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Development & Business Environment

Chairman: **Karlheinz ZACHMANN**

Vice-Chairman: **Aris CHATZIDAKIS**

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- On 27th June finally the EU-BUDGET is approved by Council and EP for the coming 7 years, including the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF). For quite some initiatives cuttings are to register. The budget amounts up to € 960 billion for investments that will enable the European Economy to grow and create jobs, especially for young people. A review before the end of 2016 is scheduled.
- On 21st June the Council adopted also an important VAT-fraud package. – On 29/5/2013 already the Commission issued a specific Recommendation to 13 EU Member States to improve their tax governance.
- The Council Regulation No 216/2013 of 7/5/2013 lays down the rules and technical requirements for the “online electronic Official Journal”.

This electronic version of the Official Journal (O.J.) can now be used as legal reference – and this in all language versions at the same time. This electronic version will be “authenticated” – Citizens can, on demand, attain a printed version via an EU-bookshop. The user must get a signature file from EUR-lex (available on the pages of the O.J.) and the PDF version in the desired linguistic version – to submit both files to CHECK-lex for answer.

- During “Green week” held in Brussels from 4 to 7 June 2013 it was announced a legislative proposal, to cut emissions from small combustion installations (below 50 megawatts). In this context it is also planned to revise the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD) to set new national emission caps for 2020. The Commission consults on several environmental Directives to identify the issues and propose possible solutions to the targets in: the Waste Framework Directive, the Landfill Directive and the Packaging Waste Directive. The basis of this review of targets is: to respond to the review clauses set out in these Directives and to bring these targets in line with the Commissions Roadmap on Resource Efficiency.
- On 1st of June 2013 the new Construction Products Regulation (CPR) came into force replacing the previous Construction Products Directive of 1988 (CPD).
- On 15/5/2013 the Commission decided to establish the Emergency Response Centre – its mission is: to enable the EU and its Members States to respond to overwhelming natural and man-made disasters, and that in a timely and efficient manner. The Centre operates 24 hours a day.

- ACE made known its involvement in a Press Release in the project of TrainRebuild. This project is considered an invaluable instrument to communicate the retrofit value and return of investment to property owners, thus creating a scale effect of Energy Efficient Renovations in Europe.
- Further ACE (members of ECF) also informed about a large number of EU issues. This "ACE – Alert" was also circulated within ECCE. Some issues to be recalled are:
 - Review of the Professional Qualifications Directive (including the creation of a European Professional Card);
 - Review of the Public Procurement Directive (will be formally approved in autumn by Council and EP);
 - Consultation on Insurance Cover for the provision of services in another Member State;
 - Consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework;
 - Consultation on Sustainable Buildings (make buildings more sustainable and create green opportunities for business).
- With 1/7/2013 CROATIA became full member of the EU which counts now 28 Member States with 22 official languages. Mr. Neven MIMICA (former Deputy Prime Minister) is the newest Commissioner and is responsible for Consumer Policy.

End June 2013 Ireland handed over the EU Presidency to Lithuania. Last GA in Lisbon the list of the Irish particular subjects, to be handled, was reported.

More than 9 years into Lithuania's membership of the EU this country takes now the lead in the EU Council.

The main priorities are:

- To present a report on equal market conditions for internal and external energy supplies, and to work on nuclear safety in the EU neighborhood;
- To work on the already established goals of completing the internal energy market by 2017 and eliminating energy islands by 2015;
- Activities on banking union issues;
- Looking on the implementation of the already existing legislations;
- Strengthening of the Single Market and remove still existing barriers;
- Encourage youth employment;
- Create conditions for growth;
- Bring neighbors, especially Eastern Partnership Countries closer to EU;
- The –under the previous Presidency adopted Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)- must now be put into concrete legislation to ensure the funds flow from 2014 on;
- Some 75 legal acts have still to be adopted in 2013 alone.

The ECF in the time to summer met only twice – 28/1 and 27/3.

On 27/6/2013, in the premises of the EP a breakfast meeting was held with MEP Mr. Reinhart BUTIKOFER – rapporteur on the Commission Communication “Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises” (COM (2012) 433 final).

In the ECCE Newsletter and in my special report ample attention was given to this event.

The summer gathering is scheduled for 10/9/2013 and hosted by CEMBUREAU. However, due to important commitments, only very few members could participate. Thus, at very short notice the gathering was cancelled. CEMBUREAU started an inquiry among all ECF members in order to convene a new date. This will be on 14th October 2013.

The EU activities are multiple and are pushed to the end in 2013. The coming elections in 2014 are already conditioning the EU life. Greece is taking beginning 2014 the Presidency.

In the coming year there will be within the EU and their institutions multiple important movements and changes. As a professional NGO ECCE must be duely informed and involved.

Due to personal and private constraints it will be for me no longer possible to cope with all necessary events and to report on.

As you all know quite well, I am the only NGO representative acting completely alone – and with no help, feedback and assistance, except the General Secretary – Maria.

All of you know that this long! But now I make an urgent appeal to think about this situation and decide accordingly!

THANK YOU!

Karlheinz Zachmann