

Main topics and media events 11 – 24 June 2018

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Energy), Monday 11 June 2018

The Council is due to adopt a general approach on the regulation on ACER, the EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. The Presidency will inform Ministers about the state of play in trilogue negotiations on the governance of the Energy Union, the directive on renewable energy and the directive on energy efficiency.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Monday 18 June 2018

The Council will have an exchange of views on the EMFF, fisheries controls and the fishing opportunities for 2019. It will also discuss the post 2020 CAP reform package and the agricultural market situation.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Employment and Social Policy), Thursday 21 June 2018

Employment and social policy ministers will discuss several legislative proposals, including on the coordination of social security systems, work-life balance and transparent and predictable working conditions. They will also hold a debate on the employment and social policy aspects of the 2018 European Semester exercise.

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Health), Friday 22 June 2018

Health ministers will hold a debate on the proposed regulation on health technology assessment. They will also discuss the future of health in the EU.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Friday 22 June 2018

The Council is expected to close the excessive deficit procedure for France, and to approve country-specific recommendations under the 2018 'European Semester'. It will discuss a proposed European deposit insurance scheme and fulfilment of the eurozone convergence criteria.

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Remarks by President Donald Tusk before the G7 summit in Charlevoix, Canada

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Good morning. Bonjour.

When we met on the eve of our Taormina summit last year, I said that it would be the most challenging G7 in years. Unfortunately, this is even more true today. Despite the excellent preparation by our Canadian friends, including the personal engagement of Prime Minister Trudeau, our discussions here in Charlevoix will be far from easy. It is evident that the American president and the rest of the Group continue to disagree on trade, climate change and the Iran nuclear deal. What worries me most, however, is the fact that the rules-based international order is being challenged. Quite surprisingly, not by the usual suspects, but by its main architect and guarantor: the US.

Naturally, we cannot force the US to change their minds. At the same time, we will not stop trying to convince our American friends and President Trump that undermining this order makes no sense at all. Because it would only play into the hands of those who seek a new, post-West order, where liberal democracy and fundamental freedoms would cease to exist. This is in the interest of neither the US, nor Europe.

I want to be very clear today. Our common values and the rules-based order are worth fighting for, and we will always stand in their defence. Because they are the foundation of our liberal democracies and they define our way of life. There is no way we are giving up on them. But of course we are open to reasonable arguments, whenever something doesn't function well. There is always room for debate. It is also one of the reasons we are here today.

Even in difficult times like these, and despite all the differences, there is still much more that unites us, than divides us. It is far too early for our adversaries and enemies to celebrate. On most fronts, the G7 continues to push in the same direction: when it comes to achieving the complete denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula, countering the aggressive stance of Russia and searching for a political solution to the conflict in Syria. We must also demonstrate unity regarding the ongoing land reclamation and militarisation in the South China Sea, as the international law must apply to all countries, big and small, on land and at sea. As the G7, we also want to

defend our democracies from threats by foreign actors. To this end, we will discuss stepping up cooperation to prevent and respond to unacceptable foreign interference in our democratic processes. We want to strengthen G7 coordination in this field. Our unity in these areas is crucial for Europe and for the whole world. And I still believe that the overall unity of our Group will prevail. Despite seasonal turbulences, we will persevere. I have no doubt about it.

Last but not least, I want to make an important appeal in the case of Oleg Sentsov, the Ukrainian film maker, who was involved in the Euro Maidan protests in Kiev, and who opposed the annexation of Crimea by Russia. He is currently serving a twenty-year sentence in a high-security prison camp in Siberia, after a political trial in Russia, as a result of which he was accused of terrorism. Today is the 24th day of his indefinite hunger strike which he is planning to follow through, if his demand, that is the release of 64 Ukrainian political prisoners, is not met. This is why I ask the G7 leaders to show their support for Oleg Sentsov. Our solidarity can save his life.

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[Press statement by Michel Barnier following this week's round of negotiations](#)

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here to debrief you on the round of negotiations which has just ended, less than three weeks from the European Council.

I would like to frankly present to you today, as I usually do, the three points of this negotiation:

- The separation issues;
- The major question of Ireland and Northern Ireland, in light of the UK paper presented yesterday;
- The future partnership and the conditions to succeed.

First of all, a general remark:

It is now time to take decisions and make choices.

Time is short. In less than 10 months, the United Kingdom is leaving the European Union, as it so wished. And, I repeat, we must conclude an agreement on the orderly withdrawal by autumn to give the necessary time on both sides

for ratification – which was always my objective.

We continue to work intensely and, on our side, we will continue to explain calmly and clearly our positions, as well as recalling – as is sometimes necessary – what the European Union, the Single Market and the Customs Union are.

And, seeing as time is short, I also recall that we are always available and ready to intensify the rhythm of our meetings and negotiations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I – First, a few words on this week's work and on the separation topics.

We progressed over the past days on a certain number of subjects linked to the orderly withdrawal. These are called "other separation issues".

We think that these subjects can be resolved before the next European Council, which means that, in the document you know well, we will probably change some yellow parts into green and some white parts into green.

Each of these subjects is obviously important to provide legal certainty where there is currently no legal certainty because of Brexit.

But there is a lot of work to be done on the three other separation issues, which are important, even very serious, for our businesses and citizens:

- The protection of the personal data of EU citizens. We want that the data that has already been exchanged remains protected as it is today.
- The protection of geographical indications, on which we still do not have any UK position. This subject is important for a lot of producers, for consumers, as much in the UK as in the 27 other countries of the European Union.
- The infringement and administrative procedures concerning the UK which will be ongoing at the end of the transition, for example in the area of state aid. This is not a bureaucratic point. This is a point which concerns the financial interests of the Union.

Beyond these three points – on which we have worked a lot – there remain two major points of divergence:

- The governance of the Withdrawal Agreement. I won't elaborate further on this point today because I spoke at length on this a few days ago in Lisbon.
- And obviously questions related to Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Ladies and gentlemen,

II – On Ireland and Northern Ireland, we also worked this week with the UK team on two important elements.

First, regulatory alignment.

This is about very concrete subjects: goods, agriculture, electricity, certain parts of environmental policy.

On these subjects, I would like to call for pragmatism from all sides, as I did recently during my trip to Ireland and Northern Ireland. On these concrete everyday topics, we need common rules to preserve the free movement of goods on the island and to preserve and encourage North-South cooperation.

During this visit – a month ago – everywhere I went, from Dundalk, to Newry, Derry-Londonderry and Dungannon, I was very interested to meet groups of farmers, businesses, young people, and women, who all told me the same thing. They told me about the importance of being able to circulate and move freely. And this is what we want to preserve in the agreement.

It is in Northern Ireland's interest also to keep the same rules in these areas, and to avoid new barriers to the daily exchanges on the island.

It is in the interest of the farmers in Ireland and Northern Ireland that the same sanitary and phytosanitary rules apply, as is the case today.

The second points of discussions on Ireland and Northern Ireland this week concerned customs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You have all seen the UK's customs paper, which we received yesterday.

I welcomed the publication of this paper. It is good to see the UK engaging with us by proposing text.

As I said yesterday, we are examining this paper objectively, looking at three questions:

1. First: Is this a workable solution to avoid a hard border?
2. Second: Does it respect the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union?
3. Third: Is this an all-weather backstop?

Allow me to come back to each of these questions, which in turn, raise more specific ones.

1) First: Is this a workable solution to avoid a hard border?

- The UK recognises that the proposals in its paper cannot qualify as a backstop since the issue of full regulatory alignment is not addressed. I repeat that we need regulatory alignment to avoid a hard border. How do we solve this issue?

2) Second question: Does the UK proposal respect the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union?

- The UK wants to continue benefiting from our free trade agreements. Does that mean that we will have to reopen, renegotiate or even re-ratify our

existing agreements in order to keep the UK in our customs territory after the transition?

- The UK tells us that it wants to avoid any control. How does that fit with the requirements of our VAT system?

3) Third question: Is this an all-weather backstop?

- The UK calls this arrangement temporary. How does that fit with the need to secure the absence of a hard border in all circumstances?
- Moreover, we had agreed with the UK on the principle that public authorities and businesses would need to adapt only once to the new situation created by Brexit – only once. Does the temporary nature of the customs arrangement mean that several adaptations will now be needed?

Ladies and gentlemen,

These questions require further discussion. The UK itself recognises that these questions are relevant and difficult.

But let me recall that our backstop provides answers to each of these questions.

It provides specific solutions to the unique situation of Northern Ireland.

The UK is taking a different angle, however. It is looking for a UK-wide solution.

Let me be clear: our backstop cannot be extended to the whole UK.

Why? Because it has been designed for the specific situation of Northern Ireland.

What does it do?

- On customs, Northern Ireland would form part of our customs territory. What is feasible with a territory the size of Northern Ireland is not necessarily feasible with the whole UK.
- On regulatory alignment, we have been pragmatic and developed the least disruptive system for citizens and businesses on both sides.

Let's go back to pragmatism. Checks carried out on ferries are less disruptive than along a 500km-long land border.

In addition, these checks can build on arrangements and facilities which already exist – which already exist – between the rest of the UK and Northern Ireland.

Obviously, behind all these rules, we want to preserve the fluidity and ease of trade and agricultural production on the island of Ireland.

And once again, we need such a solution in the Withdrawal Agreement by autumn.

We will not leave this issue unresolved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

III – My third and last point concerns the future relationship with the United Kingdom.

Following the mandate I received from the European Council in March, and as outlined by the European Parliament in its resolution, we are now discussing the framework for the future relationship, which will include an economic partnership and strategic cooperation in the area of security.

In all the UK papers that we have been receiving until now – which I read carefully with my team – there has been a request to maintain the status quo, a form of continuity, which is paradoxical seeing as the country decided itself to leave the European Union.

The United Kingdom seems to want to maintain the benefits of the current relationship, while leaving the EU regulatory, supervision, and application framework.

When we respond to UK leaders saying that these benefits are not accessible outside the EU system – because of their decision – some people in the UK try to blame us for the consequences of this.

I simply want to say that we will not be swayed, I will not be swayed, by this blame game.

The United Kingdom decided to leave the Union. We respect this democratic decision and we will implement it. The United Kingdom must assume the consequences.

If we want to construct a new relationship, we need a basis of trust. We also need more realism about what is and is not possible.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are now two weeks left before the June European Council. I hope we will use this time to consolidate and make new progress in this difficult and complex negotiation.

Thank you for your attention.

[“Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success”, interview with Gabriel](#)

Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri

"Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success", interview with Gabriel Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri

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["Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success", interview with Gabriel Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri](#)

Daily News 08 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Boosting cooperation between tax and customs authorities for a safer and more prosperous EU

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing measures to make tax and customs cooperation between Member States better and more efficient. The new **Customs Programme** will help put in place a modern Customs Union which puts the interests of EU business and citizens at its heart, while the **Fiscalis Programme** will support cooperation between Member States' tax administrations and better contribute to the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance. Continued funding of these programmes will help the EU to progress in offering businesses unfettered and easy access to the EU's Single Market so that trade can flourish, protect citizens from dangerous goods entering the Union at our external borders and ensure that Member States are equipped to fight tax avoidance and tax evasion. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Protecting the European Union's customs territory and implementing our common rules on taxation require strong cooperation between the relevant national authorities. Our new Customs and Fiscalis programmes will help to make that happen. At minimal cost, they provide a true European added value, offering unprecedented advantages to Member States' tax and*

customs authorities as they work together in the interests of our citizens and businesses.” The Commission is proposing a continued financial commitment of €950 million for the EU’s customs programme and €270 million for the EU’s Fiscalis programme, representing just 0.07% and 0.02% of the next EU budget respectively for programmes with a big added value for the EU. A full [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available online, while the legislative proposals and factsheets are available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Telecommunication Council reached a general approach on the Cybersecurity Act

The Telecommunications Council reached today a general approach on the [Cybersecurity Act](#), which was presented by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in his annual State of the Union Address in 2017. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** welcomed the political agreement from the Council in a joint statement: “*Today’s agreement opens the door to transform and strengthen the mandate of European Union Agency for Network and Information and Security (ENISA) into the EU Agency for Cybersecurity, which will support Member States with tackling cybersecurity threats and attacks. [...] Strengthening Europe’s cybersecurity is the only way to assure a strong and viable Digital Single Market for the benefit of all. It is vital for Member States to work together in building a more cyber secure European Union and avoid the complication of different national laws.*” The full statement is available [here](#). The cybersecurity package was proposed by the Commission in September 2017 as a part of a [wide-ranging set of measures](#) to deal with cyber-attacks and to build strong cybersecurity in the EU. This included the Cybersecurity Act: a proposal for strengthening the EU Agency for Cybersecurity as well as creating a new European certification framework, ensuring that products and services in the digital world are cyber secure. More details on cybersecurity are available [here](#) and in the [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Transport Council: Ministers support 3 initiatives of the Commission for clean and competitive mobility

Meeting yesterday in Luxembourg, the European transport ministers agreed on three proposals put forward by this Commission to support the competitiveness and sustainability of the mobility sector. This will allow for the opening of interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament (‘trilogue’) in view of a swift adoption. [Speaking after the meeting](#), Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said “*We have reached an agreement within the Council on three important files, and I am confident that we can complete their adoption by the end of the year. Progress has also been achieved on other files that are still under negotiation, and I look forward to work closely with the incoming Austrian Presidency.*” More specifically, ministers firstly agreed on new rules aiming to safeguard competition in air transport. This

was the flagship initiative of the [‘Open and Connected Aviation’](#) tabled by the Commission a year ago. It will allow the EU to take appropriate action, should European airlines be subject to unfair practices affecting competition with third country carriers. Secondly, ministers agreed on [European rules](#) providing incentives for ships to dispose of their waste on land, rather than dumping it at sea. This agreement was reached only five months after the Commission put forward this proposal as parts of its [ongoing efforts to tackle plastic waste](#). Ministers also agreed on common specifications for a European electronic toll service. They will establish interoperable road tolling services throughout the EU and improve cross-border cooperation on enforcement. In addition, ministers discussed progress made on other important dossiers, such as the market and social aspects of Europe on the Move or the [Commission’s proposal to update rail passenger rights](#). More information is available [here](#) and on the [Council website](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43)

2018 Skills Forecast: EU agency for the Development of Vocational Training publishes insights in tomorrow’s trends in skills demand and supply

Today, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training ([Cedefop](#)) has released its [2018 skills forecast](#), which shows future trends in skills needed on the labour market for the period up to 2030 across Europe. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion Marianne **Thyssen** said: “Cedefop’s work on the skills forecast is an important contribution to employment and skills policies, including the implementation of the Skills Agenda for Europe and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar puts emphasis on person’s right to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. Knowledge of tomorrow’s trends in skills demand and supply is necessary to design growth, employment and education policies today.” The 2018 Skills Forecast projections suggest that four in five new jobs will require a high level of skills. The Forecast also projects fast growth of high-skills occupations, with some growth in certain less-skilled jobs (for example, sales, security, cleaning, catering and caring occupations). In contrast, the number of jobs in medium-skill occupations, such as skilled manual workers and clerks, is projected to see a very slow growth or even to decline over time. At the same time, the need to replace the existing workforce (e.g. due to retirement) will generate numerous job openings, including for occupations that are otherwise in declining demand (e.g. metal and machinery trades workers or agricultural workers). On the supply side, there may be an even larger pool of high-qualified workers from which workers can be drawn, which means that some highly trained workers may therefore end up in jobs below their qualification level. The 2018 skills forecast launch is taking place today at the Residence Palace in Brussels. More information on the event can be found [here](#). The 2018 skills forecast can be found [here](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de CityFibre par Goldman Sachs et Antin Infrastructure Partners

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition conjointe de la société CityFibre, basée au Royaume-Uni, par Goldman Sachs, basée aux Etats-Unis, et Antin Infrastructure Partners, basée en France. Cityfibre est un opérateur grossiste de réseaux urbains en fibre optique au Royaume-Uni. Goldman Sachs est une banque d'affaires, de placement et de gestion de portefeuille de dimension mondiale. Antin Infrastructure Partners est une société de capital-investissement axée sur les infrastructures, en particulier dans les secteurs de l'énergie, de l'environnement, des télécommunications, des transports et des infrastructures sociales. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où les entreprises ne sont pas actives sur les mêmes marchés. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de 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.8935](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the styrene monomer purchasing sector

The European Commission can confirm that on 5 June 2018 its officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in styrene monomer purchasing. The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities. Styrene monomer is a chemical product used as a base material for a number of chemical products such as plastics, resins, rubbers and latexes. A full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740; Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182)

STATEMENTS

World Oceans Day 2018: Statement by Commissioner Karmenu Vella

On the occasion of World Oceans Day, taking place every year on 8 June, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **Karmenu Vella** stated: "Today, on World Oceans Day, I want to join the global celebration of our oceans. I want to highlight their importance for our wellbeing and for the wellbeing of future generations: as an abundant supplier of food, energy

and other natural resources; as a regulator for our climate and many of our natural cycles; and as source of inspiration, imagination and humility. On this day, I also want to recall the urgent need to address the immense challenges that our oceans are faced with: climate change, pollution, environmental degradation and unsustainable management of their resources [...] The theme of this year's World Oceans Day is "Preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean [...]" The European Union is playing its part, we are taking care of our future; standing up for our oceans." Full statement available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini travels to Jordan on 9-10 June

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini** will travel to Jordan on 9-10 June. She will reiterate the EU's strong longstanding partnership with Jordan and the continued EU support to the country and the Jordanians. During her visit, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will be received by H.E. King Abdullah II and will hold a number of other meetings in Amman. The meetings will provide an opportunity for the EU and Jordan to discuss the latest events and exchange views on the concrete progress on socio-economic cooperation, which is one of the top priorities of the EU-Jordan partnership to increase growth as well as job opportunities for Jordanians, in particular in the context of the Syria crisis and its regional impact. The regional situation, including the Syria crisis and the Middle East Peace Process, will also be part of the discussions. While in Jordan, the High Representative/Vice-President will also deliver a speech at the German Jordanian University in Madaba on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of Jordanian and Syrian students supported under EU programmes. The visit will be covered on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833)

Commissioner Stylianides in Rome to open exhibition on EU emergency response for natural disasters

Today, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** will open the [EU SAVES LIVES](#) virtual reality exhibition in Rome in the presence of Ms Elisabetta Gardini, Member of European Parliament and Mr Fabrizio Curcio, Coordinator of Civil Protection, the Council Presidency. Speaking at the opening ceremony in Rome, Commissioner **Stylianides** said: "This campaign is about bringing Europe closer to its citizens. We want to showcase the added value of the EU in situations when natural disasters hit. The EU, through its emergency response, saves lives and protects European citizens in Europe and worldwide." This campaign comes just a few months after the European Commission launched an ambitious proposal to further support Member States by upgrading the current collective [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#) via [rescEU](#). The European Commission's virtual reality

exhibition EU SAVES LIVES is travelling to several countries to explain in an interactive way how Europe helps coordinate emergency response to natural disasters and other crises in Europe and worldwide. The traveling exhibition has already been in Berlin, Bucharest and Vilnius attracting more than 160,000 visitors so far. Following a ten-day stop in Rome, the roadshow will travel to Marseille and Madrid. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Les commissaires Hogan et Moedas participent à un dialogue citoyen au Portugal sur l'avenir de l'Europe et du secteur agricole européen

Le commissaire à l'agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, est aujourd'hui en visite à Santarém, au Portugal, où il participe à un [dialogue citoyen](#) aux côtés du commissaire à la recherche, l'innovation et la science, Carlos **Moedas**. Le dialogue portera sur les débats autour de l'avenir de l'Europe et plus particulièrement les défis auxquels font face les agriculteurs européens. La Commission a présenté à ce propos la semaine dernière ses propositions législatives pour la [future politique agricole commune](#). L'événement est organisé dans le cadre d'une conférence plus générale sur l'agriculture européenne et sera suivi d'une intervention du Premier Ministre portugais, M. António Costa, ainsi que du ministre portugais de l'agriculture, M. Luis Capoulas Santos. A la suite de la conférence, les commissaires **Hogan** et **Moedas** visiteront le [Salon de l'agriculture](#) à Santarém avec le Premier ministre Costa. Le commissaire Hogan aura également une réunion avec M. Capoulas Santos. *(Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél .: +32 229 56 185, Clémence Robin – Tél .: +32 229 52509)*

Commissioner Gabriel travelling to Hanover for CeBIT 2018 digital business fair

Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will participate on Monday and Tuesday in the digital business fair [CEBIT](#). On Monday evening she will hold a keynote speech at the official opening ceremony of CEBIT 2018. The Commissioner will meet on the sidelines of the event German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier. On Tuesday morning she will meet Minister-President of Lower Saxony Stephan Weil as well as Bernd Althusmann, Minister of Economic, Labor, Transport and Digitalisation of Lower Saxony. In the afternoon the Commissioner will deliver a keynote speech on the benefits of the [Digital Single Market](#) at the CEBIT Digital Transformation Forum and participate in the following panel discussion. She will additionally make a tour through the exhibition halls and meet, among others, German Minister of Education and Research Anja Karliczek. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

Commissioner Thyssen visits European Social Fund project in Germany

On Monday 11 June Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen** will travel to Mannheim, Germany, where she will visit a European Social Fund project in presence of Member of European

Parliament Ms Ingeborg Grässle. The project concerns the [Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit \(LAG KJS\) of Baden-Württemberg](#), an association specialised in youth care aid, youth homes, help with school work, part-time education for single parents and more. It will be an opportunity for the Commissioner to learn more about the association and exchange views on how EU funding can be used. (For more information: *Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger at the Conference on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 in Sofia

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is participating to the [Conference](#) on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020, “Perspectives for Convergence and Sustainable Regions”, organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council. Decision-makers and key cohesion stakeholders from across Europe will meet in the Bulgarian capital to share their visions of the future of the policy, following the [Commission’s proposal](#) for Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 presented on 29 May. Commissioner **Oettinger** will deliver a speech on challenges and opportunities for the new EU budget and Cohesion Policy after 2020. “The Commission’s proposal for the next Cohesion Policy is both rational and ambitious,” said Commissioner **Oettinger**, “Rational, because the cost of non-cohesion between EU regions and Member States will be far greater than the effort of solidarity we ask for. And ambitious, because a strong Cohesion Policy with an investment power of €373 billion can help reach EU-wide goals of growth, jobs and innovation in every corner of Europe.” In Sofia, Commissioner **Oettinger** met Pedro Marques, Minister of Planning and Infrastructures of Portugal, Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister of Investment and Economic Development of Poland, Gabrijela Žalac, Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia and László Palkovics Minister for Innovation and Technology of Hungary. (For more information: *Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169*)

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