



Public Relations Global Network
The World's Local Agency

July 2014

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS FOCUS #5

EU matters to you

*What's up in the EU legislative pipeline that might impact your activities?
Find out more in our exclusive monthly newsletter designed for PRGN members*



Environment & Sustainability

A new EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

- ✦ The European Commission has launched on July 16th a public consultation a new EU strategy for the Alpine Region, set to take shape in 2015. The Consultation is open for submissions until 15 October 2014.
- ✦ **Public Consultation – Have your say**
- ✦ It covers some 70 million people in 7 countries – 5 of them EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and 2 non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland).
- ✦ The Commission wishes to ensure that the Strategy is realistic in its starting point, appropriate in its objectives and responsive to the real needs of inhabitants of the Region.
- ✦ In December a stakeholder conference will be held in Milan to discuss the findings of the consultation.
- ✦ The Strategy will build upon three key areas for action:
 - ❖ 1. To improve the competitiveness, prosperity and cohesion of the Alpine Region;
 - ❖ To ensure accessibility and connectivity for all the inhabitants of the Alpine Region;
 - ❖ 3. To make the Alpine Region environmentally sustainable and attractive.



This will feed into a formal proposal from the European Commission by June 2015, for an Action Plan.



Athenora
CONSULTING

66, Avenue de Cortenbergh
B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
www.athenora.com

+32(0)2 280 39 94
natacha.clarac@athenora.com



Public Relations Global Network
The World's Local Agency

July 2014



Trade & Industries

EU launches negotiations on environmental trade agreement

- ✦ On July 9th the EU, together with 13 other WTO members (Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong (China), Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Singapore and the US) have formally opened plurilateral negotiations in the WTO on liberalization of trade in so-called 'green goods'.
- ✦ At the first stage, the members will aim to eliminate tariffs or customs duties on a broad list of green goods that help clean the air and water, help manage waste, are energy efficient, control air pollution, and help generate renewable energy like solar, wind, or hydroelectric.
- ✦ At the second stage, the negotiations could also address non-tariff barriers and environmental services. The EU is particularly interested to reduce barriers to trade in services ancillary to goods exported.



The group of WTO Members will engage now in intensive negotiations meeting regularly in Geneva and discussing the substance of the agreement, i.a. product coverage and the approach on non-tariff barriers to trade and services

Euro area international trade in goods surplus

- ✦ The first estimate for the euro area trade in goods balance with the rest of the world in May 2014 gave a €15.4 billion surplus, compared with May 2013.
- ✦ The highest increases in EU28 exports were registered with China (+9%) and South Korea (+5%), and for EU28 imports with South Korea (+9%), Switzerland and Turkey (both +6%).
- ✦ The most notable decreases were recorded for exports to Switzerland (-15%), Russia and India (both -11%), and for imports from Russia (-9%) and Brazil (-8%).
- ✦ The EU28 trade surplus increased with the USA (+€32.1 bn), but decreased with Switzerland and Turkey. The EU28 trade deficit fell with China and Russia.
- ✦ Concerning the total trade of Member States, the largest surplus was observed in Germany, followed by the Netherlands, Ireland and Italy.
- ✦ The United Kingdom registered the largest deficit, followed by France, Spain and Greece.

Have your say !

The Commission has launched on July 15th a public consultation on the protection of geographical indications (GI) for non-agricultural products

A geographical indication (GI) identifies goods as originating from a country, region or locality where a particular quality, reputation or other characteristic of the product is linked to its geographical origin.

The Green Paper consists of two parts. The first part asks about the current means of protection provided at national and EU level and the potential economic, social and cultural benefits that could be achieved by improved GI protection in the EU.

The second part includes technical questions to seek the views on possible options for EU-level GI protection for non-agricultural products. The possible objectives range from fulfilling the minimum requirements on GI protection set up by the Agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) to providing additional criteria for protection.

The consultation is opened until 28th October 2014. The EU is bound by rules on protecting GIs under TRIPS, which applies to all 159 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and covers both agricultural and non-agricultural products.



Athenora
CONSULTING

66, Avenue de Cortenberg
B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
www.athenora.com

+32(0)2 280 39 94
natacha.clarac@athenora.com



Public Relations Global Network
The World's Local Agency

July 2014



Food & Beverage

European Commission to tackle unfair practices in the food supply chain

- ✦ The European Commission has adopted on July 15th a communication encouraging Member States to look for ways to improve protection of small food producers and retailers against the unfair practices of their sometimes much stronger trading partners.
- ✦ The food supply chain is employing more than 47 million people in the EU, and represents about 7% of the EU gross value added. The total market size of EU retail trade in food-related products is estimated at €1.05 trillion. Cross border trade among EU Member States accounts for about 20% of total EU food production. At least 70% of the total annual exports of agricultural products of EU countries go to other EU Member States.
- ✦ The suggestions in the communication are based on three building blocks:
 - ✦ **Support of the voluntary Supply Chain Initiative** (Voluntary codes of conduct)
 - ✦ **EU-wide standards for principles of good practice** to address UTPs
 - ✦ **Effective enforcement at national level:** to establish a credible deterrence factor against the use of UTPs, the Communication suggests minimum enforcement standards applicable throughout the EU.

Study on Food taxes and their impact on competitiveness of the agri-food sector

- ✦ The study is intitled "Food taxes and their impact on competitiveness in the agri-food sector" was commissioned by the Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission
- ✦ The conclusion is that « Non-harmonised taxes on high sugar, salt and fat products such as soft drinks, sweet and salty foodstuffs do induce a reduction of the consumption of the taxed products, but the exact impact on the competitiveness of the European agri-food sector needs to be further assessed »
- ✦ The study concludes that food taxes in general achieve a reduction in the consumption of the taxed products and as a result, consumers may instead purchase similar non-taxed or less heavily taxed items.
- ✦ It also shows that consumers may simply buy cheaper brands of the taxed products, thus potentially not lowering their consumption of the ingredient the tax aims to target (i.e. salt, sugar or fat). Equally, consumers may be able to buy other products with similar levels of sugar, salt or fat to those that are taxed.
- ✦ The study found that increases in cross border shopping were rather limited and that other factors, in particular other taxes on food/drinks, are more important drivers for the cross-border shopping effect.
- ✦ The European Commission will closely monitor this agri-food sector.



Athenora
CONSULTING

66, Avenue de Cortenberg
B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
www.athenora.com

+32(0)2 280 39 94
natacha.clarac@athenora.com



Public Relations Global Network
The World's Local Agency

July 2014



Health & Pharmaceutical

5th EU-US eHealth Marketplace & Cooperation Assembly

- ✦ 21-22/10/2014 – Boston Massachusetts, USA
- ✦ This event provides an update on the progress of the EU-US cooperation regarding eHealth interoperability and eHealth workforce skills.
- ✦ It also addresses commercial opportunities in digital health for companies on both sides of the Atlantic
- ✦ <http://www.masstech.org/connectedhealthweek>

Enjoy your summer holidays !



Athenora
CONSULTING

66, Avenue de Cortenberg
B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM
www.athenora.com

+32(0)2 280 39 94
natacha.clarac@athenora.com