

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)

TALKING ABOUT... ... ELECTRIC CARS

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The strategy on Clean and energy efficient vehicles adopted in April is being enforced by a series of actions including a preparatory meeting of HLG CARS 21. Giacomo MATTINÓ from DG Enterprise & Industry, announced at the event organized by CEBRE, CEZ Group and UEAPME that the strategy was only the first step and that more actions are to be taken. This year, the Commission has proposed a regulation on type-approval of two- and three- wheelers while other measures aim to reinforce road security of electric vehicles. Member States will have the possibility to participate in European Sector Councils of Competences and use the European Social Fund to adapt the skills of employees of the automotive sector. Andrea BENASSI of UEAPME, called on the Commission to simplify the access of SMEs to EU funding and to cut red tape. David VALENTINY, Counsellor of Wallonia Economy Minister, presented priorities of Belgian presidency in the field of electric transport and stated that the automotive industry is a case study for energy

challenges. Tomáš CHMELÍK of CEZ Group, informed that CEZ is leading a project „E-Mobility“ with 70 Peugeot cars (under negotiation) aimed to create charging infrastructure in the Czech Republic and work on standardisation. He believes in 10-20% market penetration of electric cars by 2020. “Electric cars will bring a lot of opportunities” concluded MEP Giles Chichester.



From left Giacomo Mattinó from the European Commission, Andrea Benassi, Secretary General of UEAPME, David Valentiny representing Belgian Presidency and Tomáš Chmelik from CEZ Group

SMALL BUSINESS ACT

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European institutions must concentrate on adopting the proposed measures in the SBA (European private company, revision of late payments directive, community patent, etc.) and on respecting SBA principles. SBA was adopted to help the SMEs to get out of the crisis. Two years later, some of the measures have still not been adopted or implemented. Moreover, after a long-lasting legislative procedure, some mea-

sures do not completely reflect the original idea. Sometimes, the creativity of one of the two EU decisionmaking bodies can be more harmful than beneficial for SMEs. National governments also play their role here. However, they have no obligation to monitor or even evaluate SBA implementation. Key European business organizations, BUSINESSEUROPE, EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME, agreed on the following point - implementation of the “Think Small First“ principle is crucial and should be openly addressed throughout the regulatory process at all levels: EU, national, regional and local.

EPE 2010

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On 14 October, over 700 entrepreneurs of all sizes and from business sectors coming from 45 European countries gathered in the Hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels to constitute the second European Parliament of Enterprises, organised by EUROCHAMBRES and its members, including the Czech Chamber of Commerce. Entrepreneurs debated and voted on a range of business-related topics face to face with the highest representatives of the European Institutions. Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, and Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, opened the event together with the President of EUROCHAMBRES Alessandro Barberis.



Czech Members of the European Parliament of Enterprises 2010

CEBRE was founded in 2002 by:

ENERGIZING EUROPE:

3rd Czech Energy Day was a Success!

On 5th October 2010 CEZ Group, in cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, organized the Third Czech Energy Day in Brussels. The aim of the event which has already become a tradition and which the commissioner for energy Günter Oettinger greeted as an „important pillar of the Brussels-based debate on the future energy policy“, is not only to discuss the energy developments in CEE but also to present European decision makers with the Czech perspective on current EU legislative initiatives. Representatives of the European Commission, Council and Parliament took part in lively and enriching debates during which the need for a clear EU support for nuclear was mentioned by Martin Roman,



CEO of CEZ, a.s., or Czech Industry Minister Martin Kocourek.

Jiri Horak
CEZ Group

CEZ GROUP

CEBRE CALENDAR:

- Conference on „Implementation of the Services Directive“ organised by CEBRE and Czech Permanent Representation on **4th November, 2010 (Brussels)**.
- Debate on Trade Policy as an essential part of the Europe 2020 Strategy organised by CEBRE and Czech Permanent Representation on **11th November, 2010 (Brussels)**.
- Sectoral Seminar on “Water supply and wastewater treatment in EU external aid programmes” (www.sectorseminars.eu) on **24th November, 2010 (Brussels)**.
- Exhibition by Markéta Muláčková from **26th October till 18th November 2010** (Czech Centre Brussels).

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