

JANUARY 2015 II



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<p><b>EU integration process in CEE countries</b></p>	<p><b>Cooperation Council EU-Armenia: good progress towards a deepened cooperation</b>  The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Armenia held its fifteenth meeting on Tuesday, 20 January 2015. The European Union and Armenia confirmed their joint commitment to enhance and deepen their cooperation in all areas possible and compatible with Armenia's new international obligations.  <a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/cooperation-council-eu-armenia-good-progress-towards-deepened-cooperation/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/cooperation-council-eu-armenia-good-progress-towards-deepened-cooperation/</a></p> <p><b>The EU reiterates its strong commitment to the EU perspective for Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>  The European Union welcomes the announcement of an agreement by the BiH Presidency on the Written Commitment to undertake reforms in the framework of the EU Accession Process.  <a href="http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150129_02_en.htm">http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150129_02_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>New Head of EU Delegation/EUSR to Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed</b>  The Council has appointed Mr Lars-Gunnar Wigemark as EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He will also take over the role of the Head of the European Union's Delegation in Sarajevo  <a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/new-head-of-eu-delegation-eusr-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina-appointed/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/new-head-of-eu-delegation-eusr-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina-appointed/</a></p>
<p><b>Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership</b></p>	<p><b>Clamping down on corporate tax avoidance: Council adopts anti-abuse clause</b>  The Council amended the EU's parent-subsidiary directive, adding a binding anti-abuse clause to prevent tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning by corporate groups.  <a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/council-adopts-anti-abuse-clause/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/council-adopts-anti-abuse-clause/</a></p> <p><b>Commission launches work on establishing a Capital Markets Union</b>  The European Commission has today (28 January) kicked off its project to create a Capital Markets Union (CMU) for all 28 EU Member States with a first orientation debate at the College of Commissioners.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/news/2015/01/20150128_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/news/2015/01/20150128_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>Report on Progress under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism in Bulgaria</b>  Report concludes that since the Commission's last report in January 2014, progress has been slow in Bulgaria in terms of addressing judicial reform and making concrete advances on corruption and organised crime.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-3825_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-15-3825_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>General development of the EU</b></p>	<p><b>Commission and Parliament Implement New Rules on Transparency Register</b>  A new version of the EU Transparency Register is being launched on 27 January</p>

	<p>following joint work by the European Commission and the European Parliament. This 'second generation' of the Register implements the provisions of the revised Inter-institutional Agreement signed between the European Parliament and the European Commission in April 2014. The new system brings changes to the way human resources invested in lobbying are declared, requires additional information about involvement in EU committees, forums, intergroups or similar structures, and legislative files currently followed; it also extends the requirement to declare estimated costs related to lobbying to all registrants.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3740_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3740_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>EUROSTAT: Euro area unemployment rate at 11.4% - EU28 at 9.9%</b>  The euro area (EA18) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.4% in December 2014, down from 11.5% in November 2014, and from 11.8% in December 2013. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since August 2012. The EU28 unemployment rate was 9.9% in December 2014, down from 10.0% in November 2014 and from 10.6% in December 2013. This is the first time the rate for the EU28 has fallen below 10.0% since October 2011. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Eurostat estimates that 24.056 million men and women in the EU28, of whom 18.129 million were in the euro area, were unemployed in December 2014. Compared with December 2013, unemployment fell by 1.710 million in the EU28 and by 693 000 in the euro area.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3940_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3940_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to EU institutions and their Functioning</b></p>	<p><b>Committee of the Regions welcomes new members as it begins 5-year term</b>  The European Committee of the Regions has welcomed the formal appointment of nearly all its 350 members following approval by the Council of the EU this week. The new assembly will gather in Brussels for the first time at its plenary session on 12 February as it enters a new five-year political term.  <a href="http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cor-welcomes-new-members.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=UK-January-2015">http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cor-welcomes-new-members.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=UK-January-2015</a></p> <p><b>2015, European Year for Development</b>  With the decision to designate 2015 as the European Year for Development, the EU has for the first time chosen an external policy as the theme for the European Year, and confirmed its wish to be a global player that does not forget to support the most disadvantaged  <a href="http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/2015-european-year.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=UK-January-2015">http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/2015-european-year.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=UK-January-2015</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to EU law</b></p>	<p><b>BOND-BUYING WOULD COMPLY WITH EU LAW, COURT SAYS</b>  The European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued an opinion today (14 January) suggesting that a European Central Bank (ECB) programme to buy member state bonds would be compatible with European Union law.  <a href="http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/court-backs-ecbs-right-to-quantitative-easing/">http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/court-backs-ecbs-right-to-quantitative-easing/</a></p> <p><b>DATA PROTECTION DAY 2015: CONCLUDING THE EU DATA PROTECTION REFORM ESSENTIAL FOR THE DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET</b>  Three years ago, in January 2012, the European Commission proposed a reform of the EU's data protection rules to make them fit for the 21st century. The proposals are currently being discussed by the two European Union co-legislators, the</p>

	<p>European Parliament and the Council of the EU in which national Ministers sit.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-3802_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-15-3802_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Decentralised management of EU funds</b></p>	<p><b>COMMISSION IDENTIFIES THE INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES AND INVESTMENT NEEDS FOR THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK UNTIL 2030</b>  The European Commission has published nine studies on the state of play and the development needs of the TEN-T core network corridors. The studies have identified infrastructure development needs which represent approximately €700 billion of financial investment until 2030.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3341_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3341_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>NEW GRANTS TO HELP CLOSE THE GAP IN RESEARCH EXCELLENCE ACROSS EUROPE</b>  The EU is today announcing new grants that will help bridge the research excellence gap between Member States and strengthen competitiveness and growth across Europe.  The funds are insured from Horizon 2020 program  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3885_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3885_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>EU BUDGET: TRANSFER OF UNUSED 2014 EU BUDGET COMMITMENTS</b>  The European Commission asked on 20 January 2015 for the approval of the European Parliament and the Council to transfer unused commitments of 21 billion euro from 2014 to the budgets of 2015-2017.  <a href="http://insideurope.eu/node/534#sthash.bhj0nNBO.dpuf">http://insideurope.eu/node/534#sthash.bhj0nNBO.dpuf</a></p>
<p><b>Multi-level governance</b></p>	<p><b>City branding in Zurich: a work in progress</b>  CityLogo is still the on-going URBACT network on innovative city brand management. One of the very few transnational projects trying to move forward the state of the art on how cities brand and market themselves in a more integrated manner. To some extent, CityLogo is a reaction to the most common gaps in the field. A sort of city branding ‘re-learning’, since the practice is often under the influence of an overly conventional marketing approach.  <a href="http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/city-branding-in-zurich-a-work-in-progress/">http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/city-branding-in-zurich-a-work-in-progress/</a></p> <p><b>Urban Security and Spatial Planning in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area: the Cases of Lisbon, Cascais and Barreiro municipalities</b>  The report focuses on the relations between urban security policies and the practice of spatial planning in the three studied municipalities. While it was found that there is no direct mention of urban security in urban planning documents and regulations, the question is part of the urban renewal policy in two municipalities. However, the report notes that no crime prevention measures have been implemented. The reinforcement of security despite low crime rates came mainly as a response to local demand and to restore security feelings.  <a href="http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/urban-security-and-spatial-planning-in-the-lisbon-metropolitan-area-the-cases-of-lisbon-cascais-an/">http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/urban-security-and-spatial-planning-in-the-lisbon-metropolitan-area-the-cases-of-lisbon-cascais-an/</a></p> <p><b>URMA - Urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas</b>  Within the framework of URMA, an inventory of various national approaches</p>

	<p>to urban-rural partnerships and regional systems in participating countries was developed along with good practices of existing policies and governance structures. Most importantly, URMA developed and monitored three pilot implementation projects in Twente-Borne (The Netherlands), Hamburg-Jutland (Germany) and Lombardy (Italy). These projects test and develop new approaches to establish successful and sustainable urban-rural partnerships. <a href="http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/urma-urban-rural-partnerships-in-metropolitan-areas/">http://www.eukn.eu/news/detail/urma-urban-rural-partnerships-in-metropolitan-areas/</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 1: Free movement of goods</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 2: Freedom of movement for workers</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 3: Right of establishment and freedom to provide services</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 4: Free movement of capital</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 5: Public procurement</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 6: Company Law</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 7: Intellectual property law</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 8: Competition</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 9: Financial services</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 10: Information society and media</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 11: Agriculture and rural development</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 12: Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 13: Fisheries</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 14: Transport policy</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 15: Energy</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 16: Taxation</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 17: Economic and monetary policy</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 18: Statistics</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 19: Social policy and employment</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 20: Enterprise and industrial policy</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 21: Trans-European networks</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 22: Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments</b></p>	<p><b>New EMCDDA trends potter study explores online supply of drugs</b></p> <p>The speed with which the Internet is transforming drug markets poses a major challenge to law enforcement, public health, research and monitoring agencies. This is according to The Internet and drug markets, the latest ‘trendspotter’ study from the EU drugs agency (EMCDDA) released today <sup>(1)</sup>. The study aims to raise understanding of the current online supply of drugs and to map the range of Internet markets in existence. <a href="http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2015/fs3/internet-drug-markets">http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2015/fs3/internet-drug-markets</a></p> <p><b>#EYEhearings: connecting Europe's youth with policymakers</b></p> <p>Last May the Parliament brought thousands of young people together for the European Youth Event 2014 (EYE). Under the motto "Ideas for a better Europe" participants discussed issues of importance to them, such as youth unemployment, the digital revolution, the future of the EU, sustainability, and European values. <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150116STO09868/html/EYEhearings-connecting-Europe's-youth-with-policymakers">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150116STO09868/html/EYEhearings-connecting-Europe's-youth-with-policymakers</a></p> <p><b>The social economy has the potential for becoming the third major economic sector</b></p> <p>This was the message from the EESC Section for External Relations' (REX) meeting, held on 29 January at its headquarters in Brussels, which brought together experts from major international organisations, such as the OECD, ILO, FAO, representatives of the main European social economy organisations and EU officials. The goal was to identify areas where the EU can enhance its support to help this important economic sector to grow and become more efficient, even beyond Europe. <a href="http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.34642">http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.press-releases.34642</a></p> <p><b>United by energy concerns</b></p> <p>The EU is at constant risk of energy supply disruption. Too much energy is wasted and 10% of households in the Union cannot afford proper heating, the Commission vice-president for energy union told Parliament's energy and environment committees this week. Maroš Šefčovič was presenting his vision for an energy union to tackle these and other challenges, and also listened to the priorities and concerns of MEPs. An inter-parliamentary seminar on energy security will be held in Turkey next month. <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150127STO16402/html/United-by-energy-concerns">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150127STO16402/html/United-by-energy-concerns</a></p> <p><b>The European Commission tables proposals to improve transparency in Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) based on existing investment treaties</b></p> <p>Since the adoption of its Communication 'Towards a comprehensive European international investment policy' in 2010, the Commission has worked towards improving the Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system, in particular the</p>

<p><b>Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights</b></p>	<p>transparency of proceedings.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-3882_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-15-3882_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security</b></p>	<p><b>European Migration Forum: CoR president, Michel Lebrun, calls for a genuine Euro-Mediterranean migration policy</b></p>
<p><b>Chapter 25: Research and development</b></p>	<p>At the first meeting of the European Migration Forum, the president of the European Committee of the Regions, Michel Lebrun stressed the need for a genuine Euro-Mediterranean migration policy. He also called for "migration and integration partnerships" to be set up between cities and regions in countries of origin and destination to ensure a more decentralised management of migration.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 26: Education and culture</b></p>	<p><a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/forum-europeen-sur-migration-lebrun-appelle-veritable-politique-euro-mediterraneeen-pour-la-migration.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/forum-europeen-sur-migration-lebrun-appelle-veritable-politique-euro-mediterraneeen-pour-la-migration.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Chapter 27: Environment</b></p>	
<p><b>Chapter 28: Consumer and health protection</b></p>	
<p><b>Chapter 29: Customs union</b></p>	<p><b>Committee of the Regions and European Investment Bank team up to speed up the delivery of Juncker's plan and boost local economies</b></p>
<p><b>Chapter 30: External relations</b></p>	<p>The President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) - Michel Lebrun – and President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) - Werner Hoyer – have joined forces and launched an action plan to boost the delivery of the 315bn Juncker Plan and EU structural funds. The shared objective is to simplify procedures and speed-up the implementation of quality EU projects that benefit both citizens and local businesses. The CoR will support Europe's local and regional authorities by helping mobilise the EIB's expertise in addressing their needs.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 31: Foreign, security and defence policy</b></p>	<p><a href="http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cor_eib_teamup.aspx">http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/cor_eib_teamup.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Chapter 32: Financial control</b></p>	
<p><b>Chapter 33: Financial and budgetary provisions</b></p>	
	<p>Data Protection Day 2015: Concluding the EU Data Protection Reform essential for the Digital Single Market</p>
	<p>Joint Statement by Vice-President Andrus Ansip and Commissioner Věra Jourová on European Data Protection Day, 28 January 2015</p>
	<p>"Today marks the 9th European Data Protection Day. It is a day to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of protecting personal data, a fundamental right for everyone in the EU.</p>
	<p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-3802_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-15-3802_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
	<p><b>Flash estimate - January 2015 Euro area annual inflation down to -0.6%</b></p>
	<p>Euro area<sup>1</sup> annual inflation<sup>2</sup> is expected to be -0.6% in January 2015, down from -0.2% in December 2014<sup>3</sup>, according to a flash estimate<sup>4</sup> from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.</p>
	<p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3964_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release STAT-15-3964_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
	<p><b>December 2014 - Euro area unemployment rate at 11.4% - EU28 at 9.9%</b></p>
	<p>The euro area (EA18) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.4% in December 2014, down from 11.5% in November 2014, and from 11.8% in December 2013. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since August 2012. The EU28 unemployment rate was 9.9% in December 2014, down from 10.0% in November 2014 and from 10.6% in December 2013. This is the first time the rate for the EU28 has fallen below 10.0% since October 2011. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.</p>
	<p><a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3940_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release STAT-15-3940_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
	<p><b>November 2014 compared with October 2014 - Production in construction down by 0.1% in euro area - Down by 0.2% in EU28</b></p>
	<p>In November 2014 compared with October 2014, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector fell by 0.1% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.2% in the EU28, according to first estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the</p>

	<p>European Union. In October 2014, production in construction grew by 1.1% and 0.5% respectively.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3460_en.htm?locale=en">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-15-3460_en.htm?locale=en</a></p>
<p><b>Specific issues relating to the</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European arrest warrant,</li> <li>• Stockholm programme: Europe of rights, Europe of justice, Europe that protects, Access to Europe, Europe of solidarity, Europe in a globalised world</li> <li>• Third pillar: the pillar devoted to police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, which came under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union</li> <li>• Recognition of professional qualifications</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clamping down on corporate tax avoidance: Council adopts anti-abuse clause</b>  The Council amended the EU's parent-subsidiary directive, adding a binding anti-abuse clause to prevent tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning by corporate groups.  <a href="http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/council-adopts-anti-abuse-clause/">http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/01/council-adopts-anti-abuse-clause/</a></p> <p><b>MEPs give their views on measures to tackle terrorism</b>  Anti-terrorism measures, including the EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) proposal, the role of EU police agency Europol, improving information exchange, preventing radicalisation and the upcoming European Agenda on Security, were addressed in a debate with home affairs Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos on Wednesday. A resolution is to be put to a vote at the 9-12 February plenary session, ahead of the 12 February European Council dedicated to anti-terrorism measures.  <a href="http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150126IPR15002/html/MEPs-give-their-views-on-measures-to-tackle-terrorism">http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150126IPR15002/html/MEPs-give-their-views-on-measures-to-tackle-terrorism</a></p> <p><b>New women on boards figures show continued progress</b>  The European Commission has released new figures today that show that the average share of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies across the EU has now reached 20.2% (October 2014). This represents an increase of more than 8 percentage points since October 2010, when the European Commission first put the issue of women on boards high on the political agenda.  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/150120_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/150120_en.htm</a></p> <p><b>Commissioner Jourová: Concluding the EU Data Protection Reform is essential</b>  28 January celebrates data protection day. "On this day, citizens and businesses are waiting for the modernisation of data protection rules to catch up with the digital age. (...). Ensuring trust will allow the European Digital Single Market to live up to its full potential.(...).EU Data Protection reform also includes new rules for police and criminal justice authorities when they exchange data across the EU. This is very timely, not least in light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. There is need to continue and to intensify our law enforcement cooperation. Robust data protection rules will foster more effective cooperation based on mutual trust."  <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/data-protection/news/20150128_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/data-protection/news/20150128_en.htm</a></p>
<p><b>Introduction to different sector policies (regional policy, trade policy, agricultural policy, social policy).</b></p>	<p><b>COMMISSION AND PARLIAMENT IMPLEMENT NEW RULES ON TRANSPARENCY REGISTER</b></p> <p>A new version of the EU Transparency Register is being launched following joint work by the European Commission and the European Parliament. This 'second generation' of the Register implements the provisions of the revised Inter-institutional Agreement signed between the European Parliament and the European Commission in April 2014. The new system brings changes to the way human resources invested in lobbying are declared, requires additional information about involvement in EU committees, forums or similar structures, and legislative files currently followed; it also extends the requirement to declare estimated costs related to lobbying to all registrants.  <a href="http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3740_en.htm">http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3740_en.htm</a></p>

## **COMMISSION REPORTS ON PROGRESS IN ROMANIA UNDER THE CO-OPERATION AND VERIFICATION MECHANISM**

The Commission issued today its analysis on the steps Romania has taken in the past twelve months in the areas of judicial reform and the fight against corruption, under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). The report shows continued progress towards the goals of the CVM and shows where further steps are needed.

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-3822\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-3822_en.htm)

### **Energy policy – Junkers ambition**

The creation of an energy union is supposed to be a flagship policy of the European Commission of 2014-19. Jean-Claude Juncker billed it as such at the outset of his presidency of the Commission, though quite what might constitute an energy union – how deep, how wide, how intense – is still a matter of much debate.

<http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/this-week-energy-policy-does-junker-have-the-ambition/>

## **THE NEXT CHAPTER IN EU-JAPAN RELATIONS: JAPAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SEES CO-OPERATION ON SECURITY MATTERS AND FREE-TRADE AGREEMENTS AS PILLARS OF A FULLER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EU.**

Barack Obama's visit to India last weekend has been described as opening a new era in relations between the United States and India, and the reception given to the US president was suitably bright and colourful. It will soon be Europe's turn for summitry – summits with China, Japan and South Korea may be held before the summer is out – and it is a safe bet that the meetings will be shorter on colour and significance, and without the warm body language.

<http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/the-next-chapter-in-eu-japan-relations/>

## **GREECE'S PROBLEMS ARE THE RESULT OF THE EUROZONE HAVING NO FISCAL POLICY. GERMANY AND GREECE ARE ON A COLLISION COURSE BECAUSE THERE IS NO LARGE-SCALE METHOD OF RECYCLING TAXES IN THE EUROZONE.**

Greece and Germany are on a collision course. Alexis Tsipras's new Syriza-led government in Athens wants a big chunk of its debt written off. Angela Merkel is saying "nein" to that. If this were a western, Tsipras and Merkel would be the two gunslingers who have decided in time-honoured fashion that "this town ain't big enough for the both of us". But this isn't Hollywood. There is no guarantee that this shootout will have a happy ending. Things look like getting nasty and messy. The five-year crisis in the Eurozone has entered a dangerous new phase.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/feb/01/greece-problems-eurozone-fiscal-policy-germany>

### **Eurozone deflation deepens in January**

Fresh fears have been raised about the economic outlook after the US economy lost momentum at the end of last year and the Eurozone descended deeper into deflation.

Figures from the European statistics office, suggesting that prices fell 0.6% in January on the previous year, the biggest drop since the depths of recession in 2009, prompted warnings that radical action by the European Central Bank may have come too late to shore up the Eurozone's flagging recovery.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jan/30/eurozone-deflation-deepens-january>

**Promotion of EU upcoming events and news**

**Charlemagne Youth Prize: deadline extended to 23 February**

Are you a 16-30 year old running a project with a European dimension? If so, you have until 23 February to register for the 2015 edition of the Charlemagne Youth Prize. The aim of the Prize is to encourage the development of European consciousness among young people, as well as their participation in European integration projects. Read on to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize as well as trips to Aachen and the European Parliament.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150129STO17701/html/Charlemagne-Youth-Prize-deadline-extended-to-23-February>

**YFactor: where is [y]our future? Putting youth on the EU agenda**

In the wake of the new EU legislature in the Council, Parliament and Commission, 2015 provides an especially unique opportunity to discuss future challenges regarding EU policies from the perspective of young EU citizens. Jean-Claude Juncker's recent 10 points agenda is perhaps the most operational tool to drive change within the EU's cities and regions.

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Pages/y-factor-where-is-your-future-putting-youth-on-the-eu-agenda.aspx>

**12 February 2015: informal meeting of heads of state or government**

In an informal meeting in Brussels on 12 February, EU leaders are expected to discuss the EU's fight against terrorism in the wake of the attacks in Paris. Member states need to work closer together and cooperate even more actively to fight a common threat.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2015/02/12/>

**Smart Cities - Exhibition and Conference for South-East Europe**

Date 11 to 13 March 2015 Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

Via Expo organises, with the patronage of the Bulgarian ministry of Development and Public Works and the Municipality of Sofia, an exhibition and conference on smart cities in south and east Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria. The focus of 'Smart Cities' Exhibition and Conference will be on intelligent transport, building management and automation, ICT technology implementation in the overall urban activity.

<http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/smart-cities-exhibition-and-conference-for-south-east-europe/>

**10th European Annual Symposium EU Funds 2015**

Date 23 to 25 March 2015 Location- Berlin, Germany

The European Academy for Taxes, Economics & Law organizes its 10th European annual symposium on EU Funds on delivering smart performance and results through ESI Funds 2014-2020. This annual forum brings together around 500 EU Funds experts from all over Europe and promotes an exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice between EU Institutions and Member States with regard to the correct management and control of EU Funds.

<http://www.eukn.eu/events/upcoming-events/detail/10th-european-annual-symposium-eu-funds-2015/>