

Updated Blocking Statute in support of Iran nuclear deal enters into force

The updated Blocking Statute is part of the European Union's support for the continued full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – the Iran nuclear deal, including by sustaining trade and economic relations between the EU and Iran, which were normalised when nuclear-related sanctions were lifted as a result of the JCPOA.

The process of updating the Blocking Statute was launched by the Commission [on 6 June 2018](#), when it added to its scope the extraterritorial sanctions the US is re-imposing on Iran. A two-month scrutiny period for the European Parliament and the Council followed. Since neither objected, the update will be published in the Official Journal and enter into force on 7 August.

More on the Blocking Statute

The Blocking Statute allows EU operators to recover damages arising from US extraterritorial sanctions from the persons causing them and nullifies the effect in the EU of any foreign court rulings based on them. It also forbids EU persons from complying with those sanctions, unless exceptionally authorised to do so by the Commission in case non-compliance seriously damages their interests or the interests of the Union. The authorisations will be done on the basis of agreed criteria which will also be issued on 7 August.

To help EU companies with the implementation of the updated Blocking Statute the Commission will also publish a Guidance note to facilitate understanding of the relevant legal acts.

Next steps

The European Union is fully committed to the continued, full and effective implementation of the JCPOA, as long as Iran also respects its nuclear-related commitments. The lifting of nuclear-related sanctions allowing for the normalisation of trade and economic relations with Iran constitute essential parts of the JCPOA. At the same time, the European Union is also committed to maintaining cooperation with the United States, who remains a key partner and ally.

In addition to the above measure, the EU, in close coordination with Member States and other partners, is working on concrete measures aimed at sustaining the cooperation with Iran in key economic sectors, particularly on banking and finance, trade and investment, oil, and transport.

Background

[On 8 May](#), President Trump decided to withdraw the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to reinstate all previously lifted sanctions under this agreement. The re-imposed US sanctions will come into

effect after a “wind-down” period of 90 days (ending 6 August 2018) for certain sanctions and 180 days (ending 4 November 2018) for others.

On 18 May, [the Commission initiated several steps](#) to preserve the interests of European companies investing in Iran and to enable the EIB to finance activities in Iran, demonstrating the EU’s commitment to the JCPOA.

[On 6 June](#), the European Commission adopted the updates of the Blocking Statute and of the EIB’s External Lending Mandate, which enter into force on 7 August following the two-month non objection period.

On 6 July, [a meeting of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA](#), convening the EU, E3 (France, Germany and the United Kingdom), Russia, China and Iran, took place in Vienna at ministerial level and was chaired by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini. All remaining parties to the deal reiterated their commitment to the full and continued implementation of the nuclear deal. They supported recent efforts to maintain the normalisation of trade and economic relations with Iran and also noted EU’s efforts to update the Blocking Statute to protect EU companies.

For More Information

[MEMO Questions and Answers: entry into force of the updated Blocking Statute](#)

[Foreign Policy Instrument](#)

[Official Journal of the European Union](#)

* The press release will be updated on 7 August in the morning when the legal documents will be published in the Official Journal.

Record EU Civil Protection operation helps Sweden fight forest fires

This is the largest European Civil Protection operation for forest fires in the last decade and the single biggest operation on forest fires in terms of deployment of staff. The operation included 815 flying hours and 8 822 drops of water.

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** currently visiting Sweden, said: *“Once again, Member States showed tangible European solidarity through the Civil Protection Mechanism. The devastating forest fires in Sweden have highlighted once again the impact of climate change and that we are facing a new reality. I deeply thank all Member States for their assistance and solidarity. Now is the time to collectively learn from these tragedies, and strive to strengthen Europe’s Civil Protection*

Mechanism, so that we are collectively better prepared and stronger in responding to multiple disasters across the continent.”

The EU has coordinated the collective support to Sweden from Italy, France, Germany, Lithuania, Denmark, Portugal and Poland. Austria, Czech Republic and Turkey also proposed to help. Also, 37 satellite maps were produced by the EU's Copernicus programme.

The EU is also funding €1.15 million in transportation costs for the mobilisation of support to Sweden from other European countries.

During the visit to Sweden, Commissioner **Stylianides** is traveling – along with Sweden's Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, Mr. Morgan Johansson – to the areas mostly affected by the forest fires. He will meet some of the fire-fighters mobilised via the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), who have worked tirelessly for the past three weeks.

Background

The European Commission coordinates the voluntary offers made by participating states through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and can co-finance the transport of relief items and experts to the country in question. The mobilisation of assistance is coordinated through the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre, which closely monitors developments and offers the possibility of transport co-financing for the offered assistance.

The assistance can consist of items for immediate relief as well as experts and supporting intervention teams. In the case of fires, this can include fire-extinguishing aircrafts.

The Commission has proposed to strengthen the European civil protection capacities through [rescEU](#), – so that when multiple disasters hit Member States are better prepared. rescEU is based on two fundamental pillars; prevention and preparedness and greater response capacities, including the creation of European reserve capacities to act as a safety net when national capacities are overwhelmed. The rescEU proposal is a central part of President **Juncker's** agenda for a Europe that protects.

Overall, the Mechanism facilitates the cooperation in disaster response among 34 European states (28 EU Member States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

For More Information

[MEMO 'Fighting forest fires in Europe – how it works'](#)

[European Civil Protection Mechanism](#)

[Press release on rescEU](#)

Daily News 06 / 08 / 2018

Record EU Civil Protection operation helps Sweden fight forest fires

Over 360 fire-fighting personnel, 7 planes, 6 helicopters and 67 vehicles were mobilised through the [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#) in the past three weeks, to assist Sweden in combating the unprecedented forest fires. This is the largest European Civil Protection operation for forest fires in the last decade and the single biggest operation on forest fires in terms of deployment of staff. The operation included 815 flying hours and 8 822 drops of water. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** currently visiting Sweden, said: *“Once again, Member States showed tangible European solidarity through the Civil Protection Mechanism. The devastating forest fires in Sweden have highlighted once again the impact of climate change and that we are facing a new reality. I deeply thank all Member States for their assistance and solidarity. Now is the time to collectively learn from these tragedies, and strive to strengthen Europe’s Civil Protection Mechanism, so that we are collectively better prepared and stronger in responding to multiple disasters across the continent.”* During the visit to Sweden, Commissioner Stylianides is traveling – along with Sweden’s Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, Mr. Morgan Johansson – to the areas mostly affected by the forest fires. He will meet some of the fire-fighters mobilised via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, who have worked tirelessly for the past three weeks. The [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

First EU-China investment fund backed by the Juncker Plan raises €600 million for mid-sized companies

Cathay Capital has raised an initial €600 million for its fund Cathay Midcap II, which targets €1.2 billion to finance mid-cap companies. The fund is backed by the European Investment Fund under the Juncker Plan’s European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), as well as the China Development Bank, French national promotional bank Bpifrance, China’s Silk Road Fund, sovereign funds, institutional and other private investors. It is the first fund to be set up under the [China-EU Co-investment Fund \(CECIF\) programme](#), which was established by the EIF and SRF with the aim of developing synergies between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Juncker Plan. At the [EU-China Summit](#) in Beijing in July, the EIF and the SRF signed a Memorandum of Understanding to confirm this first co-investment. The fund will support mid-cap companies with high growth potential in Europe and China, in areas such as healthcare, high-end industries, consumer goods and business services. Jyrki **Katainen**, Commission Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *“We have been working towards this moment since we set up the EU-China working group in 2015 in Beijing. I am very pleased that we are now seeing the fruits of that labour and that the Cathay Midcap fund will*

finance European and Chinese high potential mid-cap businesses in strategically important sectors. This is a very good example of how private and public investors can work together.” (Full press release can be found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Security Union: Commission increases support for Spain to fight terrorism with an additional €4.2 million

The Commission has awarded an extra €4.2 million in emergency assistance under the Internal Security Fund (ISF – Police) to support Spain’s efforts to fight terrorism and organised crime. The additional funding will contribute to the purchase of equipment and technology to protect public spaces as well as to fight online crime. With this extra funding, the overall emergency assistance awarded to Spain since July to address migratory and security challenges amounts to €32.6 million. This financial assistance comes on top of €691.7 million allocated to Spain under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) national programme for 2014-2020. (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 299 63444)

Migration: A decrease of 15% in asylum applications lodged in the first half of 2018

New figures published today by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) show a slight decrease in the number of asylum applications made in the EU in 2018. In the first half of 2018, some 301,390 applications were lodged in the EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland, a 15% decrease when compared with the first half of 2017. During the month of June 1,600 fewer applications were made when compared with the figures in May. Today’s figures show that the overall trends remain stable and there is a continuing decrease in the number of asylum applications made in the EU, following a 43% drop in 2017. More information can be found in the [press release](#) online. (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

Mergers: Commission clears the joint acquisition of Eagleview by Clearlake and Vista

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Eagleview by Clearlake and Vista, all of the US. Eagleview is a provider of aerial imagery, 3-D measurement software, data analytics, and geographic information system (“GIS”) solutions for a wide range of users including governments, property and casualty insurance companies and residential contractors. Clearlake is a private investment fund. Vista is a private equity firm focused on investments in software, data and technology-enabled businesses. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns since Eagleview has negligible actual or foreseen activities in the European Economic Area. 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.9033](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Reifen Krieg Group by Bain Capital Investors

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition by Bain Capital Investors LLC of the US of Reifen Krieg GmbH, Secura Reifenservice GmbH, Reifen24 AG, Moti Reifen GmbH, SW Reifenhandel GmbH, Komplettradrager.de GmbH, Duro Reifenservice GmbH, and MUTAVI-Solutions GmbH (together “Reifen Krieg Group”) of Germany. Reifen Krieg Group is primarily active in the wholesale supply of replacement tyres in Germany. Bain Capital is a private equity investment firm and two of its portfolio companies, European FinTyre Distribution Limited and Autodistribution Group, are also active in the wholesale and retail supply of replacement tyres and other automotive spare parts. The companies’ activities overlap only in the wholesale supply of replacement tyres in Germany. The Commission found that, in this market, the companies’ combined market position would be moderate and a significant number of competitors, including large vertically integrated groups, would continue to exert competitive pressure on the combined entity post-transaction. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9000](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of two real estate joint ventures by OMERS, DV4, QIA and ABP

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of two real estate joint ventures, E1EV LLPs and E2LG LLPs, based in the UK by Oxford Jersey Holding Company Limited (“Oxford”) of Jersey, DV4 Limited of the British Virgin Islands, Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company Q.P.S.C. (“QDREIC”) of Qatar and Stichting Depository APG Strategic Real Estate Pool (“APG”) of the Netherlands. E1EV LLPs and E2LG LLPs are two joint ventures managing and developing a portfolio of residential and retail real estate assets in the UK, notably in London (Tribeca Square LLP, East Village London LLP, Elephant and Castle LLP), Glasgow (Merchant City LLP) and Leeds (Holbeck Quarter LLP). Oxford is part of the wider OMERS Administration Corporation of Canada, which manages a diversified global portfolio of stocks and bonds as well as real estate, private equity and infrastructure investments. DV4 is a real estate investment fund. QDREIC is a real estate investment and development company, wholly owned by QIA, the sovereign investment fund of the State of Qatar. APG is a depository for an investment fund whose ultimate beneficial owner is Stichting Pensioenfond ABP (“ABP”), a pension administration organisation specialised in the field of collective pensions in the public sector. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the limited horizontal overlaps and the limited vertical relationships between the companies’ activities. 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.8786. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on official visit to New Zealand and Australia

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini will on 7 and 8 August travel to Wellington and Sydney for her first visits to New Zealand and Australia in her current role. Both visits will provide an opportunity for the High Representative/Vice-President to take stock of the excellent state of EU-New Zealand and EU-Australia relations respectively, to address ways in which the bilateral relationships can be enhanced, as well as to increase the joint work to tackle global challenges, including through multilateral fora. In New Zealand, Federica Mogherini will meet with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Minister of Defence Ron Mark. She will also meet with Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters, with whom she speak to the press. The European Union and New Zealand launched [negotiations for a comprehensive and ambitious trade agreement](#) on 21 June 2018. Federica Mogherini will travel to Sydney one year after the EU and Australia [signed a Framework Agreement to deepen cooperation](#). In Sydney, Federica Mogherini will hold a joint press conference with her Australian counterpart, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, after their extensive bilateral meeting, and will also meet the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Peter Cosgrove, to take stock of the excellent state of EU-Australia bilateral relations, as well as the joint work to tackle regional and global challenges. High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini will also address the European Australian Business Council, just over one month after the [launch of negotiations](#) for an EU-Australia trade agreement. The visit comes off the back of the High Representative's visits to Singapore and the Republic of Korea, on which topic press material is available [online](#). Coverage of all parts of the visit will be provided by [EBS](#). Visit the websites of the respective EU Delegations for more information on EU relations with [New Zealand](#) and [Australia](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Judith Hebekeuser – Tel.: +32 229 52656)

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

[ESMA updates equity derivatives, equity and equity-like instruments'](#)

transitional transparency calculations for MiFID II/ MiFIR

The update relates to the transitional transparency calculations for:

- equity derivatives ([equity derivatives I](#)) ;
- equity and equity-like instruments ([TTC](#)); and
- [tick size band assessment](#).

Further information can be found in section E of the [FAQ document](#). Trading venues are expected to apply the new results from 13 August 2018.

Colombia: EIB finances first line of Bogotá Metro with USD 480 million loan

- **Project also supported by IDB and IBRD to the tune of USD 600 million each**
- **New 24 km-long raised metro line will enter into service in 2026**

The European Investment Bank (EIB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), part of the World Bank Group, today signed financing agreements with Empresa Metro de Bogotá to support a flagship investment project that will transform Bogotá: the construction of the capital's first metro line. The project will cost a total of USD 4.3 billion and be partly financed by a USD 480 million loan from the EU bank and contributions of USD 600 million each from the IDB and IBRD.

This is the first public sector project financed by the EIB in Colombia. The USD 56 million granted by the EU bank to Empresa Metro de Bogotá with the guarantee of the Republic of Colombia today represents the first instalment of a total loan of USD 480 million approved by the EIB to support the development of this project.

The new Bogotá metro will run on raised track to avoid earthquake risks along 24 km through the so-called Caracas Corridor located in the south-west of the capital where public transport demand is highest. The project will include the construction of 15 stations and acquisition of 23 trains each able to carry 1,800 passengers.

The project forms part of Bogotá's 2016-2019 Municipal Development Plan and

includes other schemes to improve public transport in the city such as upgrading the public bus system to link it to the new metro and building 14 kilometres of new cycle paths.

The EIB is granting this loan under its Climate Action and Environment Facility (CAEF) with the aim of fostering climate change mitigation by promoting the use of public transport and helping to reduce pollutant emissions. The new metro line will also boost economic growth by generating new business opportunities, making it easier for workers to travel into the city centre and contributing to job creation.

EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro said about this project: *“For the first time, the EU bank is financing a project in the public sector in Colombia, supporting a large-scale piece of infrastructure that will have major economic and social benefits for the people. This project will foster climate action by helping to reduce pollutant emissions. We are therefore delighted to be taking part in a project that will transform Bogotá, meet all of the EU’s top priorities in the region and promote social inclusion and economic growth in Colombia”.*

Climate action and public transport

The EIB is the institution that provides most finance for climate action projects in the world. Last year it devoted EUR 19.4 billion to this goal, representing 28% of its activity. Part of this funding focused on promoting cleaner modes of transport and especially on supporting [metro networks](#) in various cities around the world.

The EIB in Latin America

The European Union is the main partner for the development of the Latin America region, its number one investor and second biggest trade partner. The EIB, as the EU bank, provides material support for projects in Latin America by facilitating long-term investment on favourable terms and by providing the technical support needed to ensure that these projects deliver positive social, economic and environmental results.

Since the EIB began operating in Latin America in 1993, it has provided total financing of EUR 8.0 billion to support 108 projects in 14 countries in the region. In 2017, the EU bank granted loans worth EUR 631 million in Latin America, enabling the development of eight projects in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Mexico, Argentina, Panama and Peru, in a variety of areas including renewable energy, sustainable transport, water and sanitation facilities, with a strong focus on climate action, as well as support for small businesses.