



Business Support on Your Doorstep

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EU & SERVICES BULLETIN

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EU NEWS

Study on European Maritime Clusters and their role to enhance the strength of maritime sectors

In October 2008, the Commission adopted the Communication "Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: implementing the broad-based innovation strategy", in which it outlines a policy framework to facilitate the development of more world-class clusters in the EU.

In that scope DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries carried out a study on "The role of maritime clusters (in EU and Norway) to enhance the strength and development of maritime sectors". The main objective of the study was to increase the exchange of knowledge on the size, specialisation and focus of the maritime sectors or clusters and on the experience within the different cluster organisations. Ultimately, this may provide evidence for policy development and contribute to the competitiveness of the maritime sectors. The study gives useful information for SMEs and Network Partners who are active in the maritime regions and willing to explore the opportunities emerging from maritime clusters.

The results present

- An overview of European maritime clusters showing their main economic features (employment, production value, added value created)
- An assessment of success factors and of the role of maritime clusters in maritime policy development (including the main characteristics of maritime clusters and the networking activities within and between clusters).

Within the Enterprise Europe Network, the Sector Group Maritime Industry and Services is the most appropriate body to address. As indicated in Sector Group's Work Programme, it will align itself with the Commission's integrated maritime policy and will take into consideration The European Maritime Cluster policy (SEC/2007/1406) and the European Network of Maritime Clusters.

Communication 'Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: implementing the broad-based innovation strategy':

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0652:FIN:EN:PDF>

Study 'Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: Implementing the broad-based innovation strategy' and background country reports:

http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/clusters_en.html#1

New Plant Protection Products Regulation adopted by European Parliament

On 13 January 2009, the European Parliament adopted in second reading a Regulation to replace the current legislation on plant protection products, based on a Commission proposal of 2006. The new legislation will increase the protection of human health and of the environment, will lead to a better protection of agricultural production and will extend and deepen the single market of plant protection products.

Plant protection products or pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, herbicides...) are chemical formulations containing an active substance and other ingredients. They are important for the protection of plants and crops in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and gardening. The new Regulation will facilitate innovation by establishing clear criteria for approval of substances. Rules are proposed to ensure an open and competitive market. The existing legislation is improved and simplified, in particular in terms of approval procedures.

The new legislation has to be formally adopted by the Council and it should enter into force later this year. Together with the end of the review programme of existing active substances, the European Commission will have met its objective to make sure that efficient plant protection is achieved with safer products.

Press release of the European Parliament

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/066-45937-012-01-03-911-20090112IPR45936-12-01-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm

Link to the provisional version of the new Regulation

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0011+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Questions and Answers of Plant Protection Products prepared by the Commission

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/8&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Legal framework and contact details on the website of DG Health and Consumer Protection

http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/protection/evaluation/framework_en.htm

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/KeyTopics/efsa_locale-1178620753812_Pesticides.htm

New Directive on Defence Procurement adopted by the European Parliament

The European Parliament adopted a new legislation, which seeks to create a genuine single market for defence and security equipment and services. The Directive establishes a coordinated European procedure for awarding contracts in the fields of defence and security. The European general rules on public procurement, set out in a directive of 2004, take insufficient account of the specificities of the defence sector. This is one reason why building a single market for defence goods is such a laborious task. The new Directive, governing only public procurement of defence and security goods, should help to achieve this aim. The defence market is worth over €90bn and the new Directive is important for all EU Member States even though 90% of the production of EU defence equipment is concentrated in five Member States: France, UK, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

The new Directive, which does not apply to contracts outside the EU or intelligence related contracts, has still to be formally approved by the Council. It will enter into force on the day following the publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. Member States shall adopt and publish, at the latest two years after the entry into force of the Directive, the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive. They shall forthwith communicate the text of those provisions to the Commission.

Web page of DG Internal Market and Services on Defence Procurement and contact details:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/dpp_en.htm

Web pages of DG Enterprise and Industry on the Defence

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/defence/index_en.htm



European Commission's public consultation on the Review of the Prospectus Directive

The European Commission has launched a consultation on the review of the application of the Prospectus Directive, including some proposals to improve and simplify this Directive. The Prospectus Directive aims to ensure that financial investors are provided with clear and comprehensive information when making investment decisions. The Commission now wishes to assess the potential impact of its proposals and the merit of any alternative approaches.

All interested stakeholders, in particular businesses, investors and consumers, are invited to participate. The proposal is a key element of the Commission's action plan to reduce administrative burdens on EU companies.

The consultation is available on-line:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/prospectus/index_en.htm

Comments should be sent to the following e-mail address:

MARKT-G3@ec.europa.eu

Closing date for replies: 10 March 2009.

Web page of DG Internal Market and Services on financial services with contact details

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/top_layer/index_19_en.htm

European Commission's package on safe, innovative and accessible medicines

Although the EU Treaty says that the health of citizens is primarily a national prerogative, it includes also some procedures for regulating pharmaceuticals at European level in order to make patients European citizens benefit from safe, innovative and accessible medicines. At the same time, common actions are needed in order to fight against pharmaceutical counterfeits as well as against inequalities in the availability of information about medicines.

That is why, the Commission proposed a pharmaceutical package with the aim to create an overarching framework, which may address in a comprehensive way all the issues concerning the sector. The main objective of this package is to apply the principles of 'Better Regulation', i.e. to streamline the regulatory environment and to simplify it without putting public health at risk

The Pharmaceutical package includes:

- A political communication to discuss with EU Member States how to improve market access, to develop initiatives to boost EU pharmaceutical research, to intensify cooperation with major third-country partners, in particular with emerging partners.

- Three legislative proposals:

1. to tackle the growing issues of counterfeiting and illegal distribution of medicines;
2. to enable citizens to have access to high-quality information on prescription-only medicines;
3. to improve patient protection by strengthening the EU system for the safety monitoring ('pharmacovigilance') of medicines.

DG Enterprise and Industry, Pharmaceutical webpage

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/pharmaceuticals/pharmacos/pharmpack_en.htm

VAT rates for 2009 in the EU Members States

The Commission has published an information document with VAT rates applicable in EU Member States as of 1 January 2009.

Document on VAT rates for 2009

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/rates/vat_rates_en.pdf

DG Taxation and Customs Union

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/contact/index_en.htm

New website on biotechnology

DG Environment has recently created a new website on biotechnology with information on policy making, legislation and useful links.

DG Environment, Biotechnology webpage

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biotechnology/index_en.htm

Contact details of DG Environment

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/contact/contact_en.htm

MEETINGS, FAIRS & EVENTS

Strengthening the IPR enforcement of EU Industry and SMEs – Workshops on Best Practices of Support Measures by Member States and Private Sector

This conference is based on the project on best practices in Intellectual Property Rights enforcement support measures which is financed by the European Commission.

When: 17 March 2009

Where: Brussels

Draft agenda

http://www.ipr-policy.eu/media/pts/1/Draft_agenda_17_March_09.pdf

Proposal for the final conference

http://www.ipr-policy.eu/media/pts/1/Proposal_for_the_final_conference.pdf



PARTNERS' CORNER

Business Cooperation in the Energy Sector – How can SMEs get best value? Enterprise Europe Network Services for supporting SMEs in the Energy Sector

The Sector Group Intelligent Energy of the Enterprise Europe Network will organise a conference in the framework of the EUSEW2009. This event intends to inform European stakeholders, SMEs and research institutes about the activities of the Sector Group Intelligent Energy, which focuses its actions on renewable energies, energy efficiency and conventional sources of energy.

When: 9 February 2009

Where: Brussels

For more information, please see the conference programme attached to the bulletin.

PUBLICATIONS

EU-Japan News

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Co-operation published the January Issue of its newsletter. The most important piece of information concerns several business related activities, such as a call for application for a training programme in Japan for EU managers and a seminar on "Enhancing EU-Japan Economic Cooperation: the scope for closer cooperation on trade policy & economic issues", which is scheduled in Brussels on the 17th of February 2009.

EU-Japan News and contact details

http://www.eu-japan.eu/news/hrtp_seminar_multiplier.html

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