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EFCA invites Young Professionals to hear at firsthand about the impact of EU policy on business conditions and EFCA's representational activities

On 10-11 October 2007 EFCA offers Young Professionals the chance to learn about real European challenges and expand their European connections.

EFCA drew up a two-day programme, which focuses on the effect of EU legislative actions on the business climate of European engineering consultancies.

The programme provides interesting opportunities for learning about what the EU means for professionals and firms, and will certainly stimulate the debate on what it means for the engineering consultancy.

MEP (Member of the European Parliament) Malcolm Harbour – who himself is an engineer - will address the Young Professionals at the occasion of the visit to the European Parliament.

Presentations will offer insight into the EU organisation, decision making and its impact on national law and business, as well as EFCA's process of influencing in 6 wide-ranging thematic areas.

A European Commission speaker and one from a national Permanent Representation will highlight challenges related to doing business across EU borders.

Other sessions will promote the exchange between young professionals, and explore ideas for sharing knowledge and debating views about the European 'project'.

For further information about the programme and to ensure your timely registration for the Young Professionals meeting in Brussels on 10-11 October, please contact your national association.

The deadline for registration is 20 September 2007.

<http://www.efcanet.org/pages/news.aspx?item=3903>



EFCA responds to EC consultation on Codes of Conduct

Over the summer holiday the Commission invited opinions on European Codes of Conduct, which are aimed at facilitating the provision of services or the establishment of a service provider in another member state.

The objective of the Services Directive is to enhance the development of cross-border operations and improve the competitiveness of the European services industry by removing discriminatory barriers and legal/administrative obstacles.

For its implementation, member states are required to take legislative measures, as well as to put in place practical actions that foster the quality of services and transparency for clients. For instance, European Codes of Conduct could be instrumental in establishing the basis for enhanced trust and confidence in services offered by providers from other member states.

The EFCA Public Procurement Committee launched the debate on the review of the EFCA Code of Conduct at its 6 June meeting in Rhodes.

Based on this preliminary consultation, the Chair developed the EFCA response to the EC consultation.

EFCA thereby emphasised a series of particular concerns, which relate to basic features of engineering consultancy services (i.e. the type of users of professional services and existing rules governing professional services).

The response also mentioned EFCA's ongoing efforts in the development of European frames of reference (e.g. recognition of engineering qualifications) and their practical implementation at national level.

EFCA input to the proposed interpretative communication on Institutionalised Public Private Partnerships

Building on its policy paper on institutionalised Public Private Partnerships (IPPPs), EFCA submitted comments on the Commission's working document with a view to supporting the current ongoing work on this important issue.

The Commission is preparing an interpretative communication, which would clarify the application of Community public procurement rules to mixed public-private companies that fulfil public tasks. Panos Panagopoulos, acting Chair of the Project Financing Committee, responded to the Commission's invitation for contributions on the topic.

In its response, EFCA consented to the view that community public procurement law must be complied with for the award of concession contracts and the selection of private partners for IPPPs. Moreover, the application of EU public procurement law in these cases is necessary in order to safeguard a fair and transparent procedure for selecting the private partner in accordance with the relevant principles of the EU Treaty.

EFCA also supports the approach to legal certainty followed in the Commission working document, since it reflects a concrete step towards fair and transparent procurement.

The EFCA response further outlines detailed comments on specific elements such as procedures and transparency in the case of mixed capital companies.

Project Financing Committee	Brussels	26.09.2007
Working Party on Directive 92/57 (H&S)	Brussels	27.09.2007
Board of Directors	Berlin	28.09.2007
Partnership for Development Committee	Brussels	04.10.2007
Public Procurement Committee	Brussels	09.10.2007
Standardisation Working Party	Brussels	16.10.2007
D&S meeting	Bucharest	26.10.2007
Professional Liability Committee	Brussels	22.11.2007
Board of Directors	Ljubljana	06.12.2007



Austrian International Consultants
umbrella

2nd European Consultants' Cooperation Forum

Networking for a Future in Europe

-  Young Professionals meet in Vienna
-  Focus on the Structure of Europe
-  Intensifying Cooperation Opportunities
-  Interactive Working Groups

Date **Friday, October 19th 2007**

Location **MuseumsQuartier
Ovalhalle and Arena21/q21
Museumsplatz 1
A-1070 Vienna**

Registration and additional information under
www.eccf.at



EUROPEAN BRIEFING

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EU FUNDS & PROGRAMMES

2007-2013 Cohesion policy: national strategies and priorities well under way

So far, the Commission validated National Strategic Reference Frameworks and continues negotiations on related operational programmes of more than 20 member states.

The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) is the framework for investment, worth 28.8 billion euro in **Italy** over the 2007-2013 programming period. Four main priorities have been defined: developing knowledge circuits; increasing living standards, security and social inclusion; fostering business clusters, services and competition; internationalising and modernising the economy.

On 20 July, the Commission approved the **Swedish** strategic document. It sets out in broad terms how Sweden will use 1.6 billion euro of EU resources over the next seven years to deliver growth and jobs within the Regional competitiveness and employment

objective and 265 million euro under the European territorial objective. The national contribution that will complement the European funding is estimated at 1.9 billion euro, bringing total support to 3.8 billion euro over seven years (including Territorial co-operation).

The **Czech** NSRF describes in broad terms how the Czech authorities will invest 26.3 billion euro of EU resources over the next seven years.

Cohesion policy is intended to reduce disparities among regions undergoing rapid development (such as Prague under the "competitiveness objective") and regions lagging behind (Central-Moravia, Moravia-Silesia and the North West), covered by the "Convergence" Objective.

The **Irish** framework sets out in broad terms how Ireland will invest its 750.7 million euro allocation over the next seven years to deliver growth and jobs, to strengthen human capital, and to ensure balanced and harmonious development, including the reduction of regional disparities.

The **UK** plans to invest 9.9 billion euro that it will receive in 22 operational programmes according to three targets: promotion of companies and innovation, workforce and equal opportunities, environment and sustainable development. Furthermore, special programmes are planned for Northern Ireland.

Estonia intends to translate the broad priorities contained in the NSRF (3.4 billion euro EU resources) into three operational programmes for human resources development, and for the development of the economic and living environment.

The **Slovak** NSRF sets out in broad terms how the authorities will invest 11.36 billion euro of EU resources over the next seven years to deliver growth and jobs.

Cohesion policy is intended to reduce disparities among regions undergoing rapid development (such as Bratislava under the 'competitiveness objective') and regions

lagging behind (Western, Central and Eastern Slovakia), covered by the 'Convergence' Objective.



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/newsroom/pdf/scoreboard17082007.pdf

INTERNAL MARKET

Commission takes action to put an end to obstacles to the free movement of services

The Commission initiated infringement proceedings for breaching EU rules on free movement of services against Austria, Germany, Spain and the UK.

The Commission decided to bring proceedings before the Court of Justice against **Austria** for its legislation on patent agents. The Commission considers that it is disproportionate to oblige all patent agents legally established in another Member State to enter themselves in the Austrian register, hold insurance for this purpose, be subject to all Austrian disciplinary rules other than those linked to professional qualifications (disregarding any rules they are already subject to in the State where they are

established) and to work together with a local representative.

In the Commission's view, the 1990 bilateral agreement between **Germany** and Poland discriminates against firms based in other Member States. As the German authorities see it, only German firms are entitled to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by that agreement to use Polish subcontractors, who are therefore able, within the limits of a quota system, to second their employees to Germany. Firms in other Member States which intend to do work in Germany are unable to take advantage of the agreement and cannot, therefore, use Polish subcontractors for providing their services.

The reasoned opinion, sent to the **United Kingdom** and **Spain**, relates to the refusal of the authorities of those Member States to allow an additional reimbursement for costs incurred as a result of urgent hospital treatment received in another Member State.

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/eulaw/index_en.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

The Euro in Cyprus and Malta

Cyprus and Malta will introduce the euro on 1st January 2008, thereby extending the euro zone to fifteen states out of the 27 EU members.

On 10 July, Finance Ministers gave their go-ahead to the two countries and established the permanent exchange rates for the Cypriot pound and the Maltese lire: 0,585274 for the Cypriot pound and 0,4293 for the Maltese lire.



DOCUMENTS & WEB SITES OF INTEREST

EU LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Proposals & Regulation

Handbook on the implementation of the Services Directive

The services of the Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services have drawn up a handbook on the implementation of the Services Directive to assist the Member States.

It describes appropriate ways of implementation and draws attention to important issues in the implementation process. It is based on preliminary discussions with Member States and seeks to reply to questions already raised by them or which can be easily anticipated.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/guides/handbook_en.pdf

Communication on a simplified business environment for companies in the areas of company law, accounting and auditing

Commission proposals for possible measures to simplify the EU acquis (i.e. the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all EU member states) in the areas of company law, accounting and auditing. Comments are invited by mid-October 2007.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/company/simplification/index_en.htm

Proposal for a Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the 10th European Development Fund

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0410en01.pdf

From Cairo to Lisbon – The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership

Commission proposal, presenting key flagship policy initiatives that embody the new approach to EU-Africa relations, and which will be put forward by the future Joint EU-Africa Strategy.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0357en01.pdf

Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union

The Communication aims at stimulating the debate on the way the EU might solve the problem of water shortages in an environment affected by global warming. The Communication presents an initial set of policy options and raises issues to be taken into account to ensure the availability of water for all human, economic and social activities.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0414en01.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/scarcity_en.htm

Proposal for new solvency requirements for insurance undertakings ('Solvency II')

Revision of EU insurance law designed to improve consumer protection, modernise supervision, deepen market integration and increase the international competitiveness of European insurers. Under the new system, known as 'Solvency II', insurers would be required to take account of all types of risk to which they are exposed and to manage those risks more effectively.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/insurance/solvency_en.htm

Posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services: Maximising its benefits and potential while guaranteeing the protection of workers

Assessment of national measures applied by Member States in the context of supervising the posting of workers, as well as the situation in terms of administrative cooperation.

The aim is to remove unnecessary obstacles to the free provision of services within the internal market while continuing to ensure adequate protection for posted workers.

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

REPORTS

2006 annual report on the protection of the Communities' financial interests and the fight against fraud

The report highlights the topics of risk analysis and risk management, debarment databases and early-warning/whistleblower tools. It analyses warning systems based on internal informers in the Member states and the European institutions, providing initial information that could trigger further investigations. At the other end of the investigative procedure, the report examines the steps taken to improve recovery of amounts not collected or wrongly paid, as well as the mechanisms for recovery by offsetting under national law. The report further contains information on the amounts recovered and the financial corrections undertaken, in particular when a payment was not made in conformity with Community rules.

The report is published simultaneously with the European Anti-Fraud Office's OLAF annual operation report for the same year, available at the same website.

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/anti_fraud/reports/index_en.html

Bulgaria and Romania: progress reports on accompanying measures following Accession

When they joined the EU on 1 January 2007, Romania and Bulgaria still had progress to make in the fields of judicial reform, corruption and organised crime. The first progress reports focus mainly on judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organised crime. They highlight the need for sustained political commitment and implementation on the ground if the benchmarks set at the time of accession are to be met in full. The reports put forward a series of concrete follow up measures. This includes action plans to be drawn up by these two Member States, a targeting of available funding and continued support for institution building.

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/cvm/index_en.htm

Internal Market Scoreboard

On average, 1.6% of Internal Market Directives for which the implementation deadline has passed are not currently written into national law.

Member States too often fail to apply Internal Market rules correctly: only four Member States have managed to reduce the number of infringement proceedings against them.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/score/docs/score16_en.pdf

24th Annual Report on monitoring the application of Community law (2006)

In terms of notification of national transposition measures, an average of 98.93% directives had received notifications by the 25 Member States in January 2006. This average rose to 99.06% end 2006. The total number of infringement proceedings initiated by the Commission fell slightly

from 2653 in 2005 to 2518 in 2006. By 31 December 2006, 1642 cases out of the 2518 registered were still ongoing. There was also a slight decrease in the number of complaints registered, from 1154 in 2005 to 1049. Complaints accounted for 41.7% of the total infringements detected in 2006. The number of infringement proceedings initiated by the Commission on the basis of its own investigations rose from 433 in 2005 to 565 in 2006 (24%) for EU 25.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0398en01.pdf

Electricity Consumption and Efficiency Trends in the Enlarged European Union: Status Report 2006

The report highlights the key findings of an in-depth 2006 survey on electricity consumption in buildings in the enlarged EU, and the market share of energy-efficient appliances and equipment. It calculates future potential savings based on currently available technologies.

<http://re.jrc.ec.europa.eu/energyefficiency/pdf/EnEff%20Report%202006.pdf>

State of European Cities Report

The Urban Audit collects information on living conditions in 258 large and medium-sized cities in the European Union.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/urban/stateofcities_2007.pdf

European Community (2007), DAC Peer Review: Main Findings and Recommendations

Review of the Development Co-operation Policies and Programmes of the European Community, carried out by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_201185_38897408_1_1_1_1,00.html

CONSULTATIONS

Simplifying the business environment for companies

In a communication, the Commission is putting forward possible measures to simplify the EU acquis in the areas of company law, accounting and auditing. The proposed measures would remove or reduce a range of administrative requirements that are considered outdated or excessive, such as simplifying disclosure requirements for companies and for branches, further reducing reporting and auditing requirements for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Deadline: mid-October 2007.

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/company/simplification/index_en.htm

Living with climate change in Europe

The Commission adopted its first policy document (Green Paper) on adapting to the impacts of climate change. It argues that we are now faced with a double challenge: next to deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions we also need to adapt to the changing climate conditions.

The paper describes possible avenues for action at EU level. Its main objective is to kick-start a Europe-wide public debate and consultation on how to take it forward.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/adaptation/consultation.htm>

InterActive Terminology for Europe

The InterActive Terminology for Europe database (IATE) enables the user to search for a specific term in a source language and to find the corresponding terms in one or more selected target languages. At present, it contains not only 8.7 million terms, but also 500,000 abbreviations and 100,000 phrases and covers all 23 official EU languages.

In offering free access to IATE to all EU citizens, the institutions are placing this unique and unparalleled tool at the disposal of anyone who wishes to take advantage of it - not only language professionals outside the institutions, but also national parliaments and administrations involved in the transposition of EU legislation into national law and the dissemination of information on the EU.

<http://iate.europa.eu>

Multilingual consolidated EU legislation

Laws applicable in the EU have now been consolidated (i.e. integration of the provisions of the original instrument together with all subsequent amendments), and are available in 19 languages (with Maltese in construction and already including some Bulgarian and Romanian texts).

They are not legally binding, but give a continually updated picture of the EU legislation in force.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/legis/avis_consolidation.htm

Roaming Regulation

Mobile operators should have offered customers a Eurotariff by 30 July 2007. This tariff shall be activated no later than one month after the receipt of the customer's request. Roaming charges should not exceed €0.49 for making calls and €0.24 for receiving calls abroad (excluding VAT). The Commission launched a website, on 2 August, comparing the rates applied by different operators.

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/index_en.htm

Construction output up by 0.6% in the euro area - Up by 0.5% in the EU27

June 2007 compared to May 2007

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2007_MONTH_08/4-21082007-EN-BP.PDF

Commission reports on the Member States' application of EU recommendations on company directors' remuneration and independence

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/company/directors-remun/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/company/independence/index_en.htm

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