

Agenda of the European Commission ***25 –29 November 2013***

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

Monday 25 November:

Tackling Tax Avoidance: Commission proposes tightening key EU corporate tax legislation

Tuesday to Wednesday 26 – 27 November:

European Development Days - Building a new vision on development post-2015

Wednesday 27 November (tbc):

Commission to adopt proposals on protection of trade secrets

Wednesday 27 November:

European Commission proposes to strengthen fair trial rights for citizens, wherever they are in the EU

Monday 25 November:

**Tackling Tax Avoidance:
Commission proposes tightening key EU corporate tax legislation**

The news:

On 25 November, the European Commission will adopt a proposal to amend the Parent Subsidiary Directive (2011/96/EU) in order to close off opportunities for corporate tax avoidance. The Parent Subsidiary Directive was originally conceived to prevent the double taxation of same-group companies based in different Member States. However, loopholes in the Directive have been exploited by some companies to avoid paying any taxes at all. The proposal aims to close these loopholes. First, it will introduce a common anti-abuse rule into the Directive. This will allow Member States to ignore artificial arrangements used for tax avoidance purposes and to tax on the basis of real economic substance. Second, it will ensure that the Directive is tightened up so that specific tax planning arrangements are no longer eligible for the tax exemptions provided under the Directive.

The background:

The issue of corporate tax avoidance is very high in the political agenda of many EU and non-EU countries, and the need for action to combat it has been highlighted at recent G20 and G8 meetings.

One of the key problems to be addressed is that of double non-taxation i.e. where loopholes in national tax systems are exploited by companies to pay no tax at all. Double non-taxation deprives Member States of significant revenues and creates unfair competition between businesses in the Single Market. Tackling this problem requires urgent and coordinated action at EU level.

On 6 December 2012 the Commission presented an Action Plan for a more effective EU response to tax evasion and avoidance. This action set out a comprehensive set of measures, to help Member States protect their tax bases and recapture billions of euros legitimately due ([IP/12/1325](#)). The revision of the Parent Subsidiary Directive is one of the measures announced in the action plan.

The event:

- Algirdas Šemeta, the European Commissioner for Taxation, Customs, Anti-Fraud, Statistics and Audit will present the proposal at the midday briefing in the Commission's press room. Press materials will be available on the day.
- Available on EbS

The sources:

- Information on fight against tax fraud and evasion:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/tax_fraud_evasion/index_en.htm
- Information on Commissioner Šemeta:
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/semeta/index_en.htm

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Tuesday to Wednesday 26 – 27 November:

European Development Days - Building a new vision on development post-2015

The news:

This year's European Development Days (EDD13) will focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and on the global framework which will succeed them by 2015. High level speakers, representatives from civil society, private sector and academia from all continents will come together to debate the content of the next agenda which should address global poverty and sustainable development. The topic is very timely as 2015 (the MDGs target date) is fast approaching. Remarkable progress has been achieved in the fight against poverty thanks to the MDGs, but a lot remains to be done. Discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have started and negotiations will take place next year at the United Nations level. EDD13 will provide a unique opportunity to come together to contribute to the EU vision for development until and beyond 2015. During the event, new survey on EU citizens' view on Development aid will also be announced.

The background:

The European Development Days, organised by the European Commission, will bring together many of the relevant actors in the field. This year's high-level event will host among others, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf President of Liberia; and Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations. The European Commission will be represented by President Barroso, Vice President Catherine Ashton, Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs as well as other EU Commissioners. Updated list of VIP confirmations available [here](#).

The event:

- EDD13 will take place in Brussels (Tour & Taxi) on 26 – 27 November
- Full programme with many panels, side events and special addresses: http://eudevdays.eu/doc/EDD13_Programme_Overview.pdf
- **Press conference** – 26 November at 16.30 – with participation of Commissioner Piebalgs
Registration for journalists only – please send an email with your [contact details](#) to press@eudevdays.eu
- Webstreaming will be available on European Development Days' [website](#)

The sources:

- Website of the European Development Days: <http://eudevdays.eu/>
- During the event, a wide range of facilities and services will be available to journalists. You can find out more at: http://eudevdays.eu/doc/EDD13_media-guide.pdf

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Wednesday 27 November (tbc):

Commission to adopt proposals on protection of trade secrets

The news:

On 27 November (date tbc) the European Commission will adopt a proposal for a directive on the protection of trade secrets and confidential business information from misappropriation and misuse by third parties

The aim of the proposal is to harmonise national laws on protecting against misappropriation of trade secrets by establishing a common definition and ensuring that in cases of unlawful acquisition, use or disclosure of a trade secret, a sufficient and comparable level of redress across the EU is provided.

The background:

Under the flagship initiative "[Innovation Union](#)", one of the pillars of the "[EU 2020 strategy](#)", the Commission undertook to create an innovation-friendly environment. Within this framework, the Commission has adopted a comprehensive strategy to ensure a smooth functioning of the [Internal Market for intellectual property](#), which also reaches areas complementary to intellectual property rights (IPRs) such as trade secrets.

Every company, large or small, in any sector uses confidentiality to gain a competitive advantage, in particular when based on knowledge and innovation. Trade secrets are the source of any first mover advantage. Valuable information that cannot be protected by exclusive rights, such as patents, will only confer its creator with an advantage over competitors if and to the extent that it is not generally known and it is kept confidential. However, companies are increasingly exposed to dishonest practices (such as economic espionage, theft, unauthorised use and disclosure of confidential information), which impact their knowledge capital and competitiveness. Furthermore, there are important differences between the levels of protection offered across the EU for defending trade secrets against unfair practices.

The event:

- Press details to be announced.
- IP and MEMO will be available on the day.
- Available on EbS

The sources:

- Trade Secrets and Confidential Business Information:
http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/iprenforcement/trade_secrets/index_en.htm
- Commissioner Michel Barnier's website:
http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/barnier/index_en.htm

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Wednesday 27 November:

European Commission proposes to strengthen fair trial rights for citizens, wherever they are in the EU

The news:

The Commission will present a package of proposals to strengthen fair trial rights of citizens in criminal proceedings throughout the European Union.

The package will contain five proposals:

1. A Directive to strengthen aspects of the presumption of innocence and ensure that no trials are conducted in absentia
2. A Directive to increase the procedural safeguards for children
3. A Directive to ensure that suspects have access to legal aid at the early stages of criminal proceedings, including for people subject to a European Arrest Warrant
4. A Recommendation on general aspects of legal aid
5. A Recommendation on procedural safeguards for vulnerable people (for example people with physical or mental disabilities)

Mutual recognition instruments, such as the European Arrest Warrant, cannot function without mutual trust in each other's justice systems. Mutual trust can best be fostered by building robust procedural safeguards for citizens throughout the entire European Union.

The background:

There are over 8 million criminal proceedings in the European Union every year. In 2010, the European Commission made the first step in a series of measures to set common EU standards in all criminal proceedings. The Commission proposed rules that would oblige EU countries to provide full interpretation and translation services to suspects, which were adopted as legislation the same year.

The law was followed by a second Directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings, adopted in 2012, and then by a third Directive on the right to access to a lawyer, adopted in 2013. The Commission is now set to continue with its roadmap in this area of criminal justice with proposals for another set of fair trial rights for citizens.

The event:

- Vice-President Viviane Reding will give a press conference at 12:30.
- IP and MEMO will be available on the day.

The sources:

- Justice Newsroom: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/index_en.htm
- Vice-President Reding's website: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/reding

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