

# Press release: Homes England investment accelerates development of more than 5,000 homes at Ebbsfleet Garden City

Homes England has completed a £74 million deal that will unlock the next phase of development at Ebbsfleet Garden City in Kent – funding a range of infrastructure works that include earthworks to fill in a lake to prepare the land for the development of more than 5,000 new homes.

The infrastructure works will unlock 657 acres of land that will be used to develop up to 5,290 new homes – accounting for around a third of the total Ebbsfleet Garden City housing development – as well as around 180,000 sq ft of commercial development.

The Homes England supported enabling works through a loan deal to Henley Camland include preparing land for the development of housing on both the Castle Hill site and the Eastern Quarry at Ebbsfleet. Henley Camland, the residential infrastructure and place-making firm which recently purchased the Eastern Quarry site from Landsec, has simultaneously agreed land deals for 2,900 homes to be developed. 2,600 of these homes will be delivered by Countryside Properties and Clarion Housing Group in a new joint venture, while and Barratt Homes will built 300 homes on this part of the wider site as a direct result of the works funded by Homes England.

Representing one of Homes England's largest deals of the past 12 months, the £73.97m loan is being made through the Home Building Fund (HBF). The HBF helps unlock or accelerate the delivery of residential and mixed-use housing developments through both development loans and loan funding for the infrastructure needed to prepare land for development.

More than 1,000 of these new homes at Ebbsfleet will be provided by 2021, with the full scheme due to be completed over the next decade.

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive of Homes England, said: "At Homes England we're using our land, finance and expertise to speed up the delivery of new homes. The vital infrastructure works that we're funding in Ebbsfleet will bring forward the development of many new homes by around four years overall and, importantly, will mean many more homes can be built in the earlier phases of the development as a result of our support with the significant infrastructure costs."

The HBF loan will also mean other important services to support the housing development, such as a new secondary school, can be delivered much sooner than would have been possible without Homes England's support. A 'fast track' route through the site connecting Bluewater to Ebbsfleet International Station will also be created.

Ian Piper, Chief Executive of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation who oversee Ebbsfleet Garden City, said: "This from Homes England, when combined with the investments already made by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation in key utilities infrastructure, is key to delivering the new homes that are required to create our vision for the Garden City. It is a good example of public bodies working together to deliver great places".

Ian Rickwood, CEO of Henley, which has secured the delivery of 2,900 homes through a series of simultaneous deals commented: "Following Homes England's investment and our quick succession of deals with various housebuilders, £1bn worth of quality homes will be delivered at a time when the UK is in dire need of them. We've worked hard alongside our partners to unlock these homes, as well as the new senior school and remain committed to bringing forward more homes and infrastructure at Ebbsfleet Garden City."

Ends

For further information please contact Lisa Cattanach, Communications Manager at Homes England on 0115 852 6904 / 07880 475445 / email: [lisa.cattanach@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.cattanach@homesengland.gov.uk)

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## **[Press release: Northumberland farmer fined for failing to fix pollution risk](#)**

A Northumberland farmer who was fined £19,000 last year for twice polluting a protected watercourse has been ordered to pay a further £2,854.56 in fines and costs for failing to fix the source of the pollution.

John Laing, 54, of New Heaton Farm in Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland, appeared at Berwick upon Tweed Magistrates' Court on 5 April 2018 having previously admitted contempt of court.

The court heard that in January 2017 Laing was ordered by Newcastle Magistrates' Court to repair the storage unit by 30 June 2017. Without remedial works, there remains a continued risk of silage leaking from a silo storage unit into a tributary that flows into the River Till.

The order had required Laing to carry out specific works to capture and prevent any effluent from escaping the silo, and provide written certification from a chartered engineer that the works had been completed to the required standards. Environment Agency officers made several visits to the farm before and after the deadline to check whether the works had been completed.

While Laing had enlisted the services of a builder, work had not started before the June 2017 deadline. Subsequent visits by Environment Agency officers in August and September 2017 revealed that some work had begun but not as agreed and to a poor standard.

In mitigation, Laing said he had relied on the assurances of a builder as to the quality of the remedial work and was no longer using the storage facility himself.

Neil Paisley, Senior Agriculture Officer at the Environment Agency, said:

John Laing has repeatedly shown a disregard for the law and a disregard for the environment since an initial pollution incident in 2014.

Pollution of any watercourse is a serious offence because of the devastating impact it can have on fish, wildlife and ecosystems. We will take action against anyone who fails to act in accordance with environmental laws and fails to comply with orders to ensure pollution is prevented.

If anyone spots a potential pollution issue they can report it to the Environment Agency's free 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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## **[Press release: EU support for productive investments in business needs greater focus on durability, say Auditors](#)**

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# Unterstützung für produktive Investitionen in Unternehmen ist ein größeres Augenmerk auf Dauerhaftigkeit erforderlich, so das Fazit der EU-Prüfer

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## Daily News 12 / 04 / 2018

### **La Commission européenne lutte contre les pratiques commerciales déloyales dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire**

La Commission propose aujourd'hui d'interdire les pratiques commerciales déloyales les plus dommageables dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire, de façon à garantir des conditions plus équitables pour les agriculteurs et les petites et moyennes entreprises de l'agroalimentaire. La proposition de la Commission prévoit également des mesures coercitives appropriées; des sanctions pourront être en effet infligées par les autorités nationales en cas d'infraction avérée. Les petits opérateurs de la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire, dont les agriculteurs, sont particulièrement vulnérables aux pratiques commerciales déloyales utilisées par leurs partenaires commerciaux au sein de la chaîne. Bien souvent, ils ne disposent que d'un faible pouvoir de négociation et n'ont pas d'autres moyens de faire parvenir leurs produits aux consommateurs. Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-président chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, a déclaré: *«Les rapports de forces dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire ne sont pas égaux. Avec cette proposition, la Commission s'attaque de front aux pratiques commerciales déloyales. En fixant des normes minimales et en renforçant l'application des règles, la proposition devrait permettre à ces opérateurs d'affronter la concurrence dans des conditions équitables, et de contribuer ainsi à l'efficacité globale de la chaîne.»* Phil **Hogan**, Commissaire chargé de l'agriculture et du développement rural, a dit: *«Une chaîne a la solidité de son maillon le plus faible: pour être efficace et efficiente, la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire doit aussi être équitable. La proposition présentée aujourd'hui vise fondamentalement l'équité – donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont pas-, pour aider ceux qui, sans qu'ils n'y soient pour rien, subissent une position de négociation faible.»* Des pratiques commerciales déloyales seront directement proscrites tandis que d'autres ne seront autorisées qu'à condition d'avoir été convenues en des termes clairs et univoques entre les parties, par exemple le renvoi au fournisseur, par l'acheteur, des denrées

alimentaires invendues. Les mesures proposées complètent celles qui existent déjà dans les États membres, ainsi que le code de conduite volontaire appelée "Supply Chain Initiative". Un [communiqué de presse](#) et un [mémo](#) sont en ligne dans toutes les langues. (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509)

### **Juncker Plan: €120 million for innovative Dutch SMEs**

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Aegon Asset Management have signed a guarantee agreement supporting a €120 million portfolio of loans for innovative Dutch companies. This InnovFin SME Guarantee agreement was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the Juncker Plan. Thanks to this EU support, Aegon will provide subordinated loans (loans which will be repaid after all other debt is repaid) to innovative SMEs and small mid-caps at favourable terms. Carlos **Moedas**, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"The deal signed today brings exciting opportunities for small Dutch companies with innovative ideas they want to make a reality. With this fresh injection of €120 million into the Dutch SME eco-system, we are helping our small businesses to grow and create jobs."* (Full press release is found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

### **Commission adopts the Opinion on the Austrian Draft Budgetary Plan**

The European Commission has today adopted its Opinion on the updated Draft Budgetary Plan (DBP) of Austria and found it to be broadly compliant with the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). In October last year, Austria submitted a DBP based on unchanged policies, which is an agreed practice for governments without full budgetary powers. The Commission called on Austria to submit an updated plan as soon as a new government takes office and received the document on 21 March. The assessment of the updated DBP is more favourable compared to the one in the autumn, which was based on a no-policy change DBP. This reflects the markedly improved economic situation and outlook, as well as the policy measures for 2018 included in the updated plan. Still, there is a risk of some deviation for 2018 as well as for 2017 and 2018 taken together. The Commission therefore invites the authorities to stand ready to take further measures within the national budgetary process to ensure that the 2018 budget will be compliant with the SGP. The Opinion and related documents are available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

### **The future of EU finances: Commissioner Crețu debates cohesion policy after 2020 in Luxembourg**

Today, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** debated the future of cohesion policy at the General Affairs Council in Luxembourg. This was the last Council on cohesion before the Commission puts forward its proposal on the next long term EU budget, on 2 May, with the post-2020 cohesion policy proposal following closely. Discussions focused on the future scope and priorities of the policy. Commissioner **Crețu** stated her conviction that Europe needs a cohesion policy for all regions. But the statu quo is not an

option; the Commissioner highlighted the need for more flexibility, a more tailored approach to regional needs, with a new allocation method and new indicators for example, as well as a stronger link between cohesion policy and structural reforms. On priorities for investments; *“we know the growing impact globalisation is having on regions,”* said the Commissioner, stressing the necessity to help regions achieve industrial transition, embrace innovation and invest in their people, with the help of [smart specialisation](#). The Commissioner also mentioned the need for a long-term response to the migration challenge, supported by cohesion policy. In addition, Commissioner **Crețu** debriefed the ministers on the progress made under the [seven communication actions](#) to improve the visibility of cohesion policy, which she presented in April 2017 with Commissioner **Thyssen**. Commissioner **Crețu**'s speaking points at the Council are available [here](#). The press conference will start at 13h30 CET and can be watched [here](#). *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition d'une partie de l'activité “gaz naturel liquéfié” d'Engie par Total**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition par Total d'un portefeuille d'actifs dans le domaine du gaz naturel liquéfié (GNL) appartenant à Engie, toutes deux basées en France. Le portefeuille d'actifs GNL d'Engie (“Engie GNL”) qui fait l'objet de la concentration comprend des contrats de fourniture, de vente et de regazéification de GNL, des droits de propriété et de tirage sur des usines de liquéfaction et des méthaniers, ainsi que les entités juridiques et le personnel associés à ces activités. Total est un fournisseur d'énergie qui exerce des activités à l'échelle internationale dans les secteurs pétrolier et gazier, ainsi que dans les secteurs des énergies renouvelables et de la production d'électricité. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problèmes de concurrence au regard des chevauchements limités entre les activités de Total et d'Engie GNL dans le domaine de la fourniture en gros, du transport et de la regazéification du GNL, ainsi que de la liquéfaction du gaz naturel. De plus, les relations verticales entre Total et Engie GNL ne sont pas susceptibles d'affaiblir la concurrence dans la fourniture en gros et la regazéification de GNL dans l'Espace économique européen et en France en particulier. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site concurrence de la Commission](#), dans le [registre public des affaires](#) sous la référence [M.8771](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

### **Eurostat press release: Eurostat press release: La production industrielle en baisse de 0,8% dans la zone euro, en baisse de 0,7% dans l'UE28 (Février 2018 comparé à janvier 2018)**

En février 2018 par rapport à janvier 2018, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,8% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,7% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En janvier 2018, la production

industrielle avait reculé de 0,6% dans la zone euro et de 0,3% dans l'UE28. En février 2018 par rapport à février 2017, la production industrielle a augmenté de 2,9% dans la zone euro et de 3,1% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

## STATEMENTS

### **Statement by Commissioner Thyssen following the adoption of the revised Europass framework**

Today, EU Member States adopted the [Commission's proposal to revise the Europass framework](#). The revision, which aims at simplifying and modernising the Europass CV and other skills tools for the digital age, will enable people across the EU to make their skills and qualifications more visible, and will help policy makers to anticipate labour market needs and trends. In reaction to the agreement of the Member States, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *"I warmly welcome today's adoption in Council of the revision of the Europass Decision. [...] Europass has clearly demonstrated its added value as vehicle to communicate skills across the EU, but it has to evolve in parallel to challenges and opportunities in the digital age. Thanks to today's adoption of our proposal to modernise Europass, the framework will offer an e-portfolio for storing and sharing information, tools for people to self-assess their skills and tools for describing formal and informal learning as well as qualifications. [...] The Commission looks forward to beginning work on implementation of this new era for Europass in close co-operation with the Member States and stakeholders. I wish to thank all those involved for their commitment to ensuring better tools and services for skills and qualifications for our citizens."* With today's agreement, the Commission has now delivered on all ten actions under the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#), launched in June 2016. The state of play of the Skills Agenda is available [here](#). The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Commissioner Stylianides meets Bulgarian Prime Minister Borissov to discuss rescEU, the EU's comprehensive plan to strengthen its emergency response to disasters**

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** travels to Sofia to meet Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov. During the meeting Commissioner **Stylianides** will present and discuss [rescEU](#) – the Commission's ambitious plans to further strengthen Europe's ability to deal with disasters in the framework of the [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#). Bulgaria is already one of the 34 participating states to the European Civil Protection Mechanism and has both provided and received assistance during times of crises. The comprehensive proposal put forward by the European Commission in November 2017 is set to upgrade the existing mechanism in order to more effectively address natural hazards in

Europe: floods, forest fires, earthquakes and epidemics. The Commission proposals foresees two complementary strands of action, targeting (1) a stronger collective response at European level via rescEU, and (2) stepping up disaster prevention and preparedness capacities. Administrative procedures will also be streamlined and simplified to reduce the time needed to deploy life-saving assistance. With the implementation of rescEU, Bulgaria, alongside the rest of the Member States, will be able to directly benefit from a strengthened European response to disasters. *(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

### **Commissioner King in Zagreb to discuss security issues**

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** will be in Zagreb, Croatia today and tomorrow, where he will meet Minister for the Interior Davor Božinović and State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice Kristian Turkalj to discuss security issues including the fight against terrorism and cooperation on information exchange. In addition, Commissioner King will meet with members of the European Affairs and the Domestic Policy and National Security Committees of the Croatian Parliament. He will also participate, together with Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner Neven **Mimica**, in a working lunch with Prime Minister Andrej Plenković. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)*

### **Migration: Commissioner Avramopoulos visits reception facilities in Greece**

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos is in Greece today to visit reception facilities in Ritsona as well as rental accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees in Livadia funded by the Commission's [ESTIA programme](#) together with the Greek Minister for Migration Dimitris Vitsas. A joint press point is scheduled to take place around 12:45 CET in the Ritsona facility and will be broadcast live by [EBS](#). *(For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 299 80423)*

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