

Agenda of the European Commission ***16 – 22 March 2015***

**Background notes from the Spokespersons' service for journalists.
The European Commission reserves the right to make changes.**

Saturday 14 – Wednesday 18 March:

Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

Wednesday 18 March:

Commission to adopt a first package to promote tax transparency

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Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

The news:

Kristalina Georgieva, Vice-President of the European Commission and Christos Stylianides, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, will lead the European Union's delegation to the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, taking place in Sendai, Japan. The conference in Sendai will review the Hyogo Framework for Action and aims to conclude the international negotiations on a new framework for disaster risk reduction.

The background:

Disaster risk has increased significantly and cost the EU alone around €100 billion during the last decade. On average, natural disasters cause the death of more than 100,000 people every year worldwide. Risk reduction, prevention and management policies are essential to reduce the impact of disasters thereby saving lives and underpinning economic development.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 'Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters' is a 10-year plan adopted by 168 United Nations Member States that committed to make the world safer from natural hazards and building disaster resilience.

Adopted in 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action is due to expire in 2015 and a wide negotiation process has taken place on shaping the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction that is foreseen to be finalised at the upcoming World Conference.

The EU has taken a leading role in building a robust and ambitious post-2015 framework, which is to place disaster risk reduction as a key element of sustainable development efforts, to define further steps to reduce risks and foster resilience. In April 2014, the European Commission adopted a Communication on The Post 2015 Hyogo Framework for Action: Managing Risks to achieve Resilience. This document has served as basis for discussions between the Member States, the European Parliament and other stakeholders for the common EU position for the global negotiations in Sendai.

The event:

The third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will take place in Sendai, Japan from 14 to 18 March 2015. EbS will cover the event.

The sources:

- Memo on 'Boosting global efforts to reduce the impact of disasters: Commission charts the course for EU action': [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-14-268_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-268_en.htm)
- World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction: <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/partnerships/european-and-international-cooperation/third-world-conference-disaster-risk-reduction>

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Wednesday 18 March:

Commission to adopt a first package to promote tax transparency

The news:

On 18 March, the Commission is due to adopt a first set of tax transparency measures, as part of its ambitious agenda to tackle corporate tax avoidance and harmful tax competition in the EU.

A key element of this Tax Transparency Package is a proposal to introduce the automatic exchange of information between Member States on their tax rulings. It will enable Member States to detect certain abusive tax practices by companies and take the necessary action in response. An overarching communication will outline the different elements of the package, which will also include some other initiatives to advance the tax transparency agenda in the EU.

Background

On 18 February, the College of Commissioners held a first orientation debate on possible key actions to ensure a fairer and more transparent approach to taxation in the EU and announced that legislation to extend the automatic exchange of information on tax rulings would be proposed shortly.

The Commission is rapidly making good on the pledges it made in its Work Programme to clamp down on tax avoidance and to ensure that taxes are paid in the country where profits are generated.

In his Political Guidelines presented to the European Parliament on 15 July 2014, President Juncker stated: "We need more fairness in our internal market. While recognising the competence of Member States for their taxation systems, we should step up our efforts to combat tax evasion and tax fraud, so that all contribute their fair share."

The event:

- The Tax Transparency package will be presented at a press conference on 18 March. An off-the-record technical briefing will be held ahead of the press conference. The exact timing of both briefings will be confirmed in due course.
- Press material will be available on that day.

The sources:

- http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4436_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/tax_fraud_evasion/role_of_the_eu/index_en.htm

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