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Sedež SGRZ: 6, Av. Lloyd George, B-1000 Bruxelles, Belgija. Tel: 32 2 645 19 10, Fax: 32 2 645 19 17

Ureja: dr. Boris Cizelj, direktor SGRZ

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UVODNIK

Kljub veliki želji in zavezanosti predsedujoče Avstrije, da poskuša narediti večji korak naprej pri vključevanju držav Zahodnega Balkana v evropsko integracijo, ji to ne uspeva popolnoma. Balkanske države so od Avstrije pričakovale precej, tudi zaradi zgodovinske tradicije in ekonomske povezanosti. Avstrija namreč obvladuje dobršen del bančnega sektorja v regiji, njihove investicije so močno prisotne tudi v energetiki in telekomunikacijah. Je velika izvoznica, zlasti v Srbijo in na Hrvaško.

Letošnje leto pa je v mnogih pogledih ključno za države Zahodnega Balkana. Najavljen je referendum o neodvisnosti Črne Gore, Srbija upa na podpis stabilizacijsko-pridružitvenega sporazuma, v pripravi je sprememba ustave v BiH, Makedonija je pred kratkim postala država kandidatka, medtem ko je Hrvaška pogajanja za vstop v EU že pričela. Pogajanja o prihodnjem statusu Kosova so v teku.

Avstrija je želela med predsedovanjem vtisniti pečat prav na področju širitve, a ji to že zaradi domačega negativnega javnega mnenja ne uspeva. Napovedi o pomembnem vrhu med EU in državami Zahodnega Balkana v Salzburgu, ki je bil organiziran 10. in 11. marca kot neformalno srečanje zunanjih ministrov, pa so zbledele že pred njegovim začetkom. O sklepih vrha poročamo v rubriki Jugovzhodna Evropa. Balkan so prehitele pomembnejše evropske teme – oblikovanje ustave in nove finančne perspektive. Morda pa je politična in ekonomska prisotnost po zgledu Avstrije dovolj za spodbujanje stabilnosti v regiji, kar bo lahko izkoristila tudi Slovenija, ki bo žezlo Unije prevzela leta 2008.

Potem, ko je Evropski parlament januarja zavrnil osnutek finančne perspektive za obdobje po letu 2007 (o tem smo poročali), vse tri ključne institucije (Evropski svet, Komisija ter Parlament) poskušajo uskladiti nov predlog, za obravnavo

naslednjem tripartitnem sestanku, ki bo 21. marca. Parlament še vedno vztraja na višjem proračunu, pa čeprav bi to pomenilo financiranje delovanja Unije s pomočjo letnih proračunov, kar bi se zgodilo v primeru, če se o 7-letni finančni perspektivi ne bi uspeli dogovoriti pravočasno. Odbor za proračun v Evropskem parlamentu pa je še zaostril svoje stališče, da bo Parlament odstopil od medinstitucionalnega sporazuma, če v prihodnjih pogovorih ne bo napredka.

Liberalizacija energetskega trga je eden izmed ciljev pravkar objavljene energetske strategije. V resnici pa vsakdanja praksa v državah članicah kaže na obratni proces. Energetski sektor se koncentrira, tako je npr. v Franciji pravkar v procesu energetskega velikana Suez z nacionalnim konkurentom na področju dobave elektrike in plina Gaz de France.

Prav tako je v porastu tudi trend ekonomskega protekcionizma. Evropsko komisijo je v preteklih mesecih zaposlovala namera prevzema francosko – luksemburškega jeklarskega velikana Arcelor s strani indijskega podjetja Mittal. Francoska vlada je pripravljena tudi spremeniti nacionalno zakonodajo, da bi pred tujimi prevzemi zaščitila industrijo, ki ima nacionalni pomen. Predsednik komisije Barroso je pozval države članice, naj ne ogrožajo skupnega trga in evra z 'nacionalistično retoriko', saj se podobne prakse pojavljajo tudi v Španiji in na Poljskem. O tematiki bo vsekakor še veliko govora, saj Komisija pripravlja tožbo proti Španiji, ker je ovirala nemško energetskega podjetje pri prevzemu domačega podjetja Endesa.

Na področju prostega pretoka delovne sile je bilo pričakovati, da se bo nekaj 'starih' držav članic odločilo odpreti svoj trg dela za delavce iz novih držav članic. To namero so do sedaj objavile Španija, Portugalska in Finska.

Francija pa je objavila, da bo omejitve odpravljala postopoma, odvisno od potreb v posameznih sektorjih in s soglasjem socialnih partnerjev. Francija potrebuje tuje delavce na področju socialnih in zdravstvenih storitev, v hotelirstvu in gostinstvu ter transportu in gradbeništvu.

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1. AKTUALNE NOVICE

■ Razvoj sprejemanja evropske ustave

Belgija je kot 14. država članica ratificirala evropsko ustavo. Kljub zavrnitvi sosednjih Francije in Nizozemske, je Belgija nadaljevala s procesom ratifikacije in ga 8. februarja uspešno zaključila.

Medtem je poljski predsednik Lech Kaczynski zagotovil, da ustava v takšni obliki nima možnosti, da bi jo Poljaki ratificirali. Predsednik se zavzema za novo verzijo, ki bo manj centralistična.

V začetku marca sta se vprašanja evropske ustave ponovno intenzivneje lotili Francija in Nemčija. Njun predlog vsebuje krajšo verzijo dokumenta, ki bi vseboval prva dela obstoječega predloga, v katerem bodo opredelili pristojnosti in temeljne pravice Unije. Tako prenovljeni dokument naj bi v potrditev ponudili tudi volilcem v Franciji in na Nizozemskem, kjer so trenutno verzijo ustave zavrnili.

Preostali, tretji del ustavnega dokumenta, ki zajema opredelitev skupnih politik EU, pa naj bi v Franciji in na Nizozemskem ratificirali le v parlamentu. Tako bi v dveh delih ratificirali ustavo v teh dveh državah.

Tak načrt naj bi začeli uresničevati pod predsedstvom Nemčije, ki se bo pričelo januarja 2007.

Spletna stran o Evropski ustavi:
http://europa.eu.int/constitution/index_sl.htm

■ EU okoljske prioritete za 2006

Evropski komisar za okolje Dimas je predstavil letno poročilo okoljske politike EU za 2005 in obenem tudi načrt prioritet za 2006.

Poročilo za 2005 navaja uspešno delovanje EU na okoljskem področju, zlasti pri izvajanju Kjotskih ciljev, EU strategijah za ravnanje z odpadki, onesnaževanje ozračja in drugimi ter upoštevanjem načela trajnostnega razvoja.

Vsekakor pa slika ni povsem rožnata, saj se na nekaterih področjih stanje okolja slabša, preteklo leto pa je bilo v znamenju sanacije posledic naravnih nesreč.

Glavne prioritete EU okoljske politike za letošnje leto bodo tehnološke in ekološke inovacije, biotska pestrost ter nadaljnji ukrepi na področju spopadanja s podnebnimi spremembami. Pomembno mesto bo

zavzemalo učinkovitejše ravnanje z energetskimi viri in pregled trgovanja z emisijami.

Na zakonodajnem področju bo Komisija pripravila osnutek direktive o izpuhih v ozračje, ki jih povzroči letalska industrija.

Poročilo o policy aktivnostih EU za leto 2005 je na voljo:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/pdf/policy_rev_2005_en.pdf

Obsežno poročilo o stanju okolja 2005 s strani Evropske okoljske agencije:

http://reports.eea.eu.int/state_of_environment_report_2005_1/en/SOER2005_all.pdf

■ Poročilo o liberalizaciji trga telekomunikacijskih storitev

Komisija je 20. februarja objavila poročilo o zakonodaji in trgih na področju telekomunikacij v EU za leto 2005. Poročilo obravnava razvoj trgov na področju širokopasovnih povezav, mobilne in fiksne tehnologije ter interesov potrošnikov in zakonodajni okvir.

Komisarka za informacijsko družbo in medije Redingova je pozitivno ocenila napredek držav članic pri uveljavljanju zakonodaje iz leta 2002, ki med drugim predvideva večjo odprtost nacionalnih trgov tuji konkurenci.

Poročilo poudarja velik napredek pri uporabi novih tehnologij, zlasti širokopasovnih internetnih povezav ter mobilne tehnologije, tudi v novih državah članicah. Pogovorne storitve operaterjem še vedno prinašajo pretežni del dobičkov, a se ta delež znižuje.

V letu 2005 so podjetja aktivno pričela s ponujanjem ugodnih paketnih storitev potrošnikom, kar je sprožilo povečanje investicij ponudnikov TK storitev v različnih državah. Posledično se je povečal zlasti delež širokopasovnih storitev med potrošniki, z 20 na 53 milijonov naročil. Velik porast beleži tudi mobilna telefonija, ki sedaj pokriva kar 93% trga.

Kritika poročila je usmerjena predvsem v cenovno politiko na nekaterih nacionalnih trgih, saj so nekatere storitve še predrage. Gre predvsem za telefoniranje z mobilnikov v tujino (t.i. 'roaming'). Pomankljivo je izvajanje pravila, ki bo potrošnikom omogočal enotno urgentno telefonsko številko 112 v EU. Poročilo svari pred previsoko stopnjo regulativnosti internetnih telefonskih storitev.

Slovenija je po gostoti širokopasovnih priključkov z 9% pod evropskim povprečjem (11%). Komisija je za Slovenijo postavila vprašanja na področju razvezave lokalne zanke in učinkovitega medomrežnega povezovanja, kritična je bila ob dejstvu, da Slovenija še ni zagotovila prenosljivosti številki. Omenjeno je tudi, da je v Sloveniji konkurenca na področju fiksne telefonije pičla.

Poročilo je dosegljivo (tudi v slovenščini):

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/e-comm/implementation_enforcement/annualreports/11threport/index_en.htm

■ Milijon delovnih mest na portalu EURES

Od 20. februarja je Komisija na spletnih straneh objavila bazo ponujenih delovnih mest v EU, s čimer je obeležila letošnje leto, ki je leto mobilnosti delavcev.

Novo spletišče EURES bo po novem objavljalo vsa prosta delovna mesta, ki jih bodo razpisali javni zavodi za zaposlovanje v 28 evropskih državah in izven.

Dodana vrednost portala bo še mreža okoli 700 svetovalcev, ki bodo zagotavljali pomoč mobilnim delavcem.

Kontakt spletnega portala EURES:

<http://europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp?lang=en>

■ Pobuda po evropskem seznamu konkretnih projektov

Francoski predsednik Chirac je 27. februarja objavil pobudo, ki bi na evropski ravni združila konkretne projekte, s katerimi bo spodbudila občutek pripadnosti evropski ideji med državljani EU.

Pobuda vsebuje idejo o vzajemni humanitarni pomoči ob naravnih katastrofah v svetu, ki se ne bi zanašala na ameriške logistične kapacitete, več sredstev za univerzitetne študijske programe, ki jih obiskujejo evropski študentje, javna pobuda programa za mladino ter evropske obmejne zaščitne sile. Ideja o učnih urah o evropskih vrednotah v srednjih šolah po celi EU, je naletela na različne odmeve.

Pobudo je treba razlagati v kontekstu sprejemanja evropske ustave ter dejstva, da je zaradi odtujenosti Unije od svojih državljanov, v nekaterih državah članicah, tudi v Franciji, državljani na referendumu niso potrdili.

Prav tako bi Francija v prihodnosti rada ponovno sama odločala o nekaterih zadevah, kot je na primer davčna politika. Francija je zagovornica principa subsidiarnosti, kar se je pokazalo ob sprejemanju sprememb v okviru 6. direktive, ko je želela doseči vključitev izjeme – znižane davčne stopnje za restavracije. O tem smo poročali v prejšnji številki.

Vir: <http://euobserver.com/9/20998>

■ Bolj učinkovita zunanja pomoč EU

Komisija je 2. marca objavila ukrepe za boljše in hitrejšo razvojno in ostalo zunanjo pomoč EU. V njih se Komisija zavezuje k večji učinkovitosti, skladnosti in učinku razvojne pomoči.

Komisija predlaga različne ukrepe, na primer natančno kartiranje pomoči EU z regionalnimi atlasi donatorjev, podporo lokalnim koordinacijskim procesom in razvoj skupnega okvira za načrtovanje pomoči. Eden od predlogov vsebuje tudi mehanizem sofinanciranja.

V podporo ukrepom je Komisija pregledala in posodobila „Atlas donatorjev EU 2006“, pri čemer je kartirala pomoč EU v svetovnem merilu. Dodatni zvezki, ki bodo osredotočeni na določeno regijo, bodo olajšali podrobnejšo analizo sodelovanja donatorjev EU v regionalnem smislu in delitev dela v EU („kdo dela kaj, kje in s kom). Prvi zvezek o zahodni Afriki je že na voljo.

Podrobnosti o sklepih na spletnih straneh:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/development_policy_statement/index_en.htm

2. KRATKE NOVICE IN VABILA K SODELOVANJU

- Predsedujoči EU, avstrijski kancler Schüssel je naznanil, da bo sklenitev pogajanj o finančni perspektivi v Parlamentu in Komisiji, po načrtih predsedujoče Avstrije, zaključeno do aprila.

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Release/February/1402schuesseljuncker.html

- Generalni direktorat Komisije za transport do 31. marca 2006 sprejema pobude na temo intermodalnih oblik tovornega prevoza. Komisija bo

predvidoma junija objavila dokument, v katerem bo analizirala orodja in področja spodbujanja logistike.

Več o posvetovanju:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/logistics/consultations/index_en.htm

- Državljeni EU lahko svoje mnenje o Beli knjigi o komunikacijski politiki izrazijo do 31. julija 2006.

Podrobnosti:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/communication/white_paper/index_en.htm

- Program Inteligentna energija za Evropo predstavlja eno od ključnih aktivnosti Komisije pri spodbujanju projektov s področja alternativne rabe energije. Razpis za nove projektne predloge za leto 2006 bo predvidoma izšel maja, z rokom prijave do oktobra.

Več:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/intelligent/index_en.html

- Komisija je objavila posvetovalni dokument o Enotnem evropskem plačilnem prostoru. V njem izraža svoje videnje delovanja skupnega plačilnega prostora.

Dokument je objavljen:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/payments/docs/sepa/sepa-2006_02_13.pdf

- Brošura z naslovom Priprava na evro za mala in srednja podjetja je sedaj na voljo tudi v slovenščini.

Na voljo na spletu:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepneurship/financing/docs/euro_guide/euro_guide_sl.pdf

3. NOVA ZAKONODAJA

- **Sprejeta direktiva o izpostavljenosti delavcev umetnim optičnim sevanjem**

Evropski parlament je 14. februarja z veliko večino potrdil direktivo, ki utemeljuje varnost zaposlenih pred vplivi umetnih vplivov optičnega sevanja. Direktiva po novem izključuje sevanje naravnega izvora, kot je npr. sončna svetloba. Zaradi te polemike se je direktiva v času sprejemanja prijel vzdevek 'sončna direktiva'.

Delodajalci so zadovoljni z besedilom, ker naj bi bilo nemogoče zahtevati, da bi za svoje zaposlene omejevali izpostavljenost sončni svetlobi.

Direktiva uveljavlja minimalne standarde za preprečevanje in zgodnje diagnosticiranje poškodb na očeh in koži, ki jih povzroča optično sevanje. Gre za ultravijolično, vidno in infrardeče sevanje.

Direktiva obvezuje delodajalca, da upošteva varnostne standarde, ugotavlja in primerno nadzira nevarnost. Delavci so upravičeni do informacij, usposabljanja, svetovanja in zdravniških pregledov.

Poročilo Parlamenta o direktivi (v slovenščini):

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2006-0026+0+DOC+PDF+V0//SL&L=SL&LEVEL=1&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

- **Direktiva o hrambi podatkov v veljavi**

Notranji ministri EU so na zasedanju 21. februarja potrdili direktivo, ki predvideva hranjenje podatkov s strani telefonskih in internetnih operaterjev.

Sporno direktivo, ki po mnenju nasprotnikov preveč posega v varstvo osebnih podatkov, so oblikovali za namene boja proti terorizmu, pedofilskim mrežam in organiziranemu kriminalu.

Podatki o telefonskih klicih bodo po novem shranjeni najmanj od 6 do 24 mesecev, zgornje časovne omejitve pa direktiva ne uveljavlja. Podatki ne bodo povzemali vsebine pogovora, le klicne številke.

Države članice morajo direktivo veljaviti v 18 mesecih.

Več:

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Council_Conclusions/JAISchlussfolgerungen.pdf

- **V evropskem parlamentu sprejet predlog direktive o storitvah**

V Strasbourgu so 16. februarja evropski poslanci sprejeli predlog direktive o storitvah, ki predstavlja pomemben korak k izvajanju načel skupnega trga. Zanj je glasovalo 394 poslancev, proti se je izreklo 215 poslancev (33 vzdržanih glasov). Po ocenah strokovnjakov naj bi skupni trg storitev Uniji prinesel 2.5 milijona novih delovnih mest.

Vse storitve niso vključene pod okrilje direktive, tako so na primer izvzete storitve na področju zdravstva, večina socialnih storitev, igralništvo, avdiovizuelne storitve, varnostne storitve, pravno svetovanje in storitve na področju javnih služb.

Finančne storitve, telekomunikacije in transport pa že v osnovi niso bile vključene v predlog direktive, saj je zanje EU zakonodaja uveljavljena posebej.

Direktiva pa opredeljuje 42 področij, kjer bodo države članice morale odpreti trg konkurentom iz vseh ostalih držav članic. Tako so v direktivo vključeni nosilci storitev na področju izobraževanja in kulture, prav tako tudi storitve splošnega gospodarskega pomena, ki vključuje poštno storitve, oskrbo z elektriko, vodo in plinom ter ravnanje z odpadki.

Parlament je predlogu Komisije, ki je predložila zelo liberalen osnutek direktive leta 2004, dodala kar 400 popravkov, tako da je trenutna verzija povsem spremenjena.

Pomemben doprinos k uveljavljanju načel skupnega trga je ukinitvev nekaterih nacionalnih ovir, kot je na primer nujnost ustanovitve podjetja v državi, kjer se podjetje iz druge države izvaja storitve.

Ena od kritik zajema tudi mnenje, da je direktiva v trenutni obliki podlaga za zelo široko tolmačenje s strani držav članic, ki bodo tako lahko ohranile status quo in ne bodo liberalizirale svojega trga storitev.

Poslanci so namreč zavrnilo za sindikate sporno načelo izvorne države kar pomeni, da bi nosilci storitev upoštevali zakonodajo države v kateri imajo sedež. Po sedanjem besedilu morajo države sicer dopustiti prihod konkurence, lahko pa tudi sprejmejo določene zaščitne ukrepe, ki so v skladu z njihovo javno politiko.

Direktiva je na tem področju zaščitila socialno raven za izvajalce storitev in v taki obliki ne bo olajšala čezmejnega pretoka storitev, kar je bil eden od ključnih namenov predloga Komisije. Predlog Komisije je predvideval, da bi morala določene elemente nadzora delovne zakonodaje izvajati tudi država izvora, čemur pa parlament nasprotuje, saj se lahko učinkovit nadzor izvajanja delovne zakonodaje izvaja le tam, kjer se storitev opravlja.

Očitek različnih združenj delodajalcev je, da direktiva v taki obliki dopušča preširoko tolmačenje, ki bo vodilo v postopke na Evropskem sodišču. Obžalujejo tudi že

omenjene izjeme, ki preprečujejo liberalizacijo trga storitev.

Proces sprejemanja direktive se bo nadaljeval, po predvidevanjih nekaterih poslancev se drugo in tretje branje v Parlamentu lahko izvedeta še v letu 2006. S tem bi direktiva prišla v izvajanje najkasneje do leta 2011.

Popravki direktive so na voljo (v slovenščini):

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?TYPE-DOC=TA&REF=P6-TA-2006-0061&MODE=SIP&L=SL&LSTDOC=N>

4. GOSPODARSKE NOVICE

■ Neprimerni pokojninski sistemi v državah EU

Komisija je skupaj z Ekonomsko finančnim svetom pripravila poročilo, ki opozarja na demografsko sliko prebivalstva EU. Evropsko prebivalstvo bo do leta 2050 precej starejše, kar se bo odražalo v manjšem deležu zaposlenih.

Število prebivalcev se bo po projekcijah zmanjšalo le za 0.6%, a zaskrbljujoče je dejstvo, da se bo za 16% zmanjšal delež zaposljivih (48 milijonov oseb). Poleg tega se bo povečalo število ljudi, starih nad 65 let, kar za 58 milijonov (77%), kar predstavlja udarec za pokojninske sisteme, zaposljivost ter s tem za gospodarsko rast. Po besedah komisarja za ekonomske in monetarne zadeve Almunie bosta leta 2050 po sedanjih projekcijah le še dva zaposlena na upokojenca (danes štirje).

Poročilo priporoča reforme nacionalnih pokojninskih sistemov v prihodnjih letih, ko se demografska slika v EU še ne bo bistveno spremenila. Enako je pomembno izvajanje reform v luči Lizbonske strategije, ki bodo povečale produktivnost in zagotovile stabilnost javnih financ.

Staranje prebivalstva bo povzročilo veliko obremenitev javnih financ, poleg pokojninskega sistema, tudi zdravstvo. Ti izdatki naj bo se do leta 2050 povečali za 4%. Slovenija je poleg Madžarske in Cipra omenjena kot država z najvišjimi izdatki za pokojnine, ki se bodo do leta 2050 zvišali za napovprečnih 7.3%.

Poročilo je na voljo:

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/06/st06/st06117.en06.pdf>

Več o staranju prebivalstva in reformnih ukrepih držav članic:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/epc/epc_sustainability_ageing_en.htm

■ Študija, ki ocenjuje koristi direktive REACH

Osnutek direktive REACH o kemikalijah, bi po navedbah študije, ki jo je po naročilu Komisije izvedla neodvisna danska svetovalna in raziskovalna organizacija, prihranil milijone sredstev na področju ekoloških stroškov, kot so čiščenje odplak in voda.

V tem oziru naj bi direktiva prihranila od 150 do 500 milijonov evrov do leta 2015.

Večina dosedanjih študij se je osredotočila na gospodarske posledice sprejetja direktive, ki jih bo povzročil strožji nadzor nad proizvajalci in porabniki kemikalij.

Študijo najdete na spletnih straneh Komisije:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/reach.htm#study_ia

■ Čevljarska vojna s Kitajsko?

Evropska komisija je ugotovila, da sta Kitajska in Vietnam na evropski trg izvažala čevlje, katerih nizko ceno sta sofinancirali omenjeni državi s subvencijami. Gre za dumping, kateremu se je EU odzvala z ustreznimi ukrepi. Februarja je evropski komisar za trgovino Mandelson razglasil uvedbo tarif na uvoz čevljev večjih števil (nad številko 37.5) 19.4% iz Kitajske in 16.8% iz Vietnama. Stopnja bo progresivna in bo z začetnih 4% na omenjeno višino narasla v 5 mesecih.

Tarife bodo veljale za obdobje šestih mesecev, nato pa bodo v skladu z odzivom ukinjene ali pa uveljavljene za dobo petih let. Dokazi o dumpingu so jasni, saj je EU nadzorovala uvoz in pogoje proizvodnje čevljev, odkar je v začetku 2005 ukinila uvozne tarife za blago iz Kitajske. Osnovani so na državni podpori v obliki poceni kapitala, davčnih olajšav, netržnih cen zemljišč za tovarne in sumljivih računovodskih praks.

Količina uvoženih čevljev iz Vietnama je v letu 2005 znašala 265 milijonov parov, iz Kitajske pa 1.25 milijard parov, kar predstavlja 3.3 pare na evropskega prebivalca.

V podobnem sporu sta se Kitajska in EU znašli že prej, ne samo v primeru trgovine s čevlji, ampak tudi s tekstilom.

Komisar Mandelson je iz režima tarif izvzel otroško ter športno obutev zaradi potreb na evropskem trgu.

Tovrstni spori so tudi v preteklosti razdelili EU, saj države članice, ki nimajo lastne čevljarske industrije cenenim uvozom ne nasprotujejo. Gre predvsem za skandinavske države (Švedska, Finska, Danska). K ukrepom Komisijo spodbujajo predvsem Italija, Španija, Portugalska, Francija in Češka z močnim čevljarskim sektorjem.

Trgovinski ukrepi proti Kitajski pa bi utegnili imeti negativne posledice tudi na evropskem trgu, saj naj bi ogrozili okoli 10.000 delovnih mest, zvišali cene za potrošnike ter podprli nekonkurenčne domače proizvajalce.

Evropski trgovci svarijo, da bi se v primeru uvedbe tarif prodajne cene dvignile tudi za 20%, o čemer pa ni dokazov. Uvozne cene za obutev so zelo nizke in bi pri ceni 8.5 evrov na par 20% predstavljalo zgolj 1.7 evra. Prodajne cene, ki jih uvoženi izdelki dosegajo na evropskem trgu, pa se gibljejo okoli 35 evrov.

Več o antidumpinških ukrepih:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/respectrules/anti_dumping/index_en.htm

■ Prispevek Švice za nove države članice

EU in Švica sta podpisali memorandum, s katerim se Švica zavezuje k sofinanciranju projektov v novih državah članicah v višini milijarde švicarskih frankov (645 milijonov evrov) v obdobju 5 let.

Aktivnosti se bodo pričele že letos, sofinanciranje bo namenjeno podpori reformam v javni upravi, zaščiti okolja, razvoju infrastrukture, promociji zasebnega sektorja, razvoju človeškega kapitala in socialnega razvoja.

Za tovrstno potezo se je Švica odločila zaradi koristi, ki ji jih prinaša skupni evropski trg ter možnost sodelovanja v evropskih programih in aktivnostih.

Prav tako bo Komisija v prihodnjih mesecih odprla delegacijo v Bernu.

Za Slovenijo so v memorandumu predvidena sredstva v višini 21.956.000 frankov. Projekte, ki bodo finančno podprti s strani Švice, bo izbiral Švicarski zvezni svet, v sodelovanju z Evropsko komisijo.

Besedilo memoranduma:

<http://www.europa.admin.ch/europapol/themen/kohaesion/off/e/index.htm>

Podrobnejše informacije in kontakt:

http://www.europa.admin.ch/europapol/themen/kohaesion/medien/e/pm_060227.pdf

■ Nova pravila za podeljevanje državnih pomoči po pravilu de minimis

Evropska komisija je predstavila nov predlog o izločitvi manjših subvencij iz zahteve po uradnem obvestilu pri podeljevanju državnih pomoči. Komisija predlaga dvig zneska pomoči 'de minimis', ki ga ni treba najavljati Komisiji, z veljavnih 100.000 evrov na 150.000 evrov. Poleg tega predlog podaja tudi nekaj varoval, ki naj bo pripomogla k preprečevanju zlorab predlagane prakse.

Predlog naj bi pripomogel k bolj ciljno usmerjenemu podeljevanju tovrstnih državnih pomoči, predvsem malim in srednjim podjetjem. Predlog vključuje nekatera področja, kot so trženje in pridelava kmetijskih pridelkov, ki do sedaj niso spadali v pravilo de minimis.

Za spremembo zneska se je Komisija odločila zaradi inflacije in rasti DBP v Uniji v času od določitve trenutno veljavnega praga.

Pred končno uveljavitvijo predloga bo Komisija za mnenje zaprosila še države članice, ki ga bodo predvidoma podale do novembra letos.

Predlog je na voljo na spletnih straneh Komisije:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/competition/state_aid/others/action_plan/dm_en.pdf

5. FINANČNE STORITVE

■ Rezultati pregleda stanja notranjega trga

Pregled notranjega trga, ki ga je izvedla Komisija je pokazal, da so države članice pri prenosu predpisov notranjega trga v svoje zakonodaje doslej najbolj uspešne. V povprečju le 1,6 % direktiv o notranjem trgu, za katere je rok za prenos v nacionalno zakonodajo že potekel, še ni prenešenih v nacionalne zakonodaje.

Kljub temu pa še vedno prihaja do težav pri pravilni uporabi predpisov notranjega trga: le pet držav članic je uspelo zmanjšati število postopkov za ugotavljanje kršitev, ki so bili uvedeni zoper njih.

Ta dosežek je posledica prizadevanj zlasti novih držav članic, ki beležijo le povprečno 1,2% zaostanek (stare države članice kar 1,9%).

Slovenija beleži 1.2% zaostanek pri prenosu zakonodaje, kr predstavlja 19 direktiv. Pri

prenosu direktive akcijskega načrta za finančne storitve (20 direktiv) je zaostanek 10%, kar Slovenijo uvršča v sredino. Trenutno Slovenija beleži 7 odprtih primerov kršitev, kar nas uvršča med najboljše.

Slovenija je prejela 6 obrazloženih mnenj in 30 uradnih opominov.

Celotno besedilo je dosegljivo na spletni strani:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/scor/index_en.htm

■ Zvišanje obrestnih mer ECB

Evropska centralna banka (ECB) je v začetku marca objavila namero o zvišanju obrestnih mer, kar je posledica visoke gospodarske rasti v EU. Povišanje je določeno z 2.25% na 2.5%, kar je najvišja raven v preteklih treh letih.

Inflacija na evroobmočju naj bi v 2006 znašala 2.2%, kar predstavlja prekoračitev 2% pričakovane zgornje meje ECB v zadnjih 6 letih. Glavni motiv za zvišanje obrestne mere je obvladovanje inflacije, ki grozi zaradi višjih cen na energetskem trgu. Po podatkih Eurostata je inflacija v EU februarja znašala 2.3%.

Analitiki napovedujejo, da bo ECB do konca tega leta obrestne mere še zvišala, predvidoma na 3%.

Spletne strani ECB - obresti:

<http://www.ecb.int/stats/monetary/rates/html/index.en.html>

■ Zbliževanje evropskih in ameriških standardov na področju računovodstva

Evropski komisar za notranji trg in storitve, McCreevy, je 27. februarja predstavil sporazum o zbližanju računovodskih standardov EU in ZDA.

Novica je razveseljiva za tistih 8.000 evropskih podjetij, ki morajo izpolnjevati tudi ameriške računovodske standarde.

Več o tem na spletni strani:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/accounting/index_en.htm

6. REGIONALNA POLITIKA

■ Strukturni skladi v podporo raziskavam in inovacijam v najmanj razvitih regijah

Komisarja za regionalno politiko in raziskave, Hübnerjeva in Potočnik, sta na konferenci v Varšavi, ki je potekala februarja, predstavila načine in primere dobre prakse financiranja raziskav in inovacij iz strukturnih skladov. Tovrstna praksa pripomore k razvoju regij.

V dosednjem programskem obdobju je bilo iz strukturnih skladov za raziskave namenjenih 10.5 milijard evrov. Sredstva so se v obliki nepovratnih sredstev kanalizirala preko Evropskega sklada za regionalni razvoj in so predstavljala 8% vseh sredstev tega sklada.

Financiranje je potekalo v 4 oblikah: raziskovalni projekti univerz in raziskovalnih institucij, investicije v raziskovalno infrastrukturo, prenos tehnologij in kontakti med gospodarstvom in raziskovalno sfero ter usposabljanje raziskovalcev (Evropski socialni sklad).

Tovrstno vsebinsko sodelovanje med regionalno politiko in drugimi področji bo po 2007 še posebej spodbujeno, zlasti sinergija s 7. Okvirnim programom (7 OP) in sicer v vsaj dveh oblikah: področje investicij v raziskovalno infrastrukturo v podporo projektom v 7. OP in podpora programov v okviru 'Regij znanja' (Regions of knowledge).

Primeri dobre prakse so na ogled na spletnih straneh:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/06/71&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

■ Sklad EU za blaženje negativnih učinkov globalizacije

Komisija je v začetku marca predstavila podrobnosti o t.i. Globalisation Adjustment Fund, iz katerega bodo sredstva namenjena delavcem, ki so izgubili delovna mesta zaradi negativnih posledic globalizacije na njihovo podjetje.

Strokovnjaki dvomijo v smotrnost in velikost tovrstnega sklada. Odločitev o njegovi ustanovitvi je bila sprejeta na vrhu voditeljev držav članic EU decembra lani. Povod za njegovo ustanovitev sta francoska in nizozemska zavrnitev ustave ter izguba številnih delovnih mest v Uniji zaradi negativnih učinkov globalizacije.

Sklad bo na leto upravljal s 500 milijoni evrov. Države članice bodo za finančno pomoč lahko zaprosile za financiranje usposabljanja delavcev pri iskanju nove zaposlitve, pa tudi za neposredno podporo delavcem 18 mesecev

pred odpustitvijo, za delavce, ki imajo nad 50 let pa še dodatno pomoč. Sredstva bi po ocenah lahko koristila od 35.000 do 50.000 ljudem v tekstilni, avtomobilski industriji in drugih, ki se soočajo s pritiski globalnega trga. Denar bo namenjen ljudem in ne podjetjem.

Za finančno pomoč bodo države članice lahko zaprosile, če bo ukinitve velikega podjetja ali industrijskega sektorja prizadelo 1000 ljudi ali 1% delovne sile v regiji. Pri tem mora biti prizadeto podjetje locirano v regiji, ki beleži nadpovprečno brezposelnost glede na nacionalno in evropsko povprečje.

Države bodo ob kandidaturi za finančno pomoč morale dokazati povezavo z globalnimi negativnimi učinki na izgubo delovnih mest, povišan uvoz ter zmanjšan uvoz oziroma upad tržnega deleža v EU. Primeri, ko se podjetje seli v drugo državo članico, ne bodo upravičeni do pomoči sklada. Prav tako za pomoč ne bo mogoče zaprositi v primerih, ko bo strukturne spremembe v industriji mogoče predhodno napovedati in se nanje pripraviti drugače.

Glavni cilj sklada bo pomoč ljudem in ne zaščita nekaterih industrijskih sektorjev, obljublja Komisija. Kritiki pa ocenjujejo, da so tovrstne aktivnosti lahko izpeljane preko Evropskega socialnega sklada. Nove države članice se bojijo, da bi do sredstev prišle predvsem zahodne države članice, ki še niso izvedle nekaterih reform na področju delovno intenzivnih panog, ki so jih same po padcu komunizma morale financirati iz lastnih sredstev.

V primeru uspeha, bo sklad začel delovati s 1. januarjem 2007 in bo aktiven do konca 2013.

Osnutek predloga ustanovitve sklada je na voljo v spletni obliki:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2006/mar/com06091_final_en.pdf

7. TRANSPORT IN ENERGETIKA

● Na vidiku nova zakonodaja o obnovljivih energetskega virih za ogrevanje

Evropski parlament je v februarju podprl idejo o novi zakonodaji na področju obnovljivih virov energije za namene ogrevanja in hlajenja. Komisar za energetiko Piebalgs bo do konca 2006 predstavil osnutek nove direktive.

Direktiva naj bi kot cilj uveljavila podvojeni delež obnovljivih virov energije pri ogrevanju in

hlajenju do leta 2020, kar bi znašalo 20% trenutne porabe. Gre predvsem za ogrevanje stanovanj, tople vode za gospodinjstva ter gretja v industrijskih procesih. Direktiva bo pozvala k oblikovanju nacionalnih ciljev.

Med obnovljive vire bo direktiva uvrstila predvsem geotermalno, sončno, energijo pridobljeno z biomaso ter sisteme daljinskega ogrevanja in hlajenja.

Različne institucije že sedaj pozivajo k bolj razširjeni rabi obnovljivih virov energije, EU pa bi morala namenjati več sredstev za raziskave. V realnosti se finančni viri ne povečujejo v skladu s potrebami. V bodoče naj bi bilo za te namene namenjenih več sredstev v okviru programov Skupnosti, kot so 7. Okvirni program in Program za konkurenčnosti in inovativnost.

Na nacionalnem nivoju bodo primerne finančne spodbude financirale države članice. Pri tem naj bi posegale na področje davčnih olajšav in neposrednih investicijskih spodbud. Države se bodo morale odzvati tudi z ustrezno zakonodajo in obveščanjem javnosti.

Več o pobudi Parlamenta:

http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+20060214+SIT+DOC+W ORD+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S&L=EN#_Toc127706675

Spletna stran Komisije o obnovljivih virih energije:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/res/index_en.htm

● **Enotno vozniško dovoljenje**

Prometni ministri EU se dogovarjajo o podrobnostih o enotne vozniškem dovoljenju, ki bo veljalo v 25 državah EU. Velika kot kreditna kartica bo varnejša, saj jo bo težje ponarediti in bo vsebovala elektronske podatke o vozniku. Obnavljati jo bo potrebno vsakih 10 let.

Enotno vozniško dovoljenje je del uveljavljanja prostega pretoka oseb znotraj Unije. V zadnjem času se je potreba po tovrstnem dokumentu pojavila tudi v luči boja proti terorizmu, saj bo omogočala enostavnejše ugotavljanje identitete s strani policije in carine.

Z dokumentom bo mogoče poenotiti zelo različne prakse v državah članicah.

Spletna stran o evropskem vozniškem dovoljenju:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/home/drivinglicence/index_en.htm

● **Regionalni trgi z električno energijo v EU**

Nacionalni organi s področja energetike so konec februarja sprožili pobudo za ustanovitev 7 regionalnih trgov z električno energijo, ki bi sprostili čezmejno trgovanje z elektriko in se s časom razvili v skupni evropski trg s to energijo.

Izvajanje omenjene pobude bi potrošnikom prineslo koristne plati liberalizacije trga v obliki konkurenčnih cen, večje zanesljivosti dobave in izbiro med ponudniki.

Slovenija bi po tej ureditvi spadala v t.i. Osrednjo-Vzhodno regijo, skupaj z Avstrijo, Češko, Nemčijo, Madžarsko, Poljsko in Slovaško. Vodja regije bi postala Avstrija.

Sporočilo Skupine evropskih regulatorjev za električno energijo in plin:

http://www.ergeg.org/pls/econtrol/docs/FOLDE/EREGE_DOCS/PRESS_RELEASES/PR-06-05_ERGEG_LAUNCH-OF-RI+ 2006-02-27.DOC

● **Evropska energetska strategija: za trajnostno, konkurenčno in varno energijo**

Komisija je 8. marca predstavila Zeleno knjigo o skupni evropski energetske strategiji. Dokument vsebuje več kot 20 predlogov za nove možne ukrepe, poziva pa tudi k oddaji predlogov na 6 prednostnih področjih. Brez ukrepov bo Unija do leta 2030 do 70% energetskih virov uvažala, s čimer so bo njena energetska odvisnost preveč povečala.

Trije glavni cilji energetske politike so: trajnostni razvoj, konkurenčnost in varnost oskrbe. Izvajanje akcijskega načrta bi v bodoče obravnavali vsako leto na pomladanskem zasedanju evropskih voditeljev.

6 prednostnih področij obsega: oblikovanje notranjega energetskega trga (s kodeksom energetskega omrežja, zagotovitvijo enakih konkurenčnih pogojev, vzpostavitev regulativnega organa, idr), solidarnost med državami članicami (zakonodaja o obveznih zalogah nafte in plina), raznolik izbor energij, obravnavanje izzivov globalnega segrevanja (prihranek 20% energije do 2020), načrt energetske tehnologije (vodilni položaj evropske industrije v novi generaciji tehnologij)

in skupna zunanja energetska politika (infrastrukturalne prednostne naloge - plinovodi, pristop glede zunanjih partnerjev - zlasti Rusije, usklajeni odzivi na zunanje vplive).

Predsednik Evropske komisije Barroso podpira konkretne pobude na področju skupne energetske politike, zlasti 50% delež uporabe nefosilnih energetskih virov, kot je jedrska energija do leta 2025. To stališče bo problematično za države, ki ne uporabljajo ali razvijajo jedrske energije. To so Avstrija, Nemčija, Španija, Irska in Italija. Tovrstna politika neizkoriščanja nuklearne energije pa bi po mnenju nekaterih strokovnjakov porinila EU še dlje v energetske odvisnosti od držav, iz katerih uvaža zlasti plin.

Komentar evropskih okoljevarstvenih nevladnih organizacij je, da strategiji primanjkuje dolgoročne vizije, zlasti za spodbujanje energetske učinkovitosti. Premalo je poudarka na razvoju alternativnih virov energije in preveč na zagotavljanju neovirane dobave nafte in plina (npr. investicije v plinovode). Premalo je poudarka tudi na razvoju tehnologij, ki zagotavljajo prihranke energije, preveč pa na nekaterih nepreverjenih tehnikah, zlasti geološko zajetje in shranjevanje fosilnih goriv.

Predstavniki Evropskega parlamenta menijo, da je strategija pomankljiva, zlasti pri konkretnih predlogih. Glede na to, da se za transport porabi 70% nafte v Uniji, bi morala strategija predlagati tudi smernice na tem področju. Prav tako bi morala natančneje predlagati usmeritve na področju klimatskih sprememb, rabe nuklearne energije, liberalizacije nacionalnih energetskih trgov in pravic potrošnikov.

Evropski ministri za energetiko so na zasedanju 14. marca na podlagi strategije razpravljali o enotni energetski politiki Unije. Na nekaterih področjih so predlog Komisije ocenili zelo kritično. O skupni energetski politiki so ministri govorili zadržano, zlasti ministri tistih članic, ki so energetske neodvisne. V tem oziru so večinoma nasprotovali ustanovitvi enotnega regulatornega organa za evropski energetski trg, kot ga predlaga strategija.

Sledila bo razprava na spomladanskem vrhu voditeljev držav članic v marcu. Osnutek evropske energetske politike za razpravo: <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/06/st06/st06878.en06.pdf>

Zelena knjiga je na voljo na spletni strani (tudi v slovenščini):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/green-paper-energy/index_en.htm

• Komisija podpira sintetična goriva

7. marca je bilo ustanovljeno novo industrijsko partnerstvo za promocijo sintetičnih goriv – Alliance for Synthetic fuels in Europe (ASFE). Komisar za podjetništvo Verheugen in za energetiko Piebalgs sta v dialogu z evropskimi proizvajalci avtomobilov ter goriv poudarila razvoj in proizvodnjo sintetičnih goriv.

Člani združenja so vodilni evropski proizvajalci avtomobilov ter goriv. Razvoj sintetičnih goriv iz plina, premoga in biogoriva bi pomenilo dodaten prispevek k energetske neodvisnosti Evrope in njeni okoljski varnosti.

Sintetični utekočinjeni plin se pridobiva posebno metodo, ki plin, premog ali bioaso spremeni v tekočino. Ta predstavlja novo gorivo. Njegove emisije vsebujejo manj žvepla, poganja pa lahko obstoječe motorje brez potrebne tehnične adaptacije, zaradi česar je razvoj tega goriva bolj smotrno.

Več o proizvodnji sintetičnih goriv:

http://www.mobility-and-sustainability.com/buster/buster.asp?i=wissen_21665.asp

• Enotna delovna zakonodaja za pomorščake

Mednarodna organizacija za delo (ILO) je sprejela konvencijo o delovnih pogojih pomorščakov. Predstavlja pravni instrument, ki bo veljaven za več kot milijon pomorščakov po svetu. Izvajanje konvencije v EU bo podprla tudi Komisija, ki jo bo poskušala vplesti v evropsko zakonodajo.

Konvencija naj bi zagotovila boljše delovne pogoje za pomorščake in s tem bolj izenačene pogoje konkurence za ladjarje. Za pomorščake predvideva boljše zdravstvene in varnostne pogoje, določa minimalno starost pomorščakov, načine zaposlovanja, delovni čas, pogoje namestitve na ladji, socialno zaščito idr.

Za izvajanje in inšpekcije bodo morale poskrbeti države, kjer je ladja registrirana in ki bodo predhodno ratificirale konvencijo.

Več o konvenciji na spletnih straneh ILO:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/eve/nt/maritime/index.htm>

● **Komisija umaknila predlog direktive o liberalizaciji pristaniških storitev**

Komisija je 8. marca objavila, da umika predlog sporne direktive o liberalizaciji pristanišč, ki ga je Parlament zavrnil že januarja. O tem smo poročali v prejšnji številki.

Komisija bo vsebino predloga direktive ponovno preučila in se posvetovala z deležniki.

Sporočilo Komisije:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEX/06/0308&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

8. FARMACIJA IN ZDRAVSTVO

■ **Zdravila sirota redko odobrena**

Študija British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology je pred kratkim razkrila, da bodo morala farmacevtska podjetja bolj dosledno pripravljati dokumentacijo za proces odobritve zdravil sirot, ki so malo iskana in nedonosna, a potrebna v primerih redkih bolezni.

Evropska agencija za zdravila je v letih 2000 do 2004 pregledala 255 zdravil sirot, a jih je odobrila le 18 (7.1%). Delež ostalih zdravil, ki jih je Agencija pregledala v postopku odobritve znaša 79%.

Med razlogi za številčno slabo zastopana zdravila sirote, študija omenja neustrezno metodologijo in pripravo dokumentacije. Študija predlaga uvedbo spodbud za uspešnejši razvoj teh zdravil, saj kar 5000 bolezni čaka na odkritje in prodajo ustreznih zdravil.

Več o študiji:

http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=25302

■ **Boj proti zdravilom ponaredek**

Evropsko združenje trgovcev s farmacevtskimi izdelki na debelo je objavilo nično strpnost do zdravil ponaredek, saj ta ogrožajo zdravje in življenje državljanov. Novica je namenjena predvsem internetnim ponudnikom zdravil, ki omogočajo prodajo zdravil brez posredovanja farmacevta.

Združenje si pri prizadevanjih za preprečevanje trženja zdravil ponaredek

pomaga z naključnimi pregledi, usposabljanji in osveščevalskimi akcijami med svojimi člani in navzven.

V svojem stališču združenje poziva po zakonski ureditvi internetne trgovine z zdravili, ki bo vsebovala nujnost dokazovanja izvora zdravil, transparentnost dobave in odpravo kvotnega sistema dobave, ki na nekaterih nacionalnih trgih povzroča pomanjkanje zdravil.

Več o stališču Združenja na temo boja proti zdravilom ponaredek:

<http://www.girp.org/statements/GIRP%20Counterefeit%20paper%20Rev%201%202006.pdf>

■ **Večje število nevarnih izdelkov na evropskem trgu**

Študija, ki jo je Komisija objavila 2. marca izkazuje, da se je število nevarnih izdelkov na evropskem trgu v letu 2005, zelo povečalo. V polovici identificiranih primerov gre za otroške igrače ter električne naprave, predvsem kitajske izdelave. Sledijo motorna vozila, izdelki za otroško nego, gospodinjski aparati, okrasni predmeti, kozmetični izdelki, vžigalniki idr.

Delež nevarnih izdelkov, ki so ga sporočile države članice, se je podvojil, kar gre pripisati tudi izboljšanim metodam preverjanja. Sistem sporočanja RAPEX omogoča članicam, da identificirane nevarne izdelke prijavijo Komisiji, kar pa države članice izrabljajo z različnimi rezultati.

Slovenija je v bazo v 2005 prijavila 18 nevarnih izdelkov, kar ni veliko.

Poročilo je na voljo na spletu:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/reports/report_rapex_05_en.pdf

■ **Skrb Evropejcev zaradi zdravniških napak**

Raziskava Eurobarometra je pokazala, da 80% državljanov EU smatra zdravniške napake za resen problem. Študija je bila izvedena v letu 2005 in je zajela 24.600 državljanov v vseh državah članicah.

Tako je menilo tudi 81% slovenskih anketirancev. 17% Slovencev je izjavilo, da so bili napačno zdravljeni v bolnišnici. Evropejci v povprečju najbolj zaupamo zobozdravnikom (74%), v Sloveniji pa so deleži 'zaupanja' me zobozdravniki, zdravniki in medicinskim

osebjem bolj enotno porazdeljeni in se gibljejo okoli 60%.

Med drugimi državami članicami so se po meri zaupanja najbolje odrezali Finski in Danski zdravniki, najslabše pa kaže Italijanom in Poljakom.

Študija je dosegljiva:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_informatio_n/documents/eb_64_en.pdf

9. RR IN INOVACIJE

■ Reforma državnih pomoči v korist RR

Parlament bo podprl Komisijo v njenih prizadevanjih po reformi podeljevanja shem državnih pomoči. Te naj bi se v bodoče pogosteje namenjale razvoju regij in področju raziskav, in ne podjetjem v zatonu. Komisija je junija lani predstavila akcijski načrt za reformo, s katero želi poleg preusmeritve sredstev postopek podeljevanja pomoči tudi poenostaviti.

Ciljna usmerjenost državnih pomoči naj bi bila bolj usmerjena v odpiranje novih delovnih mest in gospodarski rasti ter socialni koheziji. To bi dosegli s podporo podjetjem v začetni fazi ter inovativnim, tehnološko usmerjenim podjetjem.

Aksijski načrt Komisije za reformo podeljevanja državnih pomoči najdete:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0107en01.pdf

Skupek mnenj različnih deležnikov o predvideni reformi je na voljo:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/competition/state_aid/others/action_plan/consult.html

■ Evropski tehnološki inštitut kot center odličnosti

Komisija je Svetu predlagala, naj na marčevskem zasedanju ustanovi Evropski tehnološki inštitut, ki naj bi prevzel vlogo centra odličnosti za visoko šolstvo, raziskave in inovacije. S tem naj bi združil vse elemente trikotnika znanja (izobraževanje, raziskave in inovacije).

Njegov namen bo privabiti najboljše študente, raziskovalce in inovatorje z vsega sveta, ki bodo sodelovali s podjetji in tako dosegali optimalne sinergijske učinke. Inštitut bo nudil

tudi možnosti za privabljanje zasebnega kapitala.

Tovrstno združevanje moči pomeni, da je treba ustanoviti nov pravni subjekt, prisoten na več mestih, ki bo združil najboljše ekipe in univerzitetne oddelke na strateških področjih po vsej Evropi.

Projekt naj bi v primeru odobritve zaživel do leta 2009.

Več o Evropskem tehnološkem inštitutu:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/eit/index_en.html

■ Nova publikacija o ustanavljanju omrežij za projektno sodelovanje

Rezultat evropskega projekta Veritas je objavljena publikacija, ki podrobneje opisuje načine vzpostavljanja omrežij sodelovanja. Namenjena je malim in srednjim podjetjem, industrijskim združenjem ter razvojnim agencijam, ki nimajo veliko izkušenj s sodelovanjem na različnih projektih in z različnimi partnerji.

Publikacija podrobneje predstavlja dejavnike uspešnega snovanja partnerstev, racionalno porabo razpoložljivih virov ter predstavlja nekatere obstoječe mrežne pobude ter eksperte.

Publikacija je na voljo:

<http://www.sfconsulting.net/index.php?option=news&task=viewarticle&sid=20>

■ Navodila za uspešno promocijo znanosti javnosti

Da bi znanost bolj približali ljudem in tako povečali popularnost znanstvenih ved, je ključno dobro predstaviti njene vsebine na javnih dogodkih. Kako uspešno komunicirati z javnostjo o znanstvenih temah, so avtorji poročila o znanstvenih dogodkih v Evropi, predstavili v brošuri.

Vsebina je nastajala v okviru raziskave, v kateri so ocenili 21 znanstvenih dogodkov v EU. Na podlagi vidnega, so avtorji sestavili priporočila za uspešno komuniciranje z javnostjo in promocijo znanosti.

Več o poročilu:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/comm/research/headlines/news/article_06_03_01_en.html&item=Infocentre&artid=1576

■ Manj kot 2% sredstev za RR

Po poročilu Eurostata, se je od 2003 pritek sredstev za raziskave zmanjševal. Prav tak je bil tudi trend investicij s strani privatnega sektorja.

V letu 2003 je bilo za RR namenjenih 1.92% BDP Unije, 2004 pa 1.90% (200 milijard evrov), kar je še daleč od predvidene stopnje investiranja v RR, ki je bil določen v Barceloni – 3% do leta 2010.

Edina država, ki izpolnjuje 3% vlaganja v RR je Finska. V letu 2004 je za raziskave namenjala kar 3.51% BDP, od tega je 70% sredstev prišlo s strani podjetij.

Slovenija je v primerjavi z 2003 (1.54%) raziskavam namenila večji delež v 2004 (1.61%). Najvišji delež lastnih vlaganj v raziskave v podjetjih beleži Finska (96%), pred Slovenijo. Slovenska podjetja so v RR vložila kar 93% lastnih sredstev (222 milijonov evrov) v letu 2003.

Raziskava Eurostata je dosegljiva na spletni strani:

http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NS-06-006/EN/KS-NS-06-006-EN.PDF

10. KMETIJSTVO

■ Zaščita piščancev na farmah

Poslanci Evropskega parlamenta so podprli predlog direktive, s katero bodo izboljšali življenjske pogoje piščancev, ki jih na evropskih farmah redijo za proizvodnjo mesa.

Parlament predlaga, da gostota naselitve piščancev v farmah ne bi presegala 30 kilogramov žive teže na kvadratni meter, pri tem pa bi moralo biti poskrbljeno tudi za ustrezno zračenje, osvetlitev, primerno vlažnost in temperaturo zraka v prostoru, redno hranjenje in neomejeno količino vode za živali.

Poslanci zahtevajo prepoved obrezovanja kljunov in kastracije piščancev, saj naj bi zmanjšanje gostote preprečilo stres za živali, zaradi česar prihaja do kljuvanja in kanibalizma. Veterinarske inšpekcije pa bi morale izvajanje vseh novih pravil iz direktive nadzorovati z nenapovedanimi pregledi stanja v perutninskih obratih vsaj enkrat letno.

Poslanci se še zavzemajo, da bi na ravni Unije vzpostavili enoten način ugotavljanja

simptomov različnih bolezni perutnine, uskladili kazni za kršitelje pravil in poseben usklajen način označevanja za piščančje meso, mesne izdelke in proizvode, ki temelji na standardih dobrega počutja živali. Etiketa naj bi vsebovala jasne informacije o proizvodnih standardih, označevanju porekla izdelka, gostoti piščancev v obratu in starosti živali.

Osnutek direktive (v slovenščini):

http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/pr/574/574243/574243sl.pdf

■ Pomoč rejcem perutnine zaradi ptičje gripe

20. februarja so se sestali kmetijski ministri EU in med drugim obravnavali tudi vprašanje poplačevanja stroškov rejcem, ki jih bodo ti utrpeli zaradi ptičje gripe.

Prodaja perutnine je v nekaterih državah članicah že precej upadla, zato so njihovi kmetijski ministri zahtevali dovoljenje za kompenzacijska plačila rejcem.

Edina povračila so po uveljavljeni zakonodaji namenjena lažšanju tržnih bremen in znašajo 30 evrov na 100 kg piščančjega mesa. EU v primeru zmanjšane prodaje ali morebitnega uničenja piščancev zaradi ptičje gripe zaenkrat ne namerava odobriti finančne pomoči. Italija je že razglasila, da se tega ne bo držala, privrženki izplačevanja pomoči sta tudi Grčija in Francija.

Komisija bo tako proučila možnosti oblik poplačevanja škode na prihodnjem zasedanju Sveta, v mesecu marcu.

Sporočilo avstrijskega predsedstva:

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Release_s/February/2102ProellAvianFlu.html

■ Reforma sektorja sladkorja uveljavljena

Kmetijski ministri so 20. februarja uradno potrdili reformo podpore proizvajalcev sladkorja v EU, ki bo prešla v izvajanje 1. julija letos.

Ključne novosti, ki jih prinaša reforma so 36-odstotno zmanjšanje zagotovljenih najnižjih cen sladkorja, nadomestila kmetom ter ustanovitev Sklada za obnovo, ki naj bo nekonkurenčnim proizvajalcem olajšal prenehanje poslovanja.

3. marca pa so se vlade držav članic strinjale za zmanjšanja letošnje proizvodnje sladkorja,

izoglukoze ter inulinskega sirupa za 2.5 milijona ton (13.6%). Ukrep je bil sprejet, da bi preprečili proizvodnjo tržnih viškov in s tem vzpostavili ravnotežje na trgu sladkorja. Slovenija bo ob upoštevanju kvote ter sprejetega popravka lahko proizvedla 46.849 ton sladkorja.

Več o reformi sladkorja:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/capreform/sugar/index_en.htm

■ Poročilo o uporabi gensko spremenjenih pridelkov

Komisija je februarja objavila poročilo, ki vsebuje priporočila za pridelovalce hrane kako se lahko izognejo gensko spremenjenim pridelkom. Raziskovalci so proučevali primere koruze, sladkorne pese in bombaža.

Cilj raziskave je opozoriti na metode proizvodnje semen, ki niso podvržene genskim spremembam. Študija je razkrila nizko stopnjo naključnih gensko spremenjenih vsebin pri navadnih rastlinah, ki ne prekoračuje dovoljnega praga 0.9% za EU. Do te stopnje bi bilo sobivanje gensko spremenjenih in nespremenjenih rastlin še sprejemljivo, kot ugotavlja poročilo. Temu primerna bi bila proizvodnja gensko spremenjenih semen v višini 0.5%.

Zagotovil, da npr. koruza ne bo vsebovala vsaj 0.1% naključnih gensko spremenjenih elementov, pa ni, saj se opravevanja v naravi ne da nadzirati.

Celotno poročilo je na voljo na spletni strani:

<http://www.jrc.es/home/pages/eur22102enfinal.pdf>

■ Nacionalni ukrepi za zagotovitev soobstoja gensko spremenjenih pridelkov

Komisija je 10. marca objavila poročilo o nacionalnih ukrepih za zagotovitev soobstoja gensko spremenjenih pridelkov s konvencionalno in ekološko pridelavo. V njem na razočaranje številnih držav članic ugotavlja, da priprava vseevropske zakonodaje o soobstoju gensko spremenjenih pridelkov s konvencionalnimi in ekološkimi pridelki za zdaj ni utemeljena. Posvetovanja z interesnimi skupinami pa bodo na to temo šele izvedena.

Ministri za zdravje so na zasedanju sveta kritizirali predvsem netransparentnost pri obravnavi gensko spremenjenih pridelkov in dejstvo, da o njihovi varnosti še vedno ni enotnega mnenja. Vsaka država članica sedaj

sama odloča o tem ali so gensko premenjeni pridelki dovoljeni ali ne.

Poročilo Komisije je na voljo v slovenščini:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/coexistence/com104_sl.pdf

■ Kodeks dobre prakse za rejo živali na evropskih živinorejskih farmah

Živinorejska podjetja, znanstveniki, potrošniške organizacije in drugi, udeleženi v evropskem raziskovalnem projektu 6. Okvirnega programa, so predstavili kodeks dobre prakse, da bi pripomogla k večji transparentnosti na farmah, ki se ukvarjajo z rejo živine. Ob upoštevanju kodeksa, bodo lahko evropske farme pridobile certifikat, ki bo potrjeval uporabo trajnostnih visokih standardov pri reji, zlasti pri zdravju živali. To potrošnikom zagotavlja kvalitetno prehrano.

Upoštevanje kodeksa in izdajanje certifikatov bo preverjala institucija, ki bo izvajala tudi usposabljanja.

Kodeks bo objavljen v 20 jezikih, na spletnih straneh:

<http://www.code-efabar.org/>

■ Za rentabilne evropske ribiške flote

Komisija je 9. marca sprejela sporočilo z namenom izboljšanja ekonomskega položaja ribiške industrije. Sporočilo podaja vzroke za nastanek trenutnega položaja in priporočila za izboljšanje le tega.

V dokumentu so predstavljeni ukrepi, ki jih države članice lahko uporabijo v skladu s predpisi glede državne pomoči ter tako pomagajo podjetjem v sektorju, ki so v težavah.

Sporočilo predstavlja tudi dolgoročne ukrepe, ki bodo evropsko ribiško industrijo privedli do ekonomske stabilnosti.

Več o sporočilu Komisije (v slovenščini):

http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/news_corner/press/inf06_16_sl.pdf

■ Sporazum o vinu med EU in ZDA

10. marca je bil podpisan sporazum o trgovini z vinom med EU in ZDA, ki bo koristil evropskim vinarjem, saj zanje ameriški trg predstavlja največji izvozni trg.

Glavni poudarki sporazuma so vezani na uporabo nekaterih imen evropskih vin v ZDA.

Vina EU bodo tudi izvzeta iz zahtev ZDA o izdaji potrdil iz leta 2004.

Podrobnosti o sporazumu na voljo: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/294&format=HTML&aged=0&language=SL&guiLanguage=en>

11. JUGOVZHODNA EVROPA

■ Spodbuda sporazumu o prosti trgovini

Predsednik Evropske komisije Barroso je s komisarjem za širitev Rehnom v februarju obiskal 5 držav Zahodnega Balkana (Hrvaška, Bosna in Hercegovina, Srbija in Črna Gora, Makedonija in Albanija) in povsod izrazil podporo sporazumu o prosti trgovini med državami v regiji, ki bo nadomestil 31 različnih bilateralnih trgovinskih sporazumov.

Na obisku v Zagrebu je Barroso pozval Hrvaško, ki je že začela s pogajanjem za vstop v Unijo, naj s svojim zgledom pripomore ostalim državam Zahodnega Balkana pri približevanju EU. Hrvaška se je zelo negativno odzvala na predlog o ustanovitvi trgovinskega območja, saj bi namesto tega raje razširili obstoječo CEFTO, ki se ji je medtem (poleg Hrvaške, Bolgarije in Romunije, ki bosta pa z vstopom v EU prenehali delovati v CEFTI) pridružila tudi Makedonija.

V ospredju obiska je bilo tudi dejstvo, da Hrvaška namenja podjetjem v obliki državnih pomoči zelo veliko sredstev, kar v EU ni dovoljeno. O poglavju o prosti konkurenci se bo Hrvaška začela pogajati kmalu.

Več o zaključkih obiska v regiji:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/newsletter/latest_weekly.htm

■ Albanija na poti približevanja EU

V Tirani so predstavniki tamkajšnjih oblasti 20. februarja po treh letih priprav podpisali stabilizacijski in pridružitveni sporazum z EU, s katerim Albanija začne svojo pot k integraciji v EU.

Najresnejše ovire, ki jih bo morala država odpraviti sta organizirani kriminal in korupcija. Poleg tega mora država tudi liberalizirati gospodarstvo, okrepiti premoženjske pravice ter svobodo govora.

Več:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/newsletter/latest_weekly.htm

■ Referendum o neodvisnosti v Črni Gori

Referendum o neodvisnosti Črne Gore je predviden za 21. maj 2006. Sprejeta so pravila glasovanja, ki jih je predlagala Unija. Neodvisnost bo potrjena, če se tako na referendumu odloči 55% od 650.000 volivcev. Obvezna bo vsaj 50% udeležba, če naj bodo rezultati priznani.

Po trenutnih javnomnenjskih raziskavah neodvisnost podpira 41%, proti jih je 32%, kar napoveduje tesen izid.

Lokalne volitve bodo v Črni Gori izvedli jeseni 2006, skupaj s parlamentarnimi.

Vir:

<http://www.euractiv.com/Article?tcmuri=tcm:29-153042-16&type=News>

■ Neformalno zasedanje zunanjih ministrov in Zahodni Balkan

Zunanji ministri držav članic so na neformalnem zasedanju v Salzburgu 10. in 11. marca razpravljali tudi o prihodnjem razvoju držav Zahodnega Balkana in Turčije v luči približevanja EU, čemur je bil posvečen drugi dan zasedanja. Udeleženci so potrdili zavezanost Unije po vključitvi teh držav v evropsko integracijo. Po besedah zunanjih ministrov, prihodnost Zahodnega Balkana leži v okrilju EU. Kljub temu je potrebno upoštevati absorpcijske zmogljivosti Unije. Upoštevanje le te je zlasti poudarjala Francija. Tako o konkretnem članstvu ali pridruževanju držav v regiji ni bilo govora.

Države v regiji morajo energično izpolnjevati zaveze sporazumov o stabilizaciji in približevanju oz. kriterije za vstop v EU in s tem povezane reforme v državah.

Ministri so pozvali k nadaljnjemu reševanju vprašanja o statusu Kosova. Unija podpira prizadevanja Združenih narodov na Kosovu in poziva Beograd in Prištino, naj delujeta v smeri dogovora o statusu pokrajine, ki bo demokratičen in multietničen. Britanski zunanji minister Straw je izjavil, da je neodvisnost Kosova 'skoraj neizogibna'. Izjavo so nekateri diplomati komentirali kot preuranjeno, saj delo evropskega pogajalca Ahtisaarija še ni zaključeno.

Udeleženci so pozitivno ocenili gospodarsko sodelovanje v regiji, zlasti območje proste trgovine, ki deluje v okviru CEFTE. Komisija pripravlja dodatne predloge, ki bodo olajšali pretok oseb. Ministri držav Zahodnega Balkana si prizadevajo za odpravo vizumov v regiji.

Več o zasedanju na spletnih straneh Avstrijskega predsedstva:
http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/Press_Release_s/March/1103EUWesternBalkansStatement.html

12. NAJAVE DOGODKOV

Innovation and Creativity Workshop

Nice, 13 – 24. marec 2006
djoher@theseus.fr

The Future of Packaging and Waste Policy in Europe

Bruselj, 14 – 15. marec 2006
<http://www.agra-net.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=agra/showEvent&id=20001020745>

Human Capital and Innovation Expo

Milano, 15. – 18. marec 2006
http://www.insme.org/documenti/Ecu_2006_280x150_ing.pdf

Innovation Pressure: Rethinking Competitiveness, Policy and the Society in a Globalized Economy – An International ProACT Conference

Tampere (Finska), 15. – 17. marec 2006
<http://www.proact2006.fi/>

European Business Summit 2006: Building a Europe of Excellence: Turning Knowledge into Growth

Bruselj, 16. – 17. marec 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_NEWS_EVENT&ACTION=D&RCN=24694&DOC=63&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=1

EMU Governance and EURO Changeover: the Path to the Adoption of the Euro

Ljubljana, 17. marec 2006

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/events/2006/conference170306/prog_en.pdf

Interoperability: A Competitive Advantage for SMEs

Bordeaux, 20. marec 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=25294&DOC=4&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

European Enlargement and Eurofunding

Bruselj, 20. – 22. marec 2006
http://www.eiil.net/mambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=57&Itemid=45

PAXIS Regions: European Innovation at its Best

Bruselj, 21. marec 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=NEWS_INNO&SESSION=&ACTION=D&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:25298

Brussels in a Day: Practical Approach to EU Public Affairs and Lobbying

Bruselj, 22. marec 2006
http://www.e-t-i.be/download/pe_brussels_in_a_day.pdf

Entrepreneurship Forum 2006

Bruselj, 22. marec 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=24918&DOC=6&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

Eurocities Knowledge Society Forum – TeleCities Spring Event

Yalova (Turcija), 23. – 24. marec 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&sub=detail&idevent=1302>

Connect with Europe seminar: European Information on the Web

Barcelona, 23. – 24. marec 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/default.htm>

-  **25th Annual European Agricultural Conference: The Future of European Agriculture in a Globalised Market**

London, 23. – 24. marec 2006
<http://www.agra-net.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=agra/showEvent&id=20001021288>

-  **University and Research Spin-off: an Engine to Create Innovative Companies**


Roma, 23. – 24. marec 2006
<http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=169&MenuGroup=2&MenuNum=1>

-  **Intellectual Property Forum 2006**

Oxford, 24. marec 2006
[http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/documentos/docsPublicacion/doc/8_Intellectual_Property_Forum_2006_programme\[0000006339_00\].doc](http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/documentos/docsPublicacion/doc/8_Intellectual_Property_Forum_2006_programme[0000006339_00].doc)

-  **Interreg3c East RFO-Forum**

Bologna, 24. marec 2006
http://www.interreg3c.net/web/east_en

-  **Lobbying in the EU: How to represent and defend your interests in Brussels**

Bruselj, 27. – 28. marec 2006
http://www.epsilonevents.com/eps_current_event.asp?id=13&type=current

-  **Demonstrating Conformance with e-Accessibility Requirements in ICT Products and Services**

Bruselj, 27. marec 2006
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/regulation/accessconfor/index_en.htm

-  **Giving More for Research: the Role of Foundations**

Bruselj, 27. – 28. marec 2006
<http://www.efc.be/content/alert.asp?ContentID=983>

-  **OECD Global Summit on SME and Entrepreneurship Financing**


Brasilia, 27. – 30. marec 2006
http://www.insme.org/documenti/OECD_Conf_Brazil_March06_EN.pdf

-  **The Contribution of the Information Technologies to Sustainable Development**


Valenciennes (Francija), 28. – 29. marec 2006
www.tic21.com

-  **European Congress of URBAN Networks and Cities: From Vision to Action**

Graz & Maribor, 28. – 29. marec 2006
http://www.deutscher-verband.org/seiten/urban-netzwerk/urban-action.asp#mrk_english

-  **Funding Strong Universities: Diversification, Student Support and Good Governance**

Hamburg, 30. marec – 1. april 2006
http://www.eua.be/eua/en/hamburg_conference.jsp

-  **Learning from Benchmarking to make i2010! A Reality in the Regions**

Bruselj, 30. marec 2006
<http://www.understand-eu.net/>

-  **The Bologna Process and the Implications of European University Educational Reform for CSR Research**

Ingolstadt, 31. marec 2006
<http://www.eabis.org/csrplatform/academicresearch/WP3event31032006/>

-  **Financial Management of EU Structural Funds**

Maastricht, 3. april – 4. april 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/default.htm>

**Innovation Village for Photonics Research**

Strasbourg, 3. april – 7. april 2006
www.rhenaphotonics.com

**IRF European Traffic Safety Conference “Safer Roads through Innovation”**

Amsterdam, 5. april 2006
http://www.irfnet.org/cms/pages/PagesUp/Pdf/AMS_Final%20programme.pdf

**Public Private Partnerships: Making Best Use of Public Funds**

Maastricht, 5. april – 7. april 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/default.htm>

**Diaspora as Wealth Creators**

Joenkoepping (Svedska), 6. april – 7. april 2006
<http://www.diwec.org/>

**ICT Tools for Providing Information, Advice and Services to Rural SMEs**

Oulu (Finska), 6. april – 7. april 2006
<http://www.helsinki.fi/ruralia/seinajoki/rubies/>

**4th Eastern European e-Gov Days 2006**

Praha, 19. – 22. april 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&ub=detail&idevent=1298>

**70th International Handicrafts Trade Fair**

Fortezza da Basso Firenze, 21. april – 1. maj 2006
info@mostrartigianato.it

**Annual Meeting INSME: Boosting Innovation by Bridging the Knowledge Gap**

Montevideo (Uruguay), 24. – 26. april 2006
<http://www.insme.org/page.asp>

**Regional Innovation Fair Kujawy-Pomorze**

Bydgoszcz (Polska), 25. april 2006
http://ica.cordis.lu/search/?fuseaction=events.simpldocument&EV_RCN=25065

**Evaluation and Monitoring of EU Structural Funds**

Maastricht, 26. april 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/index.asp?option=products§ion=M&id=1445&fct=Open>

**International Matching Workshop for Technology-oriented SMEs**

Wroclaw, 26. april 2006
<http://teico-net.net/display.php?site=1&lang=8>

**Competitiveness and Communication: The Role of EU Associations**

Bruselj, 26. april 2006
<http://kelleneurope.com/euroconference/>

**17th WASME World SME Convention**

Seoul, 26. – 29. april 2006
http://www.wasmeinfo.org/korea_smeconv_2006.htm

**Governing Universities in the Knowledge Society**

Valencia, 27. – 28. april 2006
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/55/35927436.pdf>


**Forest-based Sector Technology Platform: From Vision to Reality: the Strategic Research Agenda for the Forest-based Sector**

Irdning (Austria), 2. – 3. maj 2006
<http://www.forestplatform.org/easydata/customers/ftp/files/pdf/Admont.pdf>

**Nanoparticles for European Industry**

London, 2. – 3. maj 2006

www.nano.org.uk

 **Reality Check: Lisbon and its Regions – International Annual Conference**

Barcelona, 4. – 5. maj 2006
www.eipa.nl

 **European Technology Platforms (ETPs)**

Dunaj, 4. – 5. maj 2006
http://cordis.europa.eu.int/austria/events_04052006_en.html

 **Clusters Conference 2006: The Role of Innovation in Growing Competitive Clusters**

Brno (Češka), 4. – 5. maj 2006
http://www.jic.cz/klastry_registrace.php

 **How Best to Promote Growth, Employment and Competitiveness in the European Union**

Nemcija, 8. – 10. maj 2006
<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/eu/conference.aspx?confref=WP814>

 **Second World Forum on Regional Economic Development**

Madeira, 15. – 16. maj 2006
<http://www.eurada.org/calendar.php?menu=3>

 **Workshop on World-Class Manufacturing in Europe: Best Practice in Europe, Japan & USA Achieving Performance Excellence**

Dublin, 9. – 10. maj 2006
<http://www.eujapan.com/europe/workshop.html>

 **Re-Searching Women in Science and Technology**

Dunaj, 15. – 16. maj 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wir/news_en.html

 **Employment Week 2006: Working Together for Growth and Jobs**


Bruselj, 16. – 18. maj 2006
<http://www.employmentweek.com/index.asp?language=en>

 **Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology within FP7**

Dunaj, 16. – 17. maj 2006
http://cordis.europa.eu.int/austria/events_16052006_en.html

 **World Forum- Cities and Quality of Life**

Geneva, 18. maj 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&sub=detail&idevent=1257>

 **Best Practice Tools & Methodologies for BICs and Incubators**

Nantes (F), 18. maj 2006
<http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=163>

 **Lobbying and Decision Making in Europe: 10th bi-annual conference**


Bruselj, 18. – 19. maj 2006
<http://www.hawksmere.com>

 **Brussels Economic Forum – Renewal Europe**

Bruselj, 18. – 19. maj 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/events/2006/events_brussels_0506_en.htm

 **The Future of Rural Development – Making it Simpler, More Coherent and Effective**

Maastricht, 18. – 19. maj 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/default.htm>

 **Regions as the Driving Forces of European Competitiveness: From Theory to Practice**

Noord-Brabant (NL), 18. – 19. maj 2006

<http://www.a-e-r.org/events/regional-policies-committee/2006/innovationnb/>

 **Investing in R&D: Reconciling Corporate Strategies with Financial Markets**

London, 18. – 19. maj 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=25248&DOC=13&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

 **Central European Congress on Food**

Sofia, 22. – 24. maj 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=MSS_NEWS_CA&ACTION=D&RCN=25281&DOC=2&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=4

 **The EBRD Annual Meeting and Business Forum**

Beograd, 22. – 23. maj 2006
<http://www.ebrd.com/new/am/>

 **Joint Organic Congress 2006**

Odense (DK), 30. – 31. maj 2006
<http://www.okologi-kongres.dk/uk/>

 **19th Bled eConference: eValues**

Bled, 5. – 7. juni 2006
<http://www.bledconference.org/>

 **World Investment Conference**


La Baule (F), 6. – 8. juni 2006
<http://www.labaule2005.org/>

 **Conference REGNO 2006 – e-gouvernement**

Vilnius, 7. – 9. juni 2006
www.kada.lt/regno2006/

 **Shaping EU Regional Policy: Economic, Social and Political Pressures**


Leuven (B), 8. juni 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&ub=detail&idevent=1313>

 **European Research & Innovation Exhibition**

Paris, 8. – 11. juni 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=24706&DOC=15&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

 **Networks for Innovation**

Atene, 11. – 14. juni 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=24888&DOC=16&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

 **European Semantic Web Conference**

Črna gora, 11. – 14. juni 2006
http://icadc.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?CALLER=EN_EVENT_TM&ACTION=D&RCN=24801&DOC=17&CAT=NEWS&QUERY=2

 **Eurelectric Annual Convention and Conference: Role and Benefits of Electricity to Society**

Oslo, 12. – 13. juni 2006
www.eurelectric.org

 **Transport Research Arena 2006**

Göteborg, 12. – 16. juni 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/research/transport/news/article_3041_en.html

 **RIBN Business Forum**

Nova Gorica, 13. juni 2006
www.sbra.be

 **Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises**

Dunaj, 13. – 14. juni 2006
<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/events/events.htm>

 **E-Society 2006**

Dublin, 13. – 16. juni 2006
www.iadis.org/es2006/

**EREF 2006 - Building Knowledge Society through Regional Innovation Support**

Nova Gorica, 14. – 15. juni 2006
www.sbra.be

**IANIS + Annual Conference 2006 - Towards e-Regio 2010: Challenges and Threats for the Competitiveness of the Regions in the Global Knowledge Economy**

Ronneby (Švedska), 15. juni 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&ub=detail&idevent=1318>

**European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures**

Dunaj, 16. juni 2006
http://cordis.europa.eu.int/austria/events_16062006_en.html

**9th International Conference on Technology Policy and Innovation: Science, Society and Sustainability**

Santorini (Grcija), 18. juni 2006
<http://www.ianis.net/index.php?page=events&ub=detail&idevent=1299>

**Innovations in the Licensing World**

Glasgow (UK), 21. – 23. juni 2006
[http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/documentos/docsPublicacion/pdf/8_LESconfGlasgow\[0000006306_00\].pdf](http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/documentos/docsPublicacion/pdf/8_LESconfGlasgow[0000006306_00].pdf)

**An Expedition to European Digital Cultural Heritage**

Salzburg, 21. – 22. juni 2006
<http://dhc2006.salzburgresearch.at/>

**Launch of the 7th Framework Programme and the New European Research Council**

Washington, 22. juni 2006
http://cordis.europa.eu.int/austria/events_22062006_en.html

**Seminar: Financial Management of EU Structural Funds**

Maastricht, 27. – 28. juni 2006
www.eipa.nl

**European BIC Network Annual Congress 2006**

Napoli, 28. – 30. juni 2006
http://www.insme.org/documenti/EBN_Newsletter30.pdf

**Seminar: EU Banking and Financial Law: A New Strategy?**

Maastricht, 29. – 30. juni 2006
www.eipa.nl

**Implementing the New Structural Funds Regulations**

Maastricht, 6. – 7. juli 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/default.htm>

**Software Engineering and Advanced Applications (SEAA)**

Dubrovnik, 28. avgust – 1. september 2006
http://www.sea.unilinz.ac.at/euromicro2006/conference_organisation.html

**4th International EGOV Conference DEXA 2006**

Krakow, 4. – 8. september 2006
<http://www.dexa.org/drupal/?q=node>

**The 2006 ECFIN Annual Research Conference: Adjustments in the Euro Area – The Financial Market Dimension**

Bruselj, 7. – 8. september 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/events/2006/events_research_conference_0906_en.htm

**The Slovene Chemistry days 2006**

Maribor, 21. – 22. september 2006
www.chem-soc.si

**European Week of Regions and Cities 2006**

Bruselj, 9. – 12. oktober 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/conferences/od2006/index.cfm



Russian Forestry Complex in XXI Century

St.Petersburg, 10. – 13. oktober 2006
www.restec.ru/forum



Agriculture in Europe: What is the Future

Wilton Park (Steypning,UK), 23. – 25. oktober 2006
<http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/themes/eu/conference.aspx?confref=WP828>



Developing the Project Pipeline for EU Structural Funds

Maastricht, 30. – 31. oktober 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/index.asp?option=products§ion=M&id=1490>



Seminar: EU Communications in a Regional and Local Context: Planning, Structuring and implementing European Information and Campaigns

Maastricht, 9. – 10. november 2006
www.eipa.nl



IST Event 2006

Helsinki, 22. – 24. november 2006
<http://www.ist2006.fi/>



Implementing the New Structural Funds Regulations

Maastricht, 27. – 28. november 2006
<http://www.eipa.nl/index.asp?option=products§ion=M&id=1490>

13. ZANIMIVE PUBLIKACIJE

- ❖ The Demographic Future of Europe: Facts, Figures and Policies, Results of the PPA Study by Robert Bosch Stiftung, February 2006
http://www.bib-demographie.de/dialog_ppas_e.pdf
- ❖ EU 2005 Activity Report, European Commission, € 25, February 2006
<http://europa.eu.int/abc/doc/off/rg/en/welcome.htm>
- ❖ Study on the Assessment of the Impact of REACH on the Environment and Public Health, February 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/pdf/impact_on_environment_report.pdf
- ❖ The European Charter for Researchers – The Code of Conduct of the Recruitment of Researchers, DG Research, European Commission, 2005
http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf
- ❖ The European Researcher's Mobility Portal
http://europa.eu.int/eracareers/index_en.cfm?l1=15&CFID=2390252&CFTOKEN=9bfbbf5e7df2685-86E2C0A4-F83F-8D9E-213CF49159D51839
- ❖ EURES, The European Job Mobility Portal
<http://europa.eu.int/eures/main.jsp?acro=eures&lang=en&catId=1&parentId=0>
- ❖ Employment and Competitiveness, Daniel Gros, CEPS Policy Brief, February 2006
http://shop.ceps.be/BookDetail.php?item_id=1301
- ❖ The Eurostat Yearbook 2005, Eurostat,
order@libeurop.be
- ❖ Education and Training 2010: Diverse Systems, Shared Goals, DG Education & Training, EU Commission
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic
- ❖ Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, 2005 report (Graphs & Tables), EU Commission
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/report05graph.doc>
- ❖ Statistics in Focus, R&D Personnel 7/2006, Eurostat, January 2006
http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NS-06-007/EN/KS-NS-06-007-EN.PDF
- ❖ The European and Mediterranean Containerport market to 2015, Ocean Shipping Consultants,
http://www.osclimited.com/cportsto2015/Containerport_Markets_to_2015.pdf
- ❖ The EU's New Financial Services Agenda; A.Murray & A.Wanlin, CER, February 2006
<http://www.cer.org.uk/publications/653.html>
- ❖ From Neighbourhood to Intergration Policy: Are they concrete alternatives to enlargement? E.Landaburu, CEPS Policy briefs, March 2006
http://shop.ceps.be/BookDetail.php?item_id=1305
- ❖ Knowledge Capital as the Source of Growth, H.Piekkola, ENEPRI Working Paper, March 2006
http://shop.ceps.be/BookDetail.php?item_id=1306
- ❖ Vade-Mecum for Business & Innovation Centers, EBN/EC,
<http://www.ebn.be/content/main.asp?PageID=78&MenuGroup=1&MenuNum=24>

- ❖ High Technology Finland 2005
<http://www.hightechfinland.com/2005/>
- ❖ Detailed Analysis of the SGA and Fiscal Surveillance published by some EU members, DG Ecfm, March 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/about/activities/sgp/year/year20052006_en.htm
- ❖ Euro Area GDP Growth Projection, DG Ecfm, March 2006
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/indicators/euroareagd_en.htm
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14. PRILOGE

PRILOGA I

New budget, old dilemmas

By Iain Begg and Friedrich Heinemann

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After months of fierce haggling, the UK government managed to broker a deal on the EU's new budget at the Union's summit in December 2005. Provided the European Parliament adopts it, the agreement on the EU 'financial framework' will largely fix EU spending for the period 2007 to 2013. Failure to reach a deal in December would have compounded the sense of malaise that gripped the EU after French and Dutch voters rejected the EU constitutional treaty. And it would have caused anguish for the new member-states in Central and Eastern Europe: they need the extra time to prepare their applications for regional aid that would start flowing in after 2007.

At the same time, however, the EU will pay a heavy price for having achieved an early agreement. A compromise was only possible because the final deal limits the growth of the budget – as demanded by Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the other countries that pay for the bulk of the budget. And within these overall spending limits, there was little room for manoeuvre. Tony Blair had hoped to use the UK's presidency of the EU in the second half of 2005 to kick-start a major overhaul of the budget. However, some EU countries, led by France, opposed any fundamental reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Meanwhile, the new members fought hard for additional money from the EU's regional aid budget – against the resistance of those countries that currently benefit most from the EU's structural and cohesion funds, namely Spain, Portugal and Greece. As a result, some 70 per cent of EU spending will still go towards farm support and regional aid during the next seven-year budget period.

The new EU budget therefore has little relevance for the Union's agreed policy priorities, most notably economic growth and employment; fighting cross-border crime and terrorism; a stable EU neighbourhood and a stronger role for the EU in the wider world. There is a glimmer of hope in the shape of a review of EU budget policies in 2008-09. However, the mismatch between policy priorities and the allocation of spending is likely to persist as long as EU countries fail to address the basic dilemma of EU finances. Collectively, the EU countries want a budget that helps to achieve certain policy objectives, such as helping neighbouring countries or fostering EU-wide research and development (R&D). But individually, EU countries mainly care about their net contribution to the budget (the difference between what they pay into the budget and what they get out of through the CAP and other EU policies). There is no mechanism to achieve acceptable net positions. Instead, governments manipulate EU policies to make sure that they receive their 'fair' share of EU money. Or if this does not work, they add national rebates. As a result, the EU regularly ends up with budgets that are inefficient, badly targeted, ludicrously complicated and hardly worth the countless hours of political fighting that precede them.

Winners and losers

In the early hours of the morning of December 17th, EU leaders emerged bleary-eyed and visibly relieved from a two-day marathon session during which they had thrashed out the details of the EU's next seven year budget framework (called 'financial perspective' in EU jargon). Most of the assembled EU leaders proclaimed victory after the deal: the UK because it had rounded off its EU presidency by having achieved a budget deal against the odds; France's Jacques Chirac because he had successfully defended the CAP against Tony Blair's reformist zeal; Germany's new chancellor, Angela Merkel, because she had used her EU debut to show her mediating skills; and the new member-states because they obtained a larger regional aid allocation than under an initial British proposal.

However, each country also had to make concessions. According to provisional calculations, Germany will once again be the biggest net contributor relative to GDP, although it no longer ranks in the top ten of the richest EU countries (measured as per capita income based on purchasing power parity). Chirac had initially insisted that the EU should not touch a 2002 deal that fixes CAP spending on 'direct

payments' (the biggest chunk of farm subsidies) until 2013. But he then grudgingly conceded that the CAP should be included in the 2008-09 spending review. Britain agreed to limit the size of its cherished rebate, won by Margaret Thatcher some 20 years ago. But since Blair did not persuade his EU partners to commit firmly to future farm policy reform, he only agreed to cut the rebate to "pay for the UK's fair share of the costs of enlargement". Although aid for the new members will in future be taken out of the equation when the rebate is calculated, the rebate will continue to rise in cash terms during 2007-13. Meanwhile, the UK's net contribution to the budget will grow slightly, from around 0.2 per cent of gross national income (GNI) to 0.3 per cent of GNI, which is roughly the same as France will pay during the next budget period.

While the 25 EU governments thought they could live with the budget compromise, the European Parliament said it could not. On January 18th 2006, a large majority of MEPs voted against the December package. Since the Parliament, Council and Commission must all accept the 'inter-institutional agreement' on which the multi-annual financial framework is based, the approval of the Parliament is needed for the budget to come into force. The Parliament, the Commission and the Council (represented by the Austrian presidency in the first half of 2006) are now working feverishly to find a compromise. MEPs object to the allocation of EU spending – they want more money for internal security and foreign policy, for example – and the budget's limited size, which they deem too small for the enlarged EU. However, by calling for a larger budget, the European Parliament risks re-opening the acrimonious debates that preceded the December compromise.

Why size matters

EU spending is measured in two ways. First, there are broad budget allocations (called 'appropriations for commitments') for the different EU spending programmes. Some of these commitments are never spent or they are delayed. Second, there are the actual sums earmarked for spending during a given accounting period (called 'appropriations for payments'). Typically, 'payments' are lower than 'commitments'. However, EU officials and governments usually bandy around both sets of figures, and they use differing projections of how much larger commitments will be than payments. Therefore, there is considerable scope for confusion.

During the last major budget reform in 1988, the EU agreed an upper limit for budget expenditure as a share of EU GNI. Since the EU economy is growing, this still allows EU spending to grow in cash terms. The limit has been set as 1.24 per cent of EU GNI since the 1990s, expressed in terms of payments (with a corresponding figure for commitments of 1.31 per cent). However, actual spending has been substantially below this ceiling in recent years.

The size of the budget is subject to fierce debates among the member-states every time a new financial framework is negotiated. Any increase in EU spending has to be paid for largely from the treasuries of individual EU member-states. Any cut implies less money for the beneficiaries of EU policies, such as French farmers, poor Portuguese regions or recipients of EU research funding. Before the current budget negotiations even started, six net contributor countries (Germany, France, the UK, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria) wrote a joint letter to then Commission President Romano Prodi, demanding that the next budget be capped at only one per cent of EU GNI. Although they did not make it clear whether that ceiling referred to 'payments' or 'commitments', they subsequently signalled that they meant commitments. Undeterred, the Commission produced a draft budget in February 2004 that foresaw payments to rise to 1.15 per cent of GNI by 2013 (which implied an even bigger budget in terms of commitments). Luxembourg, which held the EU's rotating presidency before Britain, tried to persuade EU leaders to agree on a compromise of just over one per cent of GNI – but to no avail.

The challenge bequeathed to the UK in the second half of 2005 was to square the circle between finding additional money, in particular for the new member-states, and reducing the net contributions of big payers such as Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. For Blair, the obvious place to look for additional funds was the EU's costly and inefficient farm policy. He said that Britain would be willing to give up parts of its rebate in return for CAP reform. However, Chirac would not budge, while Merkel also defended the 2002 deal that fixes CAP spending until 2013.

When the British presidency finally published its compromise proposal in early December, it suggested overall spending of \$849 billion, nearly 20 per cent lower than the Commission had originally proposed

(but only marginally below Luxembourg's compromise proposal of S871 billion). Since the CAP's direct subsidies to farmers could not be touched, the UK suggested cuts in CAP allocations for rural development and environmental projects. It also earmarked less money for regional aid than the Luxembourg presidency had proposed – which triggered an outcry from the Central and East European countries. To make a smaller budget more palatable for the newcomers, the UK proposed to loosen the rules according to which regional aid is paid, for example by reducing the required national co-financing, and by lengthening the period over which allocated money can be paid out. The new members, according to the UK, would receive a somewhat smaller upfront allocation, but they would be able to 'absorb' a larger share of that allocation under the new rules. However, the new members accused the UK of trying to redistribute money from poor EU countries to rich ones while at the same time selfishly defending the EU rebate.

Given the almost unanimous condemnation of the UK's proposal, it was all the more surprising that EU leaders came to an agreement just a few days later at the EU summit. The final compromise set EU spending at S862 billion (at 2004 prices) over seven years, the equivalent of 1.045 per cent of EU GNI (in commitments). Although MEPs, the Commission and many of the budget's beneficiaries criticise the budget for being too small, it is difficult to define what the 'right' level of budget spending should be in the Union.

New, but still out of date

Ultimately, the 'right' size of the budget depends on what the money is being spent on. An expert group assembled by the Commission in 2003 under the leadership of André Sapir concluded that it was not the size of the budget that was the problem, but its "anachronistic" bias towards farm spending, and to regional aid that was too often used to prop up outdated industries. The Sapir group became very popular in Downing Street by advocating a major reallocation of EU money to growth-promoting policies, such as research and innovation. But these suggestions ran up against a coalition of vested interests from those currently benefiting from EU money, in particular farmers and the governments of the EU's poorer countries and regions.

The Commission had sought an 'easy' way out in the shape of a larger budget: more money would at the same time respect vested interests and allocate additional money for growth-boosting policies. This proved unacceptable to the net payers. They not only sought to limit their own financial burden, but also objected in principle to a rapid rise in EU spending at a time when state budgets are under pressure in most EU countries. However, their success in limiting the size of the budget came at the expense of leaving its anachronistic allocation largely untouched. Farm spending will still take up more than 40 per cent of total EU spending in 2007-13, while a largely unreformed EU regional policy will gobble up another 30 per cent.

The budget has little money for the priorities that EU leaders agreed on in the framework of the 'Lisbon reform programme', namely jobs and growth. Allocations for Lisbon-type policies (referred to as 'competitiveness for growth and employment' in the budget) have been cut by 46 per cent compared with what the Commission had originally proposed. They now take up less than 10 per cent of total allocations (see table on page 4). This means S60 billion less for research, innovation and new infrastructure, while the reduced allocation for 'cohesion' will also mean less money for boosting regional competitiveness.

The money available for two other areas in which the EU level aims to be more influential – 'external policies' and 'freedom, security and justice' – has also been cut significantly compared with the Commission's original proposal. As a result, EU action may be constrained in key areas such as internal security, immigration, neighbourhood policy and international development aid. It needs to be pointed out that some of the difference between the Commission proposal and the British compromise is due to the fact that the Commission figures included the costs of administration in the different policy areas. The final document adds up these costs under a separate heading of 'administration'. Therefore, the cuts in actual allocations are somewhat smaller than indicated in the table. And contrary to what some media reported, the allocation for administration has not actually risen in the final compromise.

Although Tony Blair failed to persuade his EU peers to start a more thorough overhaul of the EU budget, at least he extracted a commitment to have another go at budget reform in 2008-09.

According to the budget agreement, the Commission will draw up a “comprehensive review covering all aspects of EU spending, including the CAP” on the basis of which EU leaders will then decide unanimously on further budget reforms.

The budget’s ‘review clause’ is to be welcomed for two reasons. First, it was instrumental in making a deal possible – reconciling Blair’s reform ambitions with Chirac’s reticence to change by putting off difficult decisions. Second, it implies that EU governments at least acknowledge the necessity of further budget reform. However, whether the 2008-09 review will actually lead to any significant change is doubtful. So bruising have the budget battles become that once a financial framework is in place, EU leaders are very reluctant to unravel any agreed package. As a result, the EU budget has been heavily biased towards the status quo ever since the EU first introduced multi-annual budget planning in 1988. It appears that only an impending crisis – such as the risk of leaving the new members without proper regional aid allocations – can focus EU leaders’ minds sufficiently to reach a budget deal. Since there is now a defined budgetary framework that runs until 2013, this sense of threat will be absent in 2008-09. Although EU leaders are unlikely to revisit the 2007-13 compromise, they would be well advised to use the forthcoming review as an opportunity to prepare the ground for the financial perspective beyond 2013 much more thoroughly, and to break out of the straitjacket in which the budget has become locked.

Riddled with rebates

In terms of expenditure allocations, the new EU budget is not much of an improvement on the previous one. In another respect – transparency – the new compromise is, if anything, worse than previous deals. The EU countries’ obsession with their net contributions has prevented any courageous overhaul of EU spending priorities – lest it leaves some countries better or worse off than they had hoped. Instead, governments have manipulated EU policies, sometimes to a degree that defeats their original objective. For example, a sizeable proportion of the EU’s regional policy budget will continue to go to countries with per capita income above the EU average, such as Germany and Italy, as well as to Ireland, despite that country’s spectacular economic growth in the last decade. Indeed, in an attempt to limit Germany’s net contribution, the new budget allocates additional regional aid to the southern German state of Bavaria – one of the wealthiest regions in the EU.

Since there is only so much the EU can do to skew policies, it occasionally resorts to special adjustments. The British rebate is the most prominent example of this. The UK – as a rich member-state – pays into the budget roughly in proportion to its GNI. But since it has few farmers and deprived regions, it does not receive much money from the CAP and cohesion funds. Without the rebate, the UK would end up being by far the biggest net contributor to the budget. This was recognised in 1984, when then Prime Minister Thatcher obtained the rebate, under which the UK has subsequently been repaid two-thirds of its net contribution to the budget.

There are other, less well-known adjustments to how much countries pay into the budget. Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden currently enjoy a ‘rebate on the rebate’: they pay only 25 per cent of what they ‘ought’ to contribute towards the UK rebate (on the basis of their GNI), with the remaining countries having to make up the difference. And under the latest budget deal, the UK has also accepted that regional aid for the new members will be excluded from the rebate calculations.

The new budget also contains various other devices to adjust the net contributions of certain member-states. Two-thirds of what the individual member-states pay into the budget is calculated on the basis of their respective GNIs, so that the countries with the biggest economies usually pay the most. But two of the richest EU countries, the Netherlands and Sweden, successfully demanded a reduction of their GNI-based contributions (amounting to \$4.2 billion for the Netherlands and \$1.1 billion for Sweden). Another sizeable share of EU money comes from a contribution that the EU governments pay out of their value added tax (VAT) receipts. Instead of the usually 0.3 per cent of VAT receipts, Austria will in future pay only 0.225 per cent, Germany 0.15 per cent and the Netherlands and Sweden 0.1 per cent. As a result of all these adjustments, the way budget receipts and spending is calculated has become so complicated as to be incomprehensible to anyone bar a few specialists.

The basic budget dilemma

The main objective of EU spending, it seems, is to achieve acceptable net balances rather than agreed policy objectives. In other words, the EU cannot quite decide whether it wants a budget that

redistributes money from one set of member-states to another; or a budget that achieves certain EU-wide policies. By mixing the two objectives, the EU is stuck in the worst of both worlds. The EU insists that the CAP is needed to guarantee food security and help EU farmers; and that the structural funds foster EU-wide cohesion and competitiveness. Yet in practice, both the CAP and regional aid are used to redistribute money between EU countries. Perhaps not surprisingly, policies that are less predictable in terms of their redistributive impact – for example research programmes for which scientists from different EU countries must bid competitively – only make up a tiny share of the EU budget.

In a perfect world, EU countries would judge EU spending by its efficiency and its impact on the EU's prosperity, stability and its standing in the world. But the question of where the EU can best add value hardly came up in the budget negotiations. And the final deal represents a setback in terms of transparency, efficiency and the allocation of funding to forward-looking policies. With its special 'goodies' for regions ranging from Bavaria to Madeira and its plethora of rebates, the agreement looks more like the outcome of bazaar haggling than rational financial planning.

An EU tax?

Some economists and politicians have advocated an 'EU tax', as a way of avoiding the unseemly haggling about net balances. The Austrian government has suggested that the EU should use the 2008-09 budget review to discuss an EU-wide tax on short-term, cross-border financial investments as well as on air and sea travel. However, the idea of taxing financial flows (named 'Tobin tax' after its inventor) has been dismissed as impractical by most experts. Moreover, it is not clear that an EU tax would help to solve the EU budget's distributive dilemma. Although tax revenue would be transferred directly to Brussels, EU governments would still be able to calculate how much of it would be levied in their country. This may be one of the reasons why the UK – which hosts Europe's biggest financial centre, in addition to some of the continent's busiest ports and airports – does not like the idea. Also, taking national treasuries out of the equation may encourage fiscal laxity at the EU level. One of the few attractions of the current system is that the net payer countries press for budgetary discipline at the European level.

The EU should take member-states' focus on their net contributions as a given. But rather than achieving desired net positions through meddling with policies or inventing ever more obscure adjustments, the EU should make the redistributive nature of the budget more explicit. Solidarity and cohesion are widely accepted objectives of EU policies. Most voters in the rich EU member-states will – if somewhat reluctantly – support the transfer of money to poorer EU countries to help them catch up. Most Europeans also back the pooling of national budget resources to implement certain policies at EU level, provided these add value and help to avoid duplication. Common border controls, joint R&D programmes, cross - border infrastructure projects and co-ordinated development aid are only some examples.

Straight cash transfers

What the EU needs to do is to separate the redistributive aspects of the budget (who pays how much) from the allocative ones (which kind of policies the money is spent on). Rather than achieving desired net balances through the CAP or the structural funds, EU countries should consider introducing a straightforward horizontal cash transfer system based on each country's GNI. At first, these transfers could be arranged in a way that leaves no country better or worse off than under the old system. The new system would end today's absurd situation where wealthy countries partially pay for their own farmers and infrastructure through the EU budget. But by preserving the status quo in terms of net transfers it should make it easier to ensure a consensus in favour of reform.

Once all countries are satisfied with their net positions, they will more easily agree to a radical overhaul of EU spending policies, in particular by spending more money on R&D, infrastructure projects or foreign policy actions. Even under the new financing model, EU countries would continue to fight over burden sharing. However, the battle would be fought directly over who pays how much within the horizontal transfer system, rather than doing it in an indirect way by arguing about which kinds of policies the EU should finance. The separation of distribution and allocation would result in a more transparent budget. Greater transparency would make it easier for politicians, voters and the media to track where the money goes, and to put pressure on the EU and its governments to make

sure that scarce resources are spent on agreed objectives, such as boosting EU growth or helping poorer countries. Without transparency, public opinion in the countries that pay into the budget could quickly turn against the transfers.

For too long, the EU has rejected such a radical reform idea, simply because it denied the fact that its budget is redistributive. But after the December 2005 budget deal, such denial has become pointless. The EU should go the whole way and introduce a transparent cash transfer system that is not linked to EU policies, with the simple objective of achieving a fair (or rather: politically acceptable) burden sharing.

Iain Begg is a visiting professor at the London School of Economics and Friedrich Heinemann is head of the public finance department at the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim.

PRILOGA II

EU 2010: A programme for reform

Katinka Barysch, Hugo Brady, Charles Grant, Daniel Keohane,
Mark Leonard, Simon Tilford and Aurore Wanlin

Centre for European reform Manifesto, February 2006

The European Union is suffering from a profound malaise. There have been difficult times in the past – such as the ‘empty chair’ left by General de Gaulle in the mid-1960s, the rows over the British budget contribution in the early 1980s, and the struggles to ratify the Maastricht treaty and preserve the Exchange Rate Mechanism in the early 1990s. The EU’s current predicament, however, is particularly serious, because several harmful ingredients have come together in a toxic brew.

One crucial ingredient is the poor performance of the core Euroland economies. Low economic growth and high unemployment make many people fearful of change, whether it comes in the form of new EU treaties, fresh rounds of enlargement or a world trade agreement. The failure of the EU’s constitutional treaty has left a cloud of uncertainty hanging over its institutions. Partly because of these economic and institutional problems, the legitimacy of the Union has diminished among broad sections of the European public.

In many EU countries, the Union now symbolises the forces of globalisation. It is viewed – with some justice – as the body that tries to remove barriers to trade and the free movement of people across an increasingly wide area. As a consequence, those who see globalisation as a threat to their jobs, or believe that there are too many immigrants in their country, tend to hold the EU responsible. A lot of people see the EU as a source of insecurity rather than as a resource to help governments soften the pains provoked by globalisation. They look to national governments to provide security. Populist politicians are increasingly adept at exploiting nationalist feeling to oppose openness in general, and the EU in particular.

For 50 years the Union has been a huge success, helping to spread prosperity, democracy and security across much of the European continent. But as the EU has expanded, becoming increasingly diverse, the sense of common purpose among its member-states has diminished. Many Europeans see the EU institutions as remote, complex and hard to understand, but few are aware of the many practical benefits they deliver. Now that the euro has been created, and most of the Central and East European countries have joined the Union, the EU lacks a single, unifying project.

All these problems are compounded by a leadership vacuum: the authority of the European Commission is at an all-time low, while many EU countries have leaders who appear to care little about the fate of the Union. The possibility of the Union ‘going backwards’, for example through an increase in protectionism in some member-states, is real.

And yet, despite all these difficulties, the EU remains indispensable to all its members. The memberstates need the Union to help them deliver prosperity to their citizens, through the provision of a broad single market. But they also need it to help them cope with the stresses of globalisation. Issues such as terrorism, technological and demographic change, global warming, the need to diversify energy supplies and the rapid growth of emerging economies are challenging Europe. They cannot be tackled by one or a few countries on their own. More than ever, therefore, Europeans need a strong and effective Union to promote their interests and express their values.

Joint action by the EU’s member-states and institutions can reform the Union and rebuild its credibility with the peoples of Europe. The constitutional treaty offered one route for reform. Many of its provisions would have made sensible improvements to the way the EU works. However, the No votes in the French and Dutch referendums have killed the treaty, which cannot be ratified without the consent of every member-state. In the current circumstances, if the EU had another go at writing a significant new treaty, many governments would choose to ratify through referendum rather than parliamentary vote. Therefore the likelihood of a new treaty being adopted by all 25 member-states is

minimal. In the long run, the EU will have to come back to the question of treaty revision, especially if enlargement is to continue. But we believe that for the rest of this decade the EU should not spend a lot of time and energy on trying to adopt a major new treaty.

The Union's priorities should be to improve its record of delivering practical benefits to European citizens, and to explain better the benefits it already delivers. The EU should also strive to be outward-looking: it needs the ability to influence its neighbourhood, and to stand up for European values and interests in the wider world. We believe that the EU can do a great deal to improve its institutions and policies on the basis of the current treaties. We are therefore offering 25 proposals that are designed to make the EU work better in the short to medium term. If the Union were able to implement such a programme by 2010, its image would improve, and future treaty changes would become easier to handle.

INSTITUTIONS AND ENLARGEMENT

1. The delivery deficit. The EU has a problem of legitimacy. The main cause is not a 'democratic deficit' – there are plenty of checks and balances on the exercise of power within the EU system – but rather a delivery deficit. Too often there has been a gap between rhetoric and reality. EU leaders often promise great things, for example to create "the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledgebased economy" by 2010, but fail to deliver. In order to rebuild support for the EU, national leaders need to focus on delivering visible solutions to the problems European citizens care most about. These problems include low economic growth and high unemployment, illegal immigration, organised crime, terrorism, pollution, global warming and uncertainty over future energy supplies. For many of these issues, national governments control most of the relevant levers, but the EU can and should help in all of them. The EU should also focus on challenges beyond its boundaries which individual member-states are ill-suited to tackle on their own. These include promoting stability and security in the EU's neighbourhood, and common foreign policies further afield. Even without treaty change, the EU and its member-states can make progress in all these areas.

2. Linking national capitals to the EU. Part of the EU's legitimacy problem is rooted in national capitals, which are poorly connected to the Brussels system. National governments frequently use the Union as a scapegoat, and most parliaments do a poor job of scrutinising EU legislation. The Commission should send draft laws to national parliaments at the very start of the lawmaking process. The governments and the Commission should agree that if six or more national parliaments pass a motion that a legislative proposal breaches subsidiarity (the idea that EU should not be involved in a policy unless it adds demonstrable value), the Commission will withdraw it. European commissioners are formally independent of the countries that nominate them, and rightly so. But they should appear before their 'home' parliaments at least once a year, to explain the Commission's work programme and answer questions on it. In addition, commissioners should try to make themselves available to answer questions in other national parliaments, when requested. The Council of Ministers should meet in public whenever it discusses and votes on EU legislation of any sort: this would make it harder for governments to blame the EU for decisions that they have themselves supported.

3. Flexible integration. Those countries which want a more integrated Europe should make use of flexible integration, the idea that not every member-state need take part in every EU policy. Such 'variable geometry' is already a fact of life: not every member-state is in the Schengen area of passport-free travel or the euro. Flexible integration is not the same as a 'hard core', the idea that the EU should be divided into an inner circle of states committed to closer integration across a wide range of policy areas, and an outer circle of the less ambitious countries. A hard core would be divisive and create big institutional difficulties. Much more likely, and desirable, would be a series of overlapping *avant-gardes* for different policy areas. This kind of flexible integration has potential drawbacks: it increases the complexity of the EU, and if taken to extremes could lead to some countries trying to unravel valuable parts of the existing rule-book. However, with the EU soon expanding to 27 or more members, the spread of flexible integration is probably inevitable. The 'enhanced co-operation' provisions of the existing treaties, which allow groups of countries to move ahead in particular policy areas, have yet to be tested. But informal inter-governmental groupings are already coming together in ways that promote European interests or integration. For example, the 'EU-3' on Iran (Britain, France and Germany), the 'G-5' on counter- terrorism (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), or the seven signatories of the Prüm treaty on police exchanges and border co-operation (Austria, the Benelux three, France, Germany and Spain). A more diverse EU should be able to cope with different

countries pursuing different priorities, so long as everyone agrees that certain core competences and tasks cannot be optional.

4. Core competences. These core competences and tasks should be those defined by the current treaties. They include: trade, competition, a set of common rules for fisheries and agriculture (though not necessarily today's Common Agricultural Policy), environmental standards, policies for helping the EU's poorer regions, the single market (including cross-border aspects of transport and energy policy), free movement, some co-operation on borders and policing, and common foreign policies. That leaves policies and institutions such as the euro and its budgetary rules, the co-ordination of tax policies (so long as that does not harm the single market), common border controls, criminal justice and defence policy, as suitable for flexible integration.

5. Flexible integration and enlargement. Flexible integration could play a particular role in helping to sustain support for enlargement. The view that treaty-based integration has, for the time being, stopped, has turned political elites in some European countries against EU enlargement. They fear that further widening would weaken the EU's institutions and sense of solidarity. But if the countries which want a closer political union are able to build *avant-gardes* in specific policy areas, some of those opposed to enlargement may reconsider their views. Furthermore, in a more flexible EU, some countries seeking to join could be encouraged to accept very long transition periods that would delay their full participation in certain EU policies. Again, that would make future enlargement more palatable to some doubters.

6. EU enlargement. Enlargement enhances the prosperity and security of the entire continent, and gives the Union more strategic weight. But EU governments need to do a better job of explaining the benefits of enlargement to electorates. Romania and Bulgaria should join the EU when they have demonstrated that they are making a big effort to clamp down on corruption and organised crime. Subsequent rounds of enlargement will not be feasible without significant improvements to the EU institutions. The Union should do its best to ensure that the accession talks with Croatia and Turkey reach a successful outcome. Progress in the talks with Turkey will require a resolution of the Cyprus problem. The EU governments need to make a higher priority of finding a diplomatic solution to the division of that island. As part of that effort, they should agree to a new programme of economic assistance for northern Cyprus. The EU should not define its final boundary: if the EU did so it would needlessly curtail its influence over neighbouring countries that aspire to join one day, such as Ukraine. The Union must reaffirm its existing commitments to the countries of the Western Balkans, showing that it is serious about the promise of membership for those that can meet the conditions. The EU should decide on a set of target dates for when it expects each of the Balkan states to become a candidate, and to open accession talks. A tentative timetable would maximise the EU's ability to persuade these countries to adopt the political and economic reforms that are necessary for their modernisation and the region's stability.

ECONOMIC POLICIES

7. The euro. The euro is central to the identity and success of the EU, both economically as the common currency of 12 member-states, and symbolically as the EU's most integrationist project. Prolonged stagnation in the big euro countries, a euro currency crisis or even the break-up of the eurozone would be a political and economic disaster for the Union. Countries with severe competitiveness problems, such as Italy, must carry out structural reforms as an urgent priority. But the EU also needs to revisit the fiscal rules underpinning the euro, in the stability and growth pact. These rules have been watered down to the point where few people understand them and they have little credibility. A new, clearer set of rules is needed to ensure the sustainability of public finances at a time when societies are ageing. Countries with low debt levels and welldeveloped private sector pension systems should be allowed to run higher annual deficits than those whose public finances are already strained.

8. Eurozone enlargement. Formally, only the UK and Denmark have an opt-out from the euro, though in practice Sweden behaves as if it had one. The new members from Central and Eastern Europe are obliged to join the eurozone once they fulfil the Maastricht treaty's convergence criteria on inflation, interest rates, currency stability and public finances – and the eurozone is obliged to let them in. However, the rules should respect the reality, which is that if a country does not want to join, it cannot be forced to. The new EU members, and future adherents such as Romania and Bulgaria, should be

free to decide if they want to adopt the currency. Furthermore, over-hasty enlargement of the eurozone could endanger its health: the Maastricht criteria focus on a country's suitability at any one moment, rather than the sustainability of its macro-economic stability, or the country's likely impact on the eurozone. Once a potential member has satisfied the Maastricht criteria, the European Central Bank and the Commission should jointly prepare a report on whether the eurozone has the capacity to absorb that country. The European Council should not admit the country concerned without a positive report.

9. Economic reform. In Lisbon in March 2000 the EU heads of government signed up to an ambitious programme of economic reform, much of which requires action at member-state level. The governments have yet to fulfil many of their promises. They need to pay more attention to the Lisbon method of achieving reform through benchmarking, peer review and the exchange of best practice. Encouragingly, in March 2005 every member-state agreed to submit an annual national action plan, describing its efforts to meet the Lisbon goals. The national action plans should help parliaments and media to hold their governments to account. The Commission should summon the courage to name and shame the governments which fail to fulfil their Lisbon promises. It should focus its efforts on those areas where it can play a leading role, notably the single market. It should make a special effort to open up energy markets: although in theory deregulated, many national energy markets remain closed to outside competition. The EU should also improve the connections between national energy markets, and adopt provisions so that a member-state suffering an energy shortage can expect help from its partners. The Commission must not flinch in its efforts to deregulate the services sector, which is vital to job creation in Europe. If a group of governments tries to block the passage of a truly liberalising services directive, those in favour should prepare to set up an 'enhanced co-operation' for services liberalisation. That prospect would encourage the foot-draggers to accept a compromise among all 25 that would lead to a significant boost in the cross-border provision of services.

10. The EU budget. The review of the EU budget scheduled for 2008-09 should lead to fundamental reform – before the next budget cycle ends in 2013. The EU should take seriously the recommendations of the report that André Sapir's committee delivered to then Commission President Romano Prodi in 2003. Sapir argued that spending should be targeted on the attainment of Lisbon goals. In particular, he called for a big shift of spending from farm subsidies and regional aid towards R&D, education and aid that helps companies to restructure. The EU should further reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by completing the decoupling of subsidies from production that earlier reforms have begun; introducing 'co-financing', so that national governments share the cost of supporting farmers; focusing a higher proportion of subsidies on the poorest farmers; and transferring money from farm support to rural development in the new member-states. Some of the money from the CAP should go into spending on external policies, with the emphasis on the neighbourhood policy, aid for future members and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (see below). By 2013 the budget should provide \$10 billion a year for external policies, rather than the \$8 billion planned in the December 2005 agreement.

11. Higher education. Education is the key to building a knowledge economy that will make the EU globally competitive. However, the overall performance of Europe's higher education has declined in recent years. Europe has too few world-class research universities. European universities need to modernise their archaic governance structures and make a better job of seeking private finance to supplement state funds. The EU should support these efforts and provide money to help its best universities strengthen ties with their peers in Europe and the rest of the world. The countries which recently joined the EU have few top universities. The EU's structural funds should provide money to support the best universities in the poorer memberstates in developing research departments. The Erasmus programme has benefited hundreds of thousands of students by allowing them to spend an academic year in another EU country. The EU should extend the programme so that those who wish to study for an entire degree in another member-state can do so. It should encourage the portability of student grants and loans from one member-state to another. The EU should expand the Erasmus Mundus programme, which brings students from other parts of the world to European universities. The programme should also send European students to universities in emerging economies, such as India, China and Russia.

12. Research and development. The Commission currently manages the Union's R&D funds in a manner that is neither transparent nor strategic. The EU's procedures for giving out research money are complex, cumbersome and inflexible. Bids for funds are not submitted to an open process of peer

review by eminent scientists. Therefore, the EU's recent decision to establish a European Research Council – a largely independent body that would distribute funds according to a set of objective criteria and peer review – is welcome. The ERC needs to be independent of EU institutions, and adequately funded, with a budget of at least S2 billion a year. When the ERC has proved its worth, some of the R&D funds currently managed by the Commission should be transferred to it.

13. Social policy. Jacques Delors rightly argued that if the EU wants trade unions and left-of-centre parties to give broad support to its liberalising policies, it needs a 'social dimension'. The Union should set minimum standards for health and safety in the workplace, and for nondiscrimination. It also has an important role to play in promoting benchmarking and exchange of best practice, as governments try to modernise their welfare states. For example, the EU sets guidelines for its member-states on issues such as fighting child poverty and the provision of child - care. However, an EU that stretches to 27 or more countries must inevitably accommodate a diverse range of social models. Much labour market regulation should be left to the memberstates: the EU should not extend its existing rules on working hours, paid holidays or consultation. The Sapir report urged that part of the EU budget be targeted on the 'losers' of globalisation, such as those laid off because companies or industries have become uncompetitive. The responsibility for coping with the social consequences of industrial restructuring must remain principally with the member-states. However, the EU should help, for example by offering financial support for retraining, relocation or business start-ups. The European Council's decision in December 2005 to establish a 'globalisation adjustment fund' should enable the EU to play this role. However, the fund currently lacks the secure financial base that it needs to be credible.

EXTERNAL POLICIES

14. Strengthening foreign policy. With foreign policy challenges including a Russia that is increasingly inward-looking, a rising China, an unstable Middle East and a fragile transatlantic relationship, the EU has little choice but to strengthen its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). One important goal for the EU must be to promote stronger multilateral institutions, including a more effective United Nations. In practice, not all member-states will play an equal role in the making of EU foreign policy. But there should be no permanent *directoire* of the larger countries, or any other fixed leadership group. Depending on the subject under discussion, small groups of large and small member-states with relevant expertise, should – together with the High Representative – give leadership to the Union, as has happened with policy towards Iran and Ukraine. On the question of arms sales to China, for example, countries with significant arms industries – such as Slovakia, Spain and Sweden – should be included in the leading group. Both Spain and Portugal should be involved in policy towards Latin America, and so on.

15. The High Representative. The constitutional treaty would have done much to make the CFSP more effective and efficient. But the current institutional arrangements for the CFSP can also be improved through agreements among the governments and EU institutions. The EU should diminish the role of the rotating presidency in foreign policy, and at the same time build up the role of the High Representative, currently Javier Solana. The governments should reach an understanding that successive presidencies will, first, delegate the chairing of foreign ministers' meetings to the High Representative; and, second, entrust the job of representing the Union externally to the High Representative (in place of the 'troika', which consists of Solana, the presidency, and the external relations commissioner, currently Benita Ferrero-Waldner). The High Representative and his staff need greater resources so that they can better analyse the key problems and co-ordinate the member-states' policies. In 2005 the EU spent S62 million on CFSP – less than what it spent on office cleaners. The EU should set aside S500 million a year for the CFSP and crisis management. The demise of the constitutional treaty means that the promised 'external action service' cannot be created as a legal entity. But in practice the relevant officials from the Commission (including its overseas delegations) and the Council, together with others seconded by the member-states, could and should be integrated into a single team, under the leadership of the High Representative. The governments and the Commission should agree that the commissioner for external relations would act as a de facto deputy to the High Representative. Her job would be to mobilise the Commission's extensive resources for the benefit of the CFSP. She would remain in charge of the EU's neighbourhood policy.

16. A stronger neighbourhood policy. The EU needs to pay particular attention to its potentially

unstable neighbourhood. The European neighbourhood policy is a laudable first attempt to help stabilise the Union's southern and eastern flanks. It promises aid, trade, political contacts and participation in EU programmes, in return for political and economic reform. However, some parts of the Commission and several of the member-states are not yet committed to implementing the policy (for example by providing market access). The Union needs to be able to give greater incentives to the best-performing neighbours, in order to influence their development. The EU should offer selected neighbours the privilege of becoming 'security partners' of the Union – in effect joining the CFSP. The EU and the neighbour concerned would agree that on certain foreign or security policies – for example, dealing with networks that smuggle arms or people, or policy towards Central Asia – they shared a common interest and could help each other. When the EU discussed such a subject in the Council of Ministers, the security partner would be involved. However, the partner's role would be limited to participating in the shaping, but not the taking, of decisions. It would have the choice of signing up to the policy that emerged, or standing aside. Such arrangements could greatly enhance ties between some neighbours and the EU.

17. Promoting democracy. The Commission's efforts to promote democracy in neighbouring states, through the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights, have been hampered by slow decision-taking, excessive bureaucracy and inflexibility. The EU should create a 'European endowment for democracy', modelled on the National Endowment for Democracy in the US. This should take over the funds currently managed by the Commission that support civil society and democracy.

18. Defence policy. Given how much the Europeans spend on defence – some \$180 billion a year among the 25 – they have very little capability to show for it. Solana is already over-stretched and needs a credible deputy with the specific task of strengthening European defence. This deputy should work with the European Defence Agency to mobilise the EU's military capabilities – and name and shame the governments which fail to deliver on their promises. The Commission, too, can play a useful role. Most member-states have signed up to a voluntary code of conduct on opening up their defence markets – but there is no institution to enforce the code. The governments should therefore mandate the Commission to regulate a common market for the less sensitive defence products – for example armoured vehicles or spare parts for military aircraft. The Commission should use existing single market rules to promote cross-border competition among defence contractors. The governments should pool more of their spending on military R&D, to avoid duplication and to save money. As a start, they should give the European Defence Agency a research budget of \$500 million year. They should also save money by pooling some logistical support, and operating certain assets, such as transport planes, on a joint basis.

19. Trade. The EU has an important role to play in stamping out national protectionism and in helping developing countries to trade their way out of poverty. Governments should be more supportive of the Commission and give it greater room for manoeuvre in the Doha round of trade talks. Businesses should be more active in making the case for open economies and an ambitious conclusion to the Doha round. A successful outcome requires a major reduction of EU agricultural tariffs. But the EU alone cannot ensure that Doha benefits the poorest countries. So the Union should do everything it can to maximise the pressure on the US, Japan and the stronger developing economies – including Brazil, China and India – to open their markets to the least developed countries.

20. Development assistance. The EU is the world's leading aid donor, accounting for 55 per cent of all development assistance (a fifth of that 55 per cent is managed by the Commission). However, too little EU aid goes to the world's poorest countries; half the EU's aid is spent in middle-income countries. The EU should focus its development policy on poverty reduction and thus increase the funds going to the least developed countries. Currently, the development policies of the Commission and the member-states are poorly co-ordinated, which sometimes leads to inefficiencies and contradictions. If the EU and the 25 member-states were better able to coordinate their approaches, they would make more political impact and reduce the burden on recipient governments. The member-states should give more support to the Commission's efforts to ensure greater consistency of these policies. However, the Commission's procedures for dispensing funds are too slow and inflexible. It should give its staff in the field greater freedom of action. More of the EU's aid should focus on building the capacity of developing countries to export, for example through infrastructure projects or support for the private sector, and on improving governance and the delivery of services. Less should go to central government bureaucracies or western consultants.

21. Climate change. During the global negotiations to replace the Kyoto protocol with a new institutional framework, the EU should argue for a 30 per cent binding target of cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 (from 1990 levels). Such an ambitious target would create the incentives for the development of new technologies that can help to solve the problem – and allow the EU to lead the rest of the world by example. However, its current system of carbon trading is flawed: each member-state has some leeway in setting its own ‘cap’ (maximum level) of carbon emissions. The EU should agree on a Europe-wide cap, based on scientific advice, and then apportion carbon quotas to each member-state. This carbon trading scheme should be extended to Europe’s aviation industry. In the long run the EU should merge its carbon trading system with those established by several North American states. The EU should also take further steps to limit its greenhouse gas emissions. For example, the EU should adopt more ambitious guidelines on the proportion of each member’s electricity generation that comes from renewable sources, and make them binding. It should also pass legislation to set standards on greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. The EU should do much more to export its environmental technologies, at minimal cost, to developing countries such as China and India.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

22. Better decision-making in Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). More effective EU policies on JHA could help to make the Union more popular: there is strong public support for closer European co-operation on issues such as terrorism, illegal immigration and organised crime. However, the governments still take decisions on these issues by unanimity, and often very slowly. The final compromises are frequently of poor quality, and are seldom implemented on time. The European arrest warrant, for example, is still not applicable in every member-state, two years after the official deadline for implementation. Article 42 of the existing Treaty on European Union allows the EU to switch decision-making on criminal justice and cross-border policing to qualified majority voting (QMV); and to give the Commission and the European Court of Justice the power to ensure that decisions in these areas are implemented. The governments should agree to make this switch – for which unanimity is required – as soon as possible.

23. Civil liberties. The EU’s growing role in JHA must not come at the expense of an erosion of civil liberties. If the governments used Article 42 to extend qualified majority voting in JHA (see above), the European Parliament would gain greater powers over JHA legislation, through the so-called co-decision procedure. That should allow more public scrutiny of JHA policies. The EU’s governments should agree on optimal standards for the rights of defendants facing trial in EU countries other than their own, so that they receive proper legal aid, translation and interpretation. Given that an increasing number of Europeans are held on remand away from home but in the EU, a new system of cross-border bail needs to be devised.

24. Counter- terrorism. The fight against terrorism is mainly a task for national governments. But the EU can play a useful role by helping governments to arrest and prosecute suspected terrorists (and other criminals) who travel across borders. The EU governments should speed up the implementation of proposals such as the European evidence warrant, which would make it easier to transfer evidence from one country to another. They should also share more information, through the ‘situation centre’, the EU’s intelligence assessment body. Many member-states lack the expertise to track open sources of information, like terrorist websites, which often help to recruit and train new members for extremist cells. With more money and analysts, the situation centre could play an important role in monitoring suspicious websites. Finally, the EU should step up cooperation with key countries in the fight against terrorism, such as Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. That means sending more policemen, intelligence officers and border guards on training missions to such places.

25. Immigration. Every member-state stands to gain from immigration. Their economies would also benefit greatly if legal migrants from beyond the EU could move around freely within it. The EU’s governments should therefore agree on a system of flexible residence permits that would allow migrants to shift between countries and types of employment. The free movement of migrants within the EU would require the member-states to co-ordinate their immigration policies. For example, they should agree on the criteria by which they judge applications for admission, including education and skills levels. But a single, EU-wide immigration policy would be pointless: each member-state has different immigrant communities and economic priorities. Meanwhile, the 12 ‘old’ member-states still

limiting the freedom to work of those from the 'new' member-states should end restrictions. Britain, Ireland and Sweden, which welcomed East European job-seekers, have found their presence manageable and beneficial to their economies.