

Delivering on commitments: new programmes to protect migrants and support return and reintegration in Africa worth €150 million adopted

The new programmes complement ongoing efforts of the European Union to protect migrants and provide them with sustainable reintegration options in Libya, along the Central Mediterranean Route and in Ethiopia.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"The EU stands by the many African migrants and refugees in need. With these new measures worth over €150 million we continue to save and protect lives and tackle the root causes of migration. Because we also want to support people in improving their lives in their home countries and look into the future with hope. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa allows us to swiftly address the needs of people in despair, and together with our partners, we focus on protecting and supporting return and reintegration of especially vulnerable migrants and refugees."*

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**, affirmed: *"With today's new programmes we are delivering on the commitments made in the framework of the joint [EU-AU-UN Task Force](#) and increase our already significant on-going support to those in need in Libya. We are actively working to save lives, protect people, as well as offering humane alternatives for people to leave the country and return back home. Equally important, we are working on new measures to support Libyan municipalities enhance the delivery of basic social services and improve local governance for both local and migrant population".*

As announced by High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the [Joint Task Force meeting last December](#), an additional €115 million have been made available to support migrants in Libya. This programme will be implemented together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It complements an already existing measure worth €162 million. This new regional programme aims at protecting and evacuating additional 3 800 refugees from Libya, as well as providing protection and voluntary humanitarian return to 15 000 migrants stranded in Libya and support them with reintegration assistance in their countries of origin, as committed by the EU in the framework of the Joint Taskforce. It will also support the resettlement of more than 14 000 people in need of international protection from Niger, Chad, Cameroun and Burkina Faso.

Another measure worth €20 million will be dedicated to improve the assistance provided to vulnerable migrants, particularly young people and women, in transit countries in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin. It will improve access to social and protection services, such as access to health

care, education, security, housing, civil status, legal support or psychosocial assistance.

Through an action worth €15 million, the EU will expand its support to sustainable reintegration for Ethiopian citizens. They will benefit from social and psychosocial assistance at individual and community levels, as well as economic support such as business skills training or access to microcredits. The programme will in addition train relevant regional and local government organisations involved in the reintegration process to better support and empower returnees. This initiative complements the work done under the already existing [Facility on Sustainable and Dignified Return and Reintegration](#).

Background

The [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) was established in 2015 in order to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.

The Joint Initiative on migrant protection and reintegration by the EU and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched already more than a year ago (December 2016) has already provided significant results, by enabling, in particular:

- the rescue of more than 3 600 migrants in the desert;
- the voluntary return of more than 15 800 migrants to their countries of origin;
- the post-arrival assistance and reintegration to more than 23500 migrants returned by the EU-IOM Initiative or with the support of other donors.

The Joint Task Force was set up with the African Union and United Nations on 29 November 2017, committed to accelerate ongoing efforts to assist migrants and refugees in Libya and advance the programme of the International Organisation for Migration for assisted voluntary returns from Libya to countries of origin and the emergency transit mechanism of the UNHCR, to evacuate people in need of international protection.

For more information

[EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[Factsheet: EU Trust Fund for Africa – North Africa Window: Improving migration management in the North of Africa region](#)

[Factsheet: EU Trust Fund for Africa – Support to Libya](#)

[EU – IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration: one year on](#)

[High Level Mission of the Joint AU – EU – UN Taskforce to Tripoli, 23 February 2017.](#)

[Joint Press Release – Meeting of the Joint AU – EU – UN Taskforce to Address](#)

The 2018 Ashdown Prize for Radical Thought

Living in Britain today, we all know the scale of the problems approaching us – and yet it seems that no-one has the courage to argue for the radical solutions we need.

Runaway climate change; an aging population; healthcare and housing both in crisis; the passing of the liberal international order; the commercialisation of our private data; the risks and rewards of automation and AI; one tax system for multinationals and the rich, another for everyone else.

The list goes on.

Unless we take firm action we will bow to these pressures, leaving the young and the vulnerable unable to lead the rich, full lives they deserve.

In the face of such daunting forces, we must find radical new solutions to protect the power of the citizen – over their own lives, over the decisions that affect them, over the world around them.

This is the Liberalism of tomorrow – the Liberalism Britain so badly needs.

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Author:

News story: Over 300 new houses unveiled for troops and their families

The homes have been designed with families in mind. The spacious three and four bedroom homes are built around large green spaces and areas for children to play.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb had a chance to speak with families who live on the new estate to hear their experiences of living in these new homes.

Guto Bebb, Minister for Defence Procurement:

The Defence Estate is where our serving personnel live, work and train. It's not just a place to live, but a community and it is essential that our Armed Forces families can feel at home wherever they are posted.

That is why I am proud to support this new development of first class homes for those who sacrifice the most for our nation.

The completion of these homes caps off a successful period for the Army Basing Programme. Alongside this development, over £1 billion has been invested in Salisbury Plain to accommodate the 4,000 troops and their families returning from Germany by 2019. The MOD will provide over 1,300 new homes, 2,600 bed spaces for single soldiers and nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The developments across Salisbury Plain area under the Army Basing Programme will provide an economic boost to the local economy while providing quality facilities for our armed forces to enable military capability.

Maj Gen Richard Wardlaw OBE, Director Basing and Infrastructure said:

This investment shows our commitment in providing modern first class accommodation for our Service personnel and their families. I hope all living on the Ashdown Estate enjoy their new homes and also benefit from the investment 'behind the wire' providing new working and training facilities.

[State aid: Commission approves €70 million public support scheme for electric buses and charging infrastructure in Germany](#)

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"This scheme is another positive example of how to fight global warming. In line with the EU environmental goals, it will give public transport operators an incentive to invest in low or zero emissions vehicles with the clear objective of reducing CO₂ emissions and improving air quality"*.

The scheme set up by Germany with a budget of €70 million will support public transport operators until the end of 2021, covering the additional costs for:

- the acquisition of **electric and plug-in-hybrid buses** rather than conventional diesel buses; and
- the construction of the **related electric charging infrastructure** required for the operation of these buses.

The Commission considers that this public scheme incentivises bus operators to invest in this type of vehicle and in the necessary charging infrastructure. The measure is expected to increase the number of such buses in Germany and thereby reduce CO₂ and air pollutant emissions, in particular in cities. Furthermore, to qualify for the support, public transport operators must ensure that their electric and plug-in hybrid buses are operated with electricity from renewable sources.

The measure is also in line with the [European Strategy for low-emission mobility](#), and its support for the move towards zero-emission vehicles in cities and for creating a market for such vehicles. Energy efficiency is key to Europe's clean energy transition and a central element for achieving the Paris Agreement pledge to cut emissions in the EU by at least 40% by 2030.

On this basis, the Commission concluded that the contribution to EU environmental goals of the scheme outweighs any potential distortion of competition brought about by the public financing and has approved it under the EU State aid rules. In this respect, Member States have many options on alternative technologies to reduce exhaust emissions such as retrofitting of diesel buses.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.48190 in the [state aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition website](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The [State Aid Weekly e-News](#) lists new publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the Official Journal.

[Daily News 26 / 02 / 2018](#)

Delivering on commitments: EU to adopt new programmes to protect migrants and support return and reintegration in Africa

The European Union is adopting today new programmes under the [European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#), directly following up on the commitments made by the Joint African Union – European Union – United Nations Task Force to address the migrant situation in Libya. The new programmes complement ongoing efforts of the European Union to protect migrants and provide them with sustainable reintegration options in Libya, along the Central Mediterranean Route and in Ethiopia. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *“The EU stands by the many African migrants and refugees in need. With these new measures we continue to save and protect lives and tackle the root causes of migration. Because we*

also want to support people in improving their lives in their home countries and look into the future with hope. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa allows us to swiftly address the needs of people in despair, and together with our partners, we focus on protecting and supporting return and reintegration of especially vulnerable migrants and refugees.” Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**, affirmed: “With today’s new programmes we are delivering on the commitments made in the framework of the joint [EU-AU-UN Task Force](#) and increase our already significant on-going support to those in need in Libya. We are actively working to save lives, protect people, as well as offering humane alternatives for people to leave the country and return back home. Equally important, we are working on new measures to support Libyan municipalities enhance the delivery of basic social services and improve local governance for both local and migrant population”. A [press release will be made available here](#) shortly. (Pour plus d’information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076; Alceo Smerili – Tel. +32 229-64887)

EU maritime strategy in the Atlantic spurs € 6 billion of investments in environmental protection, innovation, connectivity and social inclusion

Half way through the implementation of the [EU’s action plan for a maritime strategy in the Atlantic](#), an [independent study](#) finds it has spurred over 1200 new maritime projects and nearly € 6 billion of investments so far. Most projects target environmental protection and innovation, as well as improved connectivity and social inclusion. Examples include the development of marine renewable energy in France or port facilities in Spain and Ireland, improved tourism infrastructure in Wales, as well as setting up broadband connectivity in remote areas of Scotland or remote health monitoring in Ireland. A number of projects financed by the EU’s action plan help facilitate the clean energy transition, as put forward by the Juncker Commission ‘[Clean Energy for all Europeans](#)’, and contributes to the creation of the [Energy Union](#). Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner responsible for environment, maritime affairs and fisheries, said: “Identifying investment priorities with the involvement of regions and business can help generate sustainable growth in our coastal areas and drive forward the blue economy. With the action plan, the community of stakeholders in the Atlantic Ocean area has grown stronger and better at raising funds for marine and maritime projects”. The Atlantic maritime action plan was launched in 2013 to boost the maritime economy of its five Atlantic States, (Portugal, Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Ireland), and their outermost regions and funding comes from the EU (such as from the European Regional Development Fund, Horizon2020), the European Investment Bank as well as national, regional and private sources. By mid-2017, hundreds of initiatives had cropped up and started contributing to these goals and funding. The European Commission will use the results of the independent study – and of the [public consultation](#) that was held last year – to work with Member States to further improve the plan’s performance between now and 2020. More information [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 2 29-56185, Iris Petsa – Tel.: [+32 229-93321](#))

Des films soutenus par l'Union Européenne ont remporté l'Ours d'Or et deux Ours d'Argent à la Berlinale

Parmi les films primés lors de la 68ème cérémonie des Berlinale Awards samedi dernier, deux films ont été soutenus par le programme [Europe Créative MEDIA](#) de soutien au développement et à la distribution du cinéma européen. [“Touch Me Not”](#) d'Adina Pintilie a reçu l'Ours d'Or du Meilleur Film, tandis que [“Las Herederas” \(The Heiresses\)](#) de Marcelo Martinessi a remporté le Prix Alfred Bauer de l'Ours d'Argent, qui récompense un film qui ouvre de nouvelles perspectives, et l'Ours d'Argent de la Meilleure Actrice pour la paraguayenne Ana Brun. Le premier long métrage d'Adina Pintilie, [“Touch Me Not”](#), a également reçu le prix du meilleur premier long métrage de GWFF ([Société pour l'administration du droit du cinéma et de la télévision](#)). Cette coproduction entre la Roumanie, l'Allemagne, la République tchèque, la Bulgarie et la France a été soutenue par le programme MEDIA dans sa phase de développement. [“Las Herederas” \(The Heiresses\)](#) est une coproduction du Paraguay, de l'Uruguay, de l'Allemagne, du Brésil, de la Norvège et de la France et a été soutenue par MEDIA via les fonds de coproduction internationaux. Au total, 18 films projetés à la Berlinale ont été développés ou distribués avec un soutien de 895 000 euros provenant du programme [Europe Créative MEDIA](#). Le programme et la liste des intervenants au Forum européen du film sont disponibles [ici](#); plus d'informations sur le programme MEDIA sont disponibles [ici](#) et plus de détails sur les films soutenus par l'UE qui ont remporté l'Ours d'Or et deux Ours d'Argent sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

Commission organises expert workshop on how to tackle fake news and disinformation online

Tomorrow, the European Commission will receive around 100 experts coming from academia, journalism and the public sector to discuss future actions to tackle the spread of fake news and disinformation online. The discussions of this colloquium will enrich the Commission's reflection on this complex and global issue. Since last November, the Commission has been [consulting](#) citizens, online platforms, news organisations, researchers and public authorities to gather views on how to define a European approach on this phenomenon. In January a [High Level Expert Group](#) on fake news started its work to help develop a strategy to tackle fake news and disinformation online. The results of the public consultation, the findings of High-Level Group, an upcoming Eurobarometer and the discussions of tomorrow's workshop will feed into the initiatives against fake news, which the Commission will present in spring 2018. The debates of the colloquium will be [webstreamed](#). More information on fake news and disinformation online can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de France

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du «Thym de Provence» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Le «Thym de Provence» est, comme son nom l'indique, cultivé en Provence dans le sud-est de la France, et se caractérise par un arôme et un goût puissant et piquant comparé aux autres thyms dit «doux». Les producteurs de cette herbe ont une longue tradition de cueillette du thym sauvage, toujours pratiquée, et de procédés anciens de séchage, triage et confection de bouquets de thym. La présence du thym en Provence, et les particularités aromatiques et gustatives du «Thym de Provence» sont souvent citées dans la littérature, de Pline l'Ancien au Ier siècle jusqu'à Marcel Pagnol. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1420 produits déjà protégés, dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [DOOR](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (*pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509*)

State aid: Commission approves €70 million public support scheme for electric buses and charging infrastructure in Germany

The European Commission has found German plans to support the purchase of electric buses and related recharging infrastructure by public transport operators to be in line with EU state aid rules. The measure contributes to reducing CO₂ emissions while limiting distortions of competition. The scheme set up by Germany with a budget of €70 million will support public transport operators until the end of 2021, covering the additional costs for: i) the acquisition of **electric and plug-in-hybrid buses** rather than conventional diesel buses; and ii) the construction of the **related electric charging infrastructure** required for the operation of these buses. The Commission considers that it incentivises bus operators to invest in this type of vehicle and in the necessary charging infrastructure. The measure is also in line with the [European Strategy for low-emission mobility](#), and its support for the move towards zero-emission vehicles in cities and for creating a market for such vehicles. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“This scheme is another positive example of how to fight global warming. In line with the EU environmental goals, it will give public transport operators an incentive to invest in low or zero emissions vehicles with the clear objective of reducing CO₂ emissions and improving air quality”*. A full press release is available in [DE](#), [EN](#), [FR](#). (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740*)

State aid: Commission publishes the non-confidential version of the final negative decision concluding that Luxembourg granted undue tax benefits worth around €250 million to Amazon

Today, the Commission has published the non-confidential version of the [final negative decision](#) adopted on 4 October 2017 concluding that Luxembourg granted undue tax benefits to Amazon of around €250 million. This is illegal under EU state aid rules, because it allowed Amazon to pay four times less tax than other local companies subject to the same national tax rules. The decision is available under the case number [SA.38944](#) on the [competition](#) website. (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740*)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of a joint venture by Michelin North America and Sumitomo Corporation of Americas

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Michelin North America, Inc. ("MNAI") and Sumitomo Corporation of Americas ("SCOA"), both of the US. The joint venture will combine MNAI's and SCOA's automotive tyre distribution and installation businesses. It will mainly be active in the US and Mexico. MNAI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Michelin group, manufactures and sells tyres for a wide range of vehicles in the US, Canada and Mexico. SCOA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Corporation, is active in a wide range of industries, including the sale and retail installation of replacement automotive tyres. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of its minimal foreseen activity in the European Economic Area. 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.8803](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Malmström participates in Citizens' dialogue on global trade in Sofia, Bulgaria

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** travels today to Sofia, Bulgaria, where she will take part in a [Citizens' dialogue](#). The session entitled "Global trade – is the EU a leader?" will be for the Commissioner the first occasion this year to engage with the civil society in this format outside Brussels. She will exchange views on the EU's current role on the global trade scene, as well as the recent and upcoming EU trade agreements. The citizen's dialogue will be [broadcasted](#) by a Bulgarian TV channel. The event will be held ahead of the informal [Trade ministers' meeting](#) to be held in Sofia tomorrow, a usual occasion for the Commissioner to consult trade ministers on most important ongoing trade initiatives led by the Commission. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Commissaires Jourová et King participent à la Conférence sur la radicalisation dans les prisons

Demain, mardi 27 février, la Commissaire en charge de la Justice, Consommateurs et Egalité des Genres de l'UE, Věra **Jourová**, ouvrira la [Conférence](#) sur la radicalisation dans les prisons, organisée par la Commission européenne et la Présidence bulgare de l'UE. La conférence rassemble les experts en matière de prison et de probation, et notamment les participants aux projets financés par la Commission dans ce domaine. La Commissaire **Jourová** a déclaré: "Le poison de la radicalisation se répand à travers

l'Europe menant à des attaques terroristes et des attaques contre les valeurs européennes. La propagation de ces idées se fait par deux voies principalement: les prisons et internet. L'action au niveau européen a clairement une valeur ajoutée; d'une part en proposant des solutions européennes contre le contenu terroriste en ligne, et d'autre part, en mobilisant les experts et finançant des projets dans les prisons". Julian **King**, Commissaire en charge de l'union de la sécurité, donnera le discours de clôture de la conférence. Retrouvez l'intégralité du discours en anglais de la Commissaire **Jourová** et du Commissaire **King** [ici](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Ernst Tove: +32 2 298 67 64; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

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