

Daily News 19 / 03 / 2018

Cohesion policy invests in better road connection to Cyprus' largest port

€25.5 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) will contribute to finishing the works on a key motorway linking the port of Limassol, an important economic hub and the largest port in Cyprus, to the city of Paphos on the western coast of the island. *"This EU-funded project will ensure smoother transport of passengers and goods from and to the Limassol port, one of the busiest ports in the Mediterranean transit trade, directly contributing to the competitiveness of Cyprus' real economy,"* commented Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu**. In addition to the economic boost, the project will help reduce traffic congestion in the Limassol urban area and increase road safety. The project already benefited from a €50 million EU investment in the 2007-2013 funding period. It financed the construction of a drainage system to prevent the risk of flooding along the road, especially in residential areas, and help protect the environment. More information on EU funds in Cyprus is available on the [Cohesion Open Data Platform](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

EU announces €31 million in humanitarian aid for Latin America and the Caribbean

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** has announced €31 million for humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness for Latin America and the Caribbean on an official visit to Colombia. *"The European Union's commitment to support Latin America is stronger than ever. Here in Colombia, our new EU funding will help on two fronts: addressing the humanitarian consequences of the decades-long conflict in the country and helping reinforce the region's preparedness and response to natural disasters. We have also announced new funding for those affected by the crisis in Venezuela: supporting those in need is a priority for the EU."* said Commissioner **Stylianides**. The Commissioner met with Colombian President Santos in Bogota where he reiterated the EU's commitment to stand side by side in the country's path to peace and prosperity. He also visited areas greatly affected by conflict as well as the border town of Cucuta where there has been an upsurge in those fleeing Venezuela. The new funding is part of an overall humanitarian aid package for the region, with €6 million for Colombia. A further €2 million will go to those people affected by the crisis in Venezuela. The funding comes on top of the EU's other aid programmes and support to the region such as the [EU Trust Fund for Colombia](#). The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

€25 million of loans for cultural and creative SMEs in Belgium

The European Investment Fund has signed guarantee agreements with PMV and

ST'ART SA, two finance providers in Belgium, supported by the new [Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility](#) under the EU's Creative Europe programme. In total, more than 140 SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors are expected to obtain access to finance as a result of this new Guarantee Facility. This agreement was made possible with the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), the Juncker Plan. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, said: *"Culture and the creative sectors build bridges between art, business and technology. They are a catalyst for innovation and foster risk-taking attitudes, which are key in building resilience. Helping these companies scale up and stimulate creativity is high on the European Commission's agenda. Thanks to these two agreements under the Creative Europe programme, we will enable Belgium's creative industries to contribute even more to job creation and economic growth."* You can find the press release [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

New report underlines the key role of education in the inclusion of immigrant students

A new [report](#) published today by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and mandated by the European Commission, confirms the need to promote inclusive education and common values. The report's main findings highlight that immigrant students are struggling to integrate in schools in many Member States, often due to lower socio-economic status and language barriers. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"This report shows that we are on the right track when promoting active citizenship, common values and high quality, inclusive education. The European Commission strives to provide everyone in Europe with real opportunities. This is why our first package of measures to build a European Education Area presented in January included a proposal on promoting inclusive education and common values. And I will shortly present a second package of initiatives including proposals to promote quality in early childhood education and care and in language learning. All these initiatives can help pupils and students overcome disadvantages linked to an immigrant background."* A full press release is available [online](#) (at 12:30). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel. +32 229 56184)

EU supports Gaza and Palestinian people with two ministerial events on 20 March

The EU will host tomorrow 20 March a pledging conference to rally the support of the international community for biggest ever investment project in Gaza: the [Gaza Central Desalination Plant](#). The available water in Gaza is among the lowest in the world and 97% is unfit for human consumption. This project will meet the most urgent water needs providing water for the two million Palestinians living in Gaza, contributing to the environmental sustainability

and economic development of Gaza. The Donor Conference will be opened by the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**. In the afternoon, the EU will also host the annual spring meeting of the international donor coordination group in support of the Palestinian economy, the **Ad Hoc Liaison Committee** (AHLIC). Since 1993 the AHLIC has served as a key policy-level coordination mechanism for financial assistance to the Palestinian people, with a purpose of preserving the vision of a negotiated two-state solution. A press point with High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Søreide will take place ahead of the meeting at approximately 13:15 at the VIP corner. [Here](#) the full media advisory for the AHLIC. Audiovisual coverage for both events will be available on [EBS](#). *(for more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)*

Travel with your digital subscriptions

The EU regulation on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market is going to apply from April 2018. Europeans who have purchased films, series, sports broadcasts, games or e-books online while at home can access them when they travel across the EU (see [MEMO](#)). Taken together with new roaming rules that entered into force last summer, Europeans will from now on be able to travel with their digital subscriptions without fear of high cost or missing their favourite episodes. On Monday, 19 March, Vice-President **Ansip** will participate in an event in the European Parliament together with European broadcasters and MEPs to present the new rules. You can find more information about the event [here](#). The regulation approved by the European Parliament on 14 June 2017 (see [Press Release](#)) is part of a broader package of proposals to [modernise EU copyright legislation](#). This is the first instrument related to copyright to come into force in the context of the [Digital Single Market strategy](#). For more details and examples, see the [factsheet](#) and Commissioner Gabriel's [speech](#) at the Berlin Film Festival. *A [Facebook Chat](#) on the topic of travelling with digital subscriptions will take place tomorrow, Tuesday 20 March at 10:45 with Claire Bury, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)*

Commission seeks mandate from Member States to negotiate a 'Global Pact for the Environment'

The European Commission today asked Council for a mandate to negotiate an international Global Pact for the Environment on behalf of the European Union. The request, in the form of a Recommendation comes after the initiative was presented by the French President, Emmanuel Macron, in September 2017 in the margins of the [United Nations General Assembly in New York](#). The Pact would consolidate in a single international text the fundamental principles of international environmental law, such as the right to an ecologically healthy environment or the duty to take care of the environment. Today's recommendation to the Council aims at ensuring that all Member States of the European Union act together, making sure that European environmental policies and laws are respected. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner

for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *“When it comes to the environment, we’re all in it together. The upcoming UN negotiations on a Global Pact for the Environment present a fresh opportunity to consolidate key environmental principles in one international text. Today’s action will allow European collective leadership in the process.”* The European Union has some of the most advanced and comprehensive environmental policies in the world, and is committed to promoting sustainable development worldwide. As a strong global actor, it has been leading the way in numerous UN processes and negotiations, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate action. For more information [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Antitrust: Commission opens investigation into German grid operator TenneT for limiting cross border electricity capacity with Denmark

The European Commission has opened a formal investigation to assess whether German grid operator TenneT’s limitation of capacity from Western Denmark into Germany breaches EU antitrust rules. The investigation will focus on indications that TenneT may be reducing the amount of transmission capacity available on the electricity interconnector at the border between Western Denmark and Germany. If proven, this behaviour may breach EU antitrust rules, specifically on the abuse of a dominant market position, as it would amount to discrimination against non-German electricity producers and to a segmentation of the Single Market for energy. The Commission has today also sent to TenneT its preliminary assessment setting out in further detail its competition concerns. The Commission and TenneT are engaged in constructive discussions on commitments to address those concerns. The investigation into TenneT complements the Commission’s effort to address the systematic limitation of cross border capacity on electricity interconnectors across the EU. An opening of a formal investigation does not prejudice its outcome. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“Energy should flow freely in Europe so that the electricity produced by a wind mill in one country can reach the consumers in another. Our investigation into TenneT is part of our efforts to ensure that electricity grid operators do not unjustifiably restrict the free flow of electricity between Member States, to the detriment of European energy consumers. Ensuring that electricity interconnectors remain fully open to cross-border trade is essential to achieve our overall objective of an efficient, sustainable and competitive energy market “.* A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [DA](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: Excédent de 3,3 milliards d’euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro, déficit de 20,3 mrd d’euros pour l’UE28 (Janvier 2018)

D’après les premières estimations pour le mois de janvier 2018, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 178,6 milliards d’euros, en hausse de 9,1% par rapport à janvier

2017 (163,7 mrds). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 175,4 mrds d'euros, en hausse de 6,3% par rapport à janvier 2017 (165,0 mrds). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en janvier 2018 un excédent de 3,3 mrds d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre un déficit de 1,4 mrds en janvier 2017. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 159,8 mrds d'euros en janvier 2018, soit +8,8% par rapport à janvier 2017. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

Eurostat: La production dans le secteur de la construction en baisse de 2,2% dans la zone euro, en baisse de 2,1% dans l'UE28 (Janvier 2018 comparé à décembre 2017)

En janvier 2018 par rapport à décembre 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction, corrigée des variations saisonnières, a diminué de 2,2% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 2,1% dans l'UE28, selon les premières estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En décembre 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction avait progressé de 0,7% dans la zone euro et de 1,0% dans l'UE28. En janvier 2018 par rapport à janvier 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction a augmenté de 3,7% dans la zone euro et de 2,5% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Moscovici participates in G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs will be in Buenos Aires, Argentina today and tomorrow (19 and 20 March) to attend the [G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors](#). Topics for discussion include matters relating to tax, trade, infrastructure and the future of work. He will also use the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings with G20 finance ministers on the margins of the meeting. This is the first of several meetings of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in 2018 and provides an opportunity to undertake important preparatory work ahead of the G20 Leaders' Summit in November. On Tuesday, Commissioner **Moscovici** will act as lead speaker during the session on International Tax Challenges with a focus on the digital economy and tax transparency. This comes as the Commission prepares to launch its proposals for the fair and effective taxation of the digital economy later this week. (For more information: Vanessa Mock – +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Commissioner Jourová visits the United States to discuss privacy and law

enforcement issues

From Monday 19 March to Wednesday 21 March, Commissioner for Justice Vera **Jourová**, will visit Washington DC, United States. She will discuss with US Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, the progress made in the implementation of the Privacy Shield and lay the ground for the second annual review of the Shield due in autumn this year. The meeting with Attorney General Jeff Sessions will be dedicated to the EU-US cooperation on criminal matters, in particular to the upcoming legislation on access to electronic evidence in the EU and the Cloud Act in the US. On Wednesday, the Commissioner will give a keynote speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on the topic "Challenges to Democracy in the Digital Age". The [event](#) will be webcast live at 14.30 (CET) and her speech will be published [here](#). The Commissioner will also meet with Congressmen and Senators and participate in various dialogues with the civil society and business representatives. More details in her public calendar [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

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

[Antitrust: Commission opens investigation into German grid operator TenneT for limiting cross border electricity capacity with Denmark](#)

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Energy should flow freely in Europe so that the electricity produced by a wind mill in one country can reach the consumers in another. Our investigation into TenneT is part of our efforts to ensure that electricity grid operators do not unjustifiably restrict the free flow of electricity between Member States, to the detriment of European energy consumers. Ensuring that electricity interconnectors remain fully open to cross-border trade is essential to achieve our overall objective of an efficient, sustainable and competitive energy market"*.

TenneT TSO GmbH (TenneT) is the largest of the four German transmission system operators that manage the high-voltage electricity network in Germany. Transmission system operators transport electricity from generation plants to large industrial electricity consumers and to regional or local electricity distribution operators, which in turn deliver electricity to households and other smaller industrial consumers.

The Commission's antitrust investigation will focus on indications that TenneT may be reducing the amount of transmission capacity available on the electricity interconnector at the border between Western Denmark and Germany.

If proven, this behaviour may breach EU antitrust rules, specifically on the abuse of a dominant market position ([Article 102](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), as it would amount to discrimination against non-German electricity producers and to a segmentation of the Single Market for energy.

The Commission has today also sent to TenneT its preliminary assessment setting out in further detail its competition concerns. The Commission and TenneT are in constructive discussions to design a set of commitments that could address these concerns. Any potential commitments would need to ensure that the maximum capacity of the interconnector between Western Denmark and Germany would be made available to the market, while preserving the security of the German high-voltage electricity network.

An opening by the Commission of a formal investigation does not prejudice its outcome.

Background

TenneT TSO GmbH's high-voltage transmission network stretches across Germany, from Schleswig-Holstein in the North to Bavaria in the South-East. TenneT TSO GmbH is a fully-owned subsidiary of the Dutch company TenneT Holding B.V. which fully controls TenneT TSO B.V., the company managing the high-voltage transmission network in the Netherlands.

Electricity transported on the transmission network is supplied to the distribution networks as well as to large industrial customers directly connected to the transmission network. Electricity transmission networks are interconnected, and therefore electricity transmission system operators also manage interconnections with other networks.

The Commission already addressed the issue of compatibility with EU antitrust rules of limits on cross-border capacity (import/export) in the [Swedish Interconnectors](#) case, where it adopted a decision in April 2010 rendering legally binding commitments offered by Svenska Kraftnät.

The investigation into TenneT complements the Commission's effort to address the systematic limitation of cross border capacity on electricity interconnectors across the EU. The Commission has proposed to update the Electricity Regulation as part of the '[Clean Energy for All Europeans](#)' package which is currently being discussed in Council and Parliament. Among other things, it aims at improving the rules on cross-border capacity in order to maximise the capacity made available and to ensure that transmission system operators do not unnecessarily limit the volume of cross-border capacity.

Procedural background

[Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) prohibits

the abuse of a dominant market position which may affect trade between Member States. The implementation of this provision is defined in the [Antitrust Regulation \(Council Regulation No 1/2003\)](#), which can be applied by the Commission and by the national competition authorities of EU Member States.

Article 11(6) of the Antitrust Regulation provides that the initiation of proceedings by the Commission relieves the competition authorities of the Member States of their competence to also apply EU competition rules to the practices concerned. Article 16(1) of the same Regulation provides that national courts must avoid giving decisions which would conflict with a decision contemplated by the Commission in proceedings it has initiated.

There is no legal deadline for bringing an antitrust investigation to an end. The duration of an investigation depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of the case, the cooperation of the undertakings with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.

More information on the investigation will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [AT.40461](#).

[January 2018 compared with December 2017-Production in construction down by 2.2% in euro area -Down by 2.1% in EU28](#)

In January 2018 compared with December 2017, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector decreased by 2.2% in the **euro area** (EA19) and by 2.1% in the **EU28**, according to first estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In December 2017, production in construction grew by 0.7% in the **euro area** and by 1.0% in the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

[January 2018-Euro area international](#)

trade in goods surplus €3.3 bn-€20.3 bn deficit for EU28

The first estimate for **euro area** (EA19) exports of goods to the rest of the world in January 2018 was €178.6 billion, an increase of 9.1% compared with January 2017 (€163.7 bn). Imports from the rest of the world stood at €175.4 bn, a rise of 6.3% compared with January 2017 (€165.0 bn). As a result, the **euro area** recorded a €3.3 bn surplus in trade in goods with the rest of the world in January 2018, compared with a deficit of €1.4 bn in January 2017. **Intra-euro area** trade rose to €159.8 bn in January 2018, up by 8.8% compared with January 2017.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

News story: Coal Authority Public Board Meeting – 23 March 2018

Our next public board meeting will take place at the Coal Authority offices at 200 Lichfield Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 4RG, starting at 09.45 on Friday 23 March 2018.

The board continues to conduct its business in public, as part of its ongoing commitment to giving stakeholders greater access to information on the activities undertaken by the Coal Authority.

[View the board meeting agenda for 23 March 2018](#)

Exceptional items of a commercially confidential nature will continue to be dealt with by the board in closed session.