



Business Support on Your Doorstep

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## EU NEWS

### Recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

The European Commission is trying to reinforce the enormous energy savings potential that lies dormant in buildings. The existing Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, adopted in 2002, has introduced the energy performance certificate. With the recast proposal (COM/2008/780), this certificate becomes a real energy label for houses and buildings. For instance, a certificate has to be included in all advertisements and documents for sales or for rent, whereas inspections of heating and air conditioning systems will advise consumers to use better these appliances, to improve their performance and, if necessary, to replace them. It is up to Member States to ensure a good quality of the certificates and inspections.

The scope of the new Directive is broader: in the future, for example, all existing buildings undergoing a major renovation, not only those ones above 1000 square meter as it is in the current Directive, should meet certain efficiency levels

The proposal underwent already first reading in the Parliament and its adoption is foreseen for June 2009.

European Commission's proposal (COM/2008/780)

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2008/doc/2008\\_11\\_ser2/buildings\\_directive\\_proposal.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/strategies/2008/doc/2008_11_ser2/buildings_directive_proposal.pdf)

DG Energy and Transport, European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Platform website

<http://www.buildingsplatform.org/cms/index.php?id=7>

### Commission's overview of EU activities in the Western Balkans in 2008 and 2009

The Commission's overview of EU regionally relevant activities in the Western Balkans 2008/2009, which was published on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009, highlights more than 90 concrete EU-supported activities and initiatives across a wide range of sectors implemented in 2008 and planned for 2009.

Important steps towards visa-free travel to the EU, increased number of scholarships for studies in the EU, more support to civil society, further regional cooperation and integration in areas such as transport, trade, disaster preparedness, support in addressing the impact of the international financial crisis and better coordination of the massive financial assistance provided by the EU and other international donors are some of the most important developments.

Besides, more EU programmes and agencies are being opened to the countries of the Western Balkans. All countries of the region are now participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme and other initiatives are enabling contacts and cooperation between scientific and educational institutions.

EU regionally relevant activities in the Western Balkans 2008/09

[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/highlight/eu\\_regional\\_wester\\_balkans\\_2008-2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/highlight/eu_regional_wester_balkans_2008-2009_en.pdf)

DG Enlargement website and contact details:

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

### **Europe's response to the Financial Crisis**

European Institutions are coordinating national responses to face the financial crisis and making recommendations to improve the financial system. In order to reach this objective a common approach for restoring confidence in the financial industry and preserving economic growth has been adopted by all EU Member States. Reform must be “all-encompassing” and should include more international supervision to ensure transparency and accountability.

To facilitate the access to news concerning the financial crisis a special session has been created in the EU Press Room. To read the latest news, please go to [http://europa.eu/press\\_room/press\\_packs/crisis/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/press_room/press_packs/crisis/index_en.htm)

### **2008 European Innovation Scoreboard now available online**

The 2008 European Innovation Scoreboard, which includes country profiles and data, has now been published. It provides an assessment of innovation performance across European countries based on the most recent statistics. The report shows that the EU has made substantial progress, with virtually all Member States improving their performance and the EU catching up with the US and Japan in most areas of innovation.

The report was accompanied by the 2008 European Innovation Progress Report, which provides independent analysis of countries' innovation policies and governance.

Link to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2008 - Comparative Analysis of Innovation Performance

[http://www.proinno-europe.eu/EIS2008/website/docs/EIS\\_2008\\_Final\\_report.pdf](http://www.proinno-europe.eu/EIS2008/website/docs/EIS_2008_Final_report.pdf)

Link to the European Innovation Progress Report 2008

[http://www.proinno-europe.eu/admin/uploaded\\_documents/EIRP2008\\_Final\\_merged.pdf](http://www.proinno-europe.eu/admin/uploaded_documents/EIRP2008_Final_merged.pdf)

### **Commission's report on industrial relations**

A recent European Commission report shows that structured dialogue between workers' and employers' representatives can help the EU face the economic crisis. High quality industrial relations are a key element in managing economic change and reducing its costs, helping workers and companies adapt to change while protecting them from transitory shocks.

Industrial Relations in Europe Report (2008)

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>

Press release the report:

[http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/45&format=HTML&age\\_d=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/45&format=HTML&age_d=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en)

The European Social Dialogue website

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=329&langId=en>

### **Handbook on State Aid rules for SMEs**

This Handbook gives a concise overview of the aid possibilities for the SMEs as allowed by the Community State Aid rules.

Handbook (in English):

[http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/studies\\_reports/sme\\_handbook.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/studies_reports/sme_handbook.pdf)

DG Competition website and contact details:

[http://ec.europa.eu/competition/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/index_en.html)

## **MEETINGS, FAIRS & EVENTS**

### **Environmental 'Auction Floor' Conference, Brussels – 13 March 2009**

This first ever 'Auction Floor' conference is organized by the Commission's Office for External Co-operation EuropeAid. It aims to build effective and inclusive partnerships for environmental projects in developing countries by bringing together development actors (civil society organizations, research centers etc.) and a wide range of potential donors, such as local authorities, EU Member States as well as private sector foundations.

For further information and to register to the conference, please see

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/environment/auction-floor\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/environment/auction-floor_en.htm)

**The list of the events advertised in the EU and Services Bulletin is not exhaustive. Therefore, you are kindly invited to visit the events page on the events section of the intranet or the Enterprise Europe Network website.**

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Market Access Newsletter – January 2009**

In this issue, DG Trade presents its support activities for EU exporters, such as the recently published guide for business on the transfer of technology to China, a Handbook on Intellectual Property Strategy at trade Fairs and the Helpdesk for Intellectual Property Rights in China, as well as the free online services of the Market Access Database.

Market Access Newsletter:

[http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/january/tradoc\\_142217.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/january/tradoc_142217.pdf)

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