



Radar Screen of EU Public Policies

Monthly issue update: February & March 2016

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Key EU public policy developments February & March 2016

Packaging Waste: Legislative procedure for revision of EU packaging waste law has started; Member States discussing Commission proposal at technical level; EP draft report expected in April, Committee vote in November.

- **EUROPEN and UNESDA position papers finalised and proposed changes to the text are drafted; ongoing Coke-system lobby campaign**

Health and Wellbeing: Commission-led forum of Member States (EU High Level Group on nutrition) is asking industry to commit on added sugars reduction; Dutch Council Presidency launched a roadmap on food improvement;

- **Ongoing work through FDE and UNESDA to submit comments to the proposals and ensure that sugar reduction efforts in soft drinks is taken into account; Coca-Cola System actively supporting UNESDA in its engagement to ensure that its position aligns with our category growth strategy; Successful sampling of Coke Life at EU High Level Conference on Product Improvement**

Corporate taxation: EP Special Tax Committee invites multinationals for new hearing on aggressive tax planning on 15 March; Coca-Cola not invited. Discussion has started on anti-tax avoidance measures presented by the Commission; Commission to possibly propose public country-by-country reporting in the coming days

- **Close monitoring**

Public policy risk matrix & lobby focus

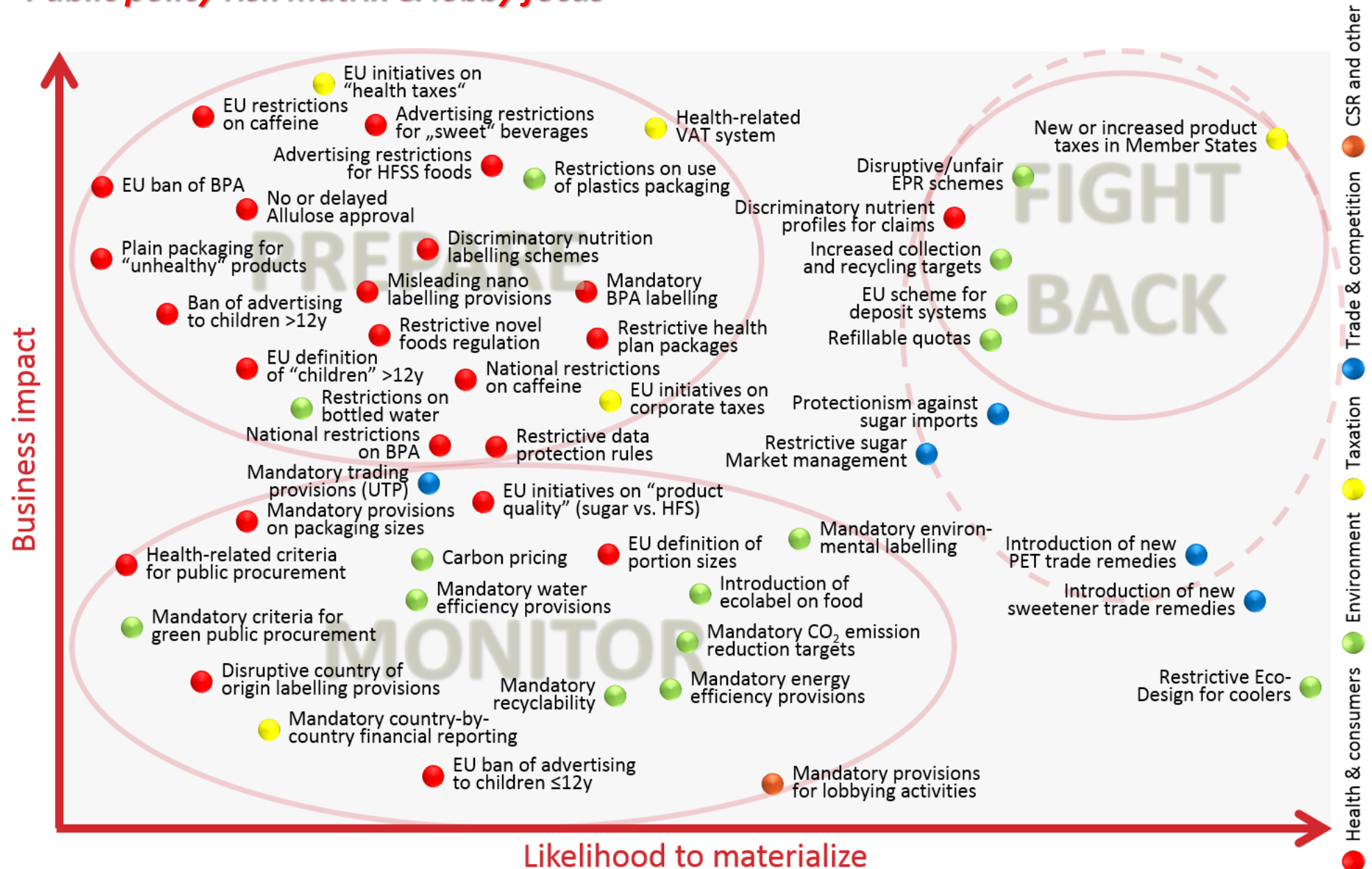


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Institutional

UK to vote on EU membership on 23 June

EU MEMBER STATES: Following an [agreement](#) reached between the 28 Prime Ministers and Heads of State on a new settlement for the UK within the EU, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, has set the 23 June as the date for the in/out referendum on UK membership. The four “baskets” in the agreement dealing with economic governance, competitiveness, sovereignty and social benefits will only come into effect in the event of a British vote to remain in the UK. All elements of the deal will lapse if the UK votes to leave. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, confirmed that the agreement was legally binding and irreversible and could not be annulled by the European Court of Justice. He also stressed that there was no possibility of a second “better” deal in the event of a vote to leave, as some UK politicians had been arguing. The European Commission stated that it will not call on UK voters to vote to stay, as it is not its role to interfere in national politics.

British Conservative MEPs are divided in their support for continued EU membership, with only 50% of the 21 MEPs backing David Cameron’s campaign to remain. Significantly, Syed Kamall MEP (ECR/UK) the leader of the ECR group, has come out in favour of leaving the EU, which has put his leadership at risk.

Consultation on mandatory EU transparency register

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: A public [consultation](#) on plans to introduce a mandatory transparency register for all organisations seeking to lobby the EU institutions was launched on 1 March and will feed into proposals due in the summer. This fulfills the pledge by European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, to regain public trust in the EU by increasing transparency and accountability. A non-legislative [opinion](#) is being drawn up by

Sven Giegold MEP (Greens/DE) to feed into the consultation (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* November 2015, p. 5). He calls for monthly reports by lobbyists about their meetings with MEPs and officials and a “legislative footprint” on committee reports, listing who the leading MEP (rapporteur) has met and what written submissions they have received in the course of their work. Giegold however has said it would be a step too far to follow the WHO Framework [Convention](#) on Tobacco which prevents the tobacco lobby having access to legislators. He argued that other industry sectors could also be considered harmful and it would be impossible to know where to draw the line. His report will be adopted on 20 April 2016.

EU food law simplification should focus on allergen labelling

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Information on allergens is the main part of the [Regulation](#) on Food Information to Consumers that should be considered for revision, according to the REFIT Regulatory Fitness [Platform](#). The REFIT platform, which includes both stakeholders and Member States, aims to recommend to the Commission revisions in EU laws that would cut administrative burdens (*EU Radar Screen Issue Update* December 2015, p. 5). At the Platform’s first meeting, a request was made that all caterers be allowed to give allergen information orally to their customers. The Food Information Regulation lists 14 allergens which have to be labelled on pre-packed food but it allows member states to adopt national rules to be more flexible on how this information is provided for food sold loose or served in restaurants. Early indications are that the Commission is reluctant to amend the existing provisions, as it would risk opening up the whole Food Information Regulation to possible amendment.

Health & Wellbeing

Roadmap for Action on Food Product Improvement

EU MEMBER STATES: 22 Member States (as well as Norway and Switzerland) endorsed the [Roadmap](#) for Action on Food Product Improvement initiated by the Dutch Presidency of the EU Council at a high-level conference on 22-23 February (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 5). The Roadmap is based on a joint commitment from the authorities, the food industry and health associations to make food products healthier by gradually reducing the amount of salt, saturated fat and sugar. Although six Member States (UK, FR, IT, CZ, LU and EL) have not supported it, the Netherlands aims to gather their support at an informal meeting of Health Ministers in April, in the view of adopting formal Council conclusions in June.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: [Speaking](#) at the conference, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, called upon Member States to endorse the 10% added sugar reduction target, which is currently being discussed within the High-Level [Group](#) on Nutrition and Physical Activity (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 5). Although they are in the process of being evaluated (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* October 2015, p. 5), Andriukaitis supported the concept of nutrient profiles, arguing it should not be possible for products high in sugar to make health claims.

STAKEHOLDERS: The following European associations endorsed the Roadmap: FoodDrinkEurope (of which Coca-Cola is a member), EuroCommerce, Foodservice Europe, Serving Europe, the European Heart Network, the European Chronic Disease Alliance, and the European Healthy Lifestyle Alliance. BEUC, the European Consumer Association, declined to support the Roadmap, which does not include specific reduction targets. They published a [letter](#) on the occasion of the conference calling for reduction targets to be mandatory for all food categories, measurable and in line with World Health

Organization (WHO) recommendations. According to FoodDrinkEurope, reduction targets should remain voluntary and provide flexibility for different food categories, in accordance with national habits and consumer preferences.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Miriam Dalli MEP (S&D/MT) [asked](#) the Commission whether it will endorse the Dutch Roadmap. While the roadmap does not include specific reduction targets, Dalli wants to know if the Commission intends to issue guidelines on the way the reduction should be done and to introduce additional legislative measures to make food products healthier. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

Discussion on category-specific sugar reduction targets

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Industry association and NGOs met with the European Commission to discuss category-specific sugar reduction targets, as proposed in the Added Sugar Annex presented by the High-Level [Group](#) on Nutrition and Physical Activity earlier this year (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 5). This is calling for a reduction of added sugar by 10% 2020 vs 2015 as baseline. [UNESDA](#), the soft drinks association, was present at the meeting and presented on the achievements and challenges of reformulation for sugar-sweetened beverages. UNESDA voiced the concerns of the sector that past reformulation efforts should be taken into account and that sugar reduction can be achieved by other innovations (e.g. portion sizes, innovative product offering etc.). These messages were echoed publicly in an opinion [piece](#) published by UNESDA in the Parliament Magazine.

The 10% reduction target originally proposed by the Commission is still under discussion. Part of the discussion also relates to sugar reduction vs sweetness reduction, with some Member States such arguing that sweeteners help reducing the sugar content but contribute maintaining consumers' sweet taste. Other Member States such as Romania strongly pushed back

on this point. The Commission has now prepared a summary report of these discussions, which will be the basis for plenary discussions at a joint meeting of the High-Level [Group](#) on Nutrition and Physical Activity (Member States) and the [Platform](#) for Action on Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (pan-European stakeholders from industry and NGOs) on 6 April.

STAKEHOLDERS: Consumer and Health NGOs, at this meetings and at public events, called for ambitious mandatory sugar reduction targets across all food categories. According to a letter seen by the EU food specialised press, the European Dairy Association ([EDA](#)) has informed the European Commission that it will not support the proposed 10% added sugar reduction target for dairy products. FoodDrinkEurope, of which both UNESDA and EDA are members, called for voluntary reduction targets, which take into account product specificities and national eating habits.

Italy challenges UK traffic light labelling scheme

EU COUNCIL: Italy led a charge against the UK traffic light labelling scheme at March meeting of the EU Agriculture Ministers. Jointly with Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain, Italy circulated a [note](#) prior to the meeting claiming that the application of this system unjustifiably favours “unhealthy” products and creates obstacles to the free movement of goods. Many quality products, like cheese, ham and jam, which have to respect strict rules about their production, would risk getting a “red label” due to their composition, whereas other products could freely be reformulated in order to get a “green label”, changing the content of fat, sugar or salt, the note argues. Even though it has been presented as a “voluntary agreement” between the UK government and the interested parties, major retailers have signed up to the scheme making it de facto mandatory. The British delegation defended its scheme, which is in line with the provisions of the [Regulation](#) on Food Information to Consumers. The Commission acknowledged

that the Regulation allows for different standards to be used and that a thorough review of ‘interpretive nutrition labelling’ is due by 2017. No comments were made on the ongoing infringement case that the Commission has opened against the United Kingdom on the issue (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* May 2015, p. 5).

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Elisabetta Gardini MEP (EPP/IT) relayed the concerns of the Italian government in a [question](#) to the Commission. Gardini claimed that the system caused a sales drop of traditional products like Parmigiano Reggiano, Parma ham and Brie cheese, quoting a study commissioned by Federalimentare, the Italian industry association, which was also highlighted at the Council meeting. She also recalled that the Parliament had questioned the concept of nutrient profiles and enquires about the status of the infringement procedure against the UK traffic light scheme. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

MEPs call for origin labelling of single-ingredient products

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Single-ingredient products should be included in a mandatory country of origin label (COOL) voted the MEPs in the European Parliament Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI). The non-binding [motion](#) for a resolution originally called on the European Commission to propose mandatory COOL for lightly processed meat and dairy products. Changes extending this to include single ingredient products were tabled by Italian Socialist MEPs. The issue had been raised in parliamentary debates last year on COOL, when Giovanni La Via MEP (EPP/IT) singled out orange juice as an example (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* September 2015, p. 6). The motion for resolution is expected to be voted in Plenary in May. EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Sabine Juelicher, Director for Food and Feed Safety and Innovation at the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Food

Safety, confirmed at the ENVI debate that the Commission still does not plan further actions to introduce mandatory COOL, as earlier studies indicated that consumers are not ready to pay for the additional costs that such an obligation would generate (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* September 2015, p. 7).

WHO Europe study shows decrease of soft drink consumption among adolescents

STAKEHOLDERS: The World Health Organisation (WHO) Europe published its latest [study](#) on the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC). The study collected information about 11-, 13- and 15-year-old boys and girls from over 40 countries for the 2013-2014 period. Overall, it describes a positive picture of young people's health and behaviours, but it also highlights the need to address existing social, age and gender inequities. In particular, the study shows the soft-drinks consumption has decreased slightly, especially among older adolescents: it is down from 28% for boys and 22% for girls at age 15 in 2009/2010 to 22% and 16% respectively (based on self-reported data of frequency of daily consumption). Intake of soft drinks among adolescents is considered a matter of concern and is higher than in other age groups. It is associated with a greater risk of weight gain, obesity and chronic diseases and directly affects dental health by providing excessive amounts of sugars. Determinants of soft-drink consumption include gender, dieting, accessibility and modelling. There are large differences between the 40 European countries examined in the study.

In addition, the report showed that less than half of school-aged children in all countries in the survey meet the current worldwide guideline for physical activity (60 minutes daily), which was one the major concerns expressed by WHO Europe at the press [conference](#) for the launch of the report.

New rules on advertising to be presented in June

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Reinforcing the protection of vulnerable consumers, including minors, to advertising remains one of the priority of the Commission when reviewing the existing rules. The Commission confirmed it will adopt its revised legislative proposal on audiovisual media services (AVMSD) on 1 June. However, the definition of minor is not clear as some consumer and public health organisations are asking for a stricter definition, meaning a person below 16 years old (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* November 2015, p. 5). The Commission, however, said that they should leave this up to the Member States decision and do not plan to harmonise this definition at EU level.

As regards the possibility to extend the scope of this new Directive, the Commission has not yet taken a decision as to whether it should be extended to services to which it does not currently apply, such as social media. This statement was made by EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Günther Oettinger in [response](#) to a [question](#) by Cristian-Silviu Buşoi MEP (EPP/RO) who called for an extension of the scope to social platforms and online streaming services.

Three studies have been published by the Commission to inform the process of preparing the Commission proposal: the first [study](#) on data and information on the costs and benefits of the AVMSD highlights that there are cultural differences among Member States on what they consider harmful content and on classification systems for the protection of minors. A second [study](#) on the on-demand audiovisual market in the EU, includes a specific chapter on online advertising which has become the second medium in Europe for ad spend, just behind TV advertising.

No health claims on high-sugar products, Court rules

EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE: The Court agreed with the Commission which prohibited health claims on products which are high in sugar, even though these claims had

been approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In a [ruling](#) on a case brought by Dextro Energy against the European Commission, the Court concluded that health claims on products high in sugar would confuse consumers, as being in contradiction with generally accepted nutritional recommendations to limit one's intake of sugar. A central question was whether the Commission was right to apply some kind of nutrient profiling despite the fact that the nutrient profiles – thresholds for sugar, fat and salt below which a product should be allowed to make nutrition or health claims – have not been set.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The setting of the nutrient profiles has raised considerable political interest and has generated intense debate, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, highlighted in his [answer](#) to a [question](#) from Daciana Octavia Sârbu MEP (S&D/RO), who was criticising the Commission for the delay in setting them (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update December 2015*, p. 6). Andriukaitis recalled that an evaluation of the Claims [Regulation](#) is ongoing, which will focus in particular on the issue of nutrient profiles (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* July-August, p. 6).

Parliament endorses EU school milk and fruit schemes

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The [deal](#) reached at the end of last year on the Regulation on the EU School Milk and Fruit and Vegetables Schemes (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* December 2015 p. 5) was officially adopted by the Parliament. Only products with a certain nutritional content will be allowed for distribution in schools, whereas added sweeteners and artificial flavour enhancers will be banned. Limits for addition of sugar, salt and fat in processed foods eligible for the school schemes will be set by the European Commission by means of a delegated act. Both schemes were established to promote fruit, vegetables and milk in schools but they have functioned in different legal and financial models. Now they will be merged (see *EU Radar Screen*

Issue Update January-February 2014, p. 5). The conclusion to this proposal was welcomed by the European Parliament's leading MEP, Marc Tarabella (S&D/BE), who argued that it would teach children good eating habits and help combat childhood obesity. The new rules are due to apply from 1 August 2017 and the programme will be reviewed in 2023.

MEP calls for sales ban of “unhealthy” food to children

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Andrejs Mamikins MEP (S&D/LV) [asked](#) if the Commission intends to promote a ban on sales of “some kinds of unhealthy consumables” to “underage children” based on what is already in place for alcohol and tobacco. He did not specify what sort of products and age limit he meant, however. He wanted to know also what had been the Commission's direct contribution to the preparation of health-enhancing physical activity recommendations and whether the Commission funded the production of cartoons to fight against childhood obesity. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

Call for soft drinks tax by former UN Rapporteur

STAKEHOLDERS: Olivier de Schutter, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, called for the introduction of higher tax on high-sugar beverages, as one of the means to make the food system more sustainable. The statement was made at a public [hearing](#) entitled “Building a more sustainable European food system” in the European Economic and Social Committee (an EU advisory body) and will feed into its opinion on the topic, which is being prepared at the request of the Dutch Presidency of the EU Council. There was a consensus among participants that the EU needs a coherent food policy which embraces numerous policies and sectors, e.g. related to agriculture, health, environment, research, trade and economy. The [draft](#) EESC opinion prepared by Mindaugas Maciulevičius does not echo de Schutter's recommendation on soft drinks tax though. It

will be discussed in the EESC Agriculture section in April and be adopted in Plenary May.

Belgian MEPs call for zero tax rate on certain food

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Claude Rolin MEP (EPP/BE) [called](#) for an overhaul of the VAT system to address obesity, including special tax rates for “healthy foods” as well as an EU-wide zero rate for fruit, vegetables and water. He was echoing recommendations from his colleague Frédérique Ries MEP (ALDE/BE) who had also [called](#) for a reduced VAT on fruit and vegetables (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 6). In his [answer](#) to Ries, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, recalled that the VAT [Directive](#) already allows Member States to apply reduced rates to fruit and vegetables. He however stated that taxation should be considered as part of a wider range of tools and the complexity of its effects calls for careful consideration and design.

Monitoring child consumption of fruit and vegetables

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Consumption of fruit and vegetables by children in the EU will likely be monitored as part of the European Health Interview [Survey](#). The survey is conducted every five years by the EU statistics office, Eurostat. Until now, it only covered adult health indicators, but will in the future cover children as well and could include data on fruit and vegetable consumption. This statement was made by EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, in [re-sponse](#) to a [question](#) by Daciana Sârbu MEP (S&D/RO) who called for comprehensive, comparable data on fruit and vegetable consumption in school children (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* December 2015, p. 6).

No plan to legislate on portion sizes

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission does not plan to introduce regulatory measures on food portion sizes in

the near future. This is what came out from the “Healthier Portions for a Healthier Diet” event organised at the European Parliament. There is not enough evidence that smaller portion sizes of food with high levels of sugar/salt/fat may improve consumers' diet. The Commission is therefore in favour of further research and exchange of best practices between Member States and stakeholders. The MEPs attending the event, including Anna Maria Corazza Bildt MEP (EPP/SE), shared this point of view and stressed that voluntary measures and exchange of best practices is the right approach.

Caffeine claims on their way for approval

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission presented a proposal to authorize four health claims on caffeine: two on the increased endurance performance and endurance capacity, and two on the increase of the alertness and concentration improvement. The Commission's proposal is based on positive opinions from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the specific health claims and on the positive EFSA [opinion](#) by on the safety of caffeine from the last year (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* May 2015, p. 5). The Commission however took into account requests by Member States (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* November 2015, p. 7) to limit the use of the health claims to food products targeted at adults only and to products containing at least 75mg of caffeine per portion and no more than 200 mg in a single dose. In addition, products bearing the health claims should carry a warning about not exceeding 400 mg of caffeine a day. The proposal will be forwarded in the coming weeks to the Council and Parliament for a 3-month scrutiny period during which the institutions could potentially raise objections and veto the proposal.

MEP asks Commission's views on artificial sweeteners

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Mairead McGuinness MEP (EPP/IE) [enquired](#) about the European Commission's action on the use of artificial sweeteners. Noting that aspartame

has been recently removed from the drinks of a company, she asked if the health concerns associated with artificial sweeteners are well founded. EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, [replied](#) that, in its Scientific [Opinion](#) on aspartame, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) ruled out a potential risk of aspartame causing cancer and therefore aspartame can continue to be used. Andriukaitis also recalled that the evaluation of other sweeteners is ongoing as part of a broader re-evaluation of all additives by 2020.

MEP calls for EU initiatives against cancer

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The EU should take initiatives against cancer on the occasion of World Cancer Day, Lefteris Christoforou MEP (EPP/CY) stated in a parliamentary [question](#). Naming physical activity and healthy diet as the focus areas which could help prevent cancer, he asked the Commission what steps it intends to take, in particular in 2016, to fight against cancer and how the European Parliament can support it. Similarly, José Blanco López MEP (ES/S&D) [asked](#) the Commission what it is doing specifically in terms of prevention to address the risk factors of cancer, naming obesity as one of them. EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, [replied](#) to Christoforou that in 2016, the Commission will focus its activities on the Joint Action on rare cancer, on the implementation of the initiative against breast cancer and on the exchange of information on cancer screening.

NGOs want agricultural policy to focus on public health

STAKEHOLDERS: The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should be subject to a 'fitness check' – a thorough evaluation of whether a piece of legislation is still fit for purpose and does not create unnecessary burdens, taking into account its impact on all other policy areas. This was the call echoed by leading environmental NGOs in a [letter](#) sent to the European Commission. At an event

organised under the auspice of the Dutch Presidency of the EU Council by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), it was highlighted that by subsidising sugar or dairy production, the CAP is at odds with public health policies, whereby these products are often taxed at the end of the consumption chain. Stakeholders were calling for a comprehensive EU Food Policy, which would not only cover agricultural production but the entire food chain. EPHA announced that they will soon publish a health impact assessment of the CAP, which is likely to include a chapter on the health impact of the upcoming abolition of sugar quotas.

European Week of Sports 2016 to focus on schools

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission considers reinforcing its partnership with the International School Sport [Federation](#) for the 2016 European Week of Sport edition which may also include a special one-day event devoted only to sport at schools. The promotion of sport is especially important among children and should start from their early education, said the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, in a [reply](#) to a [question](#) by Theodoros Zagorakis MEP (EPP/EL) (see *Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 6).

MEP notes discrimination of disabled sportspeople

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Norica Nicolai MEP (ALDE/RO) [asked](#) the Commission what it is doing to improve the quality of life and motivation of disabled sportspeople, pointing out discriminations they face, including lower rewards than athletes without disabilities at international sports events. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

New rules on BPA in cans set for adoption in September

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission notified its [draft](#) Regulation on BPA in food contact materials to the World Trade Organization (WTO). As announced last month (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016 p. 7), the proposal lowers the BPA migration limit from packaging into food from 0.6mg/kg to 0.05mg/kg and extends this limit to cover varnishes and coatings, besides plastics, which were already subject to the 0.05mg/kg limit. The new rules will become applicable six months after the publication of the Regulation in the Official Journal. Products put on the market before that date may remain on the market until exhaustion of stock.

In terms of procedure, this is now in the so-called comitology procedure where the Commission needs the approval of the Member States. This is expected to take place in September. The European Parliament is not involved in this process and does not have a veto power.

Pressure maintained on the Commission on endocrine disrupters

EU COUNCIL: During the Environment Council meeting on 4 March, Environment Ministers from the 28 Member States [called](#) on the Commission to respect its legal obligations as regards the setting of the Endocrine Disrupters (ED) criteria, referring to the recent General Court [ruling](#) which condemned the Commission for failing to act upon EDs (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* December 2015, p. 7).

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: MEPs also continue to urge the European Commission to act upon EDs. Marc Tarabella MEP (S&D/BE) [recalled](#) that EDs can be found in many every day products. He therefore asked the Commission what its definition of EDs is and what official position it takes. Tarabella reiterated similar concerns in another [question](#) on the occasion of World Cancer Day. Separately, Robert Rochefort MEP (ALDE/FR) [asked](#) whether

the Commission intends to speed up the process for the adoption of the EDs criteria following the ruling. He also asked for clarification on the objective of the Commission' impact assessment which has been delaying the process. Similar questions were asked by Giulia [Moi](#) MEP (EFDD/IT) and Joëlle [Mélin](#) MEP (ENF/FR).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, reiterated that the Commission will present a proposal on EDCs before the summer 2016. On BPA, he also recalled that a separate proposal is due this year (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 7).

The EU has no intention to compromise on public health when negotiating trade agreements with the US or other countries, including in relation to EDs. This is what he [answered](#) to Anne-Marie Mineur MEP (GUE-NL/NL). She had [asked](#) why the Commission held a meeting with US officials on EDs, when the Parliament had previously indicated that this was a non-negotiable area within the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Andriukaitis answered that the bilateral EU-US workshop on EDs was purely technical, to exchange information on screening activities and methods, and was not related to TTIP.

MEP calls for single market for food contact materials

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Barbara Kappel MEP (ENF/AT) [asked](#) the Commission what measures it intends to take to remove obstacles to the free movement of food contact materials in the EU. She referred specifically to testing requirements for adhesives, but the question could also relate to the current situation for BPA-containing food contact materials, which the Commission intends to address with a proposal to revise and extend the BPA maximum limits from plastic food materials to coating and varnishes as well (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 7). EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, replied that the Commission is currently assessing the situation and whether

there is a need for EU harmonised rules on food contact material. This assessment will be based in particular on a report from the Joint Research Centre ([JRC](#)), which is expected to be published after the summer.

STAKEHOLDERS: Part of the packaging industry is calling for EU rules on food contact materials, supporting similar calls from NGOs (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 7). In a joint position [paper](#), the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) and Flexible Packaging Europe (FPE) highlight that the current situation whereby national rules differ is a burden for the industry, distorts the internal market and results in lower consumer trust. They call on the Commission to prioritise inks, coatings and paper for the adoption of harmonised rules.

Environment

Legislative work starts on the Waste proposals

EU COUNCIL: The Environment Working Party (WP), gathering representatives from the Environment Ministries of the 28 EU Member States, started working on the Waste Proposals. During the first meeting, the WP addressed waste definitions, methodology for waste calculations (including sorting, collection and impurities), waste prevention (where a target can be set at national level) and reuse (in general terms, not specifically in relation to packaging targets). At the second meeting, the WP discussed reporting obligations and monitoring, end of waste & by-products, early warning system related to national reporting and waste targets. The WP meeting on 9 March was entirely dedicated to Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) scheme, with Member States asking for clarification over the definition of an EPR scheme and about the transition period for existing schemes to comply with the new minimum requirements. Some Member States called for EPR schemes to be mandatory, an idea that other Member States opposed. Technical discussions will continue under the Dutch Presidency of the EU Council.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The European Parliament Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) decided on the timeline regarding the four legislative proposals on Waste, on which Simona Bonafè MEP (S&D/IT) has been appointed the leading MEP:

- Translation of draft reports: 21 April
- Exchange of views on draft reports: 23 - 24 May
- Deadline for amendments: 1 June
- Consideration of amendments: 11 - 12 July
- Adoption of reports in ENVI: 7 - 8 November
- Adoption in plenary: TBC

Council, Parliament to comment on Circular Economy Action Plan

EU COUNCIL: The Member States are discussing the Circular Economy package in different constellations. A number of Member States expressed concerns about the achievability of the waste targets. The UK called for a clearer impact assessment to understand where the targets are coming from. Others asked that all Member States benefit from a longer transition period, not only the few Member States currently benefiting from this exemption. The issue of marine litter was brought up by Austria, France and Sweden, which call for bolder actions in this area. Finally, food waste was also brought up by France and Hungary as a key issue.

These meetings took place on 29 February during the Competitiveness Council (EU ministers responsible for trade, economy, industry, research and innovation) and on 4 March at the Environment Council. The results of the discussion will feed into the preparation of formal conclusions on the Circular Economy Package that are expected to be endorsed by the Environment Council in June 2016.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Members of the European Parliament environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) decided to monitor the implementation of the Circular Economy Action [Plan](#) (the non-legislative part of the Circular Economy package focusing on the

next initiatives to come). Critics focus in particular on the delay of the Ecodesign work programme, which should have been published in December 2015. MEPs Matthias Groote (S&D/DE), Gessine Meissner (ALDE/DE) and Bas Eickhout (Greens/NL) in particular called on the Commission to make the strategy on marine litter a priority within the Action Plan. The Commission's answer to that one is that the Plastics Strategy is foreseen for 2017. Jyrki Katainen, the EU Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness will be reporting to ENVI on the progress of the action plan, every six months. The first meeting, where the above comments were made, took place on 16 March.

Microplastics as a key issue in the 2017 Plastic Strategy

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Maritime pollution by microplastics is a priority issue for the European Commission, as expressed by Marianne Wenning, Director for Water, Air and Quality of life at DG Environment at a large conference on marine litter organised by the industry association, PlasticsEurope. She indicated that a recently published study on microplastics in cosmetics would lead to a stakeholder debate, where also other sources of microplastics would be brought in scope, feeding into the 2017 Plastics Strategy announced in the Circular Economy Action [Plan](#) (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* November 2015 p. 9). The management of plastic waste and the prevention of marine litter was discussed at length. PlasticsEurope in particular called for a total landfill ban for waste that has been collected separately, including plastic waste, as a means to prevent marine litter.

Further questions on the financing of Circular Economy

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: With significant financial resources having been made available for the financing of the Circular Economy under different programmes, Pavel Telička MEP (ALDE/CZ) [asked](#) the Commission to

specify how projects will be selected and how the Commission will coordinate the allocation of the funds. Telička also asked if funds could be used to extend the use of secondary raw materials. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission is assessing the possibility of launching an investment platform together with the European Investment Bank ([EIB](#)) and national promotional banks to support the financing of the circular economy. Its composition is still under discussion though. This is what EU Commissioner for the Environment and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella [replied](#) to Pavel Telička MEP (ALDE/CZ) who [called](#) for the establishment of an investment-business platform made of public and private partners to boost Circular Economy investments (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 8).

MEP calls for quality data on waste

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Harmonised data collection and reporting would improve the comparability of waste recovery rates for the achievements of the packaging recycling targets proposed in the Circular Economy Package, according to Axel Voss MEP (EPP/DE). Voss therefore [asked](#) the Commission what steps are taken to encourage Member States to comply with data quality requirements. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

MEP question on EU funding for incineration plants

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Davor Škrlec MEP (Greens/HR) [asked](#) the European Commission how it will incorporate the circular economy principles into existing cohesion policy partnership agreements and operational programmes. In particular, Škrlec would like to know what the Commission will do to change the waste management plans of Member States, in which mechanical biological waste treatment facilities and incineration plants are classed as strategic projects, and sometimes using EU funds. EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina

Cretu, [replied](#) that EU funds are available for projects in line with waste management plans designed by Member States to meet their recycling targets. Priority will be given to projects promoting separate collection, recycling and composting. Funding for incineration plants will only be granted if the objectives of the waste hierarchy are respected.

No plan to introduce new logo to tackle food waste

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission does not intend to introduce a new food logo to clarify between 'best before' and 'use by' dates, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis [responded](#) to a [question](#) by Louis Michel MEP (ALDE/BE) regarding confusion by consumers between the dates mentioned in food labels. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the Circular Economy Action [Plan](#), the Commission will examine ways to improve and promote more effective use and understanding of date marking in relation to food waste prevention, in particular "best before" labelling. Andriukaitis also mentioned that the Commission has carried out pan-European consumer research on date marking and food waste [published](#) in October 2015, which will help inform policy making in this regard. A similar [answer](#) was given to MEP Ivo Belet's (BE/EPP) [question](#) on the same topic.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Also on the topic of food waste, Claude Rolin MEP (EPP/BE) [asked](#) whether the VAT deduction which applies in the case of stocks destruction, including stocks of edible food, is not in conflict with the zero waste programme for Europe and should therefore not be excluded. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

Taxation

Member States divided over Anti-Tax Avoidance proposals

EU COUNCIL: Some Member States are pushing for having

a two-step adoption process on the Anti-tax avoidance [package](#) tabled by the Commission on 28 January (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update January 2016*, p. 9): firstly adopt what is line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)) recommendations and then discuss further what goes beyond the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Action [Plan](#). However, the Commission rejected this idea and wants the package to be adopted as a whole. The Dutch Presidency is confident that this is achievable and would like to get an agreement on the Anti-tax avoidance Directive and on the Country-by-Country Reporting ([CBCR](#)) Directive before the end of its mandate on 30 June.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Discussions have also started in the European Parliament where EU Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, Pierre Moscovici, presented the Commission package first in plenary and then in a joint hearing organised by the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON) and the new Special Tax Committee (TAXE II). MEPs generally welcomed the Commission package but emphasised that this should only be a first step and that the Commission needs to go further. Moscovici confirmed that the Commission will not stop there and that they will table their proposal on common consolidated corporate tax basis (CCCTB) before the end of the year. He also reiterated that the Commission would come up with a proposal on public CBCR in April (see below).

Discussions on the legislative proposals will continue within ECON where Dariusz Rosati MEP (EPP/PL) has been appointed leading MEP for the CBCR proposal and Hugues Bayet MEP (S&D/BE) for the Anti-tax avoidance Directive. The votes on these two reports are planned on 26 April for the CBCR proposal and on 24 May for the Anti-tax avoidance Directive.

In addition, the Commission replied to a written [question](#) tabled by Eva Paunova MEP (EPP/BG) who asked once again the Commission to confirm that its upcoming legislative proposal for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base will not aim to harmonise corporate tax

rates amongst the EU. In his [reply](#), Moscovici reiterated that this proposal will not touch upon tax rates. It will be a set of common rules for computing the tax base of companies and groups of companies.

Commission to propose public country-by-country reporting

EU COUNCIL: The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) reached a political approach on 8 March on the exchange of tax-related information [Directive](#) proposed by the Commission (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update January 2016*, p. 9). The goal of this directive is to transpose into EU legislation the OECD standard on country-by-country reporting (CBCR).

The Directive will require multinationals to report tax-related information, detailed country-by-country. Information to be reported includes revenues, profits, taxes paid, capital, earnings, tangible assets and the number of employees. It should apply to multinational companies – with a total consolidated group revenue of at least €750 million – already for the fiscal year 2016 if they are tax resident in an EU Member States. If the group's parent company is not EU tax resident and does not file a report, it will have to do so through its EU subsidiaries. Such "secondary reporting" will be mandatory as from the 2017 fiscal year; it will be optional in 2016. The Council is expected to officially adopt the Directive in June 2016.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The European Commission plans to publish on 12 April a new legislative proposal to oblige multinational companies operating in the EU to disclose all their tax information on country-by-country basis. According to a leaked proposal, companies with an annual revenue of over EUR 750 million, would be required to publish on their website "understandable" tax information over the past five years. Companies will also have to disclose a brief description of their activities, the number of employees, their annual revenue, and the amount of profit and loss before tax in each EU

Member States. For companies not established in the EU, the obligation would impinge on their branches or subsidiaries in the EU.

In order to introduce these obligations, the Commission plans to update the Accounting and Transparency Directives. This means that unlike legislation on tax matters, this proposal will not require unanimity in the European Council and the Parliament, which has in several instances supported public country-by-country reporting, will be on equal footing with the Council for its adoption.

New hearing with multinationals in TAXE II

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The new Special Tax Committee (TAXE II) has appointed Jeppe Kofod MEP (S&D/DK) and Michael Theurer MEP (ALDE/DE) as leading MEPs for the new TAXE II report on the progress made by the EU in the fight against tax evasion.

In order to gather information for this report TAXE II organised several public hearings with small tax havens, multinational and banks. On 15 March, IKEA, Google, McDonalds, and Apple appeared in front of the committee to share their views on recent developments in the corporate taxation in the EU and beyond.

MEPs criticised the four companies for arguing that it was for lawmakers to change the tax system if it didn't work, and for companies to comply with the rules. Luděk Niedermeyer MEP (EPP/CZ) spoke for many when he said it was true that the responsibility for the tax systems lay with national authorities but that the companies had aggressively taken advantage of loopholes.

One week later, MEPs quizzed six officials of major European banks – Crédit Agricole, ING Group, Nordea, Santander, UBS and Unicredit – on the role of offshore tax havens in corporate tax planning. MEPs focused on the banks' role of in facilitating aggressive tax planning for corporate clients.

Tax evasion by multinationals was also at a core of a written [question](#) tabled by Lorenzo Fontana MEP

(ENF/IT) who claimed that an MNC had evaded tax in Italy, and that some of its managers are under investigation for that reason. He asked the Commission what it intends to investigate on this issue, at least to prevent situations of this kind in the future. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

Consultation on tax dispute resolution mechanisms

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The European Commission launched on 16 February a public [consultation](#) on double taxation. The aim of the Commission is to create a coordinated EU approach to improve double taxation dispute resolution mechanisms, with clearer rules and more stringent timelines, building on the systems already in place. The Commission wants therefore to assess how the scope of advanced mechanisms (e.g. the EU Arbitration Convention) can be extended within the Union and how to make the existing mechanisms enforceable and more efficient to improve the functioning of the Single Market. The public consultation will run until 10 May 2016 and the results will feed into the upcoming EU legislation on this issue.

VAT Action Plan to be published shortly

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission should adopt its VAT Action Plan in the coming days. One of the key point that should be proposed in this Action Plan concerns reduced VAT rates, whereby the Commission spells out two options: a revision of the list of products that are eligible – including food and drinks; or a re-nationalisation of the ability to grant reduced rates to the Member States.

Trade & Competition

Coca-Cola's request to protect bottle design rejected

EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE: The General Court of the European Union has [dismissed](#) a request by The Coca-Cola Company to register a contour bottle without fluting as

a Community trademark. The Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market ([OHIM](#)) rejected in March 2014 an application to protect a new design of its metallic, glass and plastic bottle. However, Coca-Cola filed an appeal against this decision. On 24 February, the EU General Court said that OHIM was right to reject the request as the smooth-surface bottle “is devoid of any distinctive character”. According to EU law, a trademark may consist of any signs that can be represented graphically, including the shape of goods, as long as they are capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one company from those of other company. The court said that Coca-Cola also did not establish that the sign had acquired distinctive character through use. Coca-Cola is considering whether to pursue this further to the Court of Justice, the EU's highest court.

No specific EU labour law for multinationals

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: It is a competence of Member States to ensure that workers' rights implemented at national level are respected and the Commission has no intention of putting forward legislative proposals specifically targeting multinational companies. This statement was made by EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen in [reply](#) to a parliamentary [question](#) by Kostadinka Kuneva MEP (GUE-NGL/EL) on Coca-Cola's workers' rights (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 9). The Commissioner did not refer in her reply explicitly to the concerns over the Coca-Cola bottlers' merger that the MEP had raised. However, she stated that the EU had already introduced a number of instruments to support workers, also when their companies are being restructured and when they lose their jobs.

MEPs still divided on binding legislation on UTPs

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The European Parliament Committee for Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) is still divided over the need for an EU legislative

action on Unfair Commercial Practices (UTPs). The division was shown at the recent IMCO debate on the Commission's [Communication](#) on UTPs of July 2014. Edward Czesak MEP (ECR/PL), who leads the Parliament's work on a non-binding report on UTPs (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* July-August 2015, p. 14), called for a two-tier system, with voluntary schemes and a legislative framework at EU level. The MEP believed that the Supply Chain [Initiative](#) (SCI), a voluntary platform for food operators to address cases of UTPs (of which TCCC and the bottlers are members), is not enough to protect suppliers. The need for legislative tools was also supported by Socialist and Green MEPs. Others, such as the Centre-Right and Liberals, were in favour of soft-regulation. The report will be voted in IMCO in the second half of April. EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission stated again (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 10) at the IMCO debate it is against EU legislation on UTPs. It claimed that a vast majority of rules it had considered introducing, were already legislated in most Member States. However, it acknowledged that it was difficult to assess the enforcement of national rules, since these were only introduced recently. In addition, it stated that the SCI was too weak to protect all the stakeholders in the supply chain. Thus, high-level group for UTPs would assess how to further improve the initiative.

MEPs mention again product quality in Eastern Europe

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: MEPs continue to express their concerns over the alleged quality differences between same-brand products in Western and Eastern Europe (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* July-August 2015, p. 14). Miroslav Mikolasik MEP (EPP/SK) recalled this issue at a recent debate with Bernhard Url, Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). In his statement he focused on meat products.

A similar concern was expressed in a parliamentary

[question](#) by Ildiko Gall-Pelcz MEP (EPP/HU). The MEP referred in particular to allegedly varying quality of same-brand products between Hungary and Austria. She called for a system to monitor markets across the EU which would ensure fair and equal treatment for both Western and Eastern Europe. The question should be answered within eight weeks but the Commission is expected to repeat in its reply that it is not planning any further action on this issue.

Food labels in Catalan: no draft notified yet

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Member States must notify the Commission if they want to introduce language requirements for food labelling. The Commission will then assess if the proposed measure complies with the [Regulation](#) on Food information to Consumers. To date, Spain has not notified any measure for labels in Catalan to the Commission. This statement was made by EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, in [reply](#) to a parliamentary [question](#) by Marina Albiol Guzmán MEP (GUE-NGL/ES) who wanted to know if food labels could be required in Catalan, although it is not an official language of the EU (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 10).

TTIP: still far from an agreement

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The 12th [round](#) of negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) agreement between the EU and the US took place from 22-26 February 2016 in Brussels. Even though US trade negotiator, Dan Mullaney, said that both sides have made good progress and that he is optimistic that a robust TTIP agreement could be reached before Obama's departure, there are still major obstacles ahead. The two sides have yet to agree on important areas such as regulatory cooperation, public procurement, geographical indications and investor-state arbitration. However, the European Commission said it wants to have compromises in place by the end of July, with only some minor

questions remaining open.

During this round of negotiations, two of the three pillars of TTIP were subject to a particular thrust, i.e. regulatory cooperation and rules. With regard to regulatory cooperation, the negotiators have tabled new textual [proposals](#) aimed at refining further the ideas about how to create within TTIP a system which facilitates current and future regulatory cooperation in both manufacturing and services. Parties also discussed the EU's revised draft chapter on good regulatory practices as well as all other regulatory issues, i.e. technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and the nine industry sectors under consideration.

EU-US privacy shield still needs to be formally adopted

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The Commission issued on 29 February the draft [decision](#) that will put in place the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield agreed last month (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* January 2016, p. 10) and a [Communication](#) summarising the actions taken over the last years to restore trust in transatlantic data flows since the 2013 surveillance revelations. The draft decision will have to be formally adopted by the College of EU Commissioners after obtaining the advice of the national data protection authorities (expected mid-April) and after consulting a committee composed of representatives of each EU Member. EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Affairs, Vera Jourova, plans to have the procedure finished in the next three months, although this seems optimistic.

Sugar users' association calls for more sugar imports

STAKEHOLDERS: The European Sugar Users (CIUS), EU-level association of sugar-using food and beverage industries, [called](#) on the European Commission to allow for more sugar imports into the EU. It argued that otherwise the EU would face sugar shortage by summer 2016. Neither levies nor duties should be applied to the volumes of the imported beet and cane sugar and CXL

duty should be suspended with an immediate effect, argued CIUS. The Commission has a legal obligation to release more sugar into the market in case of a shortage risk. However so far, it has been reluctant to do it. At a meeting on 25 February where the situation of the sugar market was discussed with Member States, the Commission stated that the situation would become clearer with updated production and consumption figures after 1 March 2016. Based on the updated data, the Commission then indicated that it does not see a high risk of sugar shortage and will therefore not propose any measures to allow more sugar in the EU market at this stage.

Commission refers to sugar-related subsidies

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, confirmed once again that the sugar beet quotas will be abolished on 1 October 2017. The statement was made in [reply](#) to a parliamentary [question](#) by Edouard Ferrand MEP (ENF/FR) who had asked for a prolongation of the deadline (see *EU Radar Screen Issue Update* December 2015, p. 10). The upcoming abolition was also confirmed in [reply](#) to a [question](#) by Peter Jahr MEP (EPP/DE). In the later answer, Hogan explained that Member States wishing to resort to couple payments need to describe "difficulties", allowing them to provide the payments, by using relevant statistical data (e.g. trends in areas, yields and production, profitability in the targeted sector or type of farming, etc.). He also added that Member States not implementing coupled payments have the possibility to introduce by 1 August 2016 such support from 2017 onwards.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Sugar-related subsidies were also a subject of another parliamentary [question](#) by MEP Jahr jointly with Albert Deß MEP (EPP/DE). They wanted to know in particular under what circumstances the Commission would pay sugar export subsidies and if a

derogation had been approved under which sugar export subsidies could still be paid until 30 September 2017. The question should be answered within eight weeks.

European Food and Drink industry still competitive

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: The European food industry performs strongly on trade indicators, compared to the US or Brazil for instance, despite the fact that it lags behind in terms of labour productivity or added-value creation. The positive trade balance is explained by the high-quality of the products that the EU food industry exports. The [study](#) on “the competitive position of the European food and drink industry” published by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) acknowledges that in this respect, the EU legislation on food safety and quality is an asset for the European food industry, which would further gain from a more harmonised implementation among the EU Member States.

Suspension of Schengen under consideration

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Some of the EU countries have already reinstated temporary border controls with the justification of security threats and the need to manage the flows of refugees (including Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden and Norway). The European Commission therefore published a [Roadmap](#) to restore by the end of the year the full functioning of Europe's passport-free Schengen zone. The roadmap foresees a series of activities that in the next couple of months should help cope with the emergency, including stepping up cooperation with Turkey, creating an EU coastguard force and helping Greece to strengthen its external border. If at the end of May, the Commission considers that deficiencies still persist and the migratory pressures continue, it will publish a proposal for re-establishing some temporary internal bor-

der controls until these structural deficiencies in external border are mitigated or remedied. The deal reached in March between the EU leaders and Turkey is essential to the future of Schengen area.

STAKEHOLDERS: FoodDrinkEurope [expressed](#) concerns over the possible suspension of Schengen highlighting that various economic analyses estimate the cost of such a closure to be between 500 million and more than 1 trillion euros over the coming ten years.