



2009 EU Key Events

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Summary

This document is intended to be a resource for US businesses on key upcoming events in the EU for the remainder of 2009, specifically highlighting potential implications for US business interests.

June 4-7: EU Parliamentary Elections

European governments' handling of the economic crisis was the dominant issue in the European Parliament elections. Europe's center-right parties were the decisive winners, showing voters' faith in the European model of welfare state capitalism in the midst of the global financial crisis. Center-right leaders pointed to their victory as a vote against stimulus packages and corporate bailouts. Far-right anti-immigrant and eurosceptic parties also increased their number of seats. Socialist and center-left parties, on the other hand, largely failed to persuade voters that the economic recession represented a "crisis of capitalism" that warranted left-wing leadership in Parliament. The elections were marred by a new record low turnout of 43.55%, down from 45.4% in 2004.

July 1: Start of Swedish Presidency

Sweden, like the Czech Republic, will continue to be a strong advocate of free trade during its EU Council presidency. With the US holding the largest aggregate amount of Swedish FDI, Sweden is highly interested in forming and maintaining strong transatlantic trade relations, removing US-EU trade barriers, and urging the Obama administration to work towards the conclusion of the Doha Round in the WTO. The Swedish government has expressed its firm commitment to the Transatlantic Economic Council as a vehicle for regulatory cooperation. The Swedish presidency's priorities also include climate change and energy policy, and Sweden will thus highlight investment opportunities in the 'green technology' sector.

For more information: <http://www.se2009.eu/en>

Oct: Irish Referendum

Last year, the Irish people voted against ratifying the Lisbon Treaty, which must be ratified by all 27 member states. The government of Ireland presented its concerns about the Lisbon Treaty to the EU Commission in December, 2008. After securing a series of legal guarantees, the Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen committed to ratifying the Lisbon Treaty by the end of the Commission's current term. Another public referendum is scheduled for early October. The Treaty will not change Ireland's laws about taxation, abortion, or military neutrality. Polls suggest it is likely to pass.

Oct/Nov: Lisbon Treaty

The ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all Member States will have important implications for the EU's external trade policy. The role of the EP in trade negotiations will be enhanced. The treaty will simplify and streamline EU external trade policy. Trade competence will be exclusively at the EU level and national parliaments will no longer be required to ratify trade agreements. EU competence will be extended to include all services trade, trade related IPR, innovation and FDI.

For more information: http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/index_en.htm

Oct/Nov: U.S.-EU Summit and Transatlantic Economic Council

The next meeting of the Transatlantic Economic Council is expected to take place in the fall of 2009, a few weeks before the next (yet to be scheduled) U.S. - EU Summit. The venue is expected to be Washington, DC.

Oct/Nov: Change in European Commission

The current European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso will likely serve a second five-year term due to the victory of center-right parties in the Parliament elections. However, the issue of when he would be reinstated remains. France and Germany prefer waiting until the Lisbon Treaty comes into effect, with French policymakers in particular hoping for a new Commission that emphasizes a pan-European industrial policy with a strong interventionist role for the state, rather than free market competition. Barroso, in turn, has highlighted his involvement in the Commission's recent efforts to strengthen financial regulation in the EU. If reappointed, Barroso will name his Commission nominees after the Irish referendum, and European Parliament hearings will be held in late October or November.

Dec 7-18: United Nations Climate Change Conference – Copenhagen, Denmark

Over a decade ago, most countries joined an international treaty -- the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) -- to begin to consider what can be done to reduce global warming and to cope with whatever temperature increases are inevitable. More recently, a number of nations approved an addition to the treaty: the Kyoto Protocol, which has more powerful (and legally binding) measures. The goal of this year's conference will be to establish a global agreement on climate change to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which is set to expire in 2012.

This year, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report including compelling scientific evidence of global warming. The report also highlighted the necessity of urgent and comprehensive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Any agreement made in Copenhagen will likely reference this text.

Dec 12-13: USA Pavilion at Bright Green – Copenhagen, Denmark

Bright Green takes place 12-13 December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, in parallel with the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15). Bright Green combines elements from art, architecture, entertainment and trade fairs. It showcases the business response to the climate challenge – not only as a traditional trade fair but also as a live statement from the world's most innovative and climate-friendly companies. For information on this event, click [here](#).

For More Information:

The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union is located at Boulevard du Regent 27, Brussels BE-1000, Belgium, and can be contacted via e-mail at: brussels.ec.office.box@mail.doc.gov; or by visiting the website: www.buyusa.gov/europeanunion.

One can locate the nearest U.S. Export Assistance Center or Commercial Service offices throughout Europe by visiting www.buyusa.gov and www.buyusa.gov/europe.

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