

[Exit from Brexit: campaign in a box](#)

Things are changing. More and more people are waking up to the need for a new vote on the final Brexit deal.

Even Nigel Farage is!

What we all agree on is that Theresa May and her Brexit Conservative government are failing badly on the negotiations with the European Union.

Half the country wants to remain in the EU and the Liberal Democrats have not given up on them.

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Author:

[DH further procures additional seasonal influenza vaccines to meet current demand](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 9) said that it has all along been monitoring the administration and stock of seasonal influenza vaccines (SIVs) under the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP). To meet the current demand, on top of the additional 20 000 doses of SIVs procured in January, the Government has further requested the vaccine suppliers to replenish an additional 24 000 doses of quadrivalent SIVs, which would be available in the coming weeks for vaccination for eligible persons with high risk of influenza infection under the GVP in Hong Kong. Over the past three weeks, the Department has in total procured an additional amount of 44 000 doses of SIVs from the vaccine suppliers.

The DH has been closely liaising with the Hospital Authority (HA) on the demand for influenza vaccines. The DH will continue to closely monitor the demand for influenza vaccine and procure extra vaccines from vaccine suppliers as indicated.

On the supply of vaccines in the local private healthcare sector, the DH has been closely in touch with the vaccine suppliers and received confirmation from one vaccine supplier that extra quantities of quadrivalent SIVs have already been allocated and dispatched to the local private healthcare sector since last Friday and the provision is expected to be completed before the Chinese New Year (CNY). A new batch of vaccines will also arrive in Hong Kong in mid-March.

In addition, another vaccine supplier has also allocated extra quantities of quadrivalent SIVs, which are expected to become available to the local private healthcare sector after the CNY.

“To combat the influenza season, the SIVs used in Hong Kong were manufactured based on the latest recommendations from the World Health Organization for the northern hemisphere vaccine of 2017/18 season. The vaccines are valid up to mid-2018, but not the stock left from the last influenza season as alleged,” the spokesman reiterated.

Before the launch of 2017/18 GVP, the Government has contracted to purchase around 460 000 doses of SIVs, an increase of around 30 000 doses over the 2016/17 procurement.

For details on the GVP and the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme, the public may call the CHP’s hotline (2125 2125) or visit the [Vaccination Schemes page](#).

[News story: New plans for military flexible working become law](#)

The measures, which achieved Royal Assent on Thursday, will allow some military personnel to serve part-time for defined periods.

Consultation within the Armed Forces has found that personnel want more choice over the way they serve when their personal circumstances change, such as having young children, needing to care for elderly relatives, or taking on further training and education.

Personnel will also be able to restrict the amount of time they spend away from their home base and their families.

The plans, which will come into effect in 2019, are part of a range of measures the Armed Forces are implementing to become more modern and diverse.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This change will make it significantly easier for our dedicated Armed Forces to raise their children, care for elderly relatives, or look after an ill family member.

This will ensure we are able to retain and recruit the brightest and the best from all backgrounds to keep Britain safe.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Flexible work is key to retaining our expert personnel who we've invested in during their military career.

Personnel have told us they want more flexibility and we have listened – that's what this Act delivers.

The flexible working measures are designed so that they won't impact the military's ability to deliver its core tasks of defending the country. Applications for part-time service and restricted separation will be assessed against the need of the Armed Forces and personnel would be required to deploy on operations should the need arise, such as in cases of national emergency.

Internal MOD surveys have consistently reported the impact of service on family and personal life is the most important factor that might influence them to leave.

Flexible working will help retain personnel, and a recent survey found that 70% of respondents were supportive of more opportunities for flexible working, with 71% interested in taking up such opportunities in the future.

The measures are part of military modernisation, aiming to retain personnel who have been trained and have gained important experience, particularly on operations, rather than having them leave for civilian life.

96% of UK employers already offer flexible working for some of their employees and research has found that offering flexible working encourages people to stay with their current employer.

[Daily News 09 / 02 / 2018](#)

Commission proposes €2.1 million euro from Globalisation Adjustment Fund for former Goodyear workers in Germany

The European Commission has proposed a €2.1 million contribution from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to help 646 workers in Germany previously employed at the tyre manufacturer Goodyear find new jobs. Marianne **Thyssen**, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, commented: *"EU solidarity is key in tackling the challenge of finding new jobs for many people with the same skills who are being made redundant at the same time, in the same geographical area. The proposed support from the EU's Globalisation Adjustment Fund will help these workers*

to adapt their skills and facilitate their transition to new jobs or help them set up their own enterprises". Germany applied for support from the Globalisation Adjustment Fund following the dismissal of 646 workers at Goodyear, following the complete shutdown of Goodyear's production plant in Philippsburg in Baden-Württemberg. The measures co-financed by the Globalisation Adjustment Fund will help the concerned workers by providing them with job search support, peer groups and workshops, measures to increase their skills, advisory services towards business start-ups, mentoring after reintegration into employment, and training allowances. The total estimated cost of the package is €3.6 million, of which the Globalisation Adjustment Fund would provide €2.1 million. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers for approval. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Juncker Plan reaches €264.3 billion in mobilised investment, with 589,000 SMEs set to benefit from financing

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – the core element of the Investment Plan for Europe – is now expected to trigger €264.3 billion in investments, following the latest transactions to be approved by the European Investment Bank (EIB) Board of Directors. This represents around 84% of the original target: mobilising €315 billion of investment by summer 2018. The deals which will benefit from the EU budget guarantee now amount to €53.2 billion in financing and are located in all 28 Member States. So far, 366 infrastructure and innovation projects – representing financing of €40.4 billion – have been approved under the EFSI. In addition, 370 financing agreements – worth €12.8 billion – have been approved for smaller companies (SMEs). Thanks to these agreements, around 589,000 SMEs are expected to benefit from improved access to financing. As of February, the top five countries ranked in order of EFSI investment triggered, relative to GDP, are Greece, Estonia, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain. (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Emergency calls to 112: more accuracy of caller location

The EU celebrates on Sunday, 11 February the day of the [Single European Emergency Number 112](#). Calling 112 is free of charge in all EU Member States thanks to EU [legislation](#) that was introduced in 1991. As announced last year, emergency calls to 112 are increasingly more effective with the introduction of Advanced Mobile Location (AML) service. Every year, about 300,000 people who call the emergency services cannot describe their location, because they may not know where they are, or are too young or too injured to communicate. In these situations, knowing the exact location of the caller can help emergency services to react quickly and save lives. Calls from mobile phones in countries supporting the Advanced Mobile Location service are expected to send a significantly more accurate caller location information to the

emergency service. This accuracy of Advanced Mobile Location that traces the call within a perimeter of less than 100 meters can help to improve the efficiency and response time of the emergency centres. Seven countries have introduced this service: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania and United Kingdom now deploy the Advanced Mobile Location. More information on the uptake of Advanced Mobile Location service is available [here](#) and in the latest [112 implementation report](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Driving battery production in the EU: 2nd meeting between the Commission and Member States on the European Battery Alliance

On Monday 12 February, the European Commission will host the second high-level meeting on the European Battery Alliance. Political representatives of interested Member States and the European Investment Bank will participate. The meeting builds on the announcements made during the [first meeting in October](#) when representatives of EU industry and the Member States agreed to work together to create a full value chain of batteries in Europe. The meeting aims to flesh out Member States' political commitment to the establishment of large-scale battery cells production capabilities in Europe, to discuss present activities, including emerging industry-led cross-border projects, and to pool and blend support instruments at the national as well as European level. Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič who will host the meeting said: *"The estimated potential of this market in Europe is enormous – as of 2025, could reach €250 billion annually, as our battery cell demand is expected to amount to 200 GWh, and 600 GWh globally. The scale and speed required means that no single actor can do it on its own. The European Battery Alliance is providing an umbrella for these prospective partnerships throughout the value chain."* Batteries represent a key enabler in the context of the Energy Union. Their development and production play a strategic role in the ongoing modernisation of European industry and economy. A press point with Vice President Šefčovič on the outcome of the meeting will take place in the Berlaymont VIP corner [at 16:00 CET](#), and [Europe by Satellite](#) will transmit it live. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

European cooperation on supercomputers accelerating: Cyprus 15th country to join

The European effort to build and deploy the next generation of supercomputers accessible everywhere in Europe and capable of at least 10^{18} calculations per second is moving up a gear. Cyprus became earlier this week the 15th country to participate by signing the [European declaration on high-performance computing](#) (HPC). Supercomputers are at the core of major innovations in many areas such as personalised medicine, energy saving or smart urban planning. They also hold great potential for job creation and competitiveness of the European economy. With this signature, Cyprus announced its intention to join the [EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#), once it will be adopted by the Council of the European Union. This Joint Undertaking is a legal and funding instrument aiming at pooling the European and national resources to build and deploy

across Europe supercomputers that would rank among the world's top three by 2022-2023. The EuroHPC declaration was originally launched in [March 2017](#) during the [Digital Day](#) and signed by France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Since then another eight countries have joined: in addition to Cyprus also [Belgium](#), [Slovenia](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Switzerland](#), [Greece](#), [Croatia](#) and the [Czech Republic](#). Other Member States and countries associated with the [Horizon 2020](#) framework programme are encouraged to participate in the initiative. Read more about European supercomputing initiative [here](#) and in our recent [press release](#), [Q&A](#) and [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Commission reports on progress under global commitments for sustainable urban development

Today at the [World Urban Forum](#) in Malaysia, the Commission takes stock of what was achieved under [the three commitments](#) put forward by the EU and its partners 15 months ago, at the [UN Habitat III conference](#). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said: *“Much like the fight against climate change, the EU is ready to lead the way for clean, safe and prosperous cities around the globe. Europe and its partners are delivering fast on these three concrete commitments, which contribute to shaping the cities of tomorrow.”* Significant progress has been achieved under the three commitments; city-to-city cooperation is now flourishing across continents, important steps have been taken towards a single definition of cities at global level and the EU is showing the world the way to sustainable urban development with the ongoing implementation of its [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). The three commitments contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). A full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger visits Portugal and Austria

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is visiting Portugal and Austria on 9 and 11-12 February, respectively, as part of his tour across EU Member States (#MFFtour27) aimed at gathering views on the future of EU finances and the EU's multiannual budget post-2020 (#EUBudget). In Portugal, the Commissioner will meet with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Augusto Santos Silva, Minister of Infrastructures, Mr Pedro Marques and Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ms Ana Paula Zacarias. Commissioner Oettinger will attend the Conference with CES “What expectations for the future of EU finances?”. He will also meet Prime Minister António Costa and Minister of Finance, Mr Mário Centeno. In Austria, Commissioner Oettinger will meet Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Ms Karin Kneissl, Federal

Minister within the Federal Chancellery for the EU, art, culture and media, Mr Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister of Finance, Mr Hartwig Löger, and Federal Minister for Sustainability, Agriculture and Tourism, Ms Elisabeth Köstinger. He is also meeting the President of the Parliament (Nationalrat), Mr Wolfgang Sobotka, and is participating in a discussion there. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication of its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#), available in all EU languages (also in [Portuguese](#) and [German](#)). Stakeholders' views will be taken into account when preparing the next MFF, to be presented in [May 2018](#). See a speech "[A Budget Matching our Ambitions](#)" given by Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** at the conference "[Shaping our Future](#)" on 8 January 2018. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

EU co-chairs Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq and renews commitment to Iraqi people and government

The European Union will co-chair the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, in Kuwait from 12 to 14 February 2018. The three-day event aims to mobilise additional international support for Iraq at this crucial time in the history of the country, following the territorial defeat of Da'esh in 2017. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** said: "*Iraq is at a crossroads in its history – it is now crucial to act quickly and rebuild the country with the participation of all the components of Iraqi society. The EU will remain a key partner to Iraq and the Iraqi people in reconstruction, stabilisation and longer term sustainable development*". In response to the latest crisis the EU has delivered over €650 million in humanitarian, stabilisation, security and development assistance, as well as in supporting the political reform agenda. On Wednesday 14 February, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will co-chair the high level segment of the Conference, along with the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, UN Secretary General António Guterres and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. She will also participate at the Meeting of the Ministers of the Global Coalition against Da'esh on Thursday 13 February. On Monday 12 February, Commissioner **Stylianides** will chair a session focussing on the important remaining humanitarian and protection priorities in Iraq and on the essential links towards early recovery and mid-longer term assistance. Commissioner **Mimica** will chair a specific session on the governance and accountability aspects of reconstruction. More information and audio-visual coverage will be available on [EbS](#). A factsheet on overall EU support to Iraq can be found [here](#) and on EU actions to counter Da'esh [here](#). (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32229 69140; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +3222992256; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Commissioner Avramopoulos in Albania

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos will be in Tirana, Albania on Sunday and Monday (11 – 12 February) where he will meet with Prime Minister Edi Rama, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati and Minister of Interior Fatmir Xhafaj. Discussions will focus on cooperation on migration, security and border management. A meeting with Archbishop Anastasios is scheduled to take place on Sunday evening. A joint press point with Minister of Interior Xhafaj will take place on Monday around 09:30 CET and will be available on [EBS](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456 ; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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

[Future of Europe: cities and regions want a reinvented European Union based on solidarity, multi-level governance and proximity with the local and regional level](#)

London School of Economics presents key findings of large-scale survey of EU's local and regional authorities

Results of a pan-European study from the London School of Economics (LSE) collecting the views of local and regional authorities and regional parliaments on the future of Europe and the role they wish to play in a renewed Union were presented on 6 February at the meeting of the Committee of the Regions' Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs ([CIVEX](#)). A majority of respondents said that their favoured path for a reformed EU would be through strengthened "multi-level governance" and greater focus on areas relevant to citizens' daily lives rather than treaty changes or new EU ministerial positions. Having more clarity in the distribution of competences between the various levels of governments is, in their views, of greater importance than having more power. A clear majority of cities and regions also insist on cohesion being the number one EU policy priority and that such policy should be available to all EU regions.

As part of the CoR's " [Reflecting on Europe](#) " campaign, the CIVEX commission

chaired by **Barbara Duden (DE/PSE)**, Member of Hamburg City Parliament, has commissioned a pan-European study from the LSE. The exercise consisted in a wide consultation of local and regional authorities' representatives, including CoR members, regional parliaments and associations of local and regional authorities at national and European level. Participants were asked about the main issues currently hampering progresses in the European project as well as identifying ways to address those challenges. The aim was to engage qualified stakeholders in the debate on Europe's future and understand what their perceived role in the EU framework is.

Barbara Duden underlined that *" The outcomes of LSE study show that local and regional authorities could play a unique articulatory role between citizens and EU institutions, being as well laboratories of innovation and democracy. The study feeds in the complex exercise that the CoR has been carrying out in order to bring its contribution to the debate on the future of Europe. Such exercise will result in the adoption of an opinion during the Committee's plenary in October 2018, alongside the second State of the Union's address from the view of cities and regions by the CoR President. "*

The survey was conducted with about 2000 stakeholders. The questionnaire included 17 questions whilst the analysis focussed on three elements, namely governance, policy, representation and communication. Sarah Harrison, Associate professorial Research fellow at the LSE, presented the results of the study and analysis to CIVEX members on 6 February.

According to the main conclusions of the study, a majority of EU's cities and regions:

- consider that the debate on the future of Europe can be an opportunity to reintegrate citizens into the heart of European project, while revitalizing the European project;
- are in favour of reforming the current EU institutional set-up through strengthened multi-level governance rather than new treaties or new EU ministerial positions;
- believe that the strength of local and regional authorities lies in a unique proximity to citizens and the habit of involving a variety of actors in decision making to ensure optimal innovation and consensus;
- consider that cohesion should be the number one policy priority for the EU and that having cohesion available in all regions is of great important for EU future
- point out that that vulnerable categories of citizens should be better taken into account in EU decision-making;

- feel that solidarity should be a crucial focus for a reinvented EU.

The results and analysis of the study will feed into the CoR opinion on the future of Europe, to be adopted by the CoR plenary on 8-10 October 2018.

More information:

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