

# European Labour Authority ready to start working in October as decision is taken on new seat

Today, just ahead of the meeting of the Council on Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers in which Ministers are to formally adopt the Regulation establishing the European Labour Authority, Member States decided that Bratislava will host the seat of the European Labour Authority. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, welcomed the decision:

*"I congratulate the city of Bratislava and the government of Slovakia for being chosen to host the seat of the European Labour Authority.*

*From the start of my mandate, I have made fair labour mobility a key priority. Free movement boosts growth, helps businesses find the skills they need and gives everyone the opportunity to make the best use of their talents – but it needs to be well managed. This requires rules that are fair, clear and effectively enforced. The European Labour Authority is the jewel in the crown of this work. It will support labour mobility and give EU Member States the tools they need to cooperate more effectively and fight abuse.*

*The European Labour Authority regulation has been adopted in record-time and I am confident that the move of the European Labour Authority to Bratislava will be equally smooth and fast. The Authority will start operating from Brussels as of October until it moves to its host city. I look forward to seeing the Authority settle in and starting work from Bratislava as soon as possible."*

## **Background**

President Juncker first announced the idea of a European Labour Authority in his [State of the Union address in September 2017](#). The Commission presented its [proposal for establishing a Labour Authority in March 2018](#), and in February 2019, the [European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement](#). After the European Parliament, today also the Council formally adopted the Regulation establishing the European Labour Authority, which will enter into force in the coming days after its signature and publication. This new Authority will ensure that Union rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. Following today's final adoption of the founding Regulation, it will be up and running in 2019 and will operate at full capacity by 2024. On 16 October 2019, the selection of the Management Board and the work programme of the European Labour Authority will be presented.

The selection of the seat of the Authority was made by common accord of the representatives of the governments of the Member States, following a procedure and criteria endorsed by Member States themselves. Under this

procedure, the interested Member States were required to submit an offer to host the Authority by 6 May 2019, indicating in detail how the criteria are addressed and specifying the offered conditions.

### **For More Information**

[Statement: Fair labour mobility: Commission welcomes agreement on the European Labour Authority](#)

[MEMO: Questions and Answers on the European Labour Authority \(following the provisional agreement of 5 February 2019\)](#)

[Factsheet: European Pillar of Social Rights: Towards fair labour mobility: Setting up a European Labour Authority](#)

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## **EU – Western Balkans meeting on employment and social affairs (Luxembourg, 12 June 2019)**

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# VAT carousel fraudsters arrested with the support of Eurojust

□The Hague, 12 June 2019

✘ During a joint action day coordinated by Eurojust, judicial authorities from Italy, Germany, Spain, Austria and Romania took down an organised crime group suspected of large-scale VAT fraud in the EU drinks market. Following numerous house searches in Italy, Germany, Austria and Romania, mobile phones and relevant documents were seized; moreover, bank details and records as well as other criminal assets were identified. 7 suspects residing in Italy, Austria and Romania were arrested, following the execution of pre-trial arrest warrants. The total amount of tax evasion is estimated at almost €2 million. Earlier today, with Eurojust's support, 18 people, involved in another VAT fraud with alcoholic drinks, were arrested.

Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, actively coordinated and supported the national authorities throughout the investigations, which culminated in the successful action day. Eurojust swiftly set up a coordination centre, which allowed for real-time exchange of information and facilitated the smooth execution of European Arrest Warrants and European Investigation Orders. [[Click here](#) or on image to view video] ✘

Based on a report by the Italian customs related to an Austrian drink company, the Public Prosecutor of Bolzano, Italy, initiated an investigation into alleged valued added tax (VAT) fraud by organised criminals in the EU drinks market. Starting in April 2015, the Austrian company supplied large quantities of beer and other beverages to Italian companies, which were formally represented by Romanian nationals. The Austrians received no VAT from the Italians, as no such tax is due for intra EU transactions. However, the Italian companies resold the drinks to other companies, charging them with 21% VAT, but failed to remit the VAT to the Italian tax authorities. By collecting the VAT for themselves, the Italian companies acted as 'missing traders' in a typical carousel fraud scheme. Since June 2018, a German drink company was also involved in the scam, assuming the role of the Austrian company.

'Tax fraud' image © Shutterstock

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## Speech by Vice-President Šefčovič at

# the European Investment Bank (EIB) Board of Directors' meeting

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## Eurojust supports 18 restrictive measures against tax fraud

□The Hague, 12 June 2019

✘Eurojust helped the Italian national authorities to crack down on an organised crime group involved in large-scale tax fraud and other financial crimes. 17 people were placed under restrictive measures in Italy and 1 was arrested in the UK through the execution of a European Arrest Warrant. The estimated damage, caused by tax evasion and other criminal activities, amounts to over €80 million. Today's successful operation was the result of a highly complex and lengthy cross-border investigation, which would have not been possible without Eurojust's close cooperation.

The Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) and Financial Police (*Guardia di Finanza*) of Udine today held a press conference on the crackdown of an organised crime group (OCG) suspected of VAT and excise tax evasion in Italy. The OCG was supported by various criminal cells in the UK and several other EU countries. The investigations into the OCG were initiated back in 2017.

In July 2017, Eurojust, the EU's Judicial Cooperation Unit, swiftly set up a coordination centre to facilitate the execution of Letters of Request (LoRs) towards 17 EU countries and the gathering of sufficient evidence to help national authorities advance their criminal investigations. Eurojust closely coordinated the national investigations, serving as a platform to efficiently exchange information and evidence, and agree on joint prosecutorial strategies and operational actions, including simultaneous searches carried out in several EU countries. Eurojust also assisted the Italian authorities in quickly issuing and safely transmitting 2 European Arrest Warrants towards the British authorities and 17 LoRs to the EU countries concerned.

The OCG, which was headed by UK nationals and composed of Italian nationals, expanded its criminal activities to numerous EU countries. The fraudsters

were involved in a carousel scam involving real and fake alcoholic drink companies in Italy and the 17 EU countries involved. The OCG members took advantage of loopholes in tax regulation at EU level, such as the exemption from paying VAT or excise tax for transactions within the European Union, to evade taxes on the trade of alcohol. The criminals also benefitted from the possibility to justify the illegal distribution of alcohol, from almost anywhere in the EU countries concerned, by exploiting the [EU's Excise Movement and Control System \(EMCS\)](#).

The OCG members are accused of having participated in a criminal organisation to commit excise and VAT fraud, as well as large-scale money laundering, affecting the financial interests of the European Union, and other related crimes.

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