a conference to be held in Brussels in November as part of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, bringing together speakers from the European Commission, the University of Central Lancashire's Media Factory and LCDL's Creative Lancashire. For further information on either the event or the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, please [contact us](#).



Funding Opportunities and Consultations

State aid: Commission consults on three year extension of film support criteria

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on plans to extend the state aid assessment criteria of its Cinema Communication (see [IP/01/1326](#)) until 31 December 2012. Under the current criteria, state support for film production can be exempted from the EC Treaty's ban on state aid under certain conditions.

In particular, such support must concern cultural films, while respecting certain thresholds regarding territorial requirements and aid intensity. Schemes must also comply with the EC Treaty rules and cannot focus on specific film-making activities.

The Commission proposes to extend the validity of these criteria for three years and invites interested parties to submit their comments by 30 November 2008.

The proposed text of the extension is published on the Commission website

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/reform/reform.cfm

Comments should be sent by 30 November 2008 to the following mailbox:

Stateaidgreffe@ec.europa.eu

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/info_centre/library/studies/index_en.htm#finalised

Across Europe, an estimated €1.6 billion is spent on national film support each year. This mainly takes the form of direct grants or tax incentives. Around 70% of the support is focused on film production.

There is also support given at European level through the MEDIA programme and by the measures on the promotion of European works in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The European MEDIA 2007 programme (2007-2013) has a budget of €755 million. It supports the development and distribution of films as well as training activities, festivals and promotion projects throughout the continent.

Call for proposals: Researchers' Night 2009

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Research has published a call for proposals for the 'Researchers' Night 2009' event.

This call is designed for organisations in European Union Member States and associated countries. Proposed projects should have a duration of no more than seven months, and the indicative budget amounts to £3 million.

'European Researchers' Night' is a pan-European event involving a wide range of scientific and research organisations, including museums, laboratories and academic institutions, which host a variety of entertaining and fun events planned to run late into the night.

The aim is to give the public, particularly young people, the opportunity to meet researchers within the context of festive and 'fun' activities and to highlight the appeal of pursuing a research career.

Contact person: please consult the following web address:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls/>



Public procurement: Commission assesses the use of electronic procurement in Europe

The European Commission is launching an on-line survey to find out more about the actual experience of businesses and public purchasers with electronic public procurement (e-procurement); thus providing essential information for an evaluation which is taking place on the effective take-up of e-procurement across the EU.

Public procurement is a key sector of the EU economy accounting for about 16% of GDP. Modernising and opening up procurement markets across borders; including through the expansion of e-procurement is seen as crucial to Europe's competitiveness and for creating new opportunities for EU businesses.

The European Commission has identified electronic public procurement as an area where large gains can be achieved and is actively seeking to promote the use of electronic means. The 2004 e-procurement Directives provide a legal framework aimed at boosting the development and use of electronic procurement.

The Action Plan seeks in particular to help Member States remove obstacles to cross-border electronic public procurement and further increase efficiency.

It is estimated that electronic procurement and invoicing could reduce total procurement costs by around 5% and more than halve transaction costs, saving governments – and therefore taxpayers – billions of euros annually.

The deadline for responses is **18 December 2008**.

For general information on EU policy and legislation on public procurement, please visit the Commission's Europa web site at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/e-procurement_en.htm#consultation

e-procurement:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/policy/impact/eproc/index_en.htm

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Partner Searches

If you would like to circulate your own partner search, please [contact us](#)

France: e-Health Accessibility for Rural Populations and Organisations

[Auvergne Regional Council](#) is looking for partners for a project in the field of e-health accessibility, for rural populations and organisations (e-HARPO).

The project tackles two main objectives:

1. To identify innovative practices of e-medicine implemented in the European regions, especially related to medical care in rural areas.
2. The transfer of the identified practices and their integration in to public policies.

For a document with additional information on the objectives, please contact Anthony on: assistant@lancashire-brussels.org

To directly contact the project coordinator, Mrs Elena EYCHENNE, Conseil régional d'Auvergne, please note the contact details below:

e-mail: e.eychenne@cr-auvergne.fr

Tel: +33 4 73 31 81 73

Sweden: Innovation and creativity in the educational sector

The Swedish municipality of Söderhamn is searching for a UK partner for their project idea regarding innovation and creativity in the educational sector.

This project aims to share best practice and create new ways of teaching pupils through more creative and innovative methods.

Please note that the deadline is February 27 2009.

For a brief document with an overview of, and additional information on the project, please contact Anthony on:

assistant@lancashire-brussels.org

To directly contact the project coordinator, Christelle Bourqui, please see her details below:

e-mail: christelle.bourquin@soderhamn.se

Tel: 0270-750 00

Mob: 070-2364786

Web-page: www.soderhamn.se

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Conferences

World health of IT – Copenhagen Denmark - 6 November 2008

This event aims to connect leading health information and communication technology experts from Europe and beyond. It offers opportunities, inter alia, to partake in educational sessions, vendor exhibitions, interoperability demonstrations, exchange of experiences and networking sessions and other professional development opportunities.

ECTA Telecoms Regulatory Conference 2008: 26 November 2008 - 28 November 2008 Brussels, Belgium

This yearly event attracts European policymakers, national authorities, regulators and operators. The conference comes at a critical time for the European telecommunications market, as the regulatory environment for next generation broadband access is determined.

The event will provide an important forum for debate on the recently announced Framework Review proposals made by the European Parliament and the Commission. Keynote speakers include European Commissioner Neelie Kroes, Catherine Trautmann, Member of the European Parliament and Fabio Colasanti, Director General for Information Society and Media at the European Commission

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EU General

Strasbourg Plenary Session

Last week in Strasbourg saw MEPs debate the financial crisis and its effect on people across Europe. They were joined by president Sarkozy as France currently holds the EU's Presidency.

The main conclusions from the talks saw President Sarkozy emphasising the paramount importance of the EU's climate change package, must not be over-shadowed by the current economic crisis.

Additionally, other conclusions of the talks saw a call from President Sarkozy for an ongoing access to credit for both citizens and SMEs, in addition to investments in EU infrastructure in order to avoid a dramatic downturn in growth and employment.

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Commission launches EU school milk campaign

European Commissioner for Agriculture, Mariann Fischer Boel, has launched an EU-wide campaign to promote the re-launched School Milk Programme.

Under the slogan "Milk – Drink it up", the information campaign aims to raise awareness of the benefits of milk consumption and the availability of EU funds to schools.

The newly expanded EU School Milk Programme aims to encourage children to consume dairy products as part of a balanced diet and provides subsidies for distribution of dairy products in schools and other educational establishments.

The programme is now granting to secondary schools the same full and guaranteed access as primary and nursery schools. The new rules of the programme came into force at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

Background

A new regulation published on 11 July this year provides for a larger range of products covered by the subsidy, thus responding to requests from the European Parliament and the Council.

Included on the list are milk and its flavoured variants (including lactose-free milk drinks), a larger assortment of cheeses (including low-fat cheeses), yoghurts and fermented milk products, such as buttermilk. Along the lines of the School Milk Scheme, the European Commission has recently also proposed to establish a European Union-wide scheme to provide free fruit and vegetables to school children (see Policy Update from August for info).

Additional information on the campaign can be found at the website below:

www.drinkitup.europa.eu

Additional information on the European Commission's nutrition policy can be found at the link below:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/nutrition_en.htm

Source – European Commission

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Education and Culture

The Commission welcomes the adoption of Erasmus Mundus II by the European Parliament

The European Commission has welcomed the vote from the European Parliament in favour of establishing the second phase of Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) programme.

This allows the European Union to continue to support joint programmes in Europe, with grants to the most highly-talented students and professors from third countries (non-EU countries). It also extends the scope of the programme to the doctoral level and gives more financial support to European students.

Erasmus Mundus is a European co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a worldwide centre of excellence in learning.

By the end of its first phase (2004-2008), more than 6,000 students from outside Europe will have received an Erasmus Mundus scholarship to obtain a degree in Europe, and more than 1,000 teaching staff from third countries will have been given a scholarship to actively contribute to Master's courses in teaching or research activities.

Erasmus Mundus II will have a budget of €950 million, four times more than was available for the first phase of the programme (€230 million for 2004 – 2008.)

For further information on the new programme follow the links below:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/extcoop/call/index.htm>

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European Commission launches "Study in Europe" website to promote European higher education

The European Commission has launched a new web portal called 'Study in Europe' to promote the attractiveness of European Higher Education to students from other parts of the world.

The portal, www.study-in-europe.org, is part of a wide-ranging campaign to increase the number of students from outside Europe who study in the EU.

'Study in Europe' provides clear and up-to-date information about the range of courses on offer in European higher education institutions in thirty-two EU countries covering factors such as:



- Admission procedures
- Costs
- Scholarships
- The higher education environment in Europe

Potential students will find help to decide which country they should go to, which university they should choose, what they may need before they leave home and what will happen when they arrive at their chosen campus.

Europe has more than four thousand higher education institutions, from top-level research establishments to small, teaching-focused colleges. Since the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, higher education in Europe has entered a new phase of reform, aligning degree structures and opening the door to the mutual recognition of qualifications and cross-border periods of study.

Background

The 'Study in Europe' campaign has been devised under terms of reference established by the European Commission to build on the success of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Its main objective is to promote the attractiveness of European Higher Education to students from other parts of the world.

The site is an international, non-bordered portal that aims to make European Higher Education more easily accessible to students outside the EU and can be easily used by those within the EU.

Source – European Commission

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Electronic money: Commission proposes clear legal framework for innovative payment solutions

The European Commission has put forward a proposal revising the current rules governing the conditions for issuing electronic money in the EU.

The proposal follows extensive consultation (see [IP/05/930](#)), highlighting that the current rules, dating from 2000, have hindered the take-up of the electronic money market, which is stalling technological innovation.

The revised rules will facilitate market entrance for new providers, which will contribute to develop an industry, with an expected volume reaching an estimated €10 billion by 2012.

The proposal provides for a modern and coherent legal framework for issuing electronic money, with the aim of promoting the emergence of a true single market for electronic money services in the European Union. The main innovations proposed are as follows:

- A technologically neutral and simpler definition of 'electronic money' covering all situations where the payment service provider (an e-money institution or a credit institution) issues a prepaid stored value in exchange of funds.
- A new prudential regime, ensuring greater consistency between prudential requirements of electronic money institutions and payment institutions.
- A clarification of the application of redemption requirements, with special reference to mobile telecommunications. Consumers would have the right to claim back their electronic money at any moment, under conditions laid down by the new rules.

Background

The E-Money Directive (2000/46/EC) sought to facilitate access by non-credit institutions to the business of e-money issuance. However, electronic money is still far from delivering the full potential benefits that were expected at the time of its adoption and is not yet considered a credible alternative to cash.

The proposal aims to enable new, innovative and secure electronic money services to be designed, providing market access to new players and fostering real and effective competition between all market participants, now passes to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for consideration.

The new proposal can be seen in full at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/payments/emoney/index_en.htm

Source: the European Commission

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Commission welcomes European Parliament's strong support for a new Safer Internet Programme

The European Parliament cast an overwhelmingly positive vote on the report drafted by MEP Roberta Angelilli, which supports the launch of a new EU Safer Internet programme.

The 5-year programme (2009–13), proposed by the European Commission last February, will have a budget of €55 million to combat illegal online content but also to tackle illegal and harmful conduct such as grooming and cyber-bullying.

The vote during the European Parliament's plenary session in Strasbourg followed a debate on the Commission's proposal, which was applauded by all political groups.

The Safer Internet programme 2009-2013 builds on the success of the previous Safer Internet programme started in 2005 and will also encompass recent communications services from the Web 2.0, such as social networking. The proposed new programme will co-fund projects to:

- **Ensure awareness of children, parents and teachers**, and support contact points that are providing them with advice on how to stay safe online.
- **Provide the public with national contact points** for reporting illegal and harmful content and conduct, in particular on child sexual abuse material and grooming.
- **Foster self-regulatory initiatives** in this field and stimulate the involvement of children in creating a safer online environment.
- **Establish a knowledge base on the use of new technologies and related risks** by bringing together researchers engaged in online child safety at European level.

Information about the new Safer Internet programme 2009-2013 can be found at:

[IP/08/310](#)

[MEMO/08/322](#)

About the current Safer Internet programme 2005-2008:

[IP/06/1512](#)

[IP/08/207](#)

Source: the European Commission

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European companies outpace American counterparts in Research & Development investment

European companies outpace American counterparts in Research and development (R&D) investment growth for the first time in five years.

Investment by EU companies has increased by 8.8% compared to the increased R&D investment by US companies of 8.6%, according to the 2008 edition of the European Commission's annual Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard published today.

Three EU companies feature in the top ten: Nokia in 5th place (up from 17th), with an R&D investment of €5.3 billion, Volkswagen in 9th (up from 14th) and Daimler in 10th (down from 5th).

The world's biggest investor in R&D in 2008 is Microsoft, with €5.6 billion. Trends show increased sales and profitability for EU companies and for the first time since records began in 2004, R&D investment growth in the EU companies is greater than that of their US counterparts.

The EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard

The EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard is published annually by the European Commission as part of its Industrial Research Investment Monitoring activity. It shows that worldwide corporate R&D investment growth decreased from 10% in last year's Scoreboard to 9%, but EU corporate R&D investment growth increased by 8.8%, up from 7.4% on last year's Scoreboard.

The report looks at R&D investment data from 2000 participating companies' own accounts over the 2007/8 financial year. The sample comprises the 1000 EU companies investing the largest sums in R&D and the 1000 non-EU companies investing the largest sums in R&D.

All the data come from publicly available audited accounts. The data is based on the location of the registered office of the company conducting the R&D, and not on the location where the R&D is performed.

The 2008 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard has been prepared jointly by DG Research and the Joint Research Centre and can be downloaded from:

<http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Source: the European Commission

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Employment and Social Affairs

Equal treatment for all agency workers

The European Commission has welcomed the decision by the European Parliament to approve the proposal for a directive on Temporary Agency Work.

The European Parliament voted to support the Council's common position (adopted in June 2008) without amendments so it can now become law. Over three million temporary agency workers currently working across the EU will benefit from better protection of their working conditions.

The Temporary Agency Workers directive will ensure:

- Equal treatment from day one for temporary agency workers, compared to permanent workers, in terms of their basic working and employment conditions (including pay, holidays, working time, rest periods and maternity leave) and unless social partners agree otherwise.
- Equal access to collective facilities (such as canteens, child care facilities, or transport services).
- Better access for agency workers to training both when working on an assignment and in between assignments.

The Commission's original proposal dates back to 2002. At the Employment Council in June this year, Member States reached agreement on the longstanding issue of the Temporary Agency Work Directive, originally proposed by the Commission in March 2002 (see [IP/02/441](#)). The Council formally adopted its common position on 15 September 2008, which was supported by the Commission and the European social partners.

Following the approval of the European Parliament, EU countries are now required to incorporate the provisions of the Directive in their national law. It will then come into effect within three years.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/labour_law/index_en.htm

Source – European Commission.

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Enterprise

Sorry, there are no articles this edition.

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Environment

Environment: Commission unveils package to tackle illegal logging and deforestation

The European Commission has unveiled two important initiatives to protect forests globally; the package comprises a legislative proposal to reduce the risk of illegal timber and timber products entering the EU market, and Communication setting out the Commission's proposals for tackling tropical deforestation.

Illegal logging and deforestation have serious environmental implications, contributing to climate change and the loss of biodiversity, as well as threatening the livelihood of indigenous people. Illegal logging is also a symptom of wider problems, including a lack of forest governance and weak law enforcement.

In the context of the international negotiations on the post-2012 climate change agreement, the Commission proposes to pursue the objective of halting global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest, and reducing gross tropical deforestation by at least 50% by 2020.

The two initiatives can be viewed in full at the links below:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/deforestation.htm>
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/illegal_logging.htm

Source – European Commission.

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French President discusses climate in light of the current financial crisis

During the MEPs debate on the EU response to world crises with French president Sarkozy, Mr. Sarkozy rejected ideas 'that the world should do less to combat climate change because of the financial crises' and recognised the difficulty some European countries were facing regarding the financial crisis.

He empathised with those countries that are 95% dependent on coal, but claimed that some flexible solution must be found and saying 'Europe must set an example' to the world and reaffirmed that meeting the 2020 targets were essential.

Source – European Commission.

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Health and Consumer Protection

Better protection for holiday-makers

Under new rules endorsed by the European Parliament, consumers across the EU will benefit from greater holiday protection when they buy and resell timeshare holidays, or timeshare-like holidays, on cruise boats, canal boats, caravans and "discount holiday clubs".

The aim of the new Directive is to further boost consumer confidence in the Timeshare industry (worth over €10.5 billion and responsible for more than 40,000 jobs across the EU) and to eliminate the rogue traders who cause problems for consumers and bring legitimate operators into disrepute.

To date, current EU rules on Timeshare have given consumers basic rights with regard to clear information, including, the right to withdraw and change their mind and a ban on deposits. The new directive aims to tackle loopholes in the current rules, and will extend the scope of the 1994 EU Timeshare Directive to cover new products which have emerged on the market.

The new rules should ensure that consumers are equally well protected across the EU and will create a level playing field in the market for timeshare and certain other holiday-related products.

For further information on 'timeshare' and the new rules please see the website below:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/timeshare/index_en.htm

Source – European Commission.

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Justice and Home Affairs

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Regional Policy

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Research

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Clean and energy efficient vehicles get go-ahead

The European Commission welcomes the support of the European Parliament for its proposal to promote a broad market introduction of clean and energy efficient vehicles through public procurement. The EP vote is based on a compromise reached with the Member States.

The proposed Directive will introduce, for the first time, energy consumption, CO₂ and pollutant emissions as mandatory award criteria into public procurement of vehicles. It applies to public authorities and publicly owned undertakings and to undertakings running public passenger transport services. As a result, not only the price of a vehicle, but also the impact it has on the environment during its lifetime for the environment are reflected in the purchase decision. Flexibility is provided for local authorities on the detailed implementation.

A harmonised methodology is defined for monetising lifetime costs for energy consumption, CO₂ and pollutant emissions. This enables a transparent comparison of vehicle investment costs with the costs linked to the operation of vehicles. This facilitates an informed purchase decision and can avoid costs both for operators and for society.

The Directive is expected to have an impact well beyond its immediate scope. Public procurement is a key market of high visibility and can lead decisions in business and private sectors. The Directive therefore is expected over the long term, to result in a much faster introduction of clean and energy efficient vehicles and in a reduction of their costs.

This will then contribute to improve energy efficiency, and reduce CO₂ and pollutant emissions of the whole vehicle fleet in Europe.

Additional information can be found at the links below:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/promotion/index_en.htm

Source – European Commission.

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MEPs agree common charge system for EU airports

Common principles for levying charges at Community airports are set out in a second-reading report adopted by the European Parliament on a directive to prevent individual airports abusing a dominant position on the market; affecting 69 airports.

Those exempt from the charges include smaller airports, that is, those with less than one million passengers per year. Also disabled and reduced-mobility passengers will not incur the cost.

By the entry into force of the Directive in 2010, it is estimated by the Airport Council International (ACI) that 77 airports will come under the scope of the Directive.

Additional information is due out soon and will be covered in subsequent editions.

Source – European Parliament.

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Diary

13 th October	European Road Safety Day : for further information please contact; Tanja Siggs: Tanja.siggs@lancashire-brussels.org
14 th October	POLIS meeting of the Environment and Health Working Group: for further information please contact; Tanja Siggs: Tanja.siggs@lancashire-brussels.org
22 nd – 24 th October	visit to Preston to attend meetings with colleagues and speak at Preston City Council's ERDF Celebration event
Thursday 23 rd	POST-OPEN DAYS 2008 follow up meeting in Brussels: for further information please contact; Anthony Monks: assistant@lancashire-brussels.org

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