

# College visit for the official launch of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

President **Juncker** and the College of Commissioners will travel to Helsinki today for the official launch of the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The [priorities of the Finnish Presidency](#) will focus on strengthening the EU's common values and the rule of law, making the EU more competitive and socially inclusive, how to reinforce the Union's position as a global leader in climate action, and how to protect Europeans on all fronts. As set out in the [contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu](#) on 9 May this year, the Commission has itself highlighted these themes as priorities for the Union in the months to come.

On Thursday 4 July at 19:00 CET, President **Juncker**, accompanied by the College of Commissioners, will take part in an informal dinner organised by the Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne. On Friday, 5 July at 9:00 CET, President **Juncker** will have a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Rinne. In parallel, bilateral meetings between the Commissioners and members of the Finnish Government will take place on a variety of themes, including the next long-term budget of the Union, a fair, sustainable and competitive Europe, an influential Europe and a protective Europe. A family photo with the College of Commissioners and members of the Finnish Government will follow. At 10:00 CET, a plenary meeting will take place with the College of Commissioners and the Finnish Government. This will be followed by a press conference at 10:45 CET with President **Juncker** and Prime Minister Rinne, which will be broadcast live on [EbS+](#).

Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland, will welcome the College at 11:15 CET for an informal lunch in the presidential palace.

The College will then be hosted by the Finnish Parliament House for a series of meetings, including with the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, Matti Vanhanen.

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## Employment and Social Developments in Europe: 2019 review highlights that

# tackling climate change can be a driver for growth and jobs

Today the Commission has published the 2019 edition of its yearly *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* (ESDE) review. In light of global long-term trends such as ageing, globalisation, technological transformation and climate change, the 2019 ESDE is dedicated to the theme of sustainability. The report shows that tackling climate change and preserving growth go hand in hand. It sets out a number of policy options that are able to preserve the EU's competitiveness, sustain growth and spread its benefits to the entire EU population and future generations, while pursuing an ambitious transition to a climate-neutral economy. The 2019 review also confirms the continued expansion of the EU's economic activity, with new record levels in employment and an improving social situation.

Marianne **Thyssen**, the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said: *"This annual review shows that the recovery has taken hold in the European economy. With 240.7 million Europeans at work, up by 13.4 million jobs since the start of the Juncker Commission, the employment rate in the EU is the highest ever recorded. Unemployment in Europe is historically low. And the number of people at risk of poverty continues to drop. This is a good springboard for stepping up the delivery for citizens on the basis of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This must include a fair transition to a climate-neutral economy that makes full use of the 'green growth' opportunities ahead. We can improve everybody's living standards provided that the EU and Member States, together with the social partners, invest in new and better skills, higher qualifications and social services."*

The transition to a carbon-neutral economy will increase the number of jobs available, and have an impact on labour market structure, job distributions and skills needed. By 2030, the transition is expected to create an additional 1.2 million jobs in the EU, on top of the 12 million new jobs already expected. The transition could mitigate the ongoing job polarisation resulting from automation and digitalisation by creating jobs also in the middle of the wage and skill distributions, particularly in construction and manufacturing.

This being said, the impacts of the transition will vary across countries and sectors. Therefore countries must prepare for this transition to make sure that people in occupations, sectors and regions that are still linked to high-carbon models are not left behind. Integrating the social dimension from the outset, for example through measures that provide income support during transition or combine higher energy taxation with redistribution, is of key importance. Social dialogue can also contribute to a just transition by ensuring the involvement of workers and employers.

More generally, the review shows that to continue economic growth, the EU will need to invest in people's skills and innovation. The best performing EU firms are those that invest most in workers' training and high-quality

working conditions. Indeed, investments in skills, qualifications, and formal adult training support employability of workers, wage growth, and firms' competitiveness. The ESDE review also finds that social investments, such as access to childcare and early childhood education, make people more productive and increase their well-being. Affordable and adequate housing enables Europeans to fulfil their potential on the labour market and participate in society.

## **Background**

The annual *Employment and Social Developments in Europe* review provides up-to-date economic analysis of employment and social trends in Europe and discusses related policy options. It is the European Commission's analytical flagship report in the area of employment and social affairs.

The European Council's [New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024](#) calls for embracing the changes brought about by the green transition, technological evolution and globalisation while making sure no-one is left behind. This year's ESDE edition takes a look at employment and social developments in the light of one of the four main priorities of this new strategic agenda – “building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe”. Findings provided by ESDE may inspire policy-makers how to deliver on such ambitious objectives. They will also feed into policy debate on employment aspects of the strategic long-term vision for a climate-neutral economy at the [next Council meeting of European employment and social affairs ministers \(EPSCO\) on 8 July 2019](#).

There are many examples in which the Commission focuses on addressing the challenges raised in the yearly ESDE reports. For instance, the Commission's May 2018 proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework earmarks more funds for investments into people, including through the [new European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#) and an [improved European Globalisation Adjustment Fund \(EGF\)](#). The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and initiatives and tools such as the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#), the [Digital Europe Programme](#) and the [Youth Guarantee](#), the further strengthening of the [Erasmus programme](#), and the [European Solidarity Corps](#) will all contribute to pursuing these goals.

## **For More Information**

[Factsheet](#): Employment and social developments 2019: Zooming in on the social impact of climate change

[2019 Employment and Social Developments Review](#)

[A New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024](#)

[Employment and Social Analysis section on the EMPL website](#)

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## Member States' compliance with EU law in 2018: efforts are paying off, but improvements still needed

Today's Annual report on Monitoring the Application of EU law sets out how the Commission monitored and enforced EU law in 2018. The online Single Market Scoreboard, also published today, evaluates the performance of EU/EEA countries in the EU single market and identifies the shortcomings where the countries and the Commission should step up their efforts.

Citizens and businesses can only enjoy the many benefits of the [single market](#) if the rules that have been jointly agreed actually work on the ground. In [November 2018](#), the Commission presented a fresh assessment of remaining barriers in the single market and called on Member States to be vigilant in implementing, applying and enforcing EU rules and refrain from putting up new barriers. For instance, from [car emissions](#) to [e-commerce](#), from [social media](#) to the [services sector](#), and much more besides.

The Commission continues to ensure that EU rules are properly applied and enforced. For instance, in 2018, the Commission acted firmly in enforcing rules in a number of policy areas. The Commission supported national and regional authorities in implementing clear air and clean water rules. It also took action against Member States who failed to live up to their commitments and implement EU rules on Passenger Name Records, on combating terrorism and on anti-money laundering. In addition, the Commission used enforcement powers when some EU countries did not move fast enough to improve access for people with disabilities to websites and other mobile applications.

Annual report on monitoring the application of EU law in 2018

The Annual Report for 2018 shows a small increase (by 0.8%) of open infringement cases (1571) compared to 1559 cases in 2017. Thus after reaching a five-year peak in 2016, the number of cases started to level off by 5% in 2018 since 2016 (see Chart 1). Amongst others, the main policy areas concerned were on matters of environment, mobility and transport as well as internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs. Each failure to correctly apply EU law denies citizens and businesses the rights and the benefits they enjoy under EU law. In the area of environment, for example, the Commission continued measures to ensure full compliance with the Air Quality Directive as regards PM<sub>10</sub> and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) limit values, as well as monitoring systems across the EU.

Chart 2 (see Annex) provides an overview of the situation for each Member State. Concerning late transposition cases, **Cyprus, Belgium, and Spain** had the highest amount of open cases, whereas the fewest were open in **Estonia, Denmark and Italy**. **Spain, Italy, and Germany** had the highest number of cases

pending for incorrect transposition and/or wrong application of EU law, while **Estonia** had the lowest total number of open cases last year. The policy areas in which most new infringement cases were opened in 2018 were EU Internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs as well as mobility and transport (see Chart 3).

### Combating late transposition of EU Directives

For citizens and businesses to reap the benefits of EU law, it is crucial that Member States transpose European directives into their national legal order within the deadlines.

In 2018, the number of new infringement procedures relating to late transposition decreased sharply by one fourth (from 558 cases in 2017 to 419 in 2018). However, the highest number of new late transposition cases during the Juncker Commission was in 2016 (847 cases). The Commission launched new infringement procedures against a majority of Member States for failing to transpose EU personal data protection rules ([Directive 2016/680/EU](#)) into national law on time, as agreed by Member States themselves beforehand. To facilitate timely and correct transposition, the Commission continued to assist Member States by preparing implementation plans, dedicated websites and guidance documents, and by exchanging best practices in expert group meetings.

Last year, the Commission referred 5 Member States to the Court of Justice of the EU requesting financial penalties be applied: Slovenia (3 cases: [C-628/18](#), [C-69/18](#) and [C-188/18](#)), Spain (3 cases: [C-430/18](#), [C-165/18](#) and [C-164/18](#)), and Belgium ([C-676/18](#)), Ireland ([C-550/18](#)) and Romania ([C-549/18](#)) (1 case each).

### Single Market Scoreboard 2019

The Single Market Scoreboard provides a detailed overview of how EU single market rules were applied in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 2018; how open and integrated certain markets are; and how much Member States contributed to a number of EU tools to make the single market function better.

Depending on their performance in 2018, Member States were given **153 green**, **137 yellow** and **59 red cards** indicating excellent (green), average (yellow) or below average (red) performance.

The overview (see Chart 4 in Annex) shows that, despite further expansion of trade in goods and services, the situation has worsened in certain policy areas since 2017. Member States improved the functioning of some Single Market tools, such as the [Your Europe](#) portal and the Internal Market Information System ([IMI](#)). However, countries received more red cards on a number of policy areas than last year. For instance, on the fairness of public procurement systems and the recognition of professional qualifications. The same happened with regard to the cooperation in EU pilots.

In general, the best performing countries were **Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden** and **Lithuania**, while the most red and yellow cards were given to **Spain, Italy, Greece** and **Luxembourg**.

The Commission reacts to citizens' complaints

Citizens, businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders can report suspected breaches of EU law through an online complaint form accessible via the Europa "[Your rights](#)" portal. In 2018, the majority of new complaints concerned justice and consumer rights; EU internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs; as well as employment and social affairs matters. Thanks to the [SOLVIT](#) portal, an informal problem-solving network of the Commission and the Member States, citizens and businesses can seek a solution to their problems with a public authority in another EU country.

Background

Since 1984, following a request made by the European Parliament, the Commission presents an Annual report on monitoring the application of EU law during the preceding year. The European Parliament then adopts a resolution on the Commission's report.

As a matter of priority, the Commission targets problems where its enforcement action can make a real difference and benefit individuals and businesses. In the division of responsibilities between the European institutions, the European Commission has the general responsibility of initiating the legislative process. The Council and the European Parliament decide on the Commission's proposals. The Member States are responsible for the timely and correct application, implementation and enforcement of EU law in the national legal order. The Commission closes this circle: once proposals are adopted and become EU law, it monitors whether the Member States are applying this law correctly and takes action if they are not. The Commission should therefore act firmly and quickly when infringements obstruct the achievement of EU policy objectives. In this vein, the Commission recently set out its more strategic approach to enforcement in terms of handling infringements, in line with its [commitment](#) to be 'bigger and more ambitious on big things, and smaller and more modest on small things'.

The annual Single Market Scoreboard evaluates how Member States:

- implement EU rules;
- create open and integrated markets (e.g. public procurement, trade in goods and services);
- handle administrative issues concerning foreign workers (e.g. professional qualifications);
- cooperate and contribute to a number of EU-wide governance tools (e.g. [Your Europe](#) portal, [Solvit](#), and [EURES](#))

The Single Market Scoreboard evaluates performance in four policy areas, two

areas regarding market openness and integration, and 13 governance tools.

For More Information

**a) Annual report on Monitoring the application of EU law in 2018:**

- [Annual report on national implementation of EU law](#)
- [Fact sheets by country](#)
- [EU-28 fact sheet](#)
- On the general EU infringement procedure, see a full MEMO of [17/01/2012](#).

**b) Single Market Scoreboard (edition 2019 based on data in 2018):**

- [Scoreboard](#)
- [Fact sheets by country](#)
- [Performance overview](#)

**ANNEX – [IP/19/3030](#)**

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## **[Daily News 04 / 07 / 2019](#)**

### **Le président Juncker et le Collège des commissaires assistent au lancement officiel de la présidence finlandaise du Conseil de l'UE (4 et 5 juillet)**

Le président **Juncker** et le Collège des commissaires seront à Helsinki, les 4 et 5 juillet, pour le lancement de la présidence finlandaise du Conseil de l'Union européenne. Les priorités de présidence finlandaise visent à renforcer les valeurs communes de l'Union et de l'État de droit, rendre l'Union plus compétitive et socialement inclusive, renforcer la position de l'Union comme chef de file mondial en matière de lutte contre le changement climatique, ainsi qu'à protéger les citoyens européens sur tous les plans. Ces priorités sont d'ores et déjà soutenues par la Commission européenne, comme explicité dans notre contribution à la réunion informelle des chefs d'État ou de gouvernement de l'UE à 27 qui a eu lieu à Sibiu (Roumanie), le 9 mai dernier. Le jeudi 4 juillet, le Président, accompagné par le Collège des Commissaires, se rendra au diner informel organisé par le Premier ministre finlandais, Antti Rinne, à 19 heures CET. Le vendredi 5 juillet, à 9 heures CET, le président **Juncker** tiendra une réunion bilatérale avec le Premier ministre Rinne, à l'issue de laquelle une photo de famille sera organisée avec le Collège et les membres du gouvernement finlandais. En parallèle, des rencontres auront lieu entre les membres du Collège et les membres du gouvernement finlandais, selon les thématiques suivantes : le prochain budget à long terme de l'UE, une Europe juste, durable et compétitive, et une Europe

influyente et une Europe protectrice. À 10 heures CET, une rencontre plénière entre le Collège et les membres du gouvernement finlandais aura lieu. Cette réunion sera suivie, à 10h45 CET, d'une conférence de presse avec le président **Juncker** et le Premier ministre Rinne, qui sera retransmise en direct sur [EbS+](#). Ensuite, le président de la République, Sauli Niinistö, accueillera le Collège, à 11h15 CET pour un déjeuner informel, organisé dans le palais présidentiel. Le Collège sera ensuite accueilli au siège du Parlement finlandais, pour une série de rencontres. *(Pour plus d'informations: Margaritis Schinas – Tél.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tél.: +32 229 91382)*

### **Member States' compliance with EU law in 2018: efforts are paying off, but improvements still needed**

Today's 36th Annual Report on Monitoring the Application of EU law sets out how the Commission monitored and enforced EU law in 2018. The online Single Market Scoreboard (edition 2019 based on data in 2018), also published today, evaluates the performance of EU/EEA countries in the EU single market and identifies the shortcomings where the countries and the European Commission should step up their efforts. Each failure to correctly and timely apply EU law denies citizens and businesses the rights and the benefits they enjoy under EU rules. The Annual Report for 2018 shows a small increase (by 0.8%) of open infringement cases compared to cases in 2017. On the Single Market Scoreboard, the best performing countries were Portugal, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and Lithuania, while the most red (performance below average) and yellow (average performance) cards were given to Spain, Italy, Greece and Luxembourg. Citizens and businesses can only enjoy the many benefits of the [single market](#) if the rules that have been jointly agreed by Member States actually work on the ground. For the [2018 Annual Report](#), a full [press release](#) and an [EU-28 fact sheet](#) are available online as well as 28 [fact sheets by country](#). For the [EU Single Market Scoreboard](#), see the [performance overview](#) and the performance per [Member State](#) (28 EU countries and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). Since 1984, following a request made by the European Parliament, the Commission presents an Annual report on monitoring the application of EU law during the preceding year. The European Parliament then adopts a resolution on the Commission's report. Other answers on the frequently asked questions on the general EU infringement procedure are available [here](#). *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Uldis Šalajevs – Tel.: +32 229 67560)*

### **Évolution de l'emploi et de la situation sociale en Europe: le rapport 2019 montre que la lutte contre le changement climatique peut être un facteur de croissance et d'emploi**

La Commission européenne a publié aujourd'hui l'édition 2019 de son rapport annuel sur l'évolution de l'emploi et de la situation sociale en Europe (ESDE) consacré au thème de la durabilité. Il montre que la lutte contre le changement climatique et la préservation de la croissance vont de pair. Il présente plusieurs options stratégiques capables de préserver la compétitivité de l'UE, de soutenir la croissance et d'en faire profiter



l'ensemble de la population de l'UE et les générations futures tout en visant une transition ambitieuse vers une économie neutre pour le climat. Le rapport 2019 confirme également que l'activité économique de l'UE poursuit son expansion, atteignant des niveaux records en matière d'emploi et conduisant à une amélioration de la situation sociale. Marianne **Thyssen**, commissaire pour l'emploi, les affaires sociales, les compétences et la mobilité des travailleurs, a déclaré: « *Ce rapport annuel montre que la relance de l'économie européenne se confirme. Avec 240,7 millions d'Européens en emploi, soit 13,4 millions d'emplois créés depuis le début de la Commission Juncker, l'UE affiche le taux d'emploi le plus élevé jamais enregistré. Le taux de chômage en Europe est historiquement bas, et le nombre de personnes menacées de pauvreté continue de baisser. Nous sommes donc dans les conditions idéales pour intensifier notre action au profit des citoyens sur la base du socle européen des droits sociaux, et cette action doit passer par une transition équitable vers une économie neutre pour le climat, qui exploite au mieux les possibilités offertes par la "croissance verte".* » La transition vers une économie neutre en carbone permettra d'accroître le nombre d'emplois disponibles et aura une incidence sur la structure du marché du travail, la répartition des emplois et les compétences requises. D'ici à 2030, cette transition pourrait créer 1,2 million d'emplois supplémentaires, en plus des 12 millions déjà attendus. Un [communiqué de presse](#) et une [fiche d'informations](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tél.: +32 2 229 62253; Melanie Voin – Tél.: +32 2 229 58659)

### **Young Jewish Europeans face increasing antisemitism, a new EU study finds**

Today, the European Commission presents together with the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) a survey on the "Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism" of young Jewish Europeans in the EU. The report shows that four in five young Jewish Europeans have declared that antisemitism is a problem in their country, and believed it to have increased over the past five years. Moreover, 44% of young Jewish Europeans experienced antisemitic harassment. 80% of the young victims, however, have not reported harassment to the police, or to any other authority. European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** said: "*Young Jewish Europeans are very attached to their Jewish identity. I am saddened that they fear for their security in Europe, do not dare to wear a kippah and some even consider emigrating. We need to act fast to combat antisemitism in Europe and join our efforts to keep our youth safe. We want young Jewish citizens to grow up in Europe feeling they fully belong here. Antisemitism is a threat to our European values. This is why we made fighting it a priority and work closely with Member States to ensure they are fully part of our Union.*" The Commission has undertaken many actions over the last years [to fight antisemitism](#) and launched the Working Group on antisemitism last week, following the unanimous adoption of the [Council Declaration on fighting antisemitism](#). The full survey results, as well as a press release are available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand +32 2 229 62253; Melanie Voin +32 2 229 58659)

## **Sustainable Finance: Commission's technical expert group launches a call for feedback on the taxonomy for sustainable economic activities**

The European Commission welcomes the latest step to drive forward sustainable finance in the EU, with the launch of a [call for feedback](#) on a [classification system – or “taxonomy” – for environmentally-sustainable economic activities](#). The consultation is being launched by the Technical Expert Group (TEG) on Sustainable Finance, a global group of experts set up by the Commission, which published its [Report on Taxonomy](#) on 18 June 2019. The expert group's report follows on the Commission's May 2018 [legislative proposal on an EU taxonomy](#). With its proposal, currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission aims to gradually develop a unified EU-wide classification system for environmentally sustainable economic activities. The ultimate aim is to contribute to more informed decisions by businesses and investors. In line with the objective of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, the call for feedback is part of the Commission's commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation, the core objective of its [Action Plan on financing sustainable growth](#), published in March 2018. During the autumn, the TEG will advise the Commission how to take this feedback forward in developing the future EU Taxonomy. Stakeholders are invited to comment on the proposed activities identified by the expert group that contribute substantially to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the proposed technical screening criteria. The [call for feedback](#) closes on 13 September 2019. (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229-56194; Guillaume Mercier – Tel.: +32 229-80564)

## **New report: more work needed to ensure that all children in Europe have access to quality early education and care**

Today, the European Commission's [Eurydice network](#) published its latest report on ["Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe"](#). The report concludes that many European countries are not offering universal access to high quality early childhood education and care. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"We clearly need to do more to make sure that every child in the EU has access to quality early childhood education and care. This is vital to give everyone the best start in life and to build fair, cohesive and resilient societies. This report shows what countries are doing to ensure access and quality and allows us to concentrate our efforts on specific areas of improvement. Some countries are doing well, while others lag behind. As we continue to build a true European Education Area, this report is a good basis for further work to guarantee universal access across the EU."* Six quality dimensions are analysed in the report: governance, access, the workforce, educational guidelines, as well as monitoring and the evaluation of early childhood education and care systems. These aspects are also the focus of the recently adopted [Council Recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems](#). This Recommendation, which is one of the building blocks of the European Education Area the Commission intends to build with Member States by 2025, is designed to help develop a common understanding of what constitutes good quality service provision and to support Member States in improving access to

and quality of their systems. As the report published today shows, many European countries cannot yet provide education and care of good quality at all ages of early childhood, often maintaining a division between childcare and pre-primary education. The report is available [online](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

### **Commission launches work on major research and innovation missions for cancer, climate, oceans and soil**

Today the European Commission launched the work on five major research and innovation missions that will be part of [Horizon Europe](#), which is the next framework programme (2021 – 2027) and has a proposed budget of €100 billion. The European research and innovation missions aim to deliver solutions to some of the greatest challenges facing our world, including cancer prevention and treatment, climate change, healthy oceans, carbon-neutral smart cities and healthy soil and food. At the occasion of the Informal Council for Research Ministers in Helsinki, Finland, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos **Moedas**, announced the appointment of five prominent experts to chair the mission boards: Ms Connie Hedegaard, Professor Harald zur Hausen, Mr Pascal Lamy, Professor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz and Mr Cees Veerman. Among their tasks will be to identify and design the missions as well as propose specific targets and timelines. Also today, Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Special Advisor for Mission Driven Science and Innovation to Commissioner **Moedas**, presented a new report "[Governing Missions in the European Union](#)", which outlines the conditions of making missions a success. Commissioner **Moedas** said: "I am excited to see the mobilisation of such high-profile people to help us solve our generation's biggest challenges through research and innovation missions. The missions will be in good hands with the commitment, drive and leadership that these outstanding individuals will bring. The new report from Professor Mazzucato, who has already been such a decisive source of inspiration, will give us further insights into how we make the missions a success." For more information about the newly launched work on research and innovation missions see [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

### **Antitrust: Commission re-adopts decision and fines five producers of reinforcing steel bars €16 million for price-fixing cartel**

The European Commission has re-adopted a cartel decision against five Italian manufacturers of reinforcing steel bars for concrete, namely AlfaAcciai, Feralpi Holding, Ferriere Nord, Partecipazioni Industriali (Riva Fire) and Valsabbia Investimenti / Ferriera Valsabbia. In its decision, the Commission has imposed total fines of €16 074 000 for the companies' participation in a price fixing cartel between December 1989 and July 2000. The cartel has already been the subject of two previous Commission decisions. In December 2002, the Commission adopted a [decision](#) imposing fines on eight steel manufacturers and the Italian steel manufacturers' association. The General Court annulled this decision in October 2007. In September 2009, the Commission re-adopted a [decision](#) imposing fines on all eight companies. In December 2014, the General Court upheld the 2009 decision, which became final

for the three companies that did not appeal. In September 2017, the Court of Justice set aside the General Court's judgments and annulled the 2009 Commission decision. Both the General Court annulment of the Commission's 2002 decision and the Court of Justice annulment of the Commission's 2009 decision were based on procedural grounds. Today's decision addresses this issue and re-imposes fines on the five manufacturers. The re-adoption of this decision is based on the public interest in pursuing an effective and deterrent enforcement against cartels. The re-adopted decision includes an exceptional 50% fine reduction for all five companies. This is in recognition of the long duration of proceedings which is not attributable to the companies involved. The decision will be made available under case number [37956](#) in the [public case register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website. More information on the Commission's action against cartels is available in the [cartels section](#) of the competition website. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

**Eurostat : Le volume des ventes du commerce de détail en baisse de 0,3% dans la zone euro, baisse de 0,4% dans l'UE28 (mai 2019 comparé à avril 2019)**

En mai 2019 par rapport à avril 2019, le volume des ventes du commerce de détail corrigé des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,3% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,4% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En avril 2019, le volume du commerce de détail a diminué de 0,1% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28. En mai 2019 par rapport à mai 2018, l'indice corrigé des effets de calendrier des ventes de détail a augmenté de 1,3% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél. +32 229 56182; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioners Hahn and Bulc at the Western Balkans Summit in Poznań, Poland [updated at 04-07-19 at 12:24]**

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission Federica **Mogherini**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** and Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** will be in Poznań, Poland on 4-5 July to participate at the [2019 Western Balkans Summit](#) organised in the framework of the [Berlin process](#). Leaders and Ministers from ten EU Member States and from the six Western Balkan partners will attend the Summit which will focus on regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, youth, security and the rule of law, with special focus on anti-corruption. The EU delegation will aim at strengthening links within the region and with the European Union by launching new initiatives and programmes to improve transport and energy connectivity and to boost digital transformation. The EU will also step up its support to socio-economic development and green growth, regional cooperation, good neighbourly relations, and security cooperation. High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will, together with Commissioner **Hahn**, attend the Leaders' meeting on Friday 5 July. Commissioner **Hahn**

delivered a [keynote speech](#) this morning at the Grand Opening session and attended at the panel “Clean Environment – Green Agenda”. This afternoon, he will participate at the ministerial session with Ministers of Foreign Affairs first and with Ministers of Economy, he will open the Chambers Investment Forum, a platform of dialogue between the Commission and the businesses in the Western Balkans and will have a press conference (available on [EbS](#)). Commissioner **Bulc** will participate in a Working Lunch for Ministers of Economy where they will have a discussion on “Getting the Business Environment Right: Strategies, Financing and Connectivity”. She will also take part in a meeting of the Ministers of Economy on “Supporting Mobility: The Connectivity Agenda”. In the context of Commissioner’s **Bulc** visit, a number of transport projects of regional nature will be proposed for endorsement, amongst others by the [Transport Community](#), an international organisation for transport cooperation composed of the EU and the six Western Balkan partners. Videos and photos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#).  
(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

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

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## [Speech by Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of President Juncker at the Plenary Session of the European Parliament on the Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 20 and 21 June 2019](#)

Thank you very much,

Mr President of the European Parliament,

Mr President of the European Council,

Honourable Members,

I have the pleasure and the honour in addressing, on behalf of President Juncker, this House in its first plenary session of the new legislature.

We have talked about jobs and names over the past few days – and the past few nights.

It can often take time to find the right balance and the right compromise. And it is worth taking the time to get the right people for the right jobs when the future of our Union for the next five years is at stake.

This is why I am delighted that this House chose President Sassoli for what might be the most difficult job of all.

So caro Presidente, congratulazioni and congratulation of course to all Members of the European Parliament on their successful election. I would like to congratulate you not only on my behalf, but also on behalf on the President of the Commission and all my colleagues in the College. And I would like to underline that we are all looking forward to working closely with all of you.

The same applies to all the candidates nominated by the European Council – including the candidate for President of the European Commission Ms Ursula von der Leyen, who has all the credentials to lead our institution.

This House of course will have the final say and we will have the opportunity to debate this in the weeks ahead.

But the June European Council was not just about people and personalities – it was about our strategic priorities for the next five years. And I am pleased to say that there is a lot of common ground between our two different institutions.

I would like to emphasise two points. First, the social dimension. Now more than ever we must ensure equal opportunities for all at a time when Europeans are confronted with and they have to go through multiple transitions – economic, ecological, digital – which all have profound repercussions on our daily lives.

My second point, which I believe is equally vital, is the question of climate change.

It was my proudest moment serving as a Commissioner when I was honoured and I could sign on behalf of the European Union probably the most important agreement in recent historic time: the Paris Agreement in New York.

This House knows very well that it was one of the key priorities for the Commission and how hard we have been all working together with you over the last five years to deliver on our pledges and commitments. We can today say that ours is the first big economy in the world to have committed itself under the Paris Agreement to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 % by 2030, compared with 1990 levels. You know very well that with all your hard work we set the framework for making sure that we would over-achieve this target by 2030. And we have to say that is the most ambitious contribution of any major economy. We have now established a legislative framework to deliver on all our commitments.

For the European Union to continue to lead, all Member States must now match their deeds to their words when it comes to achieving our commonly-agreed 2030 targets.

But climate change will not stop in 2030 – whether we meet our targets or not.

Therefore, Europe must very clearly commit to a path of climate neutrality by 2050, as proposed by the Commission last year and supported by the Parliament and recognised by a vast majority of the European Council. 'A Clean Planet for all' is in all of our interests, not least in our economic interest, including that of the very small minority of Member States that may still need to be brought fully into our common ambition.

This is why we have committed to investing at least 25 % of our next long-term budget in climate action and therefore we have launched a sustainable finance strategy as part of the Capital Markets Union, in order to channel the flows of private capital more effectively into more sustainable investments.

However, none of these objectives can be achieved by the European Union unless we have the right money to hand at the right time.

That is why I insist that we must still reach an agreement on the future Multiannual Financial Framework this autumn. I trust that you, Honourable Members, will also make it your priority to finalise the negotiations jointly with the Finnish Council Presidency.

Voters in the European elections called for an effective Europe. Europe can only act effectively if a budget is concluded on time. This requires a willingness to compromise on all sides.

When I think of Europe's tens of thousands of researchers, 100,000 cohesion projects and one million Erasmus students, every single day counts if the programmes are to begin promptly on 1 January 2021. In this case it really applies: time is money.

Since we are talking about money: at the European Council, we could see how our hard work in recent years on deepening the Economic and Monetary Union has paid off. Today we have a stable currency with an average inflation rate of 1.8 % in the euro area.

European banks are now much more secure than before the financial crisis: Their equity buffer is now close to 20 % of their total expenditure, compared to only 10 % before the financial crisis. As a result of the Banking Union, the share of non-performing loans has also been more than halved since 2014 and is approaching pre-crisis levels.

But we must not rest on our laurels – there is still work to be done in order to complete the Economic and Monetary Union.

The budgetary instrument for convergence and competitiveness is an important step towards a budget line for the euro. We need to secure its financing and governance.

Further efforts are also needed on the Treaty on the European Stability Mechanism. To make it effective and credible, it needs to be integrated into

Union law over time.

We also need a common deposit guarantee to complete our banking union. We cannot afford to wait until the next crisis before we finally make headway on this crucial issue.

There is still much to do. I am therefore happy that with this plenary session your work is only just beginning.

Honourable Members,

Allow me to finish with a few words on some of the other issues we discussed during the last European Council.

Firstly, I want to reaffirm our full support for Cyprus in light of Turkey's continued illegal drilling activities.

President Juncker was the first one to say already back in Sibiu that "on this issue I am Cypriot". I was delighted that at the European Council every Member State spoke in unison and said: "We are all Cypriots".

The Commission is now backing up that spirit of solidarity: we are working on concrete actions we can take. I can assure the people of Cyprus that we will do what we have to do. Europe stands in full solidarity with Cyprus.

I cannot mention Cyprus without once again offering my sincere condolences to the family of former President Demetris Christofias – a man who shared his love for Europe and Cyprus in the same way as we do.

On the Western Balkans, I want to repeat the Commission's commitment to a firm and credible EU perspective for the region.

I believe it is the best way to bring stability to the region, overcome bilateral issues and keep up the reform momentum that is serving the people of the region so well.

The Member States put back a decision on accession negotiations for North Macedonia and Albania until October. The Commission is ready to keep explaining its recommendation to open talks on the basis of our objective assessment of the progress achieved.

In the meantime, it is essential that the two countries – and the region as a whole – keep up the momentum.

These reforms, these efforts are first and foremost for the citizens of the region. They are about building a society based on fairness and the respect of the rule of law. The European Union will support all efforts to achieve this.

Finally, let me reiterate our full and unequivocal support for Ukraine. We are following the issues in the East of the country very closely and we will continue to make the full implementation of the Minsk agreements the number one priority. The European Commission will repeat this message loud and clear



in Kiev next week at the next EU-Ukraine Summit.

And I will do my utmost personally to make sure that there will be a continuation of long-term gas transit through Ukraine for the next long-term period and I would just like to inform you that the next trilateral talks between Ukraine, Russia and the European Commission under my chairmanship will resume already in September.

Honourable Members, Mr President, Mr President, Thank you very much.