



NEWS FROM THE COMMISSION MIDDAY BRIEFING  
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Friday, 13 January, 2012

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[Europeans ready for 'active ageing', new survey says](#)

To mark the start of the 2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity of Generations, the Commission presented today a new Eurobarometer survey showing that 71% of Europeans are aware that Europe's population is getting older, but only 42% are concerned about this development. This is in stark contrast with the perceptions of policy makers, who regard demographic ageing as a major challenge. For most citizens, people aged 55 years and older play a major role in key areas of society. Over 60% believe that we should be allowed to continue working after retirement age and one third says that they would like to work longer themselves. Surprisingly, people closer to retirement are more likely to share this view than the younger generation.

[Taxation: Developing the One Stop Shop for cross border VAT compliance](#)

Doing business in more than one Member State often means dealing with several tax administrations in different languages. Dealing with multiple VAT obligations can be very burdensome and costly for companies. The proposal adopted today is a first step towards a One Stop Shop for all electronically delivered services that will benefit businesses as from 1st January 2015. As set out in last December's Commission Communication on the future of VAT (see [IP/11/1508](#)), the One Stop Shop approach for EU trade across borders will be applied first to e-commerce, broadcasting and telecom services. In the future the Commission will seek to extend the One Stop Shop step by step to other goods and services.

[Waste – a short cut to job creation and lower costs](#)

Full implementation of EU waste legislation would save €72 billion a year, increase the annual turnover of the EU waste management and recycling sector by €42 billion and create over 400,000 jobs by 2020 according to a European Commission study published today. Illegal waste operations in Member States are causing missed opportunities for economic growth, but stronger national inspections and better knowledge about waste management would bring major improvements.

[November 2011 - Euro area external trade surplus 6.9 bn euro 7.2 bn euro deficit for EU27](#)

The first estimate for euro area (EA17) trade with the rest of the world in November 2011 gave a 6.9 bn euro surplus, compared with -2.3 bn euro in November 2010. The October 2011 balance was +1.0 bn, compared with +3.1 bn in October 2010. In November 2011 compared with October 2011, seasonally adjusted exports rose by 3.9%, while imports

remained stable. The first estimate for the November 2011 extra-EU27 trade balance was a 7.2 bn euro deficit, compared with -16.8 bn in November 2010. In October 2011 the balance was -11.2 bn, compared with -9.5 bn in October 2010. In November 2011 compared with October 2011, seasonally adjusted exports rose by 2.8%, while imports fell by 0.6%.

**[Active ageing in the EU - The employment rate for persons aged 60-64 increased from 23% in 2000 to 31% in 2010 ...and from 50% to 61% for those aged 55-59.](#)**

The proportion of the population in the EU27 who are aged 55 and over rose from 25% in 1990 to 30% in 2010, and is estimated to reach around 40% by 2060. In connection with the demographic challenges presented by this increase, the European Union has designated 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Active ageing means that older age groups have the opportunity to stay in the workforce and share their experience, to keep playing an active role in society and to live as healthy and fulfilling lives as possible. To mark the European Year, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, issues a new publication "Active ageing and solidarity between generations – a statistical portrait of the European Union 2012", prepared in collaboration with the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and Eurofound, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. This publication presents data on topics such as demography, employment, transition from work to retirement, healthcare, living conditions and participation in society. In this News Release the most recent data on demographic trends and employment amongst the older population are presented, while more information on attitudes towards ageing and the participation of older persons in society can be found in a new Eurobarometer survey from the European Commission as well as in the Eurostat publication.

**Commission publishes a study on legal protection of trade secrets**

The Commission published today a study on the legal protection of trade secrets (often referred to as confidential business information). According to the study, although trade secrets are legally protected against theft in all Member States, the nature and scope of such protection varies considerably leading to fragmentation in their enforcement. The study also highlights the increasing need for effective protection since in recent years, for a number of reasons (the advent of the "information society", growth in outsourcing of manufacturing, the ease with which large quantities of documents and data can be copied, downloaded, stored and transmitted, etc.), companies face legal uncertainty when it comes to exploiting their trade secrets across borders. The study concludes that the need for effective protection has increased in recent years. The study also reports on the different ways through which Member States protect trade secrets, as well as on the available means of redress against misappropriation and respective remedies. It finds variable levels of protection and significant differences in national procedures to enforce the relevant laws protecting trade secrets. The study is available at:

**[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/iprenforcement/documents\\_en.htm#bgdoc2](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/documents_en.htm#bgdoc2)**

**Commission publishes a study on unfair competition practices of "parasitic copying"**

The European Commission has today published a study on the existing national legal protection in the EU Member States against parasitic copying (the practice of marketing products which are designed to resemble or look like pre-existing products of well established brands). The study reports on the different ways in which the laws of the Member States address this problem and concludes that the legal framework varies greatly between Member States and leads to different results. The study provides the basis for reflection on the adequacy of the current legal framework throughout the European Union. Products marketed under a parasitic copying strategy – commonly referred to as "parasitic copies", "look-alikes", or "slavish imitations" - lead consumers to associate or confuse the two competing products. They take unfair advantage of the reputation of the products copied and divert sales. Companies suffering losses from parasitic copying should be in the position to react against

such unfair practices. The study is available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/iprenforcement/documents\\_en.htm#bgdoc2](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/documents_en.htm#bgdoc2)

### **European Capital of Culture: President Türk and Commissioner Vassiliou open Maribor 2012**

Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou will join the President of Slovenia, Danilo Türk, in Maribor tomorrow (14 January) to mark the official launch of the city's year as 2012 European Capital of Culture. More than one hundred Slovenian artists are expected to perform at the ceremony. President Türk and the Commissioner will be accompanied by the Mayor of Maribor, Franc Kangler, mayors of its five partner towns, and members of the Maribor 2012 management team. European Commissioner for Environment Janez Potočnik will also attend the ceremony. After the opening speeches, the European flag will be raised, alongside the flags of the city and Slovenia. The programme for the year includes numerous and varied cultural events, combining traditional and innovative events, ranging from carnival to contemporary dance. The city's slogan for the Year - "The turning point" - symbolizes one of the main objectives of the year, which is to encourage the local population – and young people especially – to get more involved in the cultural life of Maribor. Maribor shares the title of European Capital of Culture with Guimarães in Portugal, which will hold its launch ceremony on 21 January in the presence of Commission President José Manuel Barroso. More information available on: <http://www.maribor2012.eu> .

### **Education/culture: Commissioner Vassiliou visits Oslo (16-18 January)**

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, visits Oslo on 16-18 January. She will address a conference on modernisation of higher education, presenting the Commission's recent proposals in this area (see [IP/11/1043](#)); these aim to boost graduate numbers, improve teaching quality and maximise what higher education can do to help Europe emerge from the crisis. Key initiatives will include the launch of a multi-dimensional information and ranking tool for higher education institutions and a loan guarantee fund to help Masters' students finance studies abroad. She will also introduce 'Erasmus for All', the Commission's proposed education programme for 2014-2020 (see [IP/11/1398](#)). The Commissioner will hold meetings with Tora Aasland, Minister of Research and Higher Education, Kristin Halvorsen, Minister of Education, and Audun Lysbakken, Minister of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. Their discussions will focus on how to strengthen education cooperation between Norway and the EU. In addition, Mrs Vassiliou will meet Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister for Culture, to present the Commission's proposed 'Creative Europe' programme for culture and the audiovisual sector (see [IP/11/1399](#)). Finally, the Commissioner Vassiliou will visit a school in the capital to promote her 'Europe Loves Reading' [literacy campaign](#) . Although Norway is not a Member State, it fully participates in EU exchanges and projects aimed at boosting cooperation in education, training, culture and the audiovisual sector.

### **Collaboration and competition in Research and Innovation: Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn visits the United States 17 – 21 January**

European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, will visit the United States from 17 – 21 January, taking in Washington, DC and Boston. During her visit, the Commissioner will meet with leaders in government, research and academia, to look at ways to expand and deepen EU-US collaboration on research and innovation. She will present the European Union's plans to bolster research and innovation in order to create growth and jobs, notably the future research programme Horizon 2020. The Commission will also set out the EU's position in the competition for the best brains, highlighting opportunities for US researchers in and with Europe. In Washington, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn will meet amongst others with: Dr. Francis S. Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH); Dr. John Holdren, Director of the Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP); Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce, and Administrator of National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and Dr. Subra Suresh - Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Commissioner will also give a speech to the European Institute entitled '2020: the new European Programme for Research and Innovation and opportunities for transatlantic cooperation'. In Boston, the Commissioner will meet Governor of Massachusetts Deval Patrick, and the President of the Massachusetts Senate, Therese Murray. She will discuss venture capital for research with a group of venture capitalists at a roundtable event. She will also visit a number of research and innovation laboratories, including the Harvard Innovation Lab, the MIT Media Lab and the Massachusetts Life Science Super Cluster. The Commissioner will give the keynote speech at an event to highlight opportunities for researchers in Europe, organised by the European Commission and EU Member States, entitled: 'Destination Europe: Your Research and Innovation Opportunities!'. Finally, on the same theme, she will attend the European Career Fair at MIT.

### **Consumer Policy: EU citizens to benefit from the new Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP)**

Today, the European Commission launched a new web portal for cosmetic products - the Cosmetic Products Notification Portal (CPNP). The Portal will be a one stop shop for the cosmetic industry to submit information about the products placed on the EU market. This is of critical importance to poison centres so that they can react quickly to help callers in case of poisoning and to national authorities for better market surveillance. The Portal will also reduce the administrative burden for the industry. The CPNP is the result of two years of intense cooperation between the Commission, the national competent authorities, the poison centres and the industry. It introduces a simple interface for the cosmetic industry to submit information on the products placed on the market and it is available in all EU official languages. From 11 July 2013, the use of CPNP will be mandatory. The new Cosmetics Regulation was adopted in 2009 and is currently in the implementation phase. It replaces the current Cosmetics Directive and will become fully applicable on 11 July 2013. This Regulation brings a robust and state of the art legal framework, which strengthens the safety of cosmetic products, streamlines the framework for all actors, and simplifies procedures, thus creating a true internal market of cosmetic products. For more information please visit:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/index_en.htm)

### **Commissioner Piebalgs attends the Launch of the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All**

Commissioner Piebalgs will attend the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi (UAE) from 14th to 16th January which will launch the "2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy for All". During the Summit, he will participate to the meeting of the UN High Level Group on Sustainable Energy for All to discuss ways and means to ensure access to sustainable energy for all by 2050. 2012 should make Sustainable Energy a key topic in the global agenda, notably in view of the "Rio+20" meeting. This is in line with the Agenda for Change of EU Development policy, focusing on supporting an inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

- [Memo "Eurobarometer survey Active Ageing"](#)
- [Speech by President Barroso: "Opening of 'Europe meets the world' exhibition" - rediffusion](#)
- [Statement by President Barroso following his meeting with Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Prime Minister of Denmark - rediffusion](#)



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