



Slovenian Business & Research Association

Slovensko gospodarsko in raziskovalno združenje Bruselj

B I L T E N

Letnik XII, številka 1 - 2

Januar – Februar 2012

Ustanovni člani SGRZ:

Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije; Univerza v Ljubljani; Univerza v Mariboru; Inštitut Jožef Stefan; Zadrudna zveza Slovenije; s finančno podporo Ministrstva za visoko šolstvo, znanost in tehnologijo

Pridruženi člani SGRZ:

Obrtna zbornica Slovenije; Riko d.d., Univerza na Primorskem, Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna občina Maribor; Mestna občina Novo mesto; Mestna občina Celje; Perutnina Ptuj d.d.; Korona d.d.; Visoka šola za dizajn; Kmetijsko gozdarska zbornica Slovenije; Mestna občina Ptuj; Biotehniška fakulteta, UL; Slovenske železnice; Institut za materiale in tehnologijo, IMT; Termoelektrarna toplarna Ljubljana, TeTol; Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost RS, ARRS; DRI upravljanje investicij d.o.o.; Gozdarski institut Slovenije, SID – Slovenska izvozna in razvojna banka, d.d.; Zavod za informacijsko modeliranje - AIM

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Redakcija Biltena je bila zaključena 10.02.2012.

Uvodnik

Začetek letošnjega leta v Evropski uniji označuje nadaljevanje ekonomske krize. V letu 2009 se je BDP zmanjšal v vseh državah-članicah, razen Poljske. Naslednje leto sta imeli negativno rast le še Grčija in Romunija, v letu 2011 Grčija in Portugalska, kar je tudi napoved Komisije za letošnje leto.

Eden največjih izzivov ostaja brezposelnost. V novembru 2011 je bilo v EU-27 kar 9,8% brezposelnih (23,6 milijona, od tega 5,6 milijona mladih). Relativno najboljši je položaj v Avstriji (4,0%), v Luksemburgu in na Nizozemskem (4,9%), sledijo Nemčija (5,5%), Malta (6,4%), ter Češka, Malta, Romunija, Danska, Finska in Švedska (med 6,7 in 7,4%). Nad 10% brezposelnih imajo Madžarska, Bolgarija, Estonija, Slovaška, Portugalska, Litva, Portugalska in Irska. Nad 15% pa imata le Grčija (18,8%) ter Španija (22,9%), kjer pa je brezposelnih skoraj polovica mladih pod 25 let.

Na splošno je stopnja brezposelnosti mladih dvakrat višja kot splošna stopnja in to je več kot zaskrbljujoče.

Temeljni problem, s katerim se Evropa sooča že nekaj časa, je nezadostna produktivnost. Medtem ko je povprečna letna stopnja rasti produktivnosti (merjeno v vrednosti opravljene delovne ure) v obdobju 2000-2010 dosegala v ZDA 2%, je ta podatek za EU le 1,2%. Pri tem ne smemo zanemariti, da delajo v ZDA okoli 15% več ur kot mi v Evropi. Če pogledamo, kako so uvrščene posamezne države članice EU glede na povprečje, dobimo naslednjo sliko: svojo prednost so v prejšnjem desetletju povečevale V. Britanija, Finska, Avstrija, Švedska in Irska. V prednosti so ostale: Nizozemska, Belgija in Francija,

pred Nemčijo, Dansko, Španijo in Italijo. Vse nove članice so svoj relativni položaj popravljale, medtem ko so nazadovale Portugalska, Ciper in Malta.

V gibanju konkurenčnosti vsake države so bistveni element stroški dela. V obdobju 2000-2008 so ti naraščali v vseh državah EU, najbolj pa v Romuniji, Latviji in Estoniji. Nadpovprečno so naraščali tudi v Bolgariji, na Madžarskem, na Irskem, v Latviji in Sloveniji. V obdobju 2008-2011 pa že vidimo padec stroškov na Irskem, Latviji, Litvi in na Cipru. Še vedno pa so naraščali v Bolgariji, Luksemburgu, Veliki Britaniji, Sloveniji, Slovaški in na Finskem.

Najbolj ponazarjajo rezultate strukturnih reform v cenovni konkurenčnosti glede na ostale države, v preteklem desetletju, dosežki Nemčije in Nizozemske. Prva je v obdobju 2000-2011 povečala svojo konkurenčnost za 17%, druga pa za 5%. V istem obdobju pa se je konkurenčnost Slovenije zmanjšala za celih 10%.

Kaj lahko zaključimo iz teh gibanj? Predvsem, da je treba storiti vse za dvig konkurenčnosti. Ta pa je odvisna od produktivnosti in povprečnih stroškov, na njuno razmerje pa seveda odločilno vpliva raven inovacij, ki so odvisne od kvalitete človeških virov, njihove motivacije in organiziranosti ter vpetosti v mednarodno menjavo znanja, tehnologije in proizvodov.

Če pogledamo, kako stojimo na teh področjih in kako smo pripravljeni na konkurenco v globalni ekonomiji znanja, lahko ugotovimo naslednje:

- Že v letu 2020 bo v EU kar 35% novih delovnih mest zahtevalo visoko izobrazbo; v Sloveniji se je v starostni skupini 25-64 let v letih 2000-2008 dvignil delež oseb z visokošolsko izobrazbo iz 17 na 22%. To je dobro, vprašanje pa je, ali so opremljeni s kompetencami, ki jih zahteva 21. stoletje? V gospodarstvu, zlasti v industriji, menijo, da je treba še veliko popraviti.
- Nekateri ocene opozarjajo, da smo izgubili kar 10% izobražencev, ki odhajajo v zanimivejša delovna okolja v razvite zahodnoevropske države ter raziskovalci zlasti v ZDA. Tega še nismo prepoznali kot nacionalni problem in tudi nismo storili dovolj, da bi ta obsežen odliv možganov zmanjšali.
- Po razvrstitvah v brošuri »Innovation Scoreboard« je Slovenija med EU-27 na 13. mestu in ima med 24 indikatorji podpovprečne vrednosti kar v 13 indikatorjih. To so npr.: izvoz z znanjem intenzivnih storitev, delež objavljenih člankov v najbolj citiranih znanstvenih revijah, registrirani evropski dizajni, prihodek od patentov in licenc prodanih v tujino (ta je pri nas 0,07% BDP, v EU-27 znaša 0,21%, v ZDA pa 0,64%).
- V nedavni anketi med 2.800 menadžerji so v GE Global Innovation Barometer-u objavili, kaj so za njih pomembne oblike državne podpore inovativnemu gospodarstvu:
 - o Javna podpora inovacijam,
 - o Možnosti sodelovanja z akademsko sfero,
 - o Učinkovita zaščita intelektualne lastnine,
 - o Učinkovito javno-zasebno partnerstvo.
- Slovenija je med državami, kjer mala in srednja podjetja prispevajo manj kot 40% BDP in kjer gospodarstvo prispeva manj kot 1,5% BDP za R&R dejavnost. To pomeni, da se malo gospodarstvo premalo vključuje v inovacijsko dejavnost.
- Temeljni problem Slovenije ni majhnost države, ampak pretirana fragmentacija vseh naših zmogljivosti (v gospodarstvu, v raziskovalni sferi, kakor tudi v lokalni samoupravi – saj imamo 3 ½ krat več občin kot nekoč). V takih pogojih, ko pogosto ne dosegamo kritične mase in mednarodno primerljive kvalitete, ni prave konkurence med življenjsko sposobnimi akterji. Zato prevladujejo težnje po zapiranju, kar pa gotovo ne vodi k napredku.
- Vse bolj je tudi jasno, da država doslej ni dokazala, da je lahko dober gospodar, programe privatizacije pa smo izpeljali na način, ki je dal slabe gospodarske rezultate, da ne govorimo o malverzacijah, pred katerimi se je država izkazala kot nemočna. Zato ima podjetništvo v javnosti slab prizvok, kar je izjemno škodljivo. Javno-zasebna partnerstva še nismo uspeli

razviti kot družbeno odgovorno obliko gospodarjenja z zmogljivostmi in viri, ki so za družbo posebej pomembni.

- Pravosodnega sistema nismo uspeli učinkovito depolitizirati, kar ni le pogoj za pravno državo, ampak resno škoduje gospodarstvu in odganja tuje investitorje. Po deležu tujih naložb smo na repu evropske lestvice in postavlja se vprašanje, kdo bo financiral razvoj podjetij, ki v veliki večini nimajo dovolj lastnih sredstev, bančni sistem pa potrebuje nekaj let, da se bo postavil na noge.

Če želimo razviti ekonomijo znanja, in samo to nam zagotavlja napredek, moramo oblikovati nacionalno strategijo, ki bo upoštevala globalne trende, razpoznala naše razvojne možnosti in prednosti ter ustvarila pogoje, da se bomo pospešeno razvijali v to smer. Tega pa ne bo, če znanje, inovacije in podjetništvo ne bodo postale temeljne družbene vrednote, ki jih bo podpiral celotni pravni sistem ter podporno okolje, kakršnega imajo bližnje, nam primerljive, uspešne države, kot so Avstrija, Švica, Belgija, Luksemburg, idr.

Boris Cizelj
Urednik

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1. AKTUALNE NOVICE

■ **Za izhod iz krize je poleg varčevanja treba zagotoviti tudi rast in zaposlovanje**

Izjavo o gospodarski rasti in zaposlovanju, s poudarkom na mladih, so na neformalnem zasedanju Evropskega sveta konec januarja sprejeli predsedniki držav in vlad članic EU. V izjavi o gospodarski rasti so se osredotočili na tri nujna področja, ki so zaposlovanje mladih, dokončanje skupnega trga in na izboljšanje pogojev za poslovanje majhnih in srednjih podjetij. Konkretne smernice nameravajo na podlagi omenjene izjave potrditi na rednem vrhunskem zasedanju Evropskega sveta v začetku marca. Predsedniki so konec januarja sprejeli tudi odločitev o pogodbi o fiskalnem paktu, s katero se bodo zavezali, da bodo v nacionalno zakonodajo prenesli zlato pravilo, ki je zaveza o omejevanju zadolževanja oziroma o tem, da bodo države v prihodnje imele uravnotežen proračun ali proračunski presežek. To pogodbo nameravajo predsedniki držav in vlad članic EU, razen Velike Britanije in Češke, podpisati na vrhunskem zasedanju v začetku marca.

Več:

[Izjava o rasti in delovnih mestih](#)

in

[Pogodba o fiskalnem paktu](#)

■ **Podpisana je pogodba o spremembi pogodbe o evropskem stalnem reševalnem skladu (ESM)**

Države članice, ki imajo evro, so v Bruslju podpisale pogodbo o spremembi pogodbe o ustanovitvi evropskega mehanizma za stabilnost (ESM), ki bo sredi letošnjega leta nadomestil začasni evropski sklad za pomoč državam v težavah (EFSF). V njem je zdaj na voljo 500 milijard evrov, voditelji držav članic pa bodo na zasedanju v začetku marca preučili, ali je to dovolj velik požarni zid za preprečevanje širjenja dolžniške krize v evroobmočju. Pred uveljavitvijo ESM morajo pogodbo o spremembi pogodbe o ustanovitvi ESM še ratificirati države članice z evrom.

Več:

[Besedilo pogodbe](#)

in

[Kratka predstavitev sprememb osnovne pogodbe](#)

■ **Javno posvetovanje o prestrukturiranju podjetij**

Do 30. marca bo odprto javno posvetovanje o prestrukturiranju podjetij v EU. Evropska komisija pojasnjuje, da je cilj posvetovanja opredeliti uspešne prakse in politike na področju prestrukturiranja in prilagajanja spremembam. Rezultate namerava upoštevati pri pripravi svežnja o zaposlovanju, ki bo med drugim vseboval tudi predloge za izboljšanje sodelovanja med delavci in predstavniki delodajalcev, državnimi, lokalnimi in regionalnimi organi ter institucijami EU. Na podlagi posvetovanja namerava opredeliti tudi posebne ukrepe za prestrukturiranje podjetij, ki lahko pomagajo reševati zaposlitvena in socialna vprašanja ter evropskim podjetjem omogočijo večjo konkurenčnost z inovacijami in hitrim, a neoviranim prilagajanjem na spremembe.

Več:

[Spletna stran za sodelovanje v javnem posvetovanju](#)

■ **Kako proizvajati in trošiti na bolj trajnosten način?**

Evropska komisija prek javnega posvetovanja do 3. aprila zbira mnenja in predloge, kako proizvajati in trošiti na trajnosten način. To spletno posvetovanje je del obsežnejšega razmisleka, ki bo prispeval k političnim pobudam, predvidoma sprejetim pred koncem leta 2012. Prek javnega posvetovanja želi Evropska komisija dobiti povratne informacije o politikah v zvezi z načrtovanjem izdelkov, recikliranjem in ravnanjem z odpadki, o zelenih javnih naročilih, o ukrepih za izboljšanje okoljske učinkovitosti izdelkov, o ukrepih za izboljšanje okoljske učinkovitosti organizacij.

Več:

[Spletna stran za sodelovanje v javnem posvetovanju](#)

■ **Nov instrument za pomoč podjetjem, ki razvijajo inovativne okoljske tehnologije**

Evropska komisija je uvedla nov instrument za pomoč podjetjem, ki razvijajo inovativne okoljske tehnologije. Pilotni program za preverjanje okoljskih tehnologij bo po njeni razlagi omogočil neodvisno preverjanje učinkovitosti novih okoljskih tehnologij. Proizvajalci bodo tako lahko dokazali

zanesljivost izjav o učinkovitosti, kupci tehnologij pa bodo lahko našli inovacije, ki ustrezajo njihovim potrebam. V začetku bo zajemal tri področja, in sicer čiščenje in spremljanje vode, materiali, odpadki in viri ter okoljske tehnologije.

Več:

[Spletna stran o preverjanju okoljskih tehnologij](#)
in
[Spletna stran o pilotnem programu](#)

2. KRATKE NOVICE

■ **Izboljšanje konzularne pomoči državljanom EU**

Evropska komisija je predlagala izboljšanje pomoči državljanom EU, ki se znajdejo na kriznih območjih in v vsakdanjih nujnih razmerah pri potovanju v tujini. Zakonodajni predlog Komisije naj bi omogočil stabilen okvir za sodelovanje in usklajevanje med državami članicami.

Več:

[Predlog Evropske komisije](#)
in
[Spletna stran o konzularni zaščiti](#)

■ **Zelena knjiga o prihodnosti osvetljave s svetlečimi diodami**

Evropska komisija je sprejela zeleno knjigo o prihodnosti osvetljave s svetlečimi diodami. O njej je do 29. februarja odprto javno posvetovanje. Ključna vprašanja za javno posvetovanje so: kateri ukrepi bi pomagali premostiti obstoječe ovire in pospešiti uporabo svetlečih diod v Evropi, kako zagotoviti dobro kakovost in varne izdelke s svetlečimi diodami na evropskem trgu, kako okrepiti sodelovanje sektorja osvetljave z arhitekti, načrtovalci osvetljav, elektroinštalaterji ter stavbnim in gradbenim sektorjem, kako lahko EU najbolje podpre podjetništvo in konkurenčnost v sektorju osvetljave.

Več:

[Zelena knjiga](#)
in
[Spletna stran za sodelovanje v javnem posvetovanju](#)

■ **Evropski statistični program 2013–2017**

Da bi v prihodnjih letih zagotovili zanesljive, primerljive in stroškovno učinkovite statistične podatke, je Evropska komisija sprejela predlog za evropski statistični program za obdobje 2013–2017. Program se bo začel izvajati 1. januarja 2013, trajal bo 5 let, njegov proračun pa bo znašal 299,4 milijona evrov.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

■ **Študija o pravni zaščiti poslovnih skrivnosti**

Evropska komisija v študiji o pravni zaščiti poslovnih skrivnosti ugotavlja, da so poslovne skrivnosti pravno zaščitene pred krajo v vseh državah članicah, različna pa je raven in narava zaščite.

Več:

[Študija](#)
in
[Spletna stran o intelektualni lastnini](#)

■ **Strožji nadzor nad biocidi**

Evropski parlament je sprejel uredbo o biocidih. Uveljavljena bo, ko jo bo dokončno potrdil še Svet EU. Glavna sprememba je, da bodo izdelki, tretirani z biocidi - kot so pohištvo, premazano s fungicidom ali anti-bakterijski kuhinjski pulti - po novem vključeni v to zakonodajo in jasno označeni. Kmetijski pesticidi bodo še naprej predmet ločene zakonodaje.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropskega parlamenta](#)

3. NOVA ZAKONODAJA

■ **Opustitev carinskih tarif**

Svet EU je sprejel uredbo o opustitvi avtonomnih dajatev skupne carinske tarife za določene kmetijske, ribiške in industrijske proizvode in uredbo o odprtju avtonomnih tarifnih kvot EU za nekatere kmetijske in industrijske izdelke. Cilj obeh uredb je zagotoviti zadostno in neprekinjeno oskrbo z nekaterimi izdelki, ki se v EU ne proizvajajo v zadostni meri, in preprečiti motnje na trgu za nekatere kmetijske in industrijske izdelke.

Več:

[Uredba o opustitvi avtonomnih dajatev](#)
in
[Izjava Sveta EU](#)
in

■ **Program Euratom za jedrske raziskave v letih 2012 in 2013**

Svet EU je za dve leti podaljšal okvirni program Evropske skupnosti za atomsko energijo (Euratom) za dejavnosti na področju jedrskih raziskav. Za izvedbo programa v letih 2012 in 2013 je na voljo do 2,5 milijarde evrov, vključno z dodatnim zneskom za financiranje projekta ITER.

Več:

[Sporočilo Sveta EU](#)

■ **Nova pravila o označevanju sadnih sokov in nektarjev**

Evropski parlament je na podlagi dogovora s Svetom EU potrdil novo zakonodajo za označevanje sadnih sokov in nektarjev. Njen namen je preprečiti uporabo morebitnih zavajajočih imen za mešane sokove in neutemeljenih trditvev, da sokovi nimajo dodanega sladkorja. Vse proizvode, ki so že na trgu ali so bili označeni pred začetkom veljavnosti nove zakonodaje, bo dovoljeno pod starimi oznakami prodajati še največ 3 leta, države članice pa bodo morale svojo zakonodajo z novimi pravili uskladiti v 18 mesecih po uveljavitvi. Novo zakonodajo mora formalno potrditi še Svet EU.

Več:

[Besedilo, ki ga je potrdil Evropski parlament](#)

4. GOSPODARSKE NOVICE

■ **Komisija je sprejela okvir za kakovost storitev splošnega pomena v EU**

Evropska komisija je sprejela okvir za kakovost storitev splošnega pomena v EU. Te državljani zagotavljajo varnostno mrežo na področjih, kot so zdravstveno varstvo, oskrba starejših, varstvo otrok, pomoč invalidom in socialna stanovanja. Evropska komisija je sprejela tudi spremenjen sveženj pravil EU o državnih pomočih za oceno storitev splošnega gospodarskega pomena.

Več:

[Okvir za kakovost](#)

in

[Okvir za državno pomoč](#)

in

[Spletna stran o storitvah splošnega pomena](#)

■ **Razvoj enotne kontaktne točke za čezmejno izpolnjevanje obveznosti v zvezi z DDV**

Enotna kontaktna točka bo po razlagi Evropske komisije dovolila podjetjem, da obračunajo in plačajo DDV v državi članici, kjer imajo sedež, in ne tam, kjer je njihova stranka. Predlog uredbe, ki jo je januarja predložila Komisija, je prvi korak k delovnemu programu, ki bo privedel do uvedbe nove sheme. Komisija poziva vse države članice, naj se leta 2012 dogovorijo o teh ukrepih. Skupen pristop je ključen za oblikovanje sistemov IT, ki bodo zagotovili potrebno izmenjavo informacij med davčnimi organi v 27 državah članicah, in za zagotavljanje celovite uvedbe enotne kontaktne točke za čezmejno izpolnjevanje obveznosti v zvezi z DDV do leta 2015.

Več:

[Predlog uredbe](#)

in

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

■ **Mala podjetja ustvarijo 85 odstotkov novih delovnih mest**

Mala in srednja podjetja so med letoma 2002 in 2010 ustvarila 85 odstotkov neto novih delovnih mest v EU. To je število delovnih mest, ki je razlika med novimi delovnimi mesti in izgubljenimi delovnimi mesti, pojasnjuje Evropska komisija. Njena raziskava tudi kaže, da je gospodarska kriza negativno vplivala na vsa podjetja, ne glede na velikost, pri čemer so bila najbolj ranljiva mikro podjetja. Pa tudi, da je gospodarska kriza manj negativno vplivala na inovativna mala in srednja podjetja in podjetja, ki delujejo v bolj inovativnih gospodarstvih.

Več:

[Raziskava](#)

in

[Spletna stran o srednjih in malih podjetjih](#)

■ **Število turističnih nočitev se je v letu 2011 povečalo za 3,8 odstotka**

Evropski statistični urad Eurostat je objavil podatke o turističnih nočitvah v EU v letu 2011. Ugotovil je, da se je njihovo število v primerjavi

z letom 2010 povečalo za 3,8 odstotka. Ta rast je posledica povečanja prenočevanja tujcev, teh nočitev so v EU v letu 2011 našli za 7,3 odstotka več kot v letu 2011. V Sloveniji je Eurostat zabeležil rast vseh nočitev v višini 5,9 odstotka, rast števila nočitev tujcev pa za 8,1 odstotka.

Več:

[Sporočilo Eurostata](#)

in

[Analiza Eurostata](#)

5. FINANČNE STORITVE

■ **Sporazum o uredbi o transakcijah kreditov**

Ministri za finance so na zasedanju Sveta EU za ekonomske in finančne zadeve (Ecofin) potrdili sporazum z Evropskim parlamentom o uredbi o tehničnih zahtevah za transfer kreditov. Ta uredba je eden od dokumentov v okviru sistema za enoten evropski trg za plačila (SEPA). Na podlagi te potrditve bo Evropski parlament uredbo lahko sprejel v prvem branju.

Več:

[Sporočilo Ecofin](#)

■ **Smernice za zagotovitev enake obravnave žensk in moških pri zavarovalnih premijah**

Evropska komisija je sprejela smernice, s katerimi želi zavarovalnicam pomagati pri izvajanju politike enakih cen za oba spola. Komisija je smernice sprejela po razsodbi Sodišča Evropske unije, da različne premije za moške in ženske pomenijo diskriminacijo na podlagi spola. V sodbi v zadevi Test-Achats z dne 1. marca 2011 je Sodišče zavarovalnicam naložilo, da morajo do 21. decembra 2012 pri določanju premij in dajatev uvesti enako obravnavo za posamezne stranke ne glede na spol.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

6. REGIONALNA POLITIKA

■ **Razprava o kohezijski politiki EU v obdobju od leta 2014 do 2020**

Države članice EU so na zasedanju Sveta EU za splošne zadeve poročilom predsedstva o napredku v zvezi z svežnjem zakonodajnih predlogov za kohezijsko politiko EU za obdobje 2014–2020. Med drugim so izrazile stališča o predlagani uporabi priporočil za posamezno državo kot instrumenta, ki omogoča prilagoditev kohezijske politike širši strategiji Evropa 2020 za rast in delovna mesta. Prav tako so izrazile stališča o ravnotežju med tematsko osredotočenostjo in prožnostjo za države članice in regije pri izvajanju kohezijske politike.

O teh točkah so po navedbah poljskega predsedstva dosegle široko soglasje. Na splošno so se strinjale, da bi bilo treba cilje kohezijske politike povezati s strategijo Evropa 2020, pri tem pa upoštevati specifične razmere posameznih regij in ozemelj. Velika večina delegacij je predlagala, da bi bilo to mogoče doseči, če bi za referenco uporabili nacionalne programe reform in ne priporočila za posamezne države, kakor je predlagala Evropska komisija. Nacionalni programi reform namreč bolje upoštevajo specifične razmere posamezne države članice.

V okviru razprave o finančnem okviru, ki bo podlaga za pripravo proračunov EU v obdobju od leta 2014 do 2020, je na januarskem zasedanju Sveta EU za splošne zadeve, izpostavila, da nasprotuje zmanjšanju sredstev za kohezijsko politiko v primerjavi z obstoječim finančnim okvirom in izpostavila, da je potrebno zagotoviti postopno zmanjševanje sredstev za regije, ki presežejo prag med razvitimi in manj razvitimi regijami. Slovenija bo namreč od leta 2014 razdeljena na dve statistični regiji, razvitejšo Zahodno Slovenijo in manj razvito Vzhodno Slovenijo.

Več:

[Sporočilo z zasedanja Sveta EU za splošne zadeve decembra 2011](#)

in

[Sporočilo z zasedanja Sveta EU za splošne zadeve januarja 2012](#)

■ **Javno posvetovanje o državnih pomočeh na regionalni ravni**

Evropska komisija je odprla javno posvetovanje o reviziji pravil za državne pomoči za manj razvite regije. Na podlagi mnenj in predlogov, ki jih bo prejela, se bo odločila, ali bo predlagala spremembo obstoječih pravil ali ne. Javno posvetovanje bo odprto do 26. aprila.

Več:

[Spletna stran za sodelovanje v javnem posvetovanju](#)

7. TRANSPORT IN ENERGETIKA

● **Evropska komisija je predstavila časovni načrt za energetiko**

Da bi v EU do leta 2050 dosegli zastavljeni cilj za zmanjšanje izpustov toplogrednih plinov za več kot 80 odstotkov bi morali izpuste ogljika pri energetski proizvodnji bolj ali manj odpraviti. Kako doseči ta cilj, ne da bi s tem posegali v dobavo energije in konkurenčnost, je vprašanje, na katerega Evropska komisija odgovarja v predlogu za Časovni načrt za energetiko do leta 2050. Načrt državam članicam omogoča, da sprejmejo ustrezne ukrepe na področju energetike in ustvarijo stabilno poslovno okolje za zasebne naložbe, zlasti do leta 2030.

Več:

[Predlog Evropske komisije](#)

in

[Spletna stran o Časovnem načrtu 2050](#)

● **Sklep o krepitvi postopka za certificiranje in potrditev prog in vlakov**

Evropska komisija je sprejela sklep o krepitvi postopka za certificiranje in potrditev prog in vlakov, opremljenih z evropskim sistemom za nadzor vlakov (ETCS). Ta sklep posebej določa, da morajo proizvodi, ki se nahajajo na vlakih, biti testirani v akreditiranih laboratorijih.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

8. EKOLOGIJA IN TRAJNOSTNI RAZVOJ

● **Sklepi o strategiji o biotski raznovrstnosti in o predlogu časovnega okvira za Evropo, gospodarno z viri**

Delegacije držav članic so na zasedanju Sveta EU za okolje sprejele sklepe o strategiji o biotski raznovrstnosti do leta 2020. Zavzele so se, da bi bilo treba problematiko biotske raznovrstnosti vključiti v vse sektorske politike na ravni EU in nacionalni ravni, da bi lahko zaustavili nenehen trend izgubljanja biotske raznovrstnosti in degradacije ekosistemov.

Časovni okvir za Evropo, gospodarno z viri, določa srednje- in dolgoročne cilje za doseganje učinkovite rabe virov in zajema številna področja, kot so energija, prevoz, podnebne spremembe, industrija, blago, kmetijstvo, ribištvo, biotska raznovrstnost in regionalni razvoj. V njem so v okviru dolgoročne vizije za leto 2050 določeni mejniki za leto 2020, ki ponazarjajo, kaj vse bo treba storiti, da bi postopno dosegli učinkovito rabo virov in trajnostno rast. Delegacije držav članic so se na splošno seznanile z informacijo, da so za prehod na trajnostno in odgovorno evropsko gospodarstvo ter družbo, ki učinkovito izkoriščata vire, poleg tehnoloških inovacij potrebni tudi novi modeli upravljanja, novi poslovni in izobraževalni modeli ter novi načini porabe in življenja, usmerjeni k trajnostnemu upravljanju virov.

Več:

[Sporočilo o zasedanju Sveta EU za okolje](#)

● **Evropska komisija je predstavila predlog za nov program LIFE**

Evropska komisija za obdobje od leta 2014 do 2020 predlaga, za nov program LIFE proračun v višini 3,2 milijarde evrov, kar je več, kot je za ukrepe na področju okolja zdaj na voljo na podlagi programa LIFE+. Prepričana je, da bo imel nov program večji učinek, bo enostavnejši in bo bolj prilagodljiv. Vključeval bo podprogram za okolje in podprogram za podnebne ukrepe.

Več:

[Predlog Evropske komisije](#)

in

[Spletna stran o programu LIFE po letu 2013](#)

● **Odpadki so lahko pomemben posel**

Študija Evropske komisije je pokazala, če bi v EU v celoti izvajali zakonodajo o odpadkih, bi prihranili 72 milijard evrov letno, za 42 milijard evrov bi povečali letni promet sektorja EU za ravnanje z odpadki in recikliranje ter do leta 2020 ustvarili 400 tisoč delovnih mest.

Več:

[Študija](#)

in

[Spletna stran o predpisih o odpadkih](#)

Predlog za zmanjšanje tveganja za onesnaženje vode

Evropska komisija predlaga, da se na seznam 33 snovi doda 15 kemikalij, ki se spremljajo in nadzirajo v površinskih vodah EU. Teh 15 snovi zajema industrijske kemikalije ter snovi, ki se uporabljajo v biocidnih pripravkih, farmacevtskih izdelkih in fitofarmacevtskih sredstvih. Izbrane so bile na podlagi znanstvenih dokazov, da lahko predstavljajo resno tveganje za zdravje.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

9. VARSTVO POTROŠNIKOV

Evropska komisija je preverila spletišča s ponudbami potrošniških kreditov

Namen pregleda spletišč s potrošniškimi krediti, ki je potekala po celi EU, je bil preveriti, ali so potrošnikom pred podpisom pogodbe za potrošniški kredit na voljo informacije, do katerih so upravičeni v skladu s potrošniško zakonodajo EU, razlaga Evropska komisija. Nacionalni organi so pregledali več kot 500 spletišč v 27 državah članicah ter na Norveškem in Islandiji. Označili so 70 odstotkov (393) spletišč, ki jih je treba nadalje pregledati, ker oglaševanje ni vključevalo zahtevanih standardnih informacij, ponudbe niso vključevale ključnih informacij, ki so bistvene za odločitev potrošnika. Na nekaterih straneh so bili stroški zavajajoči. Nacionalni organi bodo zdaj stopili v stik s finančnimi ustanovami in kreditnimi posredniki in jih prosili, naj pojasnijo ali odpravijo pomanjkljivosti. S tem pregledom so preverili zlasti uporabo direktive o potrošniških kreditih. Njen namen je olajšati potrošnikom razumevanje in primerjavo ponudb kreditov.

Več:

[Spletna stran o pregledu](#)

in

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

Evropski poslanci so zavrnil predlog za spremembo pravil za označevanje živil

Poslanci Evropskega parlamenta so z vetom zavrnil predlog Evropske komisije za spremembo pravil za označevanje živil. Po

njihovi oceni bi predlog Komisije omogočal zavajanje potrošnikov glede vsebnosti sladkorja, soli in maščob v živilih.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropskega parlamenta](#)

RAPEX

Hitri sistem obveščanja EU o nevarnih proizvodih, ki krožijo na evropskem trgu. Posodobitve za december-januar:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=421

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=420

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=419

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=418

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=417

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=416

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/create_rapex.cfm?rx_id=415

10. RR IN INOVACIJE

Akcijski načrt za ekološke inovacije

Namen novega akcijskega načrta za ekološke inovacije, ki ga je pripravila Evropska komisija, je povečati število inovacij, ki omogočajo boljše odzivanje na okoljske pritiske, in te inovacije približati trgu. Akcijski načrt zajema ukrepe na področjih povpraševanja in ponudbe, raziskav in industrije ter politike in finančnih instrumentov. Načrt se bo izvajal prek partnerstva med interesnimi skupinami, zasebnim in javnim sektorjem ter Komisijo.

Več:

[Spletna stran z akcijskim načrtom](#)

Javno posvetovanje o državni pomoči za raziskave, razvoj in inovacije

Konec leta 2013 poteče veljavnost sedanjemu okviru za državne pomoči za raziskave, razvoj

in inovacije. Preden bo predložila novega, se je Evropska komisija odločila prek javnega posvetovanja, ki je odprto do 24. februarja, zbrati mnenja in predloge zainteresirane javnosti.

Več:

[Spletna stran za sodelovanje v javnem posvetovanju](#)

Rezultati javnega posvetovanja o vzpostavitvi skupnega evropskega raziskovalnega prostora (ERA)

Evropska komisija je objavila rezultate javnega posvetovanja o vzpostavitvi skupnega evropskega raziskovalnega prostora (ERA). Na njihovi podlagi bo odločila, katere prednostne naloge bo vključila v nov okvir, ki ga bo predložila junija s ciljem, da bi ERA dokončno vzpostavili do leta 2014.

Več:

[Poročilo o posvetovanju](#)

in

[Portal ERA](#)

11. KULTURA IN IZOBRAŽEVANJE

Posodobitev direktive o poklicnih kvalifikacijah

Evropska komisija je sprejela predlog za posodobitev direktive o poklicnih kvalifikacijah. Namen predloga je poenostavitev pravil za mobilnost strokovnjakov v EU s ponudbo evropske poklicne izkaznice za vse zainteresirane poklice, ki bi omogočila hitrejšo in lažje priznavanje kvalifikacij, pojasnjujejo na Evropski komisiji. Glavne točke predloga so uvedba evropske poklicne izkaznice, boljši dostop do informacij o priznavanju poklicnih kvalifikacij, uvedba skupnih izobraževalnih okvirov in skupnih preskusov znanja, medsebojno ocenjevanje reguliranih poklicev.

Več:

[Predlog Evropske komisije](#)

in

[Spletna stran z dokumenti](#)

Obletnica programa Erasmus

Erasmus, program izmenjave študentov na svetu, letos praznuje 25. obletnico. Evropska komisija za njegovo nadaljevanje po letu 2013 predlaga program Erasmus za vse, ki naj bi

združil vse sedanje programe EU in mednarodne programe v podporo izobraževanju, usposabljanju, mladim in športu ter tako nadomestil sedem obstoječih programov. Z novim programom naj bi priložnost za študij, usposabljanje ali poučevanje v tujini dobilo do pet milijonov ljudi, kar je skoraj dvakrat več kot doslej. O predlogu Komisije trenutno razpravljajo države članice in Evropski parlament, v okviru postopka za sprejem novega finančnega okvira za obdobje od leta 2014 do 2020.

Več:

[Spletna stran programa Erasmus](#)

12. KMETIJSTVO

Izmenjava mnenj o predlogu uredbe o razvoju podeželja

Delegacije držav članic so na rednem zasedanju Sveta EU za kmetijstvo izmenjale mnenja o predlogu uredbe o razvoju podeželja in sprejeli sklepe o promociji kmetijstva v prihodnosti. V razpravi o predlogu uredbe o razvoju podeželja je razprava potekala predvsem o ukrepih za reševanje novih izzivov v okviru drugega stebra ter o predlaganih instrumentih za razvoj podeželja in njihovi opredelitvi. Večina delegacij se je strinjala, da bi vsebino predloga lahko ustrezno ocenili šele, ko bo znana razdelitev sredstev za drugi steber po posameznih državah članicah v obdobju med letoma 2014 in 2020, ko bo veljal nov finančni okvir EU. Slovenija zagovarja stališče, da je razvoj podeželja zanj pomemben, ker je treba v okviru kmetijske politike več sredstev nameniti tudi za ohranitev kmetijskih območij, zlasti tistih s težjimi pogoji pridelave. V sklepih o prihodnji promociji kmetijstva so delegacije držav članic Evropsko komisijo med drugim pozvale, naj poskrbi za boljšo promocijo evropske hrane kot zdrave, varne in visoko kakovostne, pa tudi, naj promocijske ukrepe prilagodi ukrepom za odziv na krizo.

Več:

[Sporočilo o decembrskem zasedanju Sveta EU za kmetijstvo](#)

in

[Sklepi o promociji kmetijstva](#)

in

[Sporočilo o januarskem zasedanju Sveta EU za kmetijstvo](#)

Napoved gibanja cen kmetijskih pridelkov v obdobju od leta 2011 do 2020

Evropska komisija je objavila novo napoved gibanja cen kmetijskih pridelkov za obdobje od leta 2011 do 2020. Po njeni oceni bodo cene v srednjeročnem obdobju ostale trdne. Razmere na trgu žit bodo odvisne od nizkih zalog in cene, ki bodo višje od zadnjega povprečja. V mlečnem sektorju Komisija napoveduje pozitivne spremembe zaradi konkurence iz držav v razvoju, za sektor mesa napoveduje zmerno izboljševanje razmer, zlasti za prašičje in perutninsko meso.

Več:

[Spletna stran s poročilom](#)

Nova strategija za dobro počutje živali

Evropska komisija je sprejela novo štiriletno strategijo (2012–2015) za dobro počutje živali v Evropski uniji. V njej predlaga dvojni pristop. S celovito zakonodajo o dobrem počutju živali bi spodbudili inovativni pristop, ki bi se osredotočal na dejanske rezultate dobrega počutja namesto le na bivanjske razmere. Z izboljšanjem trenutnih ukrepov pa bi zagotovili boljše orodja za boljše izpolnjevanje zakonodajnih zahtev v državah članicah.

Več:

[Strategija](#)

in

[Spletna stran z dokumenti o dobrem počutju živali](#)

Prihodek na zaposlenega v kmetijstvu v letu 2011

Evropski statistični urad Eurostat je objavil prvo oceno prihodkov na zaposlenega v kmetijstvu v letu 2011. Po teh podatkih se je v primerjavi z letom 2010 povečal za 6,7 odstotka. V Sloveniji se je povečal za 7,1 odstotka.

Več:

[Sporočilo Eurostata](#)

13. JUGOVZHODNA EVROPA IN SOSEDSKA POLITIKA

Programi za investicije v višini 1 milijarde evrov v državah, ki si želijo vstopiti v EU

Evropska komisija je sprejela programe v vrednosti 1 milijarde evrov za pomoč EU pri reformah v državah, ki si želijo vstopiti v EU. Ta denar bo na voljo za Albanijo, Bosno in Hercegovino, Hrvaško, Srbijo, Črno goro, Makedonijo, Kosovo, Turčijo in Islandijo.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

Podaljšanje trgovinskih ugodnosti za Zahodni Balkan do leta 2015

Evropska unija je za celotni Zahodni Balkan podaljšala trgovinske ugodnosti do leta 2015. Do takrat bodo države na tem območju imele prosto carinski dostop do trga EU tako rekoč za vse blago. Kvote veljajo le za sladkor, vino, nekatere goveje izdelke in ribje izdelke.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

Začetek dialoga s Kosovom o odpravi vizumov

Evropska komisija je začela s Kosovom dialog o odpravi vizumov. Obenem je opozorila, da bo vizume za državljane Kosova mogoče ukiniti šele, ko bo kosovska vlada izvedla obsežne reforme, s katerimi bo zagotovila ustrezno zaščito potnih listov, ustrezen nadzor meje, migracij in zagotovila ustrezno azilno politiko. Reforme mora izvesti tudi na področju zagotavljanja javnega reda, na področju boja zoper korupcijo in organizirani kriminal, zagotoviti spoštovanje temeljnih pravic in svobode gibanja.

Več:

[Sporočilo Evropske komisije](#)

Turčija dobi 75 milijonov evrov za podnebne ukrepe

Evropska investicijska banka (EIB) je Turčiji zagotovila posojila v višini 75 milijonov evrov za podnebne ukrepe, ki jih bodo izvajala majhna in srednja podjetja. To je pomoč Turčiji, da bo uresničila svoj cilj za povečanje deleža obnovljivih virov energije na 30 odstotkov do leta 2023.

Več:

[Sporočilo EIB](#)

14. NAJAVE DOGODKOV

✚ Information day for CIP ICT PSP Call 6

Bruselj, 17. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ European entrepreneurship summit

Bruselj, 21. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ CIWEM International Event: Water Management in Europe

Lille, 22. do 23. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ 3rd Biomass Trade & Power

Bruselj, 22. do 24. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Tackling Unemployment in Europe through Social Inclusion and Training Programmes

Bruselj, 23. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Enterprise Risk Management

Barcelona, 23. in 24. februar 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Conference on animal welfare

Bruselj, 29. februar do 1. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ INTED2012 (6th International Technology, Education and Development Conference)

Valencia, 5. do 7. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ The Berlin International Economics Congress 2012 (BIEC)

Berlin, 7. do 10. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Conference on Renewable Energy Law 2012: Market Design and

System Transformation for a Renewable Energy Future

Bruselj, 8. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ IADIS International Conference Mobile Learning 2012

Berlin, 11. do 13. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ The Future of Rail Freight in Europe

Berlin, 12. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ 5th International Congress on Bio-based Plastics and Composites

Köln, 14. in 15. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Breakthrough Innovation 2012

Barcelona, 14. in 15. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Uncomfortable Architectural Heritage of Socialism. A comparison of social acceptance in Eastern and Central Europe

Berlin, 15. do 17. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ I-ESA 2012: Interoperability for Enterprise Systems and Applications

Valencia, 20. do 23. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ International Conference on Research Infrastructures - ICRI2012

København, 21. do 23. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ 5th European Summit of Regions and Cities

København, 22. in 23. marec 2012

Več informacij [tukaj](#)

✚ Belgrade International Tourism Conference : Contemporary Tourism - Wishes & Opportunities (BITCO 2012)

15. ZANIMIVE PUBLIKACIJE

- ✚ [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, 2011 Edition](#)
- ✚ [Putting the New Vision for Agriculture into Action: A Transformation Is Happening](#)
- ✚ [Public Consultation on the Future of Gender and Innovation in Europe](#)
- ✚ [Global Risks 2012: Seventh Edition](#)
- ✚ [From Crisis to Recovery: The Causes, Course and Consequences of the Great Recession](#)
- ✚ [Talent Mobility Good Practices Collaboration at the Core of Driving Economic Growth](#)
- ✚ [Global status report on alcohol and health](#)
- ✚ [Pacific 2020: Challenges and opportunities for growth](#)
- ✚ [User expectations of a life events approach for designing e-Government services](#)
- ✚ [Does the control of customs procedure 42 prevent and detect VAT evasion?](#)
- ✚ [The EIB Group and microfinance: Promoting inclusive finance](#)
- ✚ [How does organised crime misuse EU funds?](#)
- ✚ [Earnings, jobs and innovation: The role of recycling in a green economy](#)
- ✚ [Energy, transport and environment indicators](#)
- ✚ [Eurostatistics. Data for short-term economic analysis](#)
- ✚ [External and intra-EU trade: A statistical yearbook : data 1958 - 2010](#)
- ✚ [Horizon 2020: the new European Programme for Research and Innovation and opportunities for transatlantic cooperation](#)
- ✚ [Enterprise and innovation](#)
- ✚ [ICT Market in China](#)

16. PRILOGE

PRILOGA 1: The Commission's CRD IV requires a deeper reading

CEPS/ Brussels

The European Parliament and EU Council need to undertake a more thorough review of the draft Capital Requirements Directive IV (CRD IV), which implements Basel III in EU law, with a view to streamlining and tightening the proposal. The most important amendments to consider are the introduction of risk-weighting on sovereign exposures within the EU and the related application in the large exposures regime, a review of the generous risk-weighting afforded to real estate, and the full application of the leverage ratio.

CRD IV is the most substantial of all the post-crisis regulatory measures entertained to date and touches upon the core problem of the EU financial system, namely the overall low levels of bank capital to absorb losses. Mario Draghi, in his former capacity as Chairman of the Financial Stability Board, called the loopholes in Basel II “one of the major factors of the crisis”. Since this is the first time the proposal has been subjected to review by legislative bodies, it is important for the EU to make a very close examination. The EU is the only jurisdiction codifying Basel III in EU law for application and implementation in the national law of 30 states, whose banking systems collectively represent about one-half of the world's banking assets. Other jurisdictions leave this responsibility to the discretion of national supervisory authorities.

The Commission's proposal is hugely complex, composed of a Regulation consisting of 488 articles and 4 annexes and a Directive consisting of 154 articles and 1 annex – in total good for about 220,154 words! Its size alone makes it a monster for the EU's legislative bodies. The European Parliament in particular should be reminded of its lenient review of CRD I (or Basel II) in September 2005, when, under pressure from regulators and the industry, all the trading book provisions were added as a single amendment, without a proper discussion.

This failing was partially and belatedly corrected in the CRD II and III in 2009 and 2010, which radically increased capital requirements for the trading book. As elaborated below, the EP should take a strong position on five key points of CRD IV:

- 1) the maximum harmonisation approach;
- 2) the maintenance of current risk-weighting of assets regime and, the zero risk weighting for EU government debt;
- 3) the limited role for the leverage ratio;
- 4) the reliance on credit ratings in the external credit ratings-based approach
- 5) and the reduced risk weightings for real estate exposures.

- The maximum harmonisation approach has already been criticized by some member states, but it has not been changed so far by the European Parliament's initial report. While the European Commission follows the same approach adopted in other recent EU proposals, it is difficult to maintain in the context of capital. The European Commission argues that it wants to avoid a ‘race to the top’, but it is difficult to argue in favour of a maximum limit on capital. Capital regulation is never perfect, as the crisis has demonstrated, but why would a bank not be allowed to compete on the basis of higher levels of capital? This would also make the financial system safer.

- The EP and EU Council should give the leverage ratio a much more central role in the capital adequacy assessment of banks than the European Commission has done, which is only indicative and subject to review (Art. 416). The almost unique reliance on riskweighted core tier 1 ratio, as also the European Banking Authority (EBA) continues to do in its stress tests, gives a misguided view about the health of the European banking sector, as was demonstrated again with the failure of the Belgian-French bank Dexia. The latter had a core tier-1 ratio well above 9%, thanks to substantial sovereign holdings, but a tangible equity ratio of less than 2%.

- Contrary to some reports in the media, the European Parliament has not changed the sovereign risk-weighting in its initial report. It only asks the European Commission to submit a report to the European

Parliament and the Council proposing options to adjust “that risk weight accordingly as soon as possible” (Amendment 9 EP). The zero-risk weighting thus remains in effect (Art. 109). The same applies to limits on large exposures, which do not apply for governments and local authorities (Art 389). The drawback of this method is that it unduly penalises banks with exposures to the ‘real economy’, as the latest EBA stress test demonstrated. 3 The current system builds in strong disincentives to lend to SMEs as compared to sovereigns, for example.

- The role of ratings agents in the assignment of risk categories has also not been addressed. While the European Commission is correcting the regulatory reliance on ratings agents in the latest amendment to CRA Regulation, ratings agents continue to have a central role in the determination of the risk weights, under the external ratingsbased approach. They thus continue to have a regulatory role in the current proposal.

- Exposure to real estate continues to benefit from a more favourable risk-weighting than other exposures, which and is left to the discretion of the member states (in contradiction with the maximum harmonization approach). The bias towards real estate investments, with the well-known result, is maintained, with a risk-weighting of half (or even less) of the real exposure, even for commercial property (Art. 391). Real estate exposure must be assessed on the basis of its real cost.

An examination of the European Parliament’s initial review of the proposed legislation in a post-crisis context suggests that the institution is being excessively timid. Even more so than in 2005, the EP will likely come under pressure from governments and regulators to adopt its reading as soon as possible. But even the heads of state and government are capable of changing parameters rapidly, as they did in October 2011, when they decreed that the 9% tier 1 ratio should be met by all banks by June 2012. In pointed contrast, CRD IV states that this only needs to be 6% by 2014. In short, the European Parliament should do its job responsibly on CRD IV and not bow to outside pressure or shy away from flexing its muscles.

PRIOLOGA 2: Europe’s growth challenge

Bruegel/ Brussels

The strategy for addressing the euro debt crisis evolved last summer, as European leaders put economic growth right in the policy agenda. It was an important commitment. Yet, at this juncture, action is required, and for at least two reasons.

The first is that the Marshall Plan for Greece agreed in July 2011, whose purpose is to accelerate the use of outstanding Structural and Cohesion funds to boost growth, takes time to deliver. A Taskforce for Greece was created over the summer with the responsibility, amongst many others, of facilitating the absorption of outstanding EU funds. Greek managing authorities and the Taskforce are collaborating over the selection of the worthiest investment projects. But this process is proceeding slowly.

Moreover, out of the €15bn in Structural Funds Greece has still available, the European Commission has offered about €2bn, which shall be leveraged through the European Investment Bank to bring them up to €6bn. Why not more?

There is one practical reason why it is difficult to channel all remaining resources at once. The cash transfers from the EU to the beneficiary are approved annually in the context of the EU Budget and require net contributors to the EU Budget (about half of the Member States) to concretely transfer the money. That shall explain why it may be unfeasible to anticipate the allocated money to any given country all at once.

As I argued elsewhere*, there may be alternative ways to do that, which do not require immediate cash transfers. Why, for example, could not the European Commission anticipate the full amount of outstanding EU funds by borrowing on capital markets under implicit EU budget guarantee, as it already does for some financial assistance programs?

The second reason why the EU needs to do more on the growth front is that prospects are meager and deteriorating for most euro zone countries. Greece is clearly stacked in a recession but some

other countries in the periphery are not doing much better either. That calls for a European approach rather than isolated country-specific measures like the Greek Marshall Plan. Again, the European Commission could borrow on capital markets to anticipate the full amount or at least a very large portion of unused Structural and Cohesion funds.

Fresh resources are important. But their use is too. Most euro zone peripheral countries face competitiveness problems. Their prices are much higher than those in other members, an inheritance from the previous credit booms and excessive protection on product and service markets. Competition-enhancing measures including those aiming to complete the Single Market are the priority. They are followed by the need to invest in training and R&D in the manufacturing sector, which is the only one that produces the kind of exportable goods, with which a country can pay back its external debt.

PRIOLOGA 3: Escaping Europe's Catch 22

EPC/ Brussels

The situation in early 2012 looks better than it has for a while. The European Central Bank's (ECB) intervention in the banking sector and positive developments in Italy have increased confidence in the markets that the EU might eventually be able to overcome the crisis. But while Italy and Spain are raising additional money at much more favourable rates, the downgrading of eurozone economies continues nonetheless. The situation remains very fragile and the future looks worrying, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently warning of a potentially disastrous economic downturn in the euro zone.

Europeans are increasingly wondering what more they can do. So much has already been implemented: enhanced governance in the euro zone, an increasingly interventionist ECB, austerity and reform programmes across the EU, significant support from stronger economies and the IMF to the weaker ones, repeated support to prop up Europe's banking sector, and political change in most crisis countries. But nothing has proven to be enough to stop the crisis from resurfacing again and again.

There are more attempts to stop the crisis in the pipeline, including a permanent larger crisis mechanism earlier than previously scheduled, higher firepower for the IMF, negotiations for a deal with the private sector to reduce Greek debt, and a new fiscal compact enshrined in an intergovernmental treaty to enforce fiscal discipline, preparing the political ground for Germany to support additional efforts to overcome the crisis. Implementing all this will prove to be difficult, but even once all this is in place, will it be enough?

The likelihood is that it will not be sufficient. In part, this is because some of the fundamental questions still remain unanswered: Must the ECB act as a (temporary) lender and buyer of last resort? Will the European and international liquidity net be big enough to stop contagion? How can the imbalances and the growth differential between stronger and weaker economies be addressed? Will the Greek haircut be enough to achieve a sustainable debt level by 2020 or will we witness another restructuring round this time involving institutional lenders? Will Greece and/or other problem countries be able to remain in the euro zone? And how much further must economic and political integration go?

All these questions remain unanswered and the euro zone is caught in a Catch 22 as multiple parallel crises often require contradictory responses. There is a banking crisis, a growth crisis, a public finance crisis, a divergence crisis, a market trust crisis, a governance crisis, a social crisis, a political crisis – all distinct but closely interrelated. To some extent this explains the different perspectives of politicians, commentators and economists, who are focusing on different crises.

And for 'their' crisis certain actions might seem to be the most appropriate – but these 'solutions' often have a negative impact on other crisis dimensions. This makes a permanent resolution virtually unattainable. For example, boosting growth or recapitalising banks requires an injection of public money, which aggravates the public finance crisis. Addressing the market trust issue by collateralising debt increases governance issues, generates the risk of moral hazard and raises political objections in a number of key capitals. More austerity is necessary to cut deficits, but it increases economic

divergence, lowers growth and aggravates the political and social crises, leading to worse public finances and to a slowdown of reform. And so on...

Politics focuses on the most immediate crisis at hand, oscillating with every new development and even triggering renewed intensity in another crisis area. This is a battle which can't be won – at least not in the short term. But what offers a long-term escape from the Catch 22 in which Europe is trapped? The last two years have proven that a wait-and-see approach is no viable strategy, as the situation tends to deteriorate if the EU/euro zone cannot get ahead and stay ahead of the crisis curve. A muddlingthrough approach will also not work either, as additional crisis responses always have to be bigger and more decisive than previous ones, creating more and more political resistance in both stronger and weaker Member States. Some are suggesting a catharsis, calling for Greece's exit from the euro zone. But this is a dangerous illusion, because it would not calm down the situation under the present circumstances. Rather, it would most likely negatively affect other problem countries and thus undermine confidence in the overall stability of the common currency.

But how can Europe get ahead of the curve? National reform efforts and fiscal prudence are indispensable but they do not produce a decisive break from the downward spiral. Two key additional elements are required to change the tide: a 'New Deal' to help kick-start growth, especially in the weakest economies, and a (temporary and partial) collateralisation of debt.

The sovereign debt crisis has proven that greater budgetary discipline and structural reforms are necessary. But to a large extent the crisis recipe has failed. Not only does public finance discipline fail to address the complex origins of the crisis, it is also unlikely to work should austerity continue to undermine growth perspectives in Europe's periphery, which will increase economic divergence within the euro zone even further. The euro area will not be able to endure the political, financial and socio economic costs of bridging the gap between a strong centre and a weak periphery which, ultimately, is undermining confidence in the future of the common currency.

What is needed is a 'New Deal' for the euro, based on investment rather than transfers and linked to strict conditionality. The reduction of co-financing rates in order to speed up access to EU funds was a move in the right direction, but more needs to be done. Separate treatment of productive investment in the excessive deficit procedure, austerity programmes and fiscal consolidation plans; the establishment of a temporary investment fund – a new Stability and Growth Fund (SGF); increased use of new loan/private-public partnership instruments; public guarantees and insurance to facilitate private investment; a refocusing of the EU budget – all this would boost growth and employment in weaker economies, reduce divergence, increase the feasibility of reform and, in the end, calm markets.

In addition, the agreement on the fiscal compact could politically prepare the grounds for some kind of debt collateralisation, sending a strong signal to investors that euro countries are ready and willing to integrate further, which should boost confidence in the future of the common currency. The proposals by the German Council of Economic Experts (Sachverständigenrat) based on a debt reduction strategy that seeks the gradual but compulsory reduction of government debt to below 60% of GDP is an attractive option, given that the common issuance of bonds would be temporary and used only for debt ratios over 60%. Debt exceeding this level would be pooled in a 'redemption fund'. Every country would commit to autonomously redeem the transferred debt over a period of 20-25 years, following a defined consolidation plan. In return, the fund would issue 'safe bonds', which would be used to cover pre-agreed financing needs for servicing outstanding debt and new borrowing. The 'redemption model' would be in line with EU Treaties and national constitutional requirements, which prohibit permanent collateralisation of debt.

A 'New Deal' and the partial and temporary collateralisation of debt would help to restore confidence by providing forceful responses with respect to a number of crisis dimensions. This would provide the breathing space necessary to address and overcome the remaining fundamental imbalance between economic and monetary union, which at some point in time will require a more substantial EU treaty revision.

There are some positive signs that this is where the euro zone and the EU are heading. In the meantime, Europe will have to continue to fight off crisis after crisis. But the danger is that Europe could run out of steam and attempt to simply muddle through without a decisive breakthrough and

without a long-term goal in sight. If this is the case, the crisis will not just be with us in 2012 but will continue to drag down the EU until a painful but inevitable implosion with incalculable consequences for current and future generations.

PRIOLOGA 4: Europe's Uncertain Energy Future

Friends of Europe/ Brussels

Friends of Europe's annual Energy Summit took place against a backdrop of turmoil in Europe, in energy markets and in climate change policy. While governments are distracted by the ongoing financial crisis, energy and climate change are slipping down the policy agenda, said Fatih Birol, Chief Economist of the International Energy Agency. This is clear to see in the low expectations of a deal at the most recent climate conference in Durban, which took place the week after the summit.

At the same time, the Fukushima disaster has prompted a global reassessment of the benefits of nuclear power, one of the key pillars of the move to a low-carbon society, while investment in essential oil and gas infrastructure has been hampered by the disruption caused by the events of the Arab Spring.

As a result, global trends relating to oil security and climate change are becoming much more serious, Birol said. Despite climate change policies being in place around the world, energy efficiency of global economy worsened for the second straight year, CO₂ emissions hit a record high and the amount of spending on oil imports was also at record levels, making it more difficult for nations to tackle the financial crisis.

With emerging markets such as China, India, the Middle East, and Russia, set to be the drivers of future growth in energy demand, Europe will have much less control over its own energy future. Decisions made in Beijing, Moscow or New Delhi will have as much effect on European energy demand as anything that Europe does. Europe is set to become a price taker in energy markets at exactly the time when the US will become increasingly self-sufficient and therefore less concerned about enforcing its own energy security – and that of other nations.

Renewables and natural gas are the fuel sources set to see the strongest growth in demand in the next 25 years – indeed we could be entering a “golden age of gas”, Birol said, thanks to new discoveries of both conventional and unconventional gas. However, an expansion in the use of gas is not enough to cut emissions – indeed on current rates of growth in greenhouse gases, we are “perfectly on track” for a 6 degrees C increase in average temperatures.

For the world to have any hope of reaching its target of limiting global warming to 2 degrees C, renewable energy must continue to be supported financially – for the next few years at least, Birol stressed, yet the summit also heard, from Greenpeace's Sven Teske, that many forms of renewable energy will be cost-competitive within the next five years.

Nonetheless, Europe has a commitment to cut its emissions by 80 per cent by 2050 and is set to publish an Energy Roadmap detailing how it will do this by the end of the year. One key priority will be a pan-European energy infrastructure, said EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger. “The world has been networked, but our energy systems are still limited by nations that have existed since the 19th century,” he pointed out.

Increased flexibility

Europe can increase its energy security by diversifying its sources of supply and increasing the flexibility and scope of its energy networks, as MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho pointed out. Europe requires new pan - European energy networks both to make it easier to import gas from suppliers outside Russia and also to allow it to integrate increasing amounts of renewable power. One of the cornerstones of such networks is a strong grid, so this must be one of the key priorities for policymakers, said two of the continent's Transmission Service Operators (TSOs).

However, with the financial crisis limiting the ability of both the public and private sector to fund new infrastructure, consumers will be asked to pay for this new energy network, the summit heard. To help make this more palatable for consumers, energy companies should emphasise the job creation

benefits of this investment, said Statnett's CEO Auke Lont. Gas, both conventional and unconventional, could act as a bridge to a low-carbon future, said ExxonMobil's Heinrich Herm Stapelberg, but there is a risk of locking in fossil fuel infrastructure for decades to come, warned Teske.

Gas markets have been transformed by the development of the shale gas industry in the US, but the industry is unlikely to develop on a similar scale in Europe and Asia because of different geology, higher population densities and less favourable property rights. There are environmental concerns about shale gas, which are real and should be taken seriously, said Birol, and there is a need for strong standards that companies should adhere to. The good news is this problem can be solved with existing technologies.

Having started with the turmoil of the last year, the summit ended with a warning that further turmoil is in store with Willy De Backer of Friends of Europe's Greening Europe Forum warning of "a perfect storm of resource challenges" and "a new paradigm of resource scarcity."

PRILOGA 5: Lessons from the crisis for the CEE region

Europe's World/Brussels

The financial and economic crisis of 2007-2009 shed light on the internal contradictions plaguing the functioning of the European Union and the European Monetary Union and taught serious lessons to countries heading into the eurozone, including Hungary.

Lesson #1: EMU entry should not be rushed, time should be left for real convergence.

For new accession states, the introduction of the common currency is not just a right but is also an obligation, as these countries do not have an opt-out option, like the United Kingdom and Denmark do. Until the onset of the global economic crisis, the dominant view among new EU members had been that the adoption of the common currency should occur as soon as possible. One of the main arguments for adoption was that the rules governing the monetary union would automatically result in fiscal discipline. Several studies aimed to prove the quantitative and qualitative benefits of euro adoption, having assumed that the satellite states around the EMU match Mundell's OCA criteria, i.e. they form an optimal currency area with the eurozone. There were other authors (Frankel and Rose, 1998) who even declared that countries which are less OCA-compatible should also join, as membership could accelerate their integration and make them more apt for membership in the currency union. (Of course, it also has to be mentioned that there are studies, which argue that the EMU itself is not an optimal currency area either).

Even well before the crisis, there were experts who had argued just the opposite: they had claimed that forced nominal convergence means great sacrifices, that ample time should be left for real convergence, and that the constraints of the common currency should only be accepted once the economy is fully prepared for them. Such opinions against the „rush for the euro”, however, clearly represented a minority view.

It has become obvious based on the sovereign debt crisis of the periphery that the common currency could be not just a blessing but also a curse for economies that were not fully prepared for it. The starting positions of Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal were very different, but it is still not a coincidence that it was these countries that had to face the most severe problems. The peripheral countries in question are less developed, have a higher potential growth rate and a more elevated equilibrium level of inflation.

In order to join the currency union, these countries gave up their monetary independence, while other branches of economic policymaking remained under national jurisdiction. The interest rate that was appropriate for the most advanced countries, particularly Germany, proved to be too low for the fast-growing periphery and led to the overheating of the real estate market, lending markets and consumption, thereby resulting in severe external imbalances.

Meanwhile, the euro concealed accumulating tensions within these economies, the forming imbalances were hidden from the public eye for a long time (or, perhaps, market players and

European authorities chose to ignore them). When the crisis made it obvious that the process was unsustainable, it was already too late.

Another great lesson from the crisis is that if a community of sovereign states creates a monetary union and uses a common currency, this common currency will not be a national and internal currency for any of its members. This practically means that if there is a „no bailout” clause, then, differently from the view that has prevailed before, any member of the monetary union can become insolvent. The EMU was completely unprepared for this almost evident eventuality.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that a fundamental shift can be seen in accession strategies around the region (admittedly, the monetary union would also be less prone to welcome newcomers). The earlier minority view that real convergence should be a more emphatic element of the accession process has, by now, become dominant.

A country should not seriously consider the introduction of the euro until its economy has reached a certain degree of real convergence. The ordeal of peripheral countries clearly shows that a „one-size-fits-all” monetary policy is not optimal for emerging economies and early accession can lead to grave conflicts.

According to the Balassa-Samuelson effect, productivity improvements in various sectors of a converging economy differ in their extent. In sectors producing tradable goods, the growth in productivity is faster than in sectors producing non-tradable goods. The rise in productivity in the tradables sector drives wages higher, which, however, does not cause any deterioration in relative productivity. Higher wage growth in the tradables sector, however, trickles through into the non-tradables sector, where the growth in wages does exceed the growth in productivity, thereby leading to inflation. Studies prove that the traditional Balassa-Samuelson effect works within the EMU as well (Szapáry, 2000) but in converging economies there is an additional effect. This effect has not been talked about before and we could name it “the reverse Balassa-Samuelson effect”. Unified monetary policy (which is too loose for faster-growing economies) results in excessive credit demand in the non-tradables sector, hence the sector’s labor-market demand picks up, wages rise, which also passes through into the tradables sector, thereby worsening productivity. This, in turn, manifests itself in the deterioration of external balances.

If independent monetary (and economic) policy is not available to maintain a balanced economic path both on a micro and a macro level, then processes can sooner or later become uncontrollable. Consolidation efforts can be much more painful and, surely, more time-consuming in the absence of an independent exchange rate and monetary policy.

Lesson #2: Fiscal discipline is necessary but it is always external balances that represent the true constraint.

It has been signaled in the past by various economists and has also become evident even in practice that the rules governing the Union and the Monetary Union (the Stability and Growth Pact and the Maastricht Criteria) are overly simplistic, inconsistent and that even a formal adherence to the rules does not necessarily play a stabilizing role. In fact, the rules are especially inappropriate for economies located on the periphery of the Union, which have a higher potential growth rate, including the converging countries. Instead of having a stabilizing role, the rules have led to the formation of imbalances.

The main deficiency of the system was that it equated financial stability with fiscal equilibrium, while almost fully ignoring the question of external balances. Unfortunately, the crisis has verified views, which had been minority views in the past, that the sustainability and financeability of external positions represents the real policy hurdle. In terms of the sustainability of an economic trajectory, the key question remains the position of the current account and the capital account (i.e. the net domestic savings and investment balance and the ratio of total debt to GDP). Therefore economic policy should not focus single-mindedly on fiscal equilibrium, as growth in private-sector debt represents risks that are similar to those posed by public-sector indebtedness.

The SGP has been reformed as a result of the crisis: rules pertaining to fiscal budgets have been strengthened, the Pact now includes a rule on debt and a framework has been created for monitoring and sanctioning excessive imbalances. The changes point in the right direction, since they take into

account the fact that a common currency and a shared monetary policy cannot be successful if other branches of policymaking (especially fiscal policies) are not tightly coordinated. The emphasis, however, is still mostly on the fiscal position. Policy-setters in EU states should learn from past lessons: economic policy should be set in a way that the sustainability of external balances is also maintained.

Lesson #3: Harmony between fiscal and monetary policy is key; monetary policy cannot focus exclusively on inflation

The crisis has taught some serious lessons to monetary policymakers as well. Over the past decades, inflation targeting has become the single most dominant monetary-policy framework. External factors have contributed greatly to the success of this system, which was mainly observed in large, closed economies. Inflation remained stable without practically any special effort made by central banks during the period of the „Great Moderation“. Thus the achievements related to inflation are not just attributable to central banks' activity, but they also came about largely as a spillover of globalization. Paradoxically, it was global imbalances that contributed greatly to controlling inflation in the short term. It was, however, undoubtedly the responsibility of central banks that they focused single-mindedly and exclusively on inflation and shaped their monetary policies accordingly. As they celebrated short-term successes in the fight against inflation, they did nothing to tackle problems related to severe external imbalances, unsustainable debt accumulation, credit expansion and asset price bubbles, which arose in several countries.

Therefore, the main lesson for central banks was that much more attention would have to be devoted to matters regarding financial stability. The rate of inflation should not be the only targeted indicator (especially not short-term CPI developments), as successes reached in one area can easily lead to severe damage in others. (In small open economies, which use their own currency, it is clear that excessive external imbalances could be nicknamed „inflation“.) The security and economic benefits of the currency union can result in severe external imbalances and consolidation can only occur through an internal devaluation, which, in turn, can lead to an equally risky phenomenon: deflation. Additionally, the feasibility of such consolidation measures is not entirely clear and these programs can also be rather time-consuming.

Hungary's painful case shows what can happen when coordination between the two branches of economic policymaking breaks down. Differently from popular belief, it was not just fiscal policy that played a role in the formation of imbalances and the undermining of financial stability in Hungary, monetary policy also had its own responsibility in the process. The National Bank of Hungary 'overtightened' in order to counteract loose fiscal policy and to reach its inflation target at all costs. The maintenance of overly strict monetary conditions is even harder to defend when we take into consideration the fact that the turn in fiscal policies had taken place earlier on and significant consolidation had begun to take place.

The elevated domestic interest rate and the belief that the central bank will not allow for a depreciation of the forint (as that could jeopardize the achievement of its inflation target) was a strong incentive for growth in FX-based private-sector indebtedness. This process caused a drastic deterioration in the external position of the economy, thereby boosting the country's vulnerability. Although the Hungarian crisis did not turn out to be fatal, we will still have to live with the consequences of FX-based private-sector indebtedness for a number of years.

Lesson #4: In the case of economies with liberalized capital accounts, the 'regulation' of capital flows is fundamental

The use of unconventional tools could come in handy in the regulation of capital flows not only in small, open economies similar to Hungary but also in larger economies. If capital flows cannot be constrained within the appropriate limits, control over inflation, credit growth and the external position becomes impossible and significant disequilibria come to life within the economy.

Seeing the consequences of the rapid growth in FX-based indebtedness in Hungary, it is evident that allowing transactions between residents in foreign currencies is not advisable. A clear banning of FX-based transactions should be considered or, if this is not possible, such transactions should be limited to the anchoring currency.

Summary

Looking at the way in which the eurozone is entangled in the crisis, it is understandable that the drive for euro adoption has subsided and that new entrants would be less welcome at this point in time. It is still indubitable, however, that euro adoption in a small open CEE economy is desirable at an appropriate point in time. Economies in the CEE region have integrated so deeply into Europe that staying outside the monetary union for an extended period of time could cause more harm than good in the longer term and could conserve the relative lag in their development.

One has to reject the illusionary notion that the monetary union represents some kind of special protective shield, one that provides unilateral benefits, resolves all problems of an economy, enforces fiscal discipline, prevents the overheating of the economy and, with time, makes risk premia disappear automatically. The crisis has proved just the opposite: severe imbalances can also take shape within the currency union, insolvency remains a real potential risk even for EMU members, and the correction of imbalances might take much longer and can be much more painful in the absence of an independent monetary and exchange rate policy. Constraints within the currency union also make the operation of „demand management” (meant in a traditional sense) more challenging.

It is of utmost importance to countries heading towards the EMU that their accession take place at the right moment in time. During the preparations, much greater emphasis should be laid on real convergence than had been customary and required before. Taking on the limitations and benefits represented by the common currency only makes sense once an economy is competitive and economic policy tools are available to ensure not just fiscal, but also external stability.

PRILOGA 6: Is the EU-India strategic partnership really strategic?

EU Observer/ Brussels

At a time of crisis, the EU seems to be interested in improving relations with emerging India. EU High Representative Chief Catherine Ashton recently wrapped up a 2-day visit to India, where she met with top Indian government officials as part of the EU-India strategic partnership. Trade and security, including antipiracy, cyber security and counter terrorism were the main issues on the agenda. But has the partnership been rendered more strategic?

Ashton's visit came as a much-needed sign of political engagement to a relationship that struggles to find momentum. As the EU seeks to intensify consultations with India ahead of the EU-India summit (postponed to February 2012), at least things seem to be going in the right direction.

After five years of stalled negotiations, free trade talks have finally begun to pick pace again. The 14th round of FTA talks was held in New Delhi just a few days preceding Ashton's visit. It managed to iron out key issues. While cooperation at the technical level has advanced in recent times, divides persist given the limited political interactions and an inadequate understanding of each other. Other pending issues include tariff barriers, procurement, sustainability clauses and automobiles, among others.

While it is highly unlikely that the bilateral trade and investment pact will be concluded at the February summit, talks have been put in final gear thanks to the political impetus. Now what the EU and India need is a concrete roadmap for both trade and security cooperation and in particular, to advance with the FTA.

A free trade agreement is crucial for both partners. Not only will it ease economic difficulties and promote growth on both sides, but it also has the potential to send out an important message to the international community. Conversely, the FTA might herald a shift from the mired Doha agenda to bilateralism given the scope of the deal and the market size of the two giants. It thus becomes even more imperative for both global actors to increase efforts to advance the multilateral trading agenda as well. The upcoming summit provides an opportunity to achieve at least some sort of political agreement of sorts.

Catherine Ashton also discussed the EU-India summit agenda. In Bangalore, the High Representative co-chaired a ministerial meeting with the Indian Foreign Minister, with talks spanning from trade and investment, to immigration, energy, science and technology, counter-terrorism, and other regional and multilateral issues. This is another area where the EU errs. Instead of trying to cover (superficially) almost every single issue of the bilateral relationship, Ashton's visit could have had maximum impact had it focussed on just a few priority dossiers of immediate significance.

While a strategic partnership must clearly allow for both partners to discuss a range of issues, contentious or not, the EU-India strategic partnership is different to that of the EU and the US. The transatlantic relationship has been traditionally close for historical reasons and comes with a high level of understanding. Meanwhile, the EU finds a rather compatible partner in the US when it comes to global and strategic affairs.

With India, despite commonalities, the EU needs to cultivate a greater synergy for it to become a real strategic partner. This requires an in-depth understanding of each other's visions and roles in the new global order. Issues like Iran, where the EU and India have clear ideological differences, were discussed at length. India declared its intentions to continue importing crude oil from Iran, brushing aside US sanctions and the High Representative's message that India had a responsibility to deliver the right message to Iran.

High-level visits are valuable for confidence-building, especially if such visits do not occur very often. This year will certainly see a renewal in the EU-India relationship, especially if the FTA is signed. While the European External Action Service has begun an internal review of its strategic partnership with India, India too sees a greater responsibility towards the Union.

Foreign Minister Krishna reiterated that Europe's economic recovery and growth lay central to India's interests. While the EU has made constructive advances regarding the strategic partnership, a positive response from India will undoubtedly pave the way for better relations. In this regard, greater visibility of Indian politicians in Brussels will be essential too.