On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by…

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and…

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan.It will be built through concrete achievementswhich first create a de facto solidarity.'Robert Schuman9 May 1950On 25 March 2017,…

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation.Overview…

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27…

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28.Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,…

[ESMA responds to Commission consultation on Fintech](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has sent today its response to the European Commission consultation paper on "Fintech: a more competitive and innovative financial sector", welcoming the initiative to take a stock-take of the EU's Fintech industry.

ESMA sees Fintech as a positive evolution overall as long as business models aim at improving financial consumer experiences and facilitate financial inclusion. In its consultation response, ESMA provides its on intelligence on some of the issues raised, including for:

- **Artificial intelligence and big data analytics for automated advice and businesses** – while ESMA acknowledges potential benefits, it also believes that the use of such technologies may trigger a number of concerns. ESMA stresses that possible technology-driven cost savings should be passed on to consumers. Also, ESMA hopes the Commission will take into account work currently carried out within the Joint Committee and notes that any possible specific legislation in this field should be underpinned by a thorough impact assessment;
- **Crowdfunding** – ESMA reiterates its call for a specific crowdfunding EU-level regime, which would ensure investors across the EU are equally protected and which would enable crowdfunding platforms to operate cross-border based on a common regulatory framework;
- **Reg Tech –** ESMA notes that the use of technology by market participants and regulators to comply with regulatory and supervisory requirements is not new. ESMA recognises the possible additional benefits that Reg Tech could entail for regulators if they use more these technologies in particular for data reporting and analysis;
- **Outsourcing and cloud computing** – ESMA stresses that outsourcing arrangements, including to the cloud, should be implemented in a manner that complies with European legislation, including on data security and data protection rules;
- **Distributed ledger technology –** Following the publication of its report in February 2017, ESMA continues to monitor market developments around DLT and looks into whether a regulatory response may become necessary;
- **Role of regulation and supervisors** – ESMA believes that entities providing the same service should be regulated and supervised on an equal foot. However, Fintech start-ups might benefit from regulatory advice to navigate the applicable legal framework; and
- **Role of industry: standards and interoperability –** ESMA strongly supports the objective of data standardisation and harmonisations.

ESMA's response also includes a survey on regulated investment-based crowdfunding platforms in the European Economic Area (EEA), providing an overview of current activities and trends.

[EU and UNRWA sign new landmark agreement and reaffirm joint comm](#)

On 7 June 2017, Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; Johannes Hahn, Member of the European Commission in charge of European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations; and Pierre Krähenbühl, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), signed a Joint Declaration on EU support to UNRWA for the period 2017-2020. They also

announced the signature of the financial agreement for the EU contribution to the UNRWA Programme Budget for 2017, which covers the Agency's essential services in terms of education, health care, and relief and social services.

In line with the Joint Declaration, Federica Mogherini recognised the essential role of the Agency in the Middle East. *"With its tireless work, UNRWA keeps supporting Palestine refugees, providing education, promoting socio-economic development and stability in the Middle East,"* she said. *"The international support is key to UNRWA: the European Union will keep investing in one of the pillars of its Middle East peace policy."*

The 2017-2020 Joint Declaration strengthens the political nature of the EU-UNRWA partnership and reaffirms the European Union's commitment to promoting the rights of Palestine refugees and supporting the long-term financial stability of the Agency in a context of intensified budgetary constraints and operational challenges.

"The European Union is committed to support UNRWA in further reform efforts, building on the important work underway, to ensure the provision of quality core services to vulnerable Palestine refugees. I am delighted that the EU/UNRWA partnership will from 2017 take an increasingly visible form in support to selected schools and health clinics," said Commissioner Hahn.

Pierre Krähenbühl thanked the European Union for its long-standing commitment: *"For the past four decades, the European Union has stood shoulder to shoulder with UNRWA, both providing the necessary humanitarian assistance in times of crisis and supporting the long-term human development of Palestine refugees,"* he said. *"Today, the European Union's strong and reliable support – both political and financial – continues to be instrumental in mitigating the impact of multiple regional crises. It also strengthens the dignity and preserves hope for millions of Palestine refugees."*

In the Joint Declaration, the European Union committed to continue assisting UNRWA in securing financial resources to enable the Agency to support Palestine refugees. The EU will essentially contribute to the funding of quality education for 500,000 children, primary health care for more than 3.5 million patients and assistance to over 250,000 acutely vulnerable Palestine refugees.

On the margins of the signing ceremony, the European Union and UNRWA announced the disbursement of a EUR 82 million commitment to the UNRWA Programme Budget for 2017. Among others, this will help pay the salaries of 32,000 local UNRWA staff, most of whom are Palestine refugees themselves, and contribute to the running costs of close to 700 UNRWA schools and 140 UNRWA health-care centres.

Background:

Since 1971, the European Union and UNRWA have maintained a strategic partnership governed by the shared objective to support the human development, humanitarian and protection needs of Palestine refugees and

promote stability in the Middle East. Today, the European Union is the largest multilateral provider of international assistance to Palestine refugees. This reliable and predictable support from the European Union enables UNRWA to provide core services to more than 5 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, including quality education for roughly half a million children and primary health care for more than 3.5 million patients.

Collectively, the EU and its Member States are also among the largest contributors to the Agency's humanitarian emergency appeals and projects in response to various crises and specific needs across the region.

In addition to the EUR 82 million EU contribution to the Programme Budget in 2017, the EU does fund *ad hoc* projects to respond to specific needs.

ESMA responds to Commission consultation on Fintech

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has sent today its response to the European Commission consultation paper on "Fintech: a more competitive and innovative financial sector", welcoming the initiative to take a stock-take of the EU's Fintech industry.

ESMA sees Fintech as a positive evolution overall as long as business models aim at improving financial consumer experiences and facilitate financial inclusion. In its consultation response, ESMA provides its on intelligence on some of the issues raised, including for:

- **Artificial intelligence and big data analytics for automated advice and businesses** – while ESMA acknowledges potential benefits, it also believes that the use of such technologies may trigger a number of concerns. ESMA stresses that possible technology-driven cost savings should be passed on to consumers. Also, ESMA hopes the Commission will take into account work currently carried out within the Joint Committee and notes that any possible specific legislation in this field should be underpinned by a thorough impact assessment;
- **Crowdfunding** – ESMA reiterates its call for a specific crowdfunding EU-level regime, which would ensure investors across the EU are equally protected and which would enable crowdfunding platforms to operate cross-border based on a common regulatory framework;
- **Reg Tech –** ESMA notes that the use of technology by market participants

and regulators to comply with regulatory and supervisory requirements is not new. ESMA recognises the possible additional benefits that Reg Tech could entail for regulators if they use more these technologies in particular for data reporting and analysis;

- **Outsourcing and cloud computing** – ESMA stresses that outsourcing arrangements, including to the cloud, should be implemented in a manner that complies with European legislation, including on data security and data protection rules;
- **Distributed ledger technology** – Following the publication of its report in February 2017, ESMA continues to monitor market developments around DLT and looks into whether a regulatory response may become necessary;
- **Role of regulation and supervisors** – ESMA believes that entities providing the same service should be regulated and supervised on an equal foot. However, Fintech start-ups might benefit from regulatory advice to navigate the applicable legal framework; and
- **Role of industry: standards and interoperability** – ESMA strongly supports the objective of data standardisation and harmonisations.

ESMA's response also includes a survey on regulated investment-based crowdfunding platforms in the European Economic Area (EEA), providing an overview of current activities and trends.

[Jeremy Corbyn to take Labour's message of hope for the many not the few across the UK on the final day of campaigning](#)

Jeremy Corbyn will speak at six rallies across England, Scotland and Wales on Wednesday 7 June 2017, the final day before polling day.

On Tuesday, 6 June, Jeremy addressed thousands at six simultaneous events – and watched by 1.5 million people on Facebook live.

On the final day of campaigning, Jeremy will begin the day in Glasgow Central and travel to Weaver Vale, Clwyd West, Watford, Harrow East, until he reaches the final rally in Islington South.

He will set out Labour's plans to transform Britain for the many, not the few, including:

.
No tax rises for 95 percent of people and asking the top 5 percent and big businesses to pay a bit more to fund our schools, hospitals, social care and invest in our economy

.

Protecting pensioners incomes with the triple lock and
guaranteeing winter fuel payments

.

Providing an extra £37 billion for the NHS and £8 billion for
social care

.

Raising the minimum wage to £10 an hour, ending the public sector
pay cap and bringing in workers' rights from day one of any job

.

Scrapping university tuition fees and bringing back education
maintenance grants

.

Cutting class sizes in schools and bringing in free school meals
for all primary school children

.

Building a million new homes

.

Bringing rail, water, parts of the energy system and post back
into public ownership to cut bills and improve in services

**Commenting on Labour's last day of campaigning, Jeremy Corbyn,
Leader of the Labour Party said:**

"I am incredibly proud of Labour's manifesto to transform Britain
for the many not the few.

"On the last day before people go to the polls, we will be
campaigning in towns and cities across England, Scotland and Wales with our
message that change can come.

"Our campaign has been about the kind of country we want to live
in, one in which the wealth creators – that means all of us – share in that
wealth, and everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

"Tomorrow, the British people will be able to vote for a government
that will put an end to the rigged system that benefits the super-rich. Every
vote for Labour will be a vote to put power, wealth and opportunity back in
the
hands of the many, not the few."

Speaking at Glasgow Central, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"Older people have given us so much but they are being held back
by a Conservative government that is refusing to protect their incomes
through
the pensions triple lock, is taking away the winter fuel allowance from

millions of pensioners and demanding people pay for social care with their homes.

"Labour will do things differently. We won't take older people for granted like the Tories, we will treat them with the respect they deserve and have earned. We will guarantee the triple lock, keep the winter fuel allowance
and invest in social care to provide security and dignity for the many not the
few."

Speaking at Weaver Vale, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"Our NHS is the nation's pride and joy, and our greatest achievement but it is under threat from underfunding and privatisation after seven years of the Conservatives. We can't afford another five years of the Tories.

"The election on Thursday is an opportunity to say enough is enough. We have had enough of our NHS being undermined, we've had enough of NHS
services being sold off for profit, and we've had enough of our brilliant NHS staff being treated with contempt.

"Labour will end the Conservatives' plans for more privatisation, give our NHS the funding it needs, and scrap the pay cap and give health workers
the pay rise they have needed for years."

Speaking at Clywd West, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"When police officers warned Theresa May as Home Secretary about the damaging effect of cuts, she accused them of 'scaremongering' and 'crying wolf'. What a disgraceful way to treat those brave officers who keep us safe every day.

"Labour will never take for granted those who keep us safe. We will invest to reverse years of Tory cuts, and employ 10,000 more police officers, 3,000 firefighters, 3,000 prison officers, 1,000 intelligence staff and 500 border guards. We will do whatever it takes to keep our people safe."

Speaking at Watford, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"The Conservatives have held students back for too long, saddling them with massive debts by trebling tuition fees. Labour will lift this cloud of debt – now an average of £45,000 – and scrap tuition fees as part of our plan to transform Britain for the many not the few.

"We believe everyone should have the chance to study, not just those that can afford it, and we will restore the principle that education
is free. No one should be put off from getting an education through a lack of money or fear of debt."

Speaking at Harrow East, Jeremy Corbyn will say:

"No child should go hungry at school. The Conservatives are ending
universal free school meals for five, six and seven-year-olds and giving them a
breakfast that costs 6.8 p – that's barely a thimble of cornflakes.

"By charging VAT on private schools fees, Labour will make sure
all primary school children get a healthy meal at school. We will build a
society for the many not the few, starting with our children eating a healthy
free lunch together."