

Czech road-toll to rise by 25% in 2011

From the beginning of 2011 the road tolls on Czech highways and roads will increase by a quarter. The Ministry of Transport stated that the price would increase by about five CZK per kilometre. The increase will apply to all roads and all categories of carriers. In the Czech Republic, the toll is being paid by small trucks (from 3.5 to 12 tonnes) and big trucks (over 12 tonnes).

Tight belts for Czechs next year

The Czech government has approved its budget and agreed that the public deficit should not be higher than 4.6 % of the Czech GDP (3.5% in 2012 and 2.9% in 2013). The government agreed to set up a so-called "flood tax" and decrease several benefits for taxpayers. It will also decrease salaries of state representatives and of public officials as well as judges by 5%.

Protection of personal data

Czech SMEs are asking for higher level of privacy protection as it currently fails to cover the latest technological developments. The system of notification process for the processing of personal data should be streamlined through electronic processes and single points of contact.

When will you buy an electric car?

In April 2010, the Commission set out an ambitious strategy on clean and energy efficient vehicles. The strategy builds on existing ongoing measures and sets out medium- to long- term actions. Its aim is to reduce the negative impact of road transport on the environment and enhance the competitiveness of European companies. Up to 40% of the energy consumed in Europe is for transport. New green technologies used in automotive industry could contribute considerably to the reduction of CO₂ emissions. However, research and development of green technologies must be supported and new standardisation has to be agreed upon. The biggest challenge is to rethink the whole concept of transport and convince consumers to buy green vehicles. This is still a difficult task as the infrastructure (charging stations, grids, etc.) and compatibility

of standards are missing. Stakeholders interested in electric cars gathered on 6th October during the Open Days 2010 to discuss the main challenges of the green technology sector. *(see more on page 2)*



From left Giacomo Mattinó from the European Commission, Andrea Benassi, Secretary General of UEAPME, and Tomáš Chmelík from CEZ Group

Does the EU consider SMEs' interests?

The 20 million SMEs in the EU represent 99% of all businesses, and are key drivers of economic growth, innovation and job creation. In December 2008, heads of state and government from the EU's 27 member states endorsed the European Commission's SME policy initiative, the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA). Its second anniversary gives us the opportunity to assess its implementation. The SBA proposes a strong self-commitment to respect the "Think Small First"

principle, defines ten priority areas for better SME policy at European and national level and seven concrete European legislative proposals to improve the business environment for SMEs in Europe. The 'Think Small First' principle requires that legislation takes SMEs' interests into account at the earliest stages of policy making in order to ensure that the outcome reflects smaller businesses' needs. However, the 'Think Small First' principle largely remains

a concept rather than a common practice. The overall SBA implementation has been very slow so far. Member States have made barely any progress on the "Think Small First" principle and even less on the concrete measures linked to the SBA one year after it came into force. This was also clearly demonstrated in the latest "Think Small Test" and "SBA Implementation Scoreboard" surveys made by UEAPME.

(see more on page 2)

European Parliament of Enterprises 2010

On 14 October businesses from all over Europe gathered in the Hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels to constitute the second European Parliament of Enterprises. By voting, they have sent a clear message to the EU institutions on the following points:

- The 'think small first' principle largely remains a concept rather than a common practice and the **outcome of EU policy making does not yet adequately reflect smaller businesses' needs.**
- **Public authorities should undergo stricter**

rules than businesses when it comes to payment delays. This view is in line with the fact that public authorities are traditionally very bad payers.

- **Optional European Private Company Statute would offer an added value to companies** when trading across the EU and setting up subsidiaries in other EU member states.
- **European business community do now want the development of an EU system of collective redress.**

See more results at www.parliament-of-enterprises.eu.



(see more on page 2)