

European Solidarity Corps: jobs and traineeships on track

To this end, the European Commission supports two projects led by the Italian and French Public Employment Services, which will offer a solidarity-related job or traineeship in another EU country to up to 6000 young people.

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *“The European Solidarity Corps is about creating more and better opportunities. I am happy that starting from today, with the kicking off of the occupational strand, the Corps is offering its full potential to our young people. In cooperation with Public Employment Services and partners on the ground, we will offer thousands of young people a concrete opportunity for a job or traineeship in solidarity-related fields across Europe. This will allow them to develop their skills and increase their future labour market prospects.”*

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“I am delighted to see the European Solidarity Corps growing. The occupational dimension now makes it complete. We know that many young people in Europe are eager to help others, and that this engagement will have positive knock-on effects for themselves. Participating in the European Solidarity Corps will prove to be a valuable experience for young Europeans at the start of their careers.”*

The two projects led by the [French Public Employment Service \(Pôle Emploi\)](#) and the [Italian National Agency for active labour policies \(ANPAL\)](#) bring together public employment services and organisations from different EU Member States, such as employers’ organisations and training institutes, to provide job or traineeship offers in solidarity-related areas to young people between the age of 18 and 30. Selected participants will be able to engage in a broad range of activities such as healthcare, social integration, environmental protection, assistance for migrants and refugees, or food aid in another EU country. The projects will reach out to employers, ensure the matching of candidates and provide financial and other types of support, such as training, to participants. The projects are funded with more than €14 million from the [Employment and Social Innovation](#) programme.

Timeline and next steps

The two projects will run up to March 2019.

In parallel, the European Solidarity Corps is being further developed and consolidated. The aim is to provide 100,000 placements by the end of 2020.

The experience gained under the two new projects being launched will help lay the ground for the rolling-out of the European Solidarity Corps by 2020. The two projects will continue to support young people in finding cross-border placements until spring 2019 and will work together with other projects on

occupational placements for the European Solidarity Corps.

Background

During his 2016 [State of the Union address](#), Commission President **Juncker** announced the creation of a European Solidarity Corps, offering young people between the age of 18 and 30 the opportunity to take part in a wide range of solidarity activities across the EU.

Since its [launch on 7 December 2016](#), more than 32,000 young people have joined the European Solidarity Corps. [In March 2017](#), matching with organisations began; since then, about 11,500 participants have been contacted and 460 placements were accepted. The aim is to have 100,000 young people taking part in the European Solidarity Corps by the end of 2020.

On 30 May 2017 the Commission presented a [proposal](#) to put the European Solidarity Corps on a firm footing, with a budget of €341.5 million for the years 2018-2020 and a dedicated legal base. In addition, the Commission proposed to extend opportunities for young people. As well as offering volunteering, traineeships and job placements, in the future the European Solidarity Corps will also offer participants the opportunity to set up their own solidarity projects or to volunteer as a group.

To prepare its proposal, the Commission launched both an [open online survey and targeted consultations](#) with stakeholders, which concluded in a [Stakeholder Forum](#). The proposal for a draft Regulation now needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council before it can enter into force. In their [Joint Declaration](#), the EU institutions committed to delivering on the proposal by the end of this year.

More information

[FACTSHEET: Jobs and traineeships under the European Solidarity Corps: how it works and how to join](#)

[Factsheet: Taking the European Solidarity Corps forward](#)

[Factsheet for organisations](#)

[MEMO: Questions and Answers on the European Solidarity Corps](#)

[MEMO: Taking the European Solidarity Corps forward: Questions and Answers](#)

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Corps européen de solidarité: emplois et stages sur la bonne voie

Six mois après le [lancement du corps européen de solidarité par la Commission](#)

[européenne](#) et depuis le début de la [sélection pour la participation à des projets de volontariat en mars 2017](#), le coup d'envoi à des milliers de placements (emplois et stages) est désormais donné. À cette fin, la Commission européenne apporte son soutien à deux projets menés par les services publics de l'emploi en France et en Italie, lesquels permettront à pas moins de 6 000 jeunes de participer à des projets de solidarité dans le cadre d'un emploi ou d'un stage dans un autre pays de l'UE. Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissaire pour l'emploi, les affaires sociales, les compétences et la mobilité des travailleurs, a déclaré: *«Le corps européen de solidarité vise à proposer des opportunités plus nombreuses et plus intéressantes. En coopération avec les services publics de l'emploi et les partenaires présents sur le terrain, nous proposerons à des milliers de jeunes une chance réelle de décrocher un emploi ou un stage dans des domaines liés à la solidarité en Europe. Cette démarche leur permettra de développer leurs compétences et d'améliorer leurs perspectives sur le marché du travail»*. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissaire pour l'éducation, la culture, la jeunesse et le sport, a déclaré: *«Je me réjouis du développement du corps européen de solidarité. Sa dimension professionnelle vient aujourd'hui le compléter. Nous savons que de nombreux jeunes en Europe sont désireux de porter assistance aux autres et qu'ils profiteront eux-mêmes des effets positifs de leur engagement.»* Les deux projets menés par le [service public de l'emploi en France \(Pôle Emploi\)](#) et [l'agence nationale italienne pour les politiques actives de l'emploi \(ANPAL\)](#) établiront les contacts avec des employeurs, assureront la sélection des candidats et fourniront aux participants une aide financière et d'autres types d'assistance, notamment des formations. Les participants sélectionnés pourront s'engager dans un large éventail d'activités telles que les soins de santé, l'intégration sociale, la protection de l'environnement, l'assistance aux migrants et aux réfugiés ou l'aide alimentaire dans un autre pays de l'UE. Les projets sont financés pour plus de 14 millions d'euros par le [programme pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale](#). Plus d'informations dans le [communiqué de presse](#) et [factsheet](#) en ligne. (Pour plus d'information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

European Commission approves disbursement of €100 million in assistance to Tunisia

The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, has today approved the disbursement of a €100 million loan to Tunisia. This represents the third and last tranche of the €300 million Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA-I) programme to Tunisia, adopted in [May 2014](#). The MFA-I programme is part of the EU's comprehensive efforts to help Tunisia respond to the severe economic difficulties it is facing and the persistent political instability in the region. This first macro-financial assistance operation to Tunisia will be followed by a second MFA programme (MFA-II) in the amount of €500 million, also in the form of loans, of which disbursements will again be tied to the implementation of a number of policy conditions mutually agreed upon. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *“This disbursement, on the back of agreement on a new programme, reaffirms the EU's continued commitment to support Tunisia in its efforts to further its economic and political transition. Notwithstanding an unstable regional context, Tunisia has demonstrated its determination to*

consolidate a fully-fledged democratic system, and to achieve prosperity for all its citizens. The EU firmly stands with Tunisia and its people.” Macro-Financial Assistance is an exceptional EU crisis response instrument available to the EU’s neighbouring partner countries and more information on MFA to Tunisia can be found [here](#). A full press release is available [here](#).
(For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Barbara Ochotnicka – Tel.: +32 229 13754)

Migration: Commission awards additional emergency funding to improve reception conditions in the Greek islands and in Bulgaria

The European Commission has awarded an additional €6.48 million in emergency assistance to improve reception conditions in accommodation centres in the Greek islands of Lesbos (Kara Tepe) and Chios (Souda). With this funding the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will provide services such as food, water and sanitation supply and help ensure protection for vulnerable migrants as well as education and healthcare. The overall emergency funding allocated to the Greek authorities and international organisations operating in Greece now stands at €361.82 million, adding to the €509.5 million allocated to Greece under the national programmes for the period 2014-2020. The Commission also awarded an additional €1.22 million in emergency assistance to support UNHCR’s activities in Bulgaria to help improve reception conditions and the protection environment of asylum seekers and refugees. The funding will support the monitoring of asylum procedures and the provision of legal, psychological and psychosocial support, including for child migrants. This brings the total emergency assistance for migrant and border management in Bulgaria to €170 million on top of the €91 million allocated to Bulgaria under the national programmes for the period 2014-2020.
(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

Preparation of the Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, 10-11 July 2017

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the European Commission at today’s Eurogroup and tomorrow’s ECOFIN meetings. During the Eurogroup, the Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) will debrief ministers on the main findings of the seventh [post-programme surveillance mission to Ireland](#), discuss the euro area fiscal stance for 2018 and hold a general exchange of views on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union, as set out in the Commission’s [reflection paper](#). The Commission, represented by Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Vestager**, the ECB Banking Supervision, and the Single Resolution Board will inform euro area ministers about recent developments in the euro area banking sector. Ministers will also discuss national insolvency frameworks and French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire will present the policy priorities of the new French government. Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the Commission at the press conference following the meeting. At Tuesday’s ECOFIN meeting, ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on the [Mid-term Review of the EU’s Capital Markets Union Action Plan](#), which contains a number of important new initiatives proposed by the Commission to ensure that this reform

programme gathers even more momentum. Ministers will also discuss a report on Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) in the banking sector, with a view to adopt conclusions setting out an EU agenda to address this issue across Member States with appropriate measures. The Commission will present its latest tax transparency proposal which [introduces new reporting obligations for intermediaries](#) who design and promote tax planning schemes for their clients. The Council is also expected to formally adopt [European Semester Country-Specific Recommendations for 2017](#). Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will participate in the press conference following the ECOFIN session. *(For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)*

European Commission consults on a secondary market for non-performing loans

As part of its efforts to tackle the issue of non-performing loans (NPLs) in the EU, the Commission is launching today a public consultation with a view to exploring possible initiatives to facilitate the development of secondary markets for NPLs. The consultation aims to gather targeted input from stakeholders on ways to improve the functioning of the secondary market and more specifically on loan servicing activities by third parties and the transfer of loans away from the originating bank. The consultation also offers interested parties the occasion to give feedback on a possible new instrument, labelled 'accelerated loan security', aimed at increasing the protection of secured creditors from business borrowers' default to improve the functioning of the SMEs credit market. European Commission Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis**, responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"High level of NPLs in many Member States hold back economic growth and can be source of spill-over risks to the overall economy and financial system of the European Union. That's why our priority is to tackle NPLs. While there is no single silver bullet, the Commission is supporting the targeted work of Member States. One of the key areas where the EU can make a contribution is the development of secondary markets for distressed debt. If banks were able to off-load legacy assets from their balance sheet better via secondary markets for credit, they could use their managerial capacity more on evaluating new lending business."* Respondents are invited to provide evidence-based feedback and specific suggestions by 20 October 2017 [through the online questionnaire](#). Further to this work, the Commission will also launch an impact assessment with the objective of considering a possible legislative initiative to strengthen the ability of secured creditors to recover value from secured loans to corporates and entrepreneurs. *(For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Milton Park by CPPIB and BTPS

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Milton Park of the UK, by Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) of Canada and the British Telecom Pension Scheme (BTPS) of the UK. Milton Park, located in Oxfordshire, is a business park with 302 acres of real estate area. It includes 92 buildings with 250 occupiers, employing over 9000 people. CPPIB invests the funds of the Canada Pension Plan mainly in

equities, real estate, infrastructure and fixed income investments. BTPS is an occupational pension scheme established for the benefit of employees of BT Group plc, investing in real estate as well as bonds and equities both in the UK and overseas. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of the limited changes it brings to the market. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8526](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by Thung Hua Sinn, Itochu and Toppan Printing

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Thung Hua Sinn of Thailand, and Itochu and Toppan Printing, both of Japan. Thung Hua Sinn is active in print and packaging manufacturing. Itochu is a global trader of various products and Toppan Printing is active in the development of printing technology. The joint venture will be based in Thailand and will manufacture and sell flexible packaging. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the joint venture will have no or only limited activities in the EEA. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8535](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Novo Banco by Lone Star under merger review

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the planned acquisition of Novo Banco S.A. of Portugal by Lone Star Funds of the US. The sale of Novo Banco will still require a separate Commission approval under state aid rules. Novo Banco is a universal bank, active in retail and commercial banking in Portugal. Lone Star is a private equity firm that invests globally in real estate, equity, credit, and other financial assets. The Commission concluded that the acquisition would not raise concerns under the EU Merger Regulation because the companies have no overlapping activities in banking in Portugal. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. Today's clearance decision deals with the assessment of the transaction under merger control rules. Concerning the assessment under state aid rules, the Commission continues its discussions with the Portuguese authorities on a restructuring plan to ensure the return to long-term viability of Novo Banco. A state aid decision is required in line with state aid rules and the state aid decisions [2014](#) and [2015](#) [approving aid in the resolution of Banco Espírito Santo](#). In this context Portugal had committed to sell the bridge bank Novo Banco. More information on the merger approval is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the merger case number [M.8487](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: La population de l'UE en hausse à près de 512 millions d'habitants au 1er janvier 2017

Au 1er janvier 2017, la population de l'Union européenne (UE) était estimée à 511,8 millions de résidents, contre 510,3 millions au 1er janvier 2016. Au cours de l'année 2016, autant de naissances que de décès ont été enregistrés dans l'UE (5,1 millions), ce qui signifie que la variation naturelle de la population de l'UE a été neutre. La variation démographique (positive, avec 1,5 million d'habitants supplémentaires) est donc due à l'apport du solde migratoire. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HR/VP Mogherini inaugure le 4ème Forum de la société civile du voisinage Sud

HR/VP Federica **Mogherini** participe aujourd'hui à la cérémonie d'ouverture du 4^{ème} Forum de la société civile du voisinage Sud, à Bruxelles. Cet événement, qui se tient du 10 au 12 juillet, rassemble des organisations de la société civile, des universitaires, des acteurs sociaux ainsi que des professionnels des médias et des représentants de l'UE et d'organisations internationales autour du thème "Jeunesse et Résilience". Les discussions se concentreront principalement sur les sous-thèmes suivants: i) sécurité et résilience; ii) migration et mobilité; iii) encourager le développement économique durable et inclusif; iv) droits de l'homme, avec des problématiques transversales en matière de genre, médias, changement climatique, éducation et emplois. Le Forum de la société civile du voisinage Sud a été créé il y a 4 ans dans le cadre d'une initiative européenne visant à renforcer les liens avec la société civile dans la région, à travers un dialogue entre la société civile, l'UE et les autorités nationales. Aujourd'hui, environ 1 000 ONG ont participé à ces consultations lors d'une quarantaine de réunions à travers la région et l'Europe. Plus d'informations sur le Forum [ici](#). L'intervention de la HR/VP sera retransmise en direct à 12h [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

EU and Japan step up energy cooperation on LNG

On Tuesday 11 July, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** and Japan's Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry Hiroshige Seko will sign a joint Memorandum of Cooperation on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). As the EU and Japan taken together account for nearly 50% of overall global LNG consumption, reinforced cooperation between the EU and Japan will promote the liquidity, flexibility and transparency of the global LNG market. The signature takes place just days after leaders at the EU-Japan Summit in Brussels reached a political agreement on two landmark agreements, the

Economic Partnership Agreement and the strategic partnership agreement (read [IP/17/1927](#)). Ahead of the signing, Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *“International LNG markets are set for major change with substantial new liquefaction capacity coming on stream. LNG prices across the Atlantic and Pacific basin are converging and the LNG market moves towards higher liquidity and flexibility. For the EU, the current developments in the global LNG market offer an opportunity to let LNG play its full role in diversifying gas supplies to all member states and in enhancing the competitiveness in the internal gas market. Japan is the world’s largest LNG importer. Being natural allies in this regard, the EU and Japan both want to promote the liquidity, transparency and flexibility of the global LNG market. This will ensure competitive LNG supplies and make the international market more resilient and prepared to respond to emergencies.”* The signing ceremony takes place on Tuesday 11 July at 15:00 CET in the Commission’s Berlaymont building and will be transmitted by [Europe by Satellite \(EbS\)](#). The signing ceremony is open to audiovisual media. For registration please contact Maria.GLOWACKA@ec.europa.eu. (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioner Hahn at the informal Eastern Partnership dialogues to step up Summit preparations and cooperation on energy efficiency

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations is in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova, today to participate at the informal Eastern Partnership dialogue focused on strengthening cooperation on energy efficiency between the EU and [Eastern Partnership](#) countries. Commissioner met with Ministers of Foreign Affairs this morning and will meet this afternoon with Ministers in charge of energy efficiency from the Eastern Partnership countries – [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#). The dialogue on foreign affairs focussed on the preparation of the upcoming [Eastern Partnership Summit](#) that will take place on 24 November in Brussels and addressed the regional and global challenges for the region. This afternoon’s dialogue, together with representatives of the International Financial Institutions will focus on strengthening cooperation on energy efficiency between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries. Ahead of the mission, Commissioner **Hahn** said: *“The EU will continue to support partner countries in their efforts to become more energy efficient as a top priority, for the benefit of citizens across the region. Developing and implementing cost-effective energy efficiency policy is key for improving energy security, competitiveness, boosting economic growth, creating jobs – and it contributes to preventing climate change. We are focused on delivering concrete results, with a clear programme for cooperation until 2020 and beyond.”* A press release following the meeting (at approximately 17:30) will be published [here](#). Photos and videos of the mission will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Commissioner Navracsics in Lombardy to inaugurate Joint Research Centre’s Atmospheric Observatory [*updated 10/07/17, 13:01]

Today and tomorrow, Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics** will be in Lombardy, Italy, where he will inaugurate the Commission's new Atmospheric Observatory hosted at the Ispra site of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Commission's in-house science and knowledge service. In Ispra, the Commissioner, in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and responsible for the JRC, will meet the President of the Lombardy region, Roberto Maroni, to discuss existing and future collaboration between the region and the JRC. The inauguration of the Atmospheric Observatory – operated from the JRC Air Quality tower – will be an important step in deepening cooperation in scientific areas like environment protection, air quality management and sustainability. The Commissioner will also visit the Italian Fire Brigade Station at the Ispra Site as well as two laboratories: the Interoperability Centre for Electric Vehicles and Smart Grids, and the Advanced Safeguards Measurement, Monitoring and Modeling Laboratory (equipment and training for nuclear inspectors). In Milan, on Tuesday, Commissioner Navracsics will meet Cristina Cappellini, Regional Minister of Culture, and Valentina Aprea, Regional Minister of Education, Vocational education and training and Employment. He will deliver a keynote speech at the occasion of a high level round table with stakeholders on innovation and entrepreneurship education, chaired by Minister Aprea. (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698*)

Corps européen de solidarité: emplois et stages sur la bonne voie

08/07/2017 – Enlargement, external relations and trade / Institutional affairs / Security and defence

G20 leaders met in Hamburg, Germany, on 7-8 July. European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker represented the EU at the summit. The theme of this year's summit was 'shaping an interconnected world'.

Commission approves disbursement of €100 million in assistance to Tunisia

This represents the third and last tranche of the €300 million Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA-I) programme to Tunisia, adopted in [May 2014](#).

The MFA-I programme is part of the EU's comprehensive efforts to help Tunisia respond to the severe economic difficulties it is facing and the persistent political instability in the region. The operation has supported Tunisia's process of economic recovery both by providing concessional funding, and by encouraging the implementation of a number of important policy measures agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Tunisia.

Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"This disbursement, on the back of agreement on a new programme, reaffirms the EU's continued commitment to support Tunisia in its efforts to further its economic and political transition. Notwithstanding an unstable regional context, Tunisia has demonstrated its determination to consolidate a fully-fledged democratic system, and to achieve prosperity for all its citizens. The EU firmly stands with Tunisia and its people."*

This first macro-financial assistance operation to Tunisia will be followed by a [second MFA programme](#) (MFA-II) in the amount of €500 million, also in the form of loans. The new operation was proposed following the terrorist attacks of 2015, which contributed to halting Tunisia's economic recovery. This had a significant impact on the country's balance of payments position and financing needs. The programme was agreed by the Council and the European Parliament on 6 July 2016.

The disbursement of MFA-II funds will again be tied to the implementation of a number of policy conditions mutually agreed upon. The Memorandum of Understanding, which lays down these conditions, was signed in Brussels in April 2017. The pending ratification of the Memorandum by the Tunisian Parliament will pave the way for disbursement under the second operation.

The EU's strategy of assistance to Tunisia also includes budget support programmes under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), of which Tunisia is a major recipient among the Southern Neighbourhood countries, as well as substantial loans from the European Investment Bank.

Background

Macro-Financial Assistance

Macro-Financial Assistance is an exceptional EU crisis response instrument available to the EU's neighbouring partner countries. This instrument is complementary to assistance provided by the IMF. MFA loans are financed through EU borrowing on capital markets. The funds are then on-lent with similar financial terms to the beneficiary countries.

The MFA-I for Tunisia was proposed by the European Commission on 5 December 2013 and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 15 May 2014. A second MFA operation for Tunisia (MFA II) was adopted by the co-legislators on 6 July 2016.

EU-Tunisia relations

Since the revolution of 2011, the EU has continuously and increasingly supported Tunisia in its transition to democracy. EU support to Tunisia has

intensified since 2011, and in light of the persistently unstable regional context the country is facing.

During the Association Council meeting on 11 May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta George Vella, on behalf of High Representative – Vice President Federica Mogherini, reiterated the importance of the cooperation with Tunisia, a Privileged Partner of the EU. The Joint Communication of the EU High Representative and the European Commission of 29 September 2016 on '*Strengthening EU support for Tunisia*', as well as the Council Conclusions of 17 October 2016, confirm the commitment of the EU and its Member States to that effect.

The two MFA operations [supplement](#) the grant funding provided by the EU to Tunisia under the European Neighbourhood Policy and its financial instrument, the European Neighbourhood Instrument. EU grant assistance to Tunisia since the 2011 revolution has so far amounted to over € 1 billion.

The EU's relations with Tunisia also go beyond financial assistance and development funding, through initiatives such as [Creative Europe](#), which aims to supporting cultural diversity and the competitiveness of cultural industries both in European and in the European Neighbourhood.

Further information

More information on [past MFA operations](#)

Detailed information on MFA [for Tunisia](#)

[News story: Ministry of Defence Police awarded a gold banding in the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark](#)

This is the UK's most comprehensive benchmark for workplace gender and race diversity where organisations are assessed on a range of key areas, including:

- career progression
- recruitment
- supplier diversity
- senior management and board representation of ethnic minorities and women

Business in the Community (BITC) said:

Congratulations to Ministry of Defence Police on being awarded gold for both gender and race diversity in the workplace in the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark.

They have demonstrated a strong commitment to creating inclusive workplaces where employees are valued and rewarded for their contribution to the organisation, regardless of gender or race.

I hope other employers will learn from their example and use it to drive real change within their own organisations.



Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark: Gender gold award. All rights reserved

The gold banding marks a significant leap in the force's progress as they were previously awarded a Bronze banding for their 2016 submission.

The Force's Gender Champion, Deputy Chief Constable Andy Adams is delighted with the result and said:

A gold banding recognises our achievements and commitment to diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. This benchmark helps us identify what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Our workforce is the key to our success therefore it is critical we recruit and retain the best people. This accomplishment will support our efforts to further diversify the force and create an

environment where all our staff can contribute to providing the best service.

The benchmark measures age, gender and race workplace diversity. It is a management tool to help organisations evaluate their performance, including peer comparisons, and inform evidence-based decision-making around workplace diversity.

BITC works with organisations to ensure that age, gender, race and wellbeing do not limit an employee's engagement and success in the workplace.