



Actualités

EU and Japan finalise Economic Partnership Agreement. **The main elements of the agreement:** The Economic Partnership Agreement will remove the vast majority of the €1 billion of duties paid annually by EU companies exporting to Japan, as well as a number of long-standing regulatory barriers. It will also open up the Japanese market of 127 million consumers to key EU agricultural exports and will increase EU export opportunities in a range of other sectors. The agreement also opens up services markets, in particular financial services, e-commerce, telecommunications and transport. It also guarantees EU companies access to the large procurement markets of Japan in 48 large cities, and removes obstacles to procurement in the economically important railway sector at national level; addresses specific sensitivities in the EU, for instance in the automotive sector, with transition periods before markets are opened. The deal also includes a comprehensive chapter on trade and sustainable development; sets the highest standards of labour, safety, environmental and consumer protection; strengthens EU and Japan's actions on sustainable development and climate change and fully safeguards public services. Concerning data protection, which is being dealt with separately from the Economic Partnership Agreement, a Joint Statement was issued in which the EU and Japan stress the importance of ensuring a high level of privacy and security of personal data as a fundamental right and as a central factor of consumer trust in the digital economy, which also further facilitate mutual data flows, leading to the development of digital economy. **Next steps:** This announcement means that the EU and Japan will now start the legal verification of the text, also known as "legal scrubbing". Once this exercise is completed, the English text of the agreement will be translated into the other 23 official languages of the EU, as well as into Japanese. The Commission will then submit the agreement for the approval of the European Parliament and EU Member States, aiming for its entry into force before the end of the current mandate of the European Commission in 2019. At the same time, negotiations continue on investment protection standards and investment protection dispute resolution. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/cfm/doclib_section.cfm?sec=127

Accord historique sur la modernisation des instruments de défense commerciale de l'UE. La Commission, le Conseil et le Parlement européen ont conclu un accord politique sur la modernisation des instruments de défense commerciale de l'UE. Ces instruments seront plus efficaces, plus transparents et plus faciles à utiliser pour les sociétés, et permettront dans certains cas à l'UE d'imposer des droits plus élevés sur les produits faisant l'objet d'un dumping. Les nouvelles règles raccourciront la période d'enquête précédant l'institution de mesures provisoires, qui est actuellement de neuf mois, et renforceront la transparence du système. Les entreprises bénéficieront d'un système d'alerte rapide qui leur permettra de s'adapter à la nouvelle situation en cas d'institution de droits. Les petites entreprises bénéficieront également du soutien d'un service d'assistance spécifique, afin de leur faciliter la tâche en matière de lancement de procédures de défense commerciale et de participation à ces dernières. En outre, dans certains cas, l'UE adaptera sa «règle du droit moindres» et pourra imposer des droits plus élevés. Cette règle s'appliquera dans le cas d'importations de produits faisant l'objet de subventions déloyales ou d'un dumping, en provenance de pays où les prix de l'énergie et des matières premières sont faussés. <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1765>

Intellectual property: Protecting Europe's know-how and innovation leadership. The Commission presents measures to ensure that intellectual property rights are well protected, thereby encouraging European companies, in particular SMEs and start-ups, to invest in innovation and creativity. The initiatives will make it easier to act efficiently against breaches of intellectual property rights, facilitate cross-border litigation, and tackle the fact that

5% of goods imported into the EU are counterfeited or pirated. The Commission also encourages licensing negotiations which are fair and balanced in rewarding companies for their innovation while allowing also others to build on this technology to generate new innovative. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-17-4943 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-17-4943_en.htm)

Commission and China start new dialogue on State aid control and discuss competition policy. In the context of the cooperation on competition matters, the EU and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding to start a dialogue on State aid control, creating a mechanism for consultation, cooperation and transparency in this field. The agreement complements the existing cooperation framework between the EU and China in the field of competition policy and enforcement. At the first meeting held under this new framework, the Commission and China's National Development and Reform Commission reaffirmed the importance of cooperation on competition policy to ensure good economic relations between China and the EU. In particular, co-operation on State aid control is important to prevent public policies from distorting or restricting competition, or from harming an internal market. Both sides acknowledged the mutual benefit of exchanging experiences on how to optimise and steer the use of State resources to promote efficient and sustainable economic development. In this context, the EU welcomed China's adoption of a Fair Competition Review System designed to ensure State measures do not adversely affect market entry and exit and the free movement of goods. <http://ec.europa.eu/competition/international/bilateral/china.html>

Fair taxation of the digital economy. All EU citizens, businesses and organisations interested in the evolution of the digital economy are welcome to contribute to this consultation. In this way, this is your chance to contribute to policy making. The objective of the initiative is to define an approach to the taxation of the digital economy. The approach should meet the goals of fairer and more effective taxation, supporting public revenue and a level playing field across businesses. It should also facilitate an efficient taxation, supporting EU growth and competitiveness through the Digital Single Market. Deadline : 3 January 2018. https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/consultations-get-involved/tax-consultations_en

E-commerce : vers la fin du geoblocage. Le Parlement européen, le Conseil et la Commission ont conclu un accord politique mettant fin aux blocages géographiques injustifiés pour les consommateurs désirant acheter des produits ou des services en ligne dans l'Union. Pour les citoyens, cela signifie qu'ils pourront acheter leurs appareils électriques en ligne, louer une voiture ou acheter des places de concert à l'étranger comme ils le font dans leur propre pays. Ils ne seront plus confrontés à des obstacles tels que la contrainte de payer avec une carte de débit ou de crédit émise dans un autre pays que le leur. Pour les entreprises, cela signifie une plus grande sécurité juridique pour exercer des activités à l'étranger. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-17-4781 fr.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-4781_fr.htm)

Commerce en ligne : une protection contre les fraudeurs renforcée. Les députés européens ont renforcé la protection contre les fraudeurs dans le cadre du commerce en ligne. Ainsi, les autorités nationales disposeront d'un plus grand pouvoir pour arrêter les escroqueries et fraudes en ligne... <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0426+0+DOC+PDF+V0//FR>

Agriculture biologique: un pas décisif vers l'adoption de nouvelles règles. Les Etats membres ont formellement exprimé leur soutien à de nouvelles règles pour l'agriculture biologique qui bénéficiera ainsi d'un cadre légal simplifié couvrant tous les producteurs, qu'ils soient de l'Union européenne ou de pays tiers exportant dans l'Union européenne. Des mesures de précaution plus strictes réduiront par ailleurs le risque de contamination accidentelle par des substances non-autorisées. L'accord soutenu par le Comité Spécial Agriculture au Conseil ira maintenant au Parlement européen et au Conseil des ministres pour approbation. Une fois cela fait, les nouvelles règles entreront en vigueur le 1^{er} janvier 2021. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-17-4686 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-17-4686_en.htm)

Enquête auprès des PME sur les produits phytopharmaceutiques et les résidus de pesticides. Cette enquête vise à recueillir les avis des micro-, petites et moyennes entreprises (PME) sur la législation de l'UE concernant les pesticides [règlement (CE) n° 1107/2009] et les résidus de pesticides [règlement (CE) n° 396/2005]. En particulier, elle vise à recueillir des informations sur la manière dont les règles existantes régissant l'approbation des substances actives, l'autorisation des pesticides et la fixation de limites maximales de résidus de pesticides sont appliquées. Les résultats de cette consultation sont essentiels pour déterminer l'impact de la réglementation existante sur les PME

et seront utilisés pour évaluer dans quelle mesure les règles en vigueur sont adaptées à leur finalité et pour élaborer une réponse stratégique appropriée comportant d'éventuelles modifications de la réglementation. Les informations fournies seront traitées de manière confidentielle. Les réponses ne permettront pas d'identifier les répondants individuels. <https://www.wallonieurope.be/formulaire-pesticides-2017/>

Higher than global average: European companies jack up investment into research and development. European Union firms have significantly increased their investments in research and development (R&D), rising above the world's average growth rate. While the world's top 2500 companies in terms of investment into R&D increased this investment by 5.8% over 2016, companies with headquarters in the EU did so by 7%, with growth driven mainly by the ICT, health and automotive sectors. <http://iri.jrc.ec.europa.eu/scoreboard17.html>.

New portal launched to teach youngsters about tax issues. TAXEDU is a digital resource to educate about the purpose of taxes and how they affect daily life. The hope is that it will also help to stimulate the ongoing debate about fair taxation. The portal is full of multilingual e-learning tools, games, videos and educational material for teachers to use in schools. A joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Parliament, the project has been brought to life thanks to cooperation with EU countries' tax authorities. https://europa.eu/taxedu/taxlandia_en

Opportunités

The latest funding opportunities for clusters. The European Commission opened the call on Cluster Facilitated Projects for New Industrial Value Chains with a deadline on the 12th of April 2018. Following the format of previous years, this call aims at enabling cross-sectorial and trans-regional exchange of cluster strategies. The proposal must show an evident link with the smart specialisation strategy of the region. Consequently, the participation of regional economic agencies becomes key for the success of the proposal. <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/innosup-01-2018-2020.html>

Save the date: European Cluster matchmaking event. In the framework of the Second European Industry Day, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform will, on behalf of the European Commission, organise a European cluster matchmaking event in Brussels on February 22nd, 2018. The matchmaking event is expected to gather representatives of up to 140 European cluster organisations for cross-sectorial meetings.

European innovators, start-ups and SMEs with innovative solutions. The challenges posted on the Social Challenges Innovation Platform by public authorities, private companies or third sector organizations aim at solving a wide range of issues in a local environment. This is an opportunity not to be missed for solution providers not only to receive funding, but also to connect with hundreds of potential clients in Europe, network with stakeholders and gain high visibility in the relevant ecosystem. <https://www.socialchallenges.eu/community/4/challenges>

Eurostars-2 programme. Call for Applications. Eurostars is a joint programme between EUREKA and the European Commission, co-funded from the national budgets of 36 Eurostars Participating States and Partner Countries and by the European Union through Horizon 2020. In the 2014-2020 period it has a total public budget of €1.14 billion. For Clusters with R&D-performing SME members. nicolas.delsaux@spw.wallonie.be. <https://www.eurostars-eureka.eu/content/apply-funding>

Nanotech Japan cluster SME mission. The Nanotech Cluster/SMEr mission coincides with the "nano tech - International Nanotechnology Exhibition and Conference" in Tokyo. During the fair (3 days) you will attend showcase sessions and B2B meetings and meet with Japanese visitors. The programme targets participants from SMEs (large companies may apply but will not be given priority) and clusters from the EU or COSME partnering countries, active in sectors covered by the trade fair, i.e: <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/nanotech-cluster-sme-mission>

Comment rédiger un bon projet de R&D européen ? Organisé par le NCP Wallonie pour des entreprises innovantes ou organismes de R&D qui envisagent de monter un projet européen de recherche collaborative ou d'intégrer un consortium existant. <http://www.ncpwallonie.be/en/>

A lire

SMEs in the European Union generate half of the intra-EU trade in goods. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs – up to 249 persons employed) are considered as a driver of the economy of the European Union (EU), creating jobs and contributing to economic growth. They also substantially contribute to trade within the EU. 98% of companies trading goods within the EU are SMEs, including around 70% that are micro-enterprises (up to 9 persons employed). SMEs are responsible for half the value of the intra-EU trade in goods. In detail, they account for 51% of intra-EU imports and 45% of intra-EU exports. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/8467294/6-21112017-AP-EN.pdf/ab123dd2-0901-4c64-95b0-f071a5f235e3>

The Missing Entrepreneurs 2017. It shows that there is substantial potential to combat unemployment and increase labour market participation by facilitating business creation in populations such as women, youth, the unemployed, and migrants. However, the specific problems they face need to be recognised and addressed with effective and efficient policy measures. <http://www.oecd.org/industry/the-missing-entrepreneurs-2017-9789264283602-en.htm>

Industry in Europe: Facts and Figures on Competitiveness and Innovation 2017. The publication identifies the key factors to be addressed in order to strengthen industrial competitiveness, namely investments and access to finance, development of key technologies, adoption of more sustainable business models; details EU initiatives creating an environment that supports competitiveness, among which the ones improving the access to finance, ensuring high-quality education, supporting improvements in resource efficiency and uptake of more circular business models; - offers examples of sector-specific initiatives. https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/354c1e8b-1db0-11e7-aeb3-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF?utm_source=SendBlaster&utm_medium=email&utm_term=-&utm_content=-&utm_campaign=NL201710

Evénements

EU Aviation Research Policy on Noise, 16 - 17 January 2018, Brussels. The European Commission, Clean Sky JU and INEA organise a two-day workshop on EU Aviation Research Policy on Noise, towards linking noise research and technological developments with certification and regulatory issues at EASA and ICAO level. The workshop builds upon the last successful one organised by the FP7 X-Noise project on 'Future Trends in Aviation Noise Research', held in Brussels in 2014. <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/workshop-eu-aviation-research-policy-noise-register-now>

International Cybersecurity Forum 23-24 January 2018, Lille. Combining a trade show and a forum, the FIC is recognized as the leading event on cybersecurity and digital trust in Europe. Hyperconnection, the resilience challenge will be the central theme of FIC2018.. <https://www.forum-fic.com>

Second European Industry Day, 22-23 February 2018, Brussels. The event will update stakeholders on the Commission's strategic approach to industrial policy and actions to further develop industrial competitiveness in Europe. It will also serve as a forum where stakeholders contributing to European industrial competitiveness can showcase their activities, learn from each other, discuss cross-cutting issues and develop joint visions for the future. Stakeholders will come from a variety of industrial sectors, finance, research and innovation, public government and administration. https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/organise-stakeholder-workshop-part-eu-industry-day_en

***“May you always enjoy the sunshine of happy days and stay safe from bad ones”
Best Wishes 2018***