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Have your say: more than 4.6 million responses received in public consultation on summertime arrangements

The Commission closed yesterday the public consultation on summertime with more than 4.6 million submissions from all 28 Member States of the European Union. Launched on July 4, European citizens, stakeholders and public authorities were invited to share their views on the matter by filling in [an online questionnaire](#). This consultation is part of an assessment of the EU [summertime directive](#), which the Commission is currently undertaking at the request of the European Parliament. The objective is to investigate whether or not the rules should be changed. The Commission will now analyse the responses received and publish a report on the results in the coming weeks. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

State aid: Commission approves three support measures for renewable energy in Denmark

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules three schemes to support electricity production from wind and solar in Denmark in 2018 and 2019: (i) a multi-technology tender scheme for onshore and offshore wind turbines and solar installations, with a budget of DKK 842 million (€112 million). The beneficiaries of the aid will be selected through two tenders organised in 2018 and 2019, with the different technologies competing with each other; (ii) An aid scheme for onshore wind for test and demonstration projects outside the two national test centres for large wind turbines, with an expected budget of DKK 200 million (€27 million); and (iii) a transitional aid scheme for onshore wind, with a budget of DKK 40 million (€5 million). The aid for the three schemes will be granted for a period of 20 years from the time of the connection to the grid. The renewable support schemes are financed from the State budget. The Commission assessed all three schemes under EU State aid rules, in particular the Commission's [2014 Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy](#). It found that the three Danish schemes will encourage the development of offshore and onshore wind and solar technologies, in line with the requirements of the Guidelines. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [DA](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100)

Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel en hausse à 2,1% dans la zone euro

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro s'est établi à 2,1% en juillet 2018, contre 2,0% en juin 2018. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,3%. Le taux d'inflation annuel de l'Union européenne s'est établi à 2,2% en juillet 2018, contre 2,1% à juin. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,5%. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Les taux annuels les plus faibles ont été observés en Grèce (0,8%), au Danemark (0,9%) et en Irlande (1,0%). Les taux annuels les plus élevés ont quant à eux été enregistrés en Roumanie (4,3%), en Bulgarie (3,6%), en Hongrie (3,4%) et en

Estonie (3,3%). Par rapport à juin 2018, l'inflation annuelle a baissé dans neuf États membres, est restée stable dans six et a augmenté dans treize autres. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tél.: +32 229 56151; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Federica Mogherini and Christos Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2018

On the 15th anniversary of the bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad, the European Union pays tribute to the commitment of aid workers who risk their lives to deliver humanitarian aid worldwide. The unequivocal respect of international law, the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their unfettered access to those in need are a major concern for the European Union. Ahead of the 2018 World Humanitarian Day, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Christos **Stylianides**, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement: *“Civilians often pay the highest price in conflict, and attacks, including against aid workers, continue to happen. Over the past year, from Afghanistan to Nigeria and from the Central African Republic to Yemen, these attacks have claimed the lives of civilians and humanitarian workers. These acts of violence are a grave violation of International Humanitarian Law. Saving lives should not cost lives. Almost 4,400 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks over the past two decades. Over one third of them were killed. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity to honour these dedicated humanitarians, and to advocate for their safety and security. All parties to conflicts have an obligation under International Humanitarian Law to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, and to facilitate unhindered and sustained humanitarian access, so that assistance can reach all people in need. The EU is a world leader in humanitarian assistance. Promoting principled humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law remains at the core of our international engagement.”* The full statement is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

State aid: Commission approves three support measures for renewable energy in Denmark

Denmark has a goal of supplying 50% of its energy consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030 and to become independent from fossil fuels by 2050. In line with this goal, the Danish authorities will implement three measures supporting renewable energy:

- A **multi-technology tender scheme** for onshore and offshore wind turbines and solar installations, with a budget of DKK 842 million (€112 million). The beneficiaries of the aid will be selected through two tenders organised in 2018 and 2019, with the different technologies competing with each other. The selected installations will offer their electricity on the market and receive support in the form of a premium on top of the market price (top-up payment).
- An **aid scheme for onshore wind for test and demonstration projects** outside the two national test centres for large wind turbines, with an expected budget of DKK 200 million (€27 million), and a **transitional aid scheme for onshore wind**, with a budget of DKK 40 million (€5 million).

The aid for the three schemes will be granted for a period of 20 years from the time of the connection to the grid. The renewable support schemes are financed from the State budget.

The Commission assessed all three schemes under EU State aid rules, in particular the Commission's [2014 Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy](#). It found that the three Danish schemes will encourage the development of offshore and onshore wind and solar technologies, in line with the requirements of the Guidelines.

On this basis, the Commission concluded that the measures will help Denmark boost the share of electricity produced from renewable energy sources, in line with the [environmental objectives of the EU](#), while any distortion of competition caused by the state support is minimised.

Background

The Commission's [2014 Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy](#) allow Member States to support the production of electricity from renewable energy sources, subject to certain conditions. These rules are aimed at meeting the EU's ambitious energy and climate targets at the least possible cost for taxpayers and without undue distortions of competition in the Single Market.

The [Renewable Energy Directive](#) established targets for all Member States' shares of renewable energy sources in gross final energy consumption by 2020. For Denmark, that target is 30% by 2020. Furthermore, Denmark has a goal of

supplying 50% of its energy consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030 and to become independent from fossil fuels by 2050. All three schemes aim to contribute to reaching those targets.

More information on today's decision will be available, once potential confidentiality issues have been resolved, in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website under the case numbers SA.49918, SA.50715 and SA.50717. The [State Aid Weekly e-News](#) lists new publications of State aid decisions on the internet and in the EU Official Journal.

European Cultural Days of the ECB 2018 – Illuminated Lithuania



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
EUROSYSTEM

17 August 2018

- Three events from 23 August to 16 October in Frankfurt am Main
- First event: “Europa Open Air”, in collaboration with Hessischer Rundfunk, at the Weseler Werft on 23 August
- Second event: Charity event at Paulskirche on 25 September
- Third event: Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra at the Alte Oper on 16 October

This year's European Cultural Days of the European Central Bank (ECB) feature Lithuanian artists and music under the slogan “Illuminated Lithuania”. Three cultural experiences will take place in Frankfurt. The programme has been compiled by Lietuvos bankas and the ECB, under the joint patronage of Vitas Vasiliauskas, Chairman of the Board of Lietuvos bankas and Mario Draghi, President of the ECB.

"I am proud to have the opportunity to present Lithuania in the framework of the European Cultural Days. The events will showcase our rich musical tradition and perfectly enrich the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Lithuania's independence, which we are celebrating this year." (Vitas Vasiliauskas)

"At a time when many focus on differences across Europe, this event should remind us just how much unites us. Culture, music and the arts are a fantastic language we all understand." (Mario Draghi)

"Illuminated Lithuania" – programme

23 August: "Europa Open Air" at the Weseler Werft, Frankfurt, starting at 6 p.m.

On 23 August the European Cultural Days of the ECB will open with a "Europa Open Air" concert given by the Frankfurt Radio Symphony – Hessischer Rundfunk – at the Weseler Werft (Weseler Wharf).

The orchestra, led by principal conductor Andrés Orozco-Estrada and featuring the Lithuanian choir Jauna Muzika and Lithuanian soloists, will present a programme inspired by the myths and legends of Lithuania and the Baltics. Frankfurt Radio Big Band and Lithuanian singer Viktorija Gečytė will start the evening by bringing a taste of Baltic rhythms to the banks of the river Main.

25 September: Charity Event at Paulskirche, Frankfurt, starting at 8 p.m.

On 25 September there will be a concert dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the declaration of independence by the state of Lithuania. Soloists Jonas Vozbutas (accordion) and the vocal group "Jazz Island" (Artūras Novikas Jazz School) will perform at the Paulskirche.

Entry will be free but donations are welcome. Donations will go to the charity "Joblinge," which supports disadvantaged youth in finding employment and vocational training opportunities. This event is in cooperation with the City of Frankfurt.

16 October: Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra at the Alte Oper, Frankfurt, starting at 8 p.m.

The stars of this event are the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra under Artistic Director Sergej Krylov, with soloists Džeraldas Bidva (violin), Lina Dambrauskaitė (soprano), Giovanni da Silva (tenor) and Andrius Žlabys (piano). Besides Bach and Mozart, the programme features three pieces from Lithuanian composers.

For media queries, please contact Uta Harnischfeger, tel.: +49 69 1344 6321

Find out more

[Media contacts](#)

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Juncker Plan backs agreement to provides €100 million in loans for small and medium-sized enterprises in Finland

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has concluded an agreement with [Tesi](#), a state-owned investment company, to provide innovative small and medium-sized enterprises in Finland with access to €100 million worth of loans. The agreement was made possible by the support of the Juncker Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). As of July 2018, the Juncker Plan is now set to trigger €7.6 billion in investments in Finland and €335 billion across the EU. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The Investment Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments was designed to facilitate small and medium-sized enterprises gain access to finance they need to expand, innovate and create jobs. So far, around 700,000 small businesses across Europe are expected to benefit. I am delighted that, with today's transaction, the Investment Plan will allow Finnish firms to benefit from €100 million in financing opportunities."* A full press release can be found [here](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

EU releases €2 million in humanitarian assistance to the Philippines

The European Commission has announced €2 million in humanitarian aid funding for the vulnerable communities living in the Philippines' violence-plagued province of Mindanao. *"Hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee their homes due to continued conflict in Mindanao. They left everything behind and are struggling to sustain their day-to-day lives,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**. *"This assistance underlines the EU's solidarity with the people of the Philippines. It will ensure that the most vulnerable have sufficient means to get through these difficult times."* The funding will provide displaced families and host communities affected by the conflict with food assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency education for children and protection against the pervasive violence. According to the latest data available, at least 500 000 people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance in the region, including more than 270 000 displaced people and some 100 000 out-of-school children. Since 1996, the EU has allocated over €117 million in emergency assistance to victims of conflict and natural disasters in the Philippines.

(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322 ; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Zeamarine by Maritime Holdings and Zeaborn

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Zeamarine GmbH of Germany by Maritime Holdings (Delaware), LLC of the US and Zeaborn Chartering Management GmbH (“Zeaborn”) of Germany. Zeamarine will be active in general cargo shipping on multi-purpose vessels. Maritime Holdings, controlled by New Mountain Capital of the US, is a provider of ocean transportation services. Zeaborn is an ocean shipping group. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited impact it would have on the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8992](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100)*

Concentrations: la Commission européenne autorise l’acquisition d’Averys par Blackstone

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition du groupe Averys, basé en France, par le groupe Blackstone basé aux États-Unis. Averys produit des solutions sur mesure de rayonnage et de stockage pour des entrepôts, sous des marques telles que Stow, Storax, Feralco, Duwic et Acial. Blackstone est un gestionnaire alternatif d’actifs au niveau mondial, qui fournit également des services de conseil financier. La Commission a conclu que l’opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu de l’absence de relations horizontales et verticales entre les entreprises. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d’affaire [M.9045](#). *(Pour plus d’informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100)*

Eurostat: Excédent de 22,5 milliards d’euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro

D’après les premières estimations pour le mois de juin 2018, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 198,6 milliards d’euros, en hausse de 5,7% par rapport à juin 2017 (187,9 milliards). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 176,1 milliards d’euros, en hausse de 8,6% par rapport à juin 2017 (162,2 milliards). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en juin 2018 un excédent de 22,5 milliards d’euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +25,7 milliards en juin 2017. Le commerce intra-zone euro s’est établi à 170,7 milliards d’euros en juin 2018, soit +7,1% par rapport à juin 2017. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en](#)

[ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tél: +32 229 51383)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

Finland: EU funding for growth of Finnish companies

- **M-Files** A new financing model of the EIB and Tesi will invest EUR 100 million to growth-oriented SMEs and innovative mid-cap companies over the next eight years.
- **Loan backed under European Fund for Strategic Investments, part of successful Juncker Plan**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the investment company Suomen Teollisuussijoitus Oy Tesi have agreed on a financing programme to channel funding in support of the growth of Finnish companies. The operation is guaranteed under the [European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#), central pillar of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) of the Juncker Commission. The financing to be managed by Tesi targets a total of EUR 100 million to promising companies, equally split between the EIB and Tesi. Furthermore, the funding is structured to be complemented by private sector co-investments with another EUR 100 m, totalling EUR 200 m of new investments to the benefit of SMEs and mid-caps.

This financial mechanism supplements EIB funding in the form of equity type investment and equity financing by Tesi. The financing of EUR 15–30 per company is targeted to growth-oriented SMEs and innovative mid-cap companies. In addition, each financing round must involve at least the same amount in private capital. This may be used e.g. to boost growth, internationalisation and product development.

“Finland has succeeded very well in making use of the financial instruments offered by the EU, which is also our Government’s objective. This applies, in particular, to funding from EFSI. The financing programme of Tesi and EIB published today is the first of its kind adopted in the Nordics. It will add to the available sources of risk finance and remove financial bottlenecks faced by growth companies. The programme will significantly boost the growth of innovative growth companies and mid-cap companies that are vital for our national economy and employment”, says Minister of Economic Affairs **Mika**

Lintilä.

“The new financial model enables larger financing rounds than before and diversifies the financing structures of growth-oriented companies. It boosts the growth and internationalisation of companies and improves their ability to make significant investments. We are very happy to partner with EIB and channel equity financing of the EFSI to Finnish companies”, says CEO of Tesi **Jan Sasse**.

Competitiveness to European companies

Traditionally, the EIB has to large extent offered financing to companies in the form of loans and guarantees, which means that for EIB this is a rather new type of financing. Tesi is EIB’s first partner in the Nordics that channels EFSI-guaranteed financing to companies as direct capital investments.

“I think this operation is one to be proud of.” added EIB vice-president **Alexander Stubb**. “The platform is designed to fill-in market gaps in the Finnish equity investment landscape, which hinders companies’ development and internationalisation. Two of the priorities under the investment schemes supported by the EU are to support SMEs and to work together with National Promotional Institutions, so I believe we hit the bull’s-eye here.”

The European Fund for Strategic Investment EFSI is part of the Investment Plan for Europe, the Juncker plan. The aim is to secure the access to funding, investments and economic growth for European SMEs.

Jyrki Katainen, Commission Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: “The Investment Plan’s European Fund for Strategic Investments was designed to facilitate small and medium-sized enterprises gain access to finance they need to expand, innovate and create jobs. So far, around 700,000 small businesses across Europe are expected to benefit. I am delighted that, with today’s transaction, the Investment Plan will allow Finnish firms to benefit from EUR 100 million in financing opportunities.”