

Cabinet Newsletter

Newsletter n. 23, 25 November 2010

Dear Reader,

The EU Competitiveness Council is meeting today and tomorrow in Brussels, with Vice President Tajani co-representing the European Commission. On the industry side, a few key policy areas will be discussed, namely Europe's new industrial policy, the Innovation Union, and space issues.



Antonio Preto
Head of Cabinet

For the first time since its release, the Communication 'An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era' (*cf. Newsletter n. 18*) will be presented to, and then reviewed by, the Council, with two questions prepared by the Presidency steering the ministerial debate. The Communication had spelt out a plan to analyse the competitiveness performance of individual Member States, issuing an annual European Competitiveness Report. Along with these actions, the Communication has also proposed "fitness checks" of existing legislation, thorough "competitiveness proofing" of new legislation, and support for SMEs by facilitating access to finance and making them more global, amongst many others.

This two-day gathering follows yesterday's European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) meeting, where Vice President Tajani presented the Communication to its Members, outlining main points of our new Strategy. Underscoring Europe's need for an even stronger industrial base, the Vice President argued that the productivity of the manufacturing sector had to be at the forefront of economic recovery. He repeated his argument that industrial policy must be considered in coordination with other sectors, including trade and finance. Members were responsive and favourable to the Strategy, ensuring a good start to the Competitiveness Council.

In terms of the agenda of the Council, the morning session will include a discussion amongst members. Following this debate, Vice President Tajani will give further insights into the Communication, before inviting the Council to support the proposed approach.

In the session dedicated to the "Innovation Union", the Presidency of the Council will present its conclusions on the exchange of views from this session, as well as the Council's decision on whether to approve the Communication. We look forward to hearing these perspectives and questions on our new industrial policy, which will certainly enrich our work.



It is essential that Member States now demonstrate leadership in the implementation of the Innovation Union, which Vice President Tajani will further underscore this afternoon. He will also highlight the impact innovation has on Europe's industrial competitiveness. We must not forget to view this initiative in the context of our Communication.

The afternoon will be spent discussing space, which, as you know, has been another key priority of the Vice President. The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU has conferred new competences to the Competitiveness Council, one of which is a new sub-group on space. In this new group, Vice President Tajani will present the state of play on the EU's space policy, drawing from the Communication's chapter dedicated to space issues. The Space Council will then exchange views on adopting a resolution entitled "Global challenges: Taking full benefit of European space systems". We will keep you abreast of the outcomes of this resolution.

Tomorrow will be dedicated to the research component of the Competitiveness Council hosted by the Vice President's colleague, Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of several months' hard work and are optimistic about the results of this rigorous two-day Council.