

Statement by Michel Barnier at the press conference following the General Affairs Council (Art. 50)

Merci Louis.

Bonjour à chacune et chacun d'entre vous et merci pour votre attention.

La réunion d'aujourd'hui est une étape politique importante. Puisque, comme l'a dit Louis Grech – Président efficace de cette réunion – ces directives fixent au nom des 27 mon mandat, ma feuille de route, et confirment la mission qui m'a été confiée par le Président de la Commission puis par les 27 Etats membres réunis il y a quelques semaines au Conseil européen.

C'est un point d'unité extrêmement important pour les négociations, c'est aussi une preuve de détermination et de confiance qui m'oblige et qui m'honore tout au long de la mission que je vais conduire.

Cette unité n'existe pas seulement entre les 27, mais aussi entre les institutions, le Conseil où nous sommes, la Commission et le Parlement européen.

Comme vous le savez, les directives qui ont été adoptées sur la base de la proposition du Collège du 3 mai dernier, portent sur la première phase de cette négociation et uniquement sur cette première phase.

Elles concernent un nombre de sujets limités que nous considérons comme prioritaires, incluant les droits des citoyens et le règlement financier. Ce sont les sujets que nous devons traiter pour aboutir à un retrait ordonné que nous devons organiser, conformément au traité.

Ladies and gentlemen,

From the day the UK decided to leave, the EU has gone through an intense preparatory process.

We are ready and well-prepared:

- We have a clear mandate supported by all 27 Member States.
- We have a solid resolution from the European Parliament.
- We have excellent working relations between all EU institutions.
- We have a negotiation team. All structures are in place.

The new Brexit Council working group will meet tomorrow already. In the course of the next few days we will finalise our negotiating positions on the key subjects for the first phase of the negotiations.

These positions will then be sent to the UK. I expect this to happen very quickly, very quickly, after the elections.

In line with our transparency policy, we will publish our position papers and negotiating documents.

I hope to organise the first round of negotiations as soon as possible, hopefully in the week of 19 June.

I would like to be able to give a first report to the European Council on 22-23 June, exactly one year after the date of the referendum and less than three months after Theresa May's notification letter.

I hope to see our British colleagues at the negotiation table as soon as possible. And look forward to work in a positive atmosphere to find common ground.

Nous aurons besoin évidemment de progrès suffisant sur les sujets de la première phase afin de pouvoir négocier, dans la deuxième phase – le plus vite possible à la fin de cette année ou au début de l'année prochaine – la relation future entre l'Union et le Royaume-Uni.

Et je répète que nous aurons besoin – j'espère que tout le monde a bien compris cela – de progrès suffisant sur cette première phase. Ce sera ma responsabilité comme négociateur de proposer au Conseil – ou de ne pas proposer au Conseil – de constater ces progrès suffisants. J'espère franchement être en situation de pouvoir le faire.

Pourquoi ce séquençage ?

Parce que nous devons apporter des réponses à ceux que la décision britannique de quitter l'Union européenne met en difficulté immédiate et pour lesquels cette décision crée une incertitude juridique pour leur propre vie quotidienne ou familiale :

- Les citoyens européens ou britanniques qui vivent de part et d'autre du *channel* et qui doivent continuer à pouvoir vivre comme avant.
- Les très nombreux porteurs de projets qui comptent sur les fonds européens : ils doivent pouvoir mener leurs projets à bien. Lors de mes visites sur le terrain dans chacun des Etats membres, et dernièrement à Dublin devant les deux chambres du Parlement réunies, les parlementaires nationaux me disent l'inquiétude des Présidents de régions, des maires, des organisations syndicales ou professionnels à propos du maintien de l'engagement financier accordé aux projets auxquels ils se consacrent.
- Et puis évidemment en Irlande, les habitants, les agriculteurs, les entrepreneurs des régions frontalières, en Irlande et en Irlande du nord qui craignent le rétablissement d'une frontière physique. Nous devons les rassurer sur ce point. J'ai vu cette inquiétude sur le terrain, encore une fois vendredi dernier à Monaghan sur la frontière.

Nous devons montrer que nous sommes capables de trouver des réponses sur ces

questions difficiles. C'est en réussissant cette première phase des négociations que nous poserons les bases de la confiance nécessaire pour négocier aussitôt après le nouveau partenariat entre l'Union et le Royaume-Uni.

Plus vite nous obtiendrons un accord sur ces points prioritaires, plus tôt nous pourrons commencer à discuter de cette relation future dans un esprit constructif, ce qui est mon état d'esprit au tout début de cette négociation.

As of today the “European Investigation Order” will help authorities to fight crime and terrorism

For instance, if French judicial authorities are tracking terrorists hidden in Belgium, they can ask their Belgian counterparts to interrogate witnesses or conduct house searches on their behalf. This new tool will simplify and speed up cross-border criminal investigations.

Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *“Criminals and terrorists know no borders. Equipping judicial authorities with the European Investigation Order will help them cooperate effectively to fight organised crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and corruption. It will give judicial authorities access to evidence quickly wherever it is in the EU. I call on all Member States to implement it as quickly as possible to improve our common fight against crime and terrorism. In June we will also discuss with Member States solutions to facilitate the collection and exchange of e-evidence. It is time to fully modernise the tools available to judicial authorities to conduct investigations. “*

The [European Investigation Order](#) is based on mutual recognition, which means that each EU country is obliged to recognise and carry out the request of the other country, as it would do with a decision coming from its own authorities.

The European Investigation Order will bring the following advantages:

- **It creates a single comprehensive instrument with a large scope** – It will replace the existing fragmented legal framework for obtaining evidence. It will cover the whole process of collecting evidence, from the freezing of evidence to the transfer of existing evidence, for Member States participating.
- **It sets strict deadlines for gathering the evidence requested** – Member States have up to 30 days to decide if they accept a request. If

accepted, there is a 90-day deadline to conduct the requested investigative measure. Any delay will be reported to the EU country issuing the investigation order.

- **It limits the reasons for refusing such requests** – The receiving authority can only refuse to execute the order under certain circumstances, e.g. if the request is against the country's fundamental principles of law or harms national security interests.
- **It reduces paperwork by introducing a single standard form** translated into the official language of the executing State for authorities to request help when seeking evidence.
- **It protects the fundamental rights of the defence** – The issuing authorities must assess the necessity and proportionality of the investigative measure requested. A European Investigation Order has to be issued or validated by a judicial authority, and the issuing of an order may be requested by a suspected or accused person, or by a lawyer on his/her behalf in line with the defence rights and with national criminal procedures. Member States must ensure legal remedies equivalent to those available in a similar domestic case and ensure that persons concerned are properly informed of these possibilities.

In particular, the European Investigation Order allows for:

- temporary transfer of persons in custody in order to gather evidence;
- checks on the bank accounts and financial operations of suspected or accused persons;
- covert investigations and intercepting telecommunications;
- measures to preserve evidence.

Traditional investigation tools are not always adapted to the digital world we live in. Judicial authorities need ways to access evidence in the cloud and located in another or somewhere else in the world. The Commission is currently working on solutions to equip judicial authorities with modern investigation tools to simplify their access to e-evidence.

Next steps

Member States had time to implement the European Investigation Order in national legislation by today, 22 May 2017. The European Commission will now analyse the state of the implementation and follow up with Member States in case they have not taken the necessary measures yet.

At the Justice Council on 8 June, the Commission will present solutions to improve cross-border access to e-evidence.

Background

The Directive is based on the **principle of mutual recognition for judicial decisions** when it comes to obtaining evidence for use in criminal proceedings.

This directive applies to all EU countries except Denmark and Ireland, which are not taking part. The United Kingdom decided to participate in the

proposed Directive. It replaces existing EU mutual legal assistance schemes for gathering evidence, notably the [2000 EU Mutual Legal Assistance Convention](#) and [Framework Decision 2003/577/JHA](#) on the freezing of evidence.

On 21 May 2010, seven EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) put forward an initiative for a European Investigation Order. The Directive was adopted in 2014 jointly by the Council and the European Parliament.

For more information

[Directive 2014/41/EU regarding the European Investigation Order in criminal matters](#)

[Criminal justice – recognition of evidence](#)

[Security Union: two years on](#)

Daily News 22 / 05 / 2017

European Semester 2017 Spring Package: Commission issues country-specific recommendations

Today Vice-President **Dombrovskis**, Commissioner **Thyssen** and Commissioner **Moscovici** presented the 2017 [country-specific recommendations](#) (CSRs), spelling out the economic policy guidance for Member States for the coming 12 to 18 months. The European economy has proven resilient in the face of significant challenges; reflected in growth rates of nearly 2 % in both the euro area and the EU in 2016, improving public finances and employment levels at a record of nearly 233 million people. Unemployment is at its lowest level since 2009 and investments exceed pre-crisis levels in some Member States – also helped by the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), the so-called Juncker Plan. Although economic conditions in the euro area and the EU are improving, challenges remain: slow productivity growth and the legacies of the crisis, including disparities within and across countries, continue to weigh on the economy, as does uncertainty stemming mostly from external factors. The Commission therefore calls on Member States to use this window of opportunity to strengthen the fundamentals of their economies by implementing the economic and social priorities identified in common at [European level](#) – boosting investment, pursuing structural reforms and ensuring responsible fiscal policies. Particular attention is paid to the [challenges and priorities identified for the euro area](#). Priorities vary across the EU but further efforts across the board are essential to achieve more inclusive, robust and sustainable growth. *(Full opening remarks will be available on the [rapid database](#). For more information see the [press release](#) and [memo](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914; Enda Mc Namara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)*

Entry into force of the 'European Investigation Order' to help authorities fight crime and terrorism

Today, the ["European Investigation Order"](#) enters into force. It simplifies the work of judicial authorities when they request evidence located in another EU country. For instance, if French judicial authorities are tracking terrorists hidden in Belgium, they can ask their Belgian counterparts to interrogate witnesses or conduct house searches on their behalf. This new tool will simplify and speed up cross-border criminal investigations. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"Criminals and terrorists know no borders. Equipping judicial authorities with the European Investigation Order will help them cooperate effectively to fight organised crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and corruption. It will give judicial authorities access to evidence quickly wherever it is in the EU. I call on all Member States to implement it as quickly as possible to improve our common fight against crime and terrorism. In June we will also discuss with Member States solutions to facilitate the collection and exchange of e-evidence. It is time to fully modernise the tools available to judicial authorities to conduct investigations."* The European Investigation Order sets strict deadlines for its execution, limits on the reasons for refusing such requests and reduces paperwork by introducing a single standard form. It also protects the fundamental rights of the defence. Member States had time to implement it in national legislation by today, 22 May 2017. The European Commission will now analyse the state of the implementation and follow up with Member States in case they have not taken the necessary measures yet. In parallel, the Commission is currently working on solutions to equip judicial authorities with modern investigation tools to simplify their access to e-evidence. This will be further discussed at the Justice Council on 8 June. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Au Caire, la Commission salue l'adoption de l'Agenda Urbain de l'Union pour la Méditerranée

[L'Union pour la Méditerranée](#) (UpM), forum de coopération et de dialogue entre les Etats membres de l'UE et 15 pays au Sud et à l'Est de la Méditerranée, adoptera aujourd'hui au Caire une Déclaration établissant un Agenda Urbain pour la région. Véritable feuille de route pour un développement urbain durable dans le Bassin Méditerranéen, sa méthodologie reprend les principes fondateurs de [l'Agenda Urbain de l'UE](#) dont les autres pays se sont inspirés: [groupes de travail thématiques](#) sur les principaux enjeux urbains (qualité de l'air, logement et inclusion sociale, mobilité durable, entrepreneuriat...), gouvernance partagée et pleine implication des villes, ainsi que des partenaires de la société civile et du secteur privé. L'Agenda Urbain de l'UpM poursuit également [les objectifs de développement durable des Nations Unis d'ici à 2030](#), notamment [l'objectif 11 sur des villes durables](#), ainsi que les objectifs du [Nouvel Agenda Urbain](#) qui en découle, adopté par les Nations Unis en Octobre 2016. Assurant la co-présidence de la réunion ministérielle au Caire, la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a salué

l'adoption de ce nouveau programme de développement urbain: "Les villes et les acteurs locaux, y compris de la sphère privée, connaissent mieux que personnes les problématiques urbaines. Leur participation à l'élaboration des politiques qui les concernent directement ne peut que bénéficier aux millions de personnes qui vivent autour de la Méditerranée. J'espère ainsi que l'on saura tirer profit de l'expérience et des pratiques qui font le succès de l'Agenda Urbain de l'UE." La Déclaration ainsi qu'un communiqué de presse seront bientôt disponibles sur [le site de l'UpM](#) et l'intervention de la Commissaire **Crețu** lors de la réunion ministérielle est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Preparation of the Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, Brussels 22-23 May 2017

Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the European Commission at today's meeting of the Eurogroup. The Eurogroup will discuss the next steps towards concluding the second review of the stability support programme for Greece following the preliminary agreement reached between the institutions and the Greek authorities on a policy package earlier this month. Ministers will discuss the economic situation and outlook for the euro area on the basis of the European Commission's [Spring 2017 Economic Forecast](#). The Commission and the European Central Bank will also debrief ministers on the main findings of the [seventh post-programme surveillance mission to Spain](#). Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. At tomorrow's ECOFIN, Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the Commission. Ministers are expected to agree on a new dispute resolution mechanism for taxation. The new rules would address the problem of double taxation, which currently creates uncertainty and unnecessary costs for many companies. The measures form part of a [wider package of corporate tax reforms](#) proposed by the Commission last October. A political debate on common rules for taxing corporate profits in the EU (the [CCCTB](#)) will also take place on Tuesday. The European Commission will also present its report on addressing national barriers to capital flows, part of its ongoing efforts to build integrated financial markets in the context of the Capital Markets Union. As part of the European Semester, the Council will adopt conclusions on the macroeconomic imbalance procedures on the basis of the in-depth reviews. Finally, Ministers will follow up on the general conclusions drawn by the G20 summit that took place in Washington D.C. on 21-23 April during the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring meetings. Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will participate in the press conference following the ECOFIN session. (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Enda Mc Namara- Tel.: +32 229 64976; Patrick McCullough- Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Commissioners Avramopoulos and Thyssen to launch "Employers for Integration" at second European Dialogue on Skills and Migration

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris

Avramopoulos and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen** will host the second meeting of the European Dialogue on Skills and Migration, at the [European Business Summit](#). The Commissioners will officially launch the “[Employers together for integration](#)” initiative, in the presence of CEOs and other high-level representatives of several companies committed to fostering migrant integration. The initiative aims to promote employers’ efforts across the EU to support the integration of refugees and other migrants in the labour market and beyond. On this occasion Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, said: *“Making integration work is not just a social but an economic imperative. Only a successful integration of all migrants in the EU will allow turning migration into an opportunity, both for them and for our European society and economy. The role and engagement of employers is essential for this.”* Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said: *“The forum is a sign of commitment that we unite forces with employers. Our primary task now is to tackle the challenges and to seize the opportunities of integrating refugees and asylum seekers in the labour market. It can and should be a win-win for all.”* All interested companies can support the initiative and sign up [here](#). The event will be recorded on [EbS](#) and can be followed live on the social media through #EBS2017 and #IntegrationMatters. The European Dialogue on Skills and Migration was launched in 2016 to foster exchanges between the Commission and economic and social partners, in particular employers, on labour migration related issues. For its second edition on 23 May 2017, the Dialogue focuses on the labour market integration of refugees and other legally residing migrants. More information on the Dialogue is available [here](#). See [here](#) for more information on the Commission’s participation in the European Business Summit. (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253)

Climate action: Commissioner Arias Cañete in Berlin for high-level global climate talks

On 22-23 May, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** will be in Berlin to take part in the 8th Petersberg Climate Dialogue, an annual gathering of ministers from all regions of the world for informal discussions in support of the negotiating process of the UN climate change convention. This year’s Dialogue comes at a crucial time right after the [UN climate talks held in Bonn on 8-18 May](#) and ahead of the G7 leaders’ summit to take place in Taormina, Italy, on 26-27 May. This year’s dialogue, entitled “Working together on Solutions”, will address the challenges and opportunities ahead for implementation of the global Paris Agreement on climate change, in terms of both mitigation and adaptation and also sustainable development. The Dialogue will be chaired by Germany and Fiji, president of the upcoming COP23 climate negotiations in November. In the margins of the main meeting, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will meet with members of the High Ambition Coalition – the alliance of developed and developing countries that were instrumental in securing a successful outcome in Paris. He will also meet with China’s Special Representative on Climate Change, Mr Xie Zhenhua and Canada’s Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Ms

Catherine McKenna. *More information on international action on climate change is available [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.:+32 229 52589)*

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

[The choice is stark: Progress or just the same old Tories](#)

What kind of society do you want to live in?

When you strip away all of the bluster and rhetoric around this election, that is ultimately what you're being asked to decide on June 8th.

[Theresa May has thrown her own election campaign into chaos and confusion – Andrew Gwynne](#)

Andrew

Gwynne, Labour's Election Co-ordinator, responding to the unravelling of the Tories' social care policy, said:

"Theresa

May has thrown her own election campaign into chaos and confusion. She is unable to stick to her own manifesto for more than four days. And by failing to

put a figure for a cap on social care costs, she has only added to the uncertainty for millions of older people and their families.

"This

is weak and unstable leadership. You can't trust the Tories – if this is how they handle their own manifesto, how will they cope with the Brexit negotiations?"