

News from the Member Federations | General CoESS news

- VPB's Cash and Value Logistics Unit concerned about draft EU Regulation on cross-border CIT harmonisation
- USP (French CoESS member) to develop specialised training for private security managers and prevention officers
- Personal national identification card for each French private security guard
- Nordic standardisation efforts - NHO Service (Norwegian CoESS member) co-develops Standard Contract
- Closing conference - ZRSZV's (Slovenian CoESS member) Social Dialogue project
- CounterAct - Final Conference - March 3, 2009 (Brussels)

News from the CoESS Working Committees

- Maritime Train-the-Trainer Seminar (ISPS Code) - Two-page article in 'Beveiliging'
- CoESS Working Committee Critical Infrastructure - March 10, 2009 (Brussels)
- CoESS Working Committee Maritime Security - March 30-31, 2009 (Hamburg, Germany)

News from ASSA-I (Aviation Security Services Association International)

- anna.aero unveils European airport traffic database for 2009
- Commission proposes making rights to slots more flexible in order to counteract the impact of the crisis on air transport
- European Commission welcomes the adoption of the Directive on airport charges by the European Parliament and the Council
- ACI Europe: no economic recovery without empowered European airports
- ACI: preliminary world airport traffic 2008
- ICAO releases preliminary safety and security statistics for 2008
- EU completes 'Single Sky' airspace shake-up

News from the European Union

- World Security Congress and Show 2009 (Madrid, Spain)
- Southeast Asian countries plan EU-style union by 2015
- Ministers approve maritime safety laws
- Upcoming Swedish EU Presidency launches logo
- New online platform presenting results of EU-funded projects is launched
- Future of EU Enlargement in South-East Europe
- Publication of the General Report on the EU's activities in 2008
- Commission adopts revised mechanism for verifying the application of Schengen rules in the Member States
- Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009
- EU ministers agree to lower VAT
- Albania to formally apply for EU membership
- Maritime safety: towards better prevention of maritime accidents
- EU ministers discuss progress report on Single Market Review
- Sarkozy announces France's return to NATO
- New independent certification body for Ireland
- Raising standards in the Irish private security industry
- EDPS: European Parliament reaches correct balance between transparency and data protection
- Race to get end-of-term legislation through EU Parliament
- EU, social partners plan job summit as high unemployment looms
- Euro area annual inflation up to 1.2% - EU down to 1.7%
- MEPs slam European Commission as Working Time conciliation fails
- Czech government falls, putting EU Presidency at risk
- Business leaders want 'European Skills Pact'
- BusinessEurope: position paper on liability of subcontracting undertakings

News from the Member Federations | General CoESS news

VPB's Cash and Value Logistics Unit concerned about draft EU Regulation on cross-border CIT harmonisation



The Cash and Value Logistics unit from VPB, CoESS' Dutch member federation, is concerned about the EU's draft Regulation on cross-border CIT harmonisation in the Eurozone. Both retailers and banks are in favour of such a Regulation. The European federations responsible for Cash-in-Transit and the transport of valuables, however, are not keen on the draft contents as it may cause unfair competition between countries applying varying levels of security policies, which, in turn, will increase risk in cash and value logistics.

- Source: VPB Checklist | February 2009
- For further information, please consult the VPB website: www.vpb.nl.

USP (French CoESS member) to develop specialised training for private security managers and prevention officers



USP, Union des entreprises de Sécurité Privée, active member of CoESS, and INHES, Institut National des Hautes Etudes de Sécurité, signed an agreement aimed at developing a specialised training for private security managers and prevention officers in accordance with the relative legal dispositions.

- Source: USP | February 2009
- For further information, please consult the USP website (French): <http://www.securite-privée.org/formation-une-formation-pour-les.html>.

Personal national identification card for each French private security guard



As of March 7, 2009 the French authorities issue a personal national identification card to each private security guard (already in service and future candidates), who themselves will have to apply for the card with their local French authorities. The card is required for private security guards active in the following private security fields: manned guarding, electronic surveillance, guarding with or without dogs, transport of cash and valuables, bodyguarding and aviation security.

- Source: USP | March 7, 2009
- For further information, please consult the USP website (French): <http://www.securite-privée.org/carte-professionnelle-tous-les.html>.

Nordic standardisation efforts - NHO Service (Norwegian CoESS member) co-develops Standard Contract



The Nordic Innovation Centre recently conducted a study entitled 'Exploiting the potential of Nordic internationalisation of services' aimed at exploring the possibilities for Nordic service standardisation initiatives. NHO Service, associated CoESS member, has been heavily involved in developing a new Standard Contract for the private security sector in Norway. The development of this Standard Contract is a joint effort by NHO Service, Norsk Standard and representatives from private security companies and trade unions. Nordic Innovation Centre's study warmly applauds NHO Service's initiative and work. NHO Service hopes that this standard will be used as the basis for the development of a future European standard.

- Source: NHO Service | March 18, 2009
- To review the full study and to learn more about NHO Service's joint initiative, please consult the Nordic Innovation Centre website: <http://www.nordicinnovation.net/prosjekt.cfm?id=1-4415-299>.

Closing conference - ZRSZV's (Slovenian CoESS member) Social Dialogue project

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On March 26-27, 2009 ZRSZV, CoESS' Slovenian member federation, organised the closing conference of its project 'Strengthening Social Dialogue in the Private Security Industry - Networking and Set-up of Mutual Assistance in the EU's Eastern New Member and Candidate Countries'.

- ➔ For further information on the Social Dialogue project, please consult the ZRSZV website (English): <http://www.zrszv.si/novice/obvestila/strengproang.htm>.

CounterAct - Final Conference - March 3, 2009 (Brussels)



CounterAct is a European research project funded under the Sixth Framework Programme by the European Commission (DG Transport and Energy). The main objective is to improve security against terrorist attacks aimed at public passenger transport, intermodal freight transport and energy production and transmission infrastructure. CoESS and its corresponding member ASSA-I participated in the Final Conference on March 3, 2009.

- ➔ To download the Conference presentations, please consult the Counteract website: <http://www.counteract.eu/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fDocuments%2fFinal%20Conference%20Brussels%2c%20March%202009&FolderCTID=&View=%7b5D3259FC%2d12B1%2d45D8%2d8699%2d122B3DADAB5D%7d>.
- ➔ For further information, please consult the CounterAct website: <http://www.counteract.eu>.

News from the CoESS Working Committees

Maritime Train-the-Trainer Seminar (ISPS Code) - Two-page article in 'Beveiliging'



Following the Train-the-Trainer Seminar on ISPS Code that was organised in Rotterdam, the Netherlands from February 17-19, 2009, the Dutch security magazine 'Beveiliging' published a two-page article in its March 2009 issue.

- ➔ Source: Beveiliging | March 2009
- ➔ The article is available on the CoESS intranet site (Dutch): <http://coess.org/intranet/login.php>. Please note that you will have to login to be able to consult the document. In case you have any difficulties logging in, please contact the CoESS General Secretariat.

CoESS Working Committee Critical Infrastructure - March 10, 2009 (Brussels)

On March 10, 2009 the Working Committee Critical Infrastructure organised a meeting in Brussels. The following two projects were discussed: CoESS Survey related to the organisation of Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) throughout Europe and CoESS' future White Paper on Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) in Europe.

- ➔ The minutes of the Working Committee Critical Infrastructure of March 10, 2009 are available on the CoESS intranet site: <http://coess.org/intranet/login.php>. Please note that you will have to login to be able to consult the document. In case you have any difficulties logging in, please contact the CoESS General Secretariat.

CoESS Working Committee Maritime Security - March 30-31, 2009 (Hamburg, Germany)

On March 30-31, 2009 the Working Committee Maritime Security organised a two-day meeting in Hamburg, Germany, courtesy of our German member federation and host, BDWS, and its member company Kötter GmbH & Co. KG. The Working Committee focused on the following agenda topics: evaluation of the Maritime Train-the-Trainer Seminar of February 17-19, 2009 in Rotterdam (The Netherlands), next steps for the Maritime Training Programme, SAGMaS latest developments and feedback from the 'Piracy and armed robbery' seminar of January 21, 2009.

- The minutes of the Working Committee Maritime Security of March 30-31, 2009 will soon be made available on the CoESS intranet site: <http://coess.org/intranet/login.php>. Please note that you will have to login to be able to consult the document. In case you have any difficulties logging in, please contact the CoESS General Secretariat.

News from ASSA-I (Aviation Security Services Association International)

anna.aero unveils European airport traffic database for 2009

Following the success of anna.aero's downloadable spreadsheet which tracked monthly traffic changes at over 200 European airports in 2008, anna.aero is pleased to introduce an online database which will track traffic changes at European airports in 2009.

- Source: anna.aero | February 27, 2009
- To review the database, please consult the anna.aero website: <http://www.anna.aero/european-airport-traffic-trends>.

Commission proposes making rights to slots more flexible in order to counteract the impact of the crisis on air transport

On March 10, 2009 the European Commission adopted a proposal for an amendment to the 'slots' which it is submitting to the European Parliament and the Council for urgent adoption. This temporary measure would allow airlines to keep their rights over slots.

- Source: European Commission | March 10, 2009
- For further information, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/375&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=nl>.

European Commission welcomes the adoption of the Directive on airport charges by the European Parliament and the Council

On March 11, 2009 the EU legislators agreed on a Directive on airport charges. Vice-President Antonio Tajani, responsible for transport, said: "I am delighted with this outcome: it is an important first step in addressing airport charges in Community law. Airport charges must be transparent and non-discriminatory, which will benefit the citizens of Europe." The Directive provides a clear legal framework for setting airport charges and reflects current commercial practices. Once implemented, the new legislation will promote better dialogue between airlines and airports. It is essential to ensure transparency, non-discrimination and appropriate consultation between airlines and airports under an independent regulator in each Member State.

- Source: European Commission | March 11, 2009
- For further information, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/389&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

ACI Europe: no economic recovery without empowered European airports



On March 13, 2009 ACI Europe, the voice of Europe's airports, released its response to the ongoing economic and financial turmoil. The paper, entitled 'Empower Europe's airports to boost economic recovery' reveals the unprecedented impact that this crisis is having on airports across Europe and the proactive nature of their reaction. It also details the five urgent measures that ACI Europe is calling for. These measures do not involve massive bailouts, but are merely focussed on a reconsideration of existing policies and regulations, both at European and at national level. The measures are fully in line with the recently announced European Economic Recovery Plan as they also look to the long-term competitiveness and viability of the European aviation system.

- Source: ACI Europe | March 13, 2009
- To review the press release, please consult the ACI Europe website: http://www.aci-europe.org/upload/09_03_13%20No%20Economic%20Recovery%20without%20empowering%20European%20airports%20IP.pdf.
- To review the full paper 'Empower Europe's airports to boost economic recovery', please consult the ACT Europe website: http://www.aci-europe.org/crisisdocument/ACI_CRISIS.pdf.

ACI: preliminary world airport traffic 2008

Strong traffic results early in 2008 helped save the overall averages for the year, as seen in the ACI preliminary airport data. While passenger traffic growth hovered at -0.2 percent and cargo shrank by -3.6 percent, total aircraft movements dropped by -2.2 percent, led by the largest world market North America, where movement reductions (-5.6 percent) were greater than the decline in passenger numbers (-3 percent). Director General of ACI (Airports Council International), Angela Gittens, sums up the tempestuous year: "Dramatic swings in the business world, including an unprecedented financial and investment crisis and the onset of a spreading global recession, impacted consumers and businesses in all regions in 2008. Shrinking demand is directly hitting the carriers, who in turn are cutting routes and services offered at many airports. The end result is readily visible in the ACI preliminary figures provided by 900 airports worldwide."

- Source: Airports Council International (ACI) | March 17, 2009
- For further information, please consult the ACI website: http://www.airports.org/cda/aci_common/display/main/aci_content07_c.jsp?zn=aci&cp=1-7-46^28155_666_2.

ICAO releases preliminary safety and security statistics for 2008

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) released preliminary safety and security statistics for airlines of its 190 member states for 2008. Regarding security in 2008, 24 acts of unlawful interference were recorded in which a total of 11 persons were killed and 31 were injured. This compares to 22 acts in 2007, with 18 persons killed and 33 injured. "While the safety and security of commercial aviation keeps improving over the long term, we continue to work with Member States and the industry to consistently reduce even more the number of accidents and fatalities. This is imperative if air transport is to keep growing and contribute to the economic and social development of all regions of the world," said Roberto Kobeh González, President of the Council of ICAO.

- Source: International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) | March 19, 2009
- For further information, please consult the ICAO website: http://www.icao.int/icao/en/nr/2009/pio200903_e.pdf.

EU completes 'Single Sky' airspace shake-up

Cheaper airline tickets, shorter flight times, less pollution and no more air borders: these are the expected benefits of the 'Single European Sky II' package of legislation adopted by the European Parliament on March 25, 2009. SES II consists of two regulations aimed at improving the performance of the European aviation system in key areas such as safety, capacity, flight, cost efficiency and environmental sustainability, by coordinating and supervising Member States' air traffic control systems and implementing common rules and performance targets.

- Source: European Parliament and European Commission | March 25, 2009
- For further information, please consult the European Parliament website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=20090325&secondRef=TOC&language=EN> and the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air/single_european_sky/ses_2_en.htm.

News from the European Union

World Security Congress and Show 2009 (Madrid, Spain)

From May 5-8, 2009, the World Security Congress and Show 2009 will be organised in Madrid, Spain, by the World Security Federation. The Congress will foster an international debate about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of private and public security.

- Source: World Security Federation | February 2009
- For further information and/or to register, please consult the World Security Congress and Show 2009 website: <http://www.worldsecuritycongress.org>.

Southeast Asian countries plan EU-style union by 2015



The leaders of ten Southeast Asian countries have signed a declaration to integrate their economies and construct an economic and political union modelled on that of the European Union by 2015. Meeting in Thailand for the annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the heads of ten Asian countries agreed to the Cha-Am Hua Hin Declaration on the Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2009-2015). The plan looks to build a single market - although without a Euro-style common currency - within six years.

- Source: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Bangkok Post | March 1, 2009
- For further information, please consult the ASEAN website: <http://www.aseansec.org/22331.htm> and the Bangkok Post website: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/136986/leaders-sign-asean-declaration>.

Ministers approve maritime safety laws

Justice and Home Affairs Ministers rubberstamped six legislative proposals of the EU's third maritime safety package, which aims to reduce maritime accidents and pollution in Europe. The package, tabled by the European Commission in 2005, includes eight draft laws. On February 26, 2009 the Justice and Home Affairs Council approved four of them, laying down rules on ship inspection, port state control, monitoring vessel traffic and investigating accidents. Two further proposals were adopted on February 27, 2009 on common standards for maritime administration activities and passenger carriers' liability for accidents.

- Source: Council of the European Union | March 2, 2009
- For further information, please consult the Council of the European Union website: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1103&lang=en> and http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/106371.pdf.

Upcoming Swedish EU Presidency launches logo



On March 2, 2009 Sweden's Europe Minister, Cecilia Malmström, presented the logo of the upcoming Swedish EU Presidency as climate change and the financial crisis are set to dominate Stockholm's agenda in the second half of 2009. With the Copenhagen UN conference on climate change taking place in December 2009, the Swedish Presidency is due to begin preparations for a new global agreement on emissions reduction one of its key priorities.

- Source: Swedish EU Presidency | March 2, 2009
- For further information, please consult the Swedish government website: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/11312/a/121473>.

New online platform presenting results of EU-funded projects is launched

The European Commission presented a new online tool for easy access to the results and details of EU-funded projects in the fields of education, culture, youth and citizenship. EVE (Espace Virtuel d'Echange) was officially launched by European Commissioner Jan Figel on March 2, 2009 at a conference and exhibition on creative and innovative projects funded by the EU.

- Source: European Commission | March 2, 2009
- To access the EVE platform, please consult the EVE website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eve>.
- For further information, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/340&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=nl>.

Future of EU Enlargement in South-East Europe

On March 3, 2009 Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, delivered a speech during the EU Observer Conference Western Balkans.

- Source: European Commission | March 3, 2009

- ➔ To review the full speech, please consult the European Commission website:
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/87&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=nl>.

Publication of the General Report on the EU's activities in 2008



The European Commission has published the General Report on the activities of the European Union in 2008. Last year was marked in particular by the global financial crisis, climate change and international conflict, all of which brought rapid and effective European reaction that pushed the Union to the forefront of the world political stage. The key institutional event of the year was the process of ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, which faltered in spring with the 'no' vote in the Irish referendum, but was revived at the European Council in December 2008.

- ➔ Source: European Commission | March 4, 2009
- ➔ To review the General Report on the EU's activities in 2008, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/generalreport/en/welcome.htm>.

Commission adopts revised mechanism for verifying the application of Schengen rules in the Member States

On March 5, 2009 the European Commission adopted two proposals on a revised mechanism for Schengen evaluation. The mechanism enables verification of the application of the Schengen rules in the Member States. These proposals supplement the current mechanism and introduce unannounced visits to ensure a high level of implementation of the Schengen rules in the Member States.

- ➔ Source: European Commission | March 5, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the European Commission website:
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/359&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=nl>.

Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009

The European Commission and Council's Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion examines the Member States' integrated national strategies on social inclusion, pensions, healthcare and long-term care. It reviews the main trends across the EU and at national level. The 2009 Report gives a clear signal on the need to implement comprehensive active inclusion strategies, to ensure long-term adequacy and sustainability of pensions, to reduce health inequalities and to improve cost-efficiency in the healthcare sector. Moreover, it highlights the challenges that each EU country faces to promote social inclusion, adequate and sustainable pensions and universally accessible healthcare and long-term care. These challenges are presented in the country assessments accompanying the report.

- ➔ Source: European Commission | March 5, 2009
- ➔ To review the Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009, please consult the European Commission website:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/joint_reports_en.htm#2009.

EU ministers agree to lower VAT

On March 10, 2009 the financial and economic crisis pushed EU Finance Ministers to agree on a deal to apply reduced sales tax on local services such as meals, haircuts and home repairs. The deal is part of a wider package to help the EU's smaller businesses, which tend to be local. The standard rate of VAT in the EU is 15 percent and countries will have the right to cut this to five percent on the list of services agreed in the deal.

- ➔ Source: Czech Presidency website and European Voice | March 10, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the Czech Presidency website: <http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/third-ecofin-council-presided-by-czech-finance-minister-kalousek--11709/> and the European Voice website: <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2009/03/ministers-agree-on-reduced-vat-rates-for-services/64247.aspx>.

Albania to formally apply for EU membership

Albania will present its European Union membership application before the end of June 2009, the country's Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, announced on March 8, 2009. The European Commission has identified normal procedures in Albania's upcoming parliamentary elections as a condition of its candidacy, with the country set to hold parliamentary elections on June 28, 2009.

- Source: EurActiv | March 10, 2009
- For further information, please consult the EurActiv website: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/albania-formally-apply-eu-membership/article-180100>.

Maritime safety: towards better prevention of maritime accidents

On March 11, 2009 the European Parliament finally approved the third package of measures for maritime safety after the agreement reached in conciliation last December 2008 and approval by the Council. This package complements existing EU legislation. With this package, the European Union will have a completely overhauled system for monitoring vessels in its ports. This system will allow a more frequent and systematic inspection of vessels that pose a risk. It will also make it possible to definitively ban the worst of them from European ports.

- Source: European Commission | March 11, 2009
- For further information, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/390&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

EU ministers discuss progress report on Single Market Review

On March 5-6, 2009 the Competitiveness Council adopted conclusions on the European Commission's progress report on the Single Market Review. The report, issued in December 2008, outlines a series of measures that have already been taken or are in the pipeline that will help create the conditions to relaunch the European economy. Ministers broadly agreed with its assessment, including on 'the need for a more evidence-based and impact-driven approach to internal market policy, with targeted actions to remove barriers and enhance competition in areas and sectors of particular economic significance'.

- Source: European Commission | March 12, 2009
- For further information, please consult the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/strategy/index_en.htm#one.

Sarkozy announces France's return to NATO



On March 11, 2009 French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced the return of his country to the military structures of NATO, 43 years after General Charles de Gaulle left the alliance to mark Paris' independence of the US. The President said he would formally notify France's allies of its return to the military structures during NATO's 60th anniversary summit on April 2-4, 2009 in Strasbourg/Kehl.

- Source: BBC News | March 12, 2009
- For further information, please consult the BBC News website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7937666.stm>.

New independent certification body for Ireland

A new independent certification body for Ireland was launched in Dublin recently. CerticCS is a security-specific body that provides certification schemes for security companies involved in the installation of electronic security systems and providers of guarding, cash-in-transit and alarm monitoring centres. CerticCS provide an alternative route for security companies seeking approval to meet the Private Security Authority's (PSA) Private Security Contractors Licence and An Garda Síochána Intruder Alarm Policy. Companies will be audited to the appropriate Irish Standards by CerticCS inspectors who are experienced industry auditors, giving customers of the security industry confidence in CerticCS approved companies.

- Source: Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) | SecureView - Spring 2009

- ➔ For further information, please consult the CerticCS website: <http://www.certiccs.ie> and the ISIA website: http://www.isia.ie/isia/Main/2009_News_CerticCS.htm.

Raising standards in the Irish private security industry

The drive towards raising standards within the Irish security industry is gathering pace with more and more companies achieving the Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) Qualsec (Quality Assurance Scheme) standards. Qualsec is a continuous improvement quality scheme managed and monitored independently by CerticCS. The scheme operates on a three-tier approach through which companies can attain a Silver, Gold or Platinum standard.

- ➔ Source: Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA) | SecureView - Spring 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the ISIA website: http://isia.ie/isia/Main/2008_Qualsec.htm.

EDPS: European Parliament reaches correct balance between transparency and data protection

Following the vote in the European Parliament on March 11, 2009, the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) has expressed his satisfaction with how the Parliament addressed the delicate issue of reconciling transparency requirements with data protection obligations. Although some legal fine-tuning is still needed, the amendments adopted by MEPs clearly reflect an approach which strives for a proper balance between transparency on the one hand and data protection on the other.

- ➔ Source: European Data Protection Supervisor and European Parliament | March 12, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the European Data Protection Supervisor website: http://www.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/webdav/site/mySite/shared/Documents/EDPS/PressNews/Press/2009/EDPS-2009-04_Transparency_EN.pdf and the European Parliament website: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/019-51409-068-03-11-902-20090310IPR51408-09-03-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm.

Race to get end-of-term legislation through EU Parliament

With just three plenary meetings left before the European Parliament finishes its current term, MEPs still have some major legislation to clear before they hit the campaign trail ahead of the June elections. Among the most important are the energy and telecom bills - flagship liberalisation projects of the current European Commission. Other big chunks of legislation include the Working Time Directive, a controversial law restricting the working week to 48 hours. Draft EU laws that have already begun the legislative process in the European Parliament, meaning that they have been voted on in committee, are automatically carried over to the next term. After the final May 2009 plenary session, Parliament will reconvene in July 2009 for its constitutive session following the June 2009 elections. Its first legislative meeting will be in September 2009. Meanwhile, the new parliament (2009-2014) will see a major increase in its powers if the Lisbon Treaty is passed in Ireland, which is to hold a second referendum on the pact later this year.

- ➔ Source: EUobserver | March 12, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the EUobserver website: <http://euobserver.com/9/27763/?rk=1>.

EU, social partners plan job summit as high unemployment looms

In an attempt to soften the impact of the economic slowdown on European households, the EU executive and social partners announced plans to embark on a series of talks to devise ways to avoid social freefall and come up with new ideas to carve out recession-proof employment policies at an upcoming employment summit on May 7, 2009. In its latest economic forecast released on March 12, 2009 BusinessEurope, the European employers' organisation, said the 16-nation Eurozone's economy would contract by 2.1 percent in 2009, compared with 0.8 percent growth last year. For the 27-nation EU, negative growth is expected at 2.2 percent.

- ➔ Source: European Commission and European Parliament | March 12-13, 2009
- ➔ To review BusinessEurope's economic forecast, please consult the BusinessEurope website: <http://212.3.246.117/docs/1/ODILBNLCKDJBEPNOCJJGOONPDBG9DBN7N9LTE4Q/UNICE/docs/DLS/2009-00696-E.pdf>.
- ➔ For further information, please consult the European Commission website: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/108&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> and the European Parliament website: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/004-51421-068-03-11-901-20090310IPR51420-09-03-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm.

Euro area annual inflation up to 1.2% - EU down to 1.7%

Euro area inflation was 1.2% in February 2009, up from 1.1% in January 2009. A year earlier, the rate was 3.3%. Monthly inflation was 0.4% in February 2009. EU annual inflation was 1.7% in February 2009, down from 1.8% in January 2009. A year earlier, the rate was 3.5%. Monthly inflation was 0.4% in February 2009.

- ➔ Source: Eurostat | March 16, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the Eurostat website: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009_MONTH_03/2-16032009-EN-AP.PDF.

MEPs slam European Commission as Working Time conciliation fails

The European Parliament openly criticised the inactivity of the EU executive as MEPs and the European Council on March 17, 2009 failed to resolve long-running disagreements over the Working Time Directive. Both sides met in conciliation in Brussels. “No agreement could be reached on the main controversial aspects” of the Directive, according to German Socialist MEP Mechtild Rothe, who chaired the Parliament’s delegation to the conciliation committee.

- ➔ Source: EurActiv | March 18, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the EurActiv website: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/meps-slam-commission-working-time-conciliation-fails/article-180406>.

Czech government falls, putting EU Presidency at risk



On March 24, 2009 the Czech Parliament voted down the government led by Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, who currently holds the EU Presidency. The vote of non-confidence gathered the necessary 101 votes out of 200 to topple the administration, with four votes from the governing party going with the opposition.

- ➔ Source: Czech Presidency | March 24, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the Czech Presidency website: <http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/response-of-czech-prime-minister-mirek-topolaneck-to-no-confidence-vote-13407/>.

Business leaders want ‘European Skills Pact’

A key report launched on March 26, 2009 at the European Business Summit urges governments to pay to train workers who would otherwise be laid off, in an effort to address the yawning skills gap that is opening up across Europe. Under the proposed plan, companies considering lay-offs or putting staff on shorter working weeks can apply for public funds to boost the skills of their staff.

- ➔ Source: European Business Summit | March 26, 2009
- ➔ To review the report on skills and innovation, please consult the INSEAD website: http://www.insead.edu/discover_insead/docs/WhocaresWhodares.pdf.
- ➔ For further information, please consult the European Business Summit website: <http://www.ebsummit.eu/>.

Barroso hopeful of progress on EU-Turkey talks



Turkey’s accession talks with the EU may move a small step forward before the Czech EU Presidency ends in June 2009, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said on March 26, 2009. “We are hoping to open at least two chapters during the Czech Presidency,” he stated.

- ➔ Source: EUobserver | March 26, 2009
- ➔ For further information, please consult the EUobserver website: <http://euobserver.com/9/27857/?rk=1>.

BusinessEurope: position paper on liability of subcontracting undertakings

On March 31, 2009 BusinessEurope published its position paper on liability of subcontracting undertakings.

- Source: BusinessEurope | March 31, 2009
- For further information, please consult the BusinessEurope website:
<http://www.buinesseurope.eu/content/Default.asp?PageID=423>.

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