



Business Support on Your Doorstep

EU Alert

network
enterprise europe

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EU Promotes the Adoption of Electronic Invoicing

The aim of a report drafted by experts from the European Commission, presented at the Conference on Electronic Invoicing organized by the Spanish Presidency of the European Union, is to launch the use of electronic invoicing to reach the European regulatory framework in the field.

In the Conference on Electronic Invoicing, held on April 27 in Madrid under the organization of Spanish Presidency of the EU, a report on this service was presented. Said report recommends that member states focus on the specific needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), harmonise the European regulatory framework and adopt a standard for invoice data forms and content. According to the study, electronic invoicing has great potential which is already being tapped into by some businesses and the public sector, although there are still some barriers which prevent it from being more widely adopted, as is the case for small enterprises or in cases of intra-European invoicing.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9789>

New Place for EU-US Scientific and Technologic Cooperation

BILAT-USA and Link2US have now launched a new web portal offering the latest information on joint EU-US activities and initiatives, as well as key documents and overviews that will advance transatlantic research cooperation.

International cooperation is the cornerstone of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), and BILAT-USA ("Bilateral coordination for the enhancement and development of S&T partnerships between the European Union and the United States of America") and LINK2US ("European Union - United States research cooperation network: Link to the United States"), funded under the 'Horizontal actions and measures in support of international cooperation' budget line of the Capacities Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), are making major headway in fostering research synergies between the EU and US.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9788>

Commission Tables its Strategy on Clean and Efficient Vehicles

This strategy is laid down in a Communication, tabled by the European Commission. It delivers on the consensus between Member States and European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani's commitment to move on from short-term recovery measures to a medium-term orientation that strengthens the competitiveness of the European automotive industry by linking it to clean technologies. The strategy also contributes to the Europe 2020 objectives of smart and sustainable growth. It contains an Action Plan composed of concrete and ambitious measures to be implemented by the Commission.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9790>

Air Traffic Problems Extend Some Deadlines for Tenders

After the eruption of Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland, which caused alterations in meetings and events in the European Union, and forced to close an important part of European airspace, the deadlines for submitting applications for bidding for Europe Aid have been extended. This organism has issued a notice advising of the changes.

As a result of the disruption of the air traffic in Northern Europe, caused by the volcanic ash cloud, extensions of deadlines may be issued exceptionally. We kindly ask all potential tenderers to follow the information on Europe Aid website and/or the homepage of the Contracting Authority referred to in the Procurement Notice.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9785>

EU Helps Passengers With Their Complaints on Volcanic Ash Crisis

The network of European Consumer Centres (ECC-Net) has come out with a practical complaint package, which is designed to help consumers affected by recent flight disruptions to exercise their consumer rights guaranteed under EU laws. The package includes a standard complaint letter, contact details of all airlines and other practical advice.

In 2009, more than one in five (22.5%) complaints tackled by ECCs concerned air transport. During the first week of the volcanic ash crisis, the number of cases handled by the network has risen 7 times. From the start, the ECC-Net has been put on full alert, working closely together to ensure co-ordinated assistance to EU consumers. The network of European Consumer Centres (ECC-Net) has been working since the start of the volcanic ash crisis to offer practical help to passengers who got stranded as a result of flight disruptions and are experiencing difficulties having their consumer rights respected.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9815>

Amendments to EU Directive for Late Payments

EP Internal Market Committee approved on Wednesday several amendments to a planned EU directive designed to tackle the problem of late payments. They believe that deadlines for paying bills in the business world should be laid down by law for both the private and public sectors,

The cash-flow problems faced by small firms are biting harder than ever in the current crisis and can even tip companies into bankruptcy. This recast version of an existing directive on combating late payments aims to give more protection to businesses and the jobs they create. The fight against moroseness is based on a commitment in the Small Business Act.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9816>

500 Cities Pledge to Reduce CO2 by More Than 20%

More than 500 European mayors will commit to cut CO2 emissions by more than 20% by 2020. By signing the Covenant of Mayors, they pledge to save energy, foster renewable energy and raise awareness among their citizens. They will sign the declaration in the presence of EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain.

The Covenant of Mayors is a Commission initiative, supported both by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, and it has become a key element of the EU sustainable energy policy. Regions and cities are demonstrating that climate mitigation is one of the best economic recovery strategies. At the Covenant of Mayors Ceremony in the European Parliament, more than 500 mayors will sign the declaration. The Declaration commits them to analyse how much CO2 they emit at the moment, outline how they will reach the goal and evaluate their actions.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9807>

Speedier Processing Times for Renewable Energy Patents

Speaking at the European Patent Forum, Spain's Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Miguel Sebastián, announced that the processing time for renewable energy patents will be cut from the current 33-month period to no more than 12 months.

During his speech at the European Patent Forum, Sebastián said the Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Industrial Property (Plan Pi), approved by Spain's Council of Ministers, will also include a specific programme for renewable energy industrial property, so-called "green patents". In addition to speeding up processing times, the Ministry will also introduce a series of measures to provide financial help for patents related to renewable energies.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9802>

Commission Makes it Easier to Apply for and Manage EU Grants for Research

The European Commission has unveiled a plan to simplify the procedures for taking part in EU-funded research projects. The overall aim is to make participation transparent and attractive to the best researchers and innovative companies in Europe and beyond.

Ensuring European research realises its full potential is crucial to the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy, given the need to consolidate economic recovery and develop new sources of growth and jobs to replace those lost in the crisis. Complementing the proposals on simplification, the Commission has also appointed a group of independent experts to review all aspects of the current Seventh Framework Programme.

<http://euroalert.net/en/news.aspx?idn=9794>

Consultation: Access to Traffic and Travel Data

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect information across the EU on the status of traffic and travel information with regard to the following aspects:

Traffic and travel data availability and access, co-operation and data exchange between public and private sector

Definition of safety related traffic information and provision of free universal traffic information services

On 16 December 2008 the European Commission adopted an ITS Action Plan for road transport and interfaces with other modes, especially public transport. Aim is to accelerate and coordinate the deployment of ITS applications. One of the action areas deals with the optimal use of road, travel and traffic data. The information from this consultation will support an on-going study in this field.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/its/consultations/2010_06_18_traffic_travel_data_en.htm

Consultation: Smart Regulation

At the heart of the European project is the need to create a framework which allows businesses to compete fairly and effectively across the single market, and which at the same time protects workers, consumers, health and the environment. The Commission, which works in the interests of all Member States and citizens, has a unique role in ensuring that policies at the European level are decided in a way which is evidence-based, and which is as transparent and accountable as possible.

The previous Commission took up this challenge through its Better Regulation agenda. It left a lasting mark, bringing about important and necessary changes to the way the Commission works. Wide public consultations and impact assessments have become an inherent part of the way we prepare legislation. Citizens, businesses and authorities are benefiting from a simpler regulatory environment with lower administrative burdens.

http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better_regulation/smart_regulation/consultation_en.htm

If you have any queries about the EU Alert bulletin, or would like some more information about any of the topics in this edition, please contact Enterprise Europe West Midlands on 0121 455 0268

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