

Daily News 24 / 01 / 2018

COLLEGE MEETING: Commission publishes guidance on upcoming new data protection rules

The Commission publishes today guidance to facilitate a direct and smooth application of the new [data protection rules](#) across the EU as of 25 May. With just over 100 days left before the application of the new law, the guidance outlines what the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations should still do to bring the preparation to a successful completion. **Andrus Ansip**, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, said: "Our digital future can only be built on trust. Everyone's privacy has to be protected. Strengthened EU data protection rules will become a reality on 25 May. It is a major step forward and we are committed to making it a success for everyone." **Věra Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, added: "*In today's world, the way we handle data will determine to a large extent our economic future and personal safety. We need modern rules to respond to new risks, so we call on EU governments, authorities and businesses to use the remaining time efficiently and fulfil their roles in the preparations for the big day.*" While the new regulation provides for a single set of rules directly applicable in all Member States, it will still require significant adjustments in certain aspects, like amending existing laws by EU governments or setting up the European Data Protection Board by data protection authorities. The guidance recalls the main innovations, opportunities opened up by the new rules, takes stock of the preparatory work already undertaken and outlines the work still ahead of the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations. Today, the Commission also launches a new practical [online tool](#) to help citizens, businesses, in particular SMEs, and other organisations to comply and benefit from the new data protection rules. A [press release](#), [Q&A](#) and [factsheets](#) are available online. Commissioner Jourová's press conference can be followed [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

COLLEGE MEETING: Security Union – Commission follows up on terrorist radicalisation

Today, the European Commission reports on progress made towards an effective and genuine Security Union, including priorities like countering radicalisation, enhancing cybersecurity and protecting public spaces. As security is identified as a key priority in the [Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-19](#), the Commission is also setting out a number of measures to be taken over the coming months to strengthen support to Member States and speed up EU work. The Commission will continue to drive progress ahead of the September informal leaders' meeting on security, announced in the [Leaders' Agenda](#). Commissioner for Home Affairs, Migration and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "*Security remains a key challenge*

for Europe and a number one priority for the EU, as reflected in the EU Institutions' Joint Declaration for 2018-19. We must continue to make use of this strong momentum and deliver concrete results for our security, collectively. We need to do more to keep European citizens safe both offline and online. Fighting terrorist propaganda online remains an area where there is a clear urgency to act. The Commission will act if needed and all options remain on the table." Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** said: "Over the past year we have intensified efforts to close information gaps, fight radicalisation, scale up cyber resilience, and protect our public spaces. This comprehensive approach is bringing results: but we need to keep the momentum going to ensure a genuine, effective Security Union. We must deal with the terrorist problem at its heart – the radicalisation that can drive people in Europe to violent and extremist ideologies. We will continue working with experts, policy makers and internet companies on this vital issue – there is much still to do." A full [press release](#) and [factsheet](#) on the Security Union are available online. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

COLLEGE MEETING: Space policy: Galileo Security Monitoring Centre back-up site moves to Spain

Today the Commission adopted a decision to transfer the back-up site of the Galileo Security Monitoring Centre from the United Kingdom to Spain. The Galileo Security Monitoring Centre (GSMC) is a technical infrastructure which plays a key role in ensuring the security of the EU's satellite navigation programme Galileo, including its Public Regulated Service (PRS). As a consequence of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, the GSMC's back-up site needs to be relocated. Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: "Europe's satellite navigation system Galileo has already been delivering high quality services for over a year now. With today's decision the Commission is taking the necessary operational steps to ensure business continuity and preserve the security of the Galileo system." Six Member States (Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) submitted proposals which the Commission assessed according to objective technical, security, financial and programmatic criteria. On 18 January 2018, representatives of 27 Member States in the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) Programmes Committee voted in favour of the Commission proposal to relocate the back-up site to Spain. With today's formal decision, the Commission is launching the process for the transfer. The new site will become operational in the coming months. [Galileo](#) is a key component of the Commission's [Space Strategy](#), as underlined by Commissioner **Bieńkowska** in her [speech](#) at the [10th Conference on EU Space Policy](#). The strategy focuses on fostering new services, creating business opportunities, promoting Europe's leadership in space and maintaining Europe's strategic autonomy. More details are available in a press release in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [ES](#). Further information on the Galileo programme can be found in several [videos](#) and [publications](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein –

Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Latest developments in Romania: President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans express concerns

President **Juncker** and First Vice-President **Timmermans** have today issued a public [statement](#) on the latest developments in Romania regarding the independence of Romania's judicial system and its capacity to fight corruption. The Commission statement notes, *"The independence of Romania's judicial system and its capacity to fight corruption effectively are essential cornerstones of a strong Romania in the European Union. The irreversibility of the progress achieved so far under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism is an essential condition to phase out the Mechanism...the Government and the Parliament should ensure full transparency and take proper account of consultations in the legislative process on the justice laws... a process in which the judicial independence and the opinion of the judiciary is valued and given due account, also drawing on the opinion of the Venice Commission, is a prerequisite for sustainability of the reforms and an important element in fulfilling the CVM benchmarks...The Commission calls on the Romanian Parliament to rethink the course of action proposed, to open up the debate in line with the Commission's recommendations and to build a broad consensus on the way forward. The Commission reiterates its readiness to cooperate with and support the Romanian authorities in this process...The Commission warns again against backtracking and will look thoroughly at the final amendments to the justice law, the criminal codes and laws on conflict of interest and corruption to determine the impact on efforts to safeguard the independence of the judiciary and combat corruption."* The full statement is available online in [English](#) and [Romanian](#). (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Tim McPhie– Tel. +32 229 58602)

Antitrust: Commission fines Qualcomm €997 million for abuse of dominant market position

The European Commission has fined Qualcomm €997 million for abusing its market dominance in LTE baseband chipsets. Baseband chipsets enable smartphones and tablets to connect to cellular networks and are used both for voice and data transmission. LTE baseband chipsets comply with the 4G Long-Term Evolution (LTE) standard. Today's decision concludes that Qualcomm held a dominant position in the global market for LTEbaseband chipsets over the period investigated (i.e. between at least 2011 and 2016). **Qualcomm has abused this market dominance by** preventing rivals from competing in the market. It did so by making significant payments to a key customer on condition that it would exclusively use Qualcomm chipsets. This is illegal under EU antitrust rules. Commissioner **Margrethe Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Qualcomm illegally shut out rivals from the market for LTE baseband chipsets for over five years, thereby cementing its market dominance. Qualcomm paid billions of US Dollars to a key customer, Apple, so that it would not buy from rivals. These payments were not just reductions in price – they were made on the condition that Apple would exclusively use*

Qualcomm's baseband chipsets in all its iPhones and iPads. This meant that no rival could effectively challenge Qualcomm in this market, no matter how good their products were. Qualcomm's behaviour denied consumers and other companies more choice and innovation – and this in a sector with a huge demand and potential for innovative technologies. This is illegal under EU antitrust rules and why we have taken today's decision.” Commissioner Vestager's press conference can be watched [here](#). A press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Integration of migrants: Commission presents toolkit to help Member States make the best use of EU funds

Today the Commission is publishing a [toolkit](#) to help national and regional authorities design strategies and projects to integrate migrants and identify available EU resources. It will help set up local integration strategies supported by EU resources used in synergy, still in the current 2014-2020 budget period. The toolkit identifies five priorities for holistic and efficient long-term integration strategies: reception; education; employment; housing; and access to public services. It lists the most pressing challenges under these five priorities and suggests adequate support measures, each one of them matched with the right EU fund. Member States and regions have a wide range of EU funding instruments at their disposal that can support different types of projects in the field of integration – from providing language classes and healthcare upon arrival to helping migrants find a job, a home to live in and a place in society. A full press release is available [here](#). The toolkit will be presented this afternoon in the European Economic and Social Committee, in the presence of Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu**. The programme of the event, which is open to the press, is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Slovaquie: une initiative de la Commission aide une région à bas revenus à rattraper son retard

Aujourd'hui la Commission lance [l'Initiative pour les régions accusant un retard](#) à Prešov, une région à bas revenus du Nord-Est de la Slovaquie. Sur le terrain, les experts de la Commission et de la Banque mondiale apporteront un soutien personnalisé à la région pour surmonter les principaux obstacles qui freinent son développement économique (fuite des cerveaux, chômage des jeunes, manque de coopération entre les acteurs privés et les centres de recherche publics dans le domaine de l'innovation) et l'aider à davantage capitaliser sur ses atouts compétitifs. Grâce à ce soutien, la région concevra et mettra en place un plan d'action pour transformer son économie et créer un environnement propice aux investissements d'ici début 2019. La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a déclaré: *“La politique de cohésion fait en sorte qu'aucune région ne soit laissée pour compte. Nous travaillons en étroite collaboration avec les gouvernements et les citoyens*

pour les aider à mener à bien leurs réformes économiques et améliorer leur qualité de vie. L'initiative d'aujourd'hui met ce principe en pratique: la région de Prešov bénéficiera d'un soutien sur mesure pour bâtir une économie solide pour les générations futures." Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

MEDIA programme: EU funded films nominated for Oscars; second EU Film Contest launched

Seven EU-funded films will compete in the 90th Academy Awards ceremony. In the last years, many films supported by the [EU's Creative Europe MEDIA](#) programme brought home Oscars, including *Amour*, *La Grande Bellezza*, *Ida*, *Son of Saul* or *Slumdog Millionaire*. This year once again the EU-funded films are present across the various categories. MEDIA supported film *Call me by your name* directed by Luca Guadagnino is nominated in four categories including "Best Picture" and "Actor in a leading role". Amongst the five EU supported films shortlisted in the "Foreign Language Film" category, two received a nomination: *The Square* and *On Body and Soul* (*Teströl és lélekröl*). MEDIA programme supported the distribution of the Palm d'Or winner *The Square* in 30 countries with over €1 million. The development and distribution of the Berlin Golden Bear winner *On Body and Soul* was supported with €700,000. In the "Animated Feature Film" category, *Loving Vincent* and *The Breadwinner* will compete; while *Revolting Rhymes* is nominated in the "Short Film Animated" category and *Faces Places* (*Visages Villages*) is nominated in the "Documentary" category. By its innovative techniques, *Loving Vincent* is the world's first fully painted feature film. Every one of the 65,000 frames of the film has been hand-painted by 115 professional oil painters to bring the paintings of Van Gogh to life. The Oscars awards ceremony will be held in Hollywood on 4 March 2018. Read the full overview of MEDIA programme related Oscar nominations [here](#). The MEDIA programme launched yesterday additionally the second edition of the [EU Film Contest](#) to promote Europe's unique diversity of films in an accessible way to a wide audience. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said: "*I am proud to see that the MEDIA programme is bearing fruits and European films are so well recognised. Through the EU Film Contest I hope that we will reach many people, among them the next generation of filmmakers, who will continue this tradition and create many new European masterpieces.*" Participants can [test](#) how much they know about European films for a chance to experience the behind the scenes of Cannes Film Festival and discover the European audiovisual industry at work. More information is available [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 Slovénie

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du [«Jajca izpod](#)

[Kamniških planin](#)» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Les «Jajca izpod Kamniških planin» sont des œufs de poules élevées autour des Alpes de Kamnik-Savinja dans le nord de la Slovénie. La réputation de ces oeufs remonte à la fin du XIXe siècle, à l'époque où de nombreuses fermières de Kamnik fournissaient cette denrée appréciée aux cuisines et marchés de Ljubljana. Comparés à d'autres oeufs, les «Jajca izpod Kamniških planin» contiennent au moins deux fois plus d'acides gras oméga-3 grâce aux graines de lin dont se nourrissent les poules pondeuses. 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*)

Mergers: Commission refers the acquisition of Pini Polonia by Smithfield to the Polish competition authority

The European Commission has referred the proposed transaction between Smithfield Foods of the US and Pini Polonia of Poland to the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK) at its request. Both companies are active in the slaughtering of pigs in Poland. On 27 November 2017, Smithfield and Pini Polonia notified the proposed transaction to the Commission. On 15 December 2017, UOKiK requested that the Commission refer to it the assessment of the proposed transaction. The evidence gathered by the Commission confirmed that the proposed transaction would only affect competition as regards the slaughtering of pigs in Poland, where Smithfield and Pini Polonia are currently the two largest market players. The Commission therefore decided to refer the proposed transaction to UOKiK, which will deal with the case under Polish national law. A full press release is available in [PL](#), [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740*)

Concentrations: La Commission autorise la prise de contrôle exclusif d'Emin Leydier par SAICA

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, le projet d'acquisition du contrôle exclusif d'Emin Leydier (France) par SAICA (Espagne). Emin Leydier est un fabricant de matériaux ondulés et de solutions d'emballage, principalement actif en France. SAICA est actif dans la collection et la fourniture de papiers recyclés ainsi que dans la fabrication de matériaux ondulés et emballages, et opère dans plusieurs pays Européens. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne poserait pas de problèmes de concurrence dans la mesure où les entreprises occupent une position limitée sur les marchés où leurs activités se chevauchent. Plus d'informations sont disponibles sur le site [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre d'affaires](#) public, sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8692](#). (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740*)

Eurostat: Le tourisme dans l'UE – Augmentation du nombre de nuitées dans l'UE en 2017... et plus particulièrement en Lettonie, en Slovénie et en Croatie

En 2017, le nombre de nuitées passées dans des établissements d'hébergement touristique dans l'Union européenne (UE) devrait avoir atteint plus de 3,2 milliards, ce qui représente une progression de 5,1% par rapport à 2016. Depuis 2009, le nombre de nuitées passées dans des établissements d'hébergement touristique dans l'UE est en hausse constante; cette évolution est notamment imputable à l'augmentation des nuitées de non-résidents du pays visité. En 2017, l'Espagne (471 millions de nuitées, soit +3,6% par rapport à 2016) est restée en tête, devant la France (431 millions, +6,6%), l'Italie (425 millions, +5,4%) et l'Allemagne (400 millions, +2,7%). Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Eurostat: Third quarter of 2017 – Seasonally adjusted government deficit down to 0.3% of GDP in the euro area – Down to 0.6% of GDP in the EU28

In the third quarter of 2017, the seasonally adjusted general government deficit to GDP ratio stood at 0.3% in the euro area (EA19), a strong decrease compared with 1.0% in the second quarter of 2017. In the EU28, the deficit to GDP ratio stood at 0.6%, a decrease compared with 1.2% in the previous quarter. A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

Third quarter of 2017 compared with second quarter of 2017 – Government debt fell to 88.1% of GDP in euro area – Down to 82.5% of GDP in EU28

At the end of the third quarter of 2017, the government debt to GDP ratio in the euro area (EA19) stood at 88.1%, compared with 89.0% at the end of the second quarter of 2017. In the EU28, the ratio also decreased from 83.3% to 82.5%. Compared with the third quarter of 2016, the government debt to GDP ratio fell in both the euro area (from 89.7% to 88.1%) and the EU28 (from 82.9% to 82.5%). A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

La Commission s'apprête à accueillir le tout premier sommet sur l'éducation pour jeter les bases de l'espace européen de l'éducation

Le tout premier [sommet européen sur l'éducation](#) aura lieu demain à Bruxelles, organisé par le commissaire à l'éducation, la culture, la jeunesse et au sport, Tibor Navracsics. Ce sommet fait suite au [sommet de Göteborg](#) (Suède) de novembre 2017 où la Commission a présenté ses projets en vue de créer un espace européen de l'éducation d'ici à 2025 et au [Conseil européen de décembre](#) où les États membres ont exprimé leur volonté d'accentuer leurs efforts dans le domaine de l'éducation. A la veille de l'événement, Tibor

Navracsics a déclaré: « *L'éducation doit doter nos citoyens, jeunes et moins jeunes, des compétences qui leur permettent de mener des vies épanouissantes et de bâtir des communautés. Bien que l'éducation relève de la responsabilité des États membres, nous devons intensifier notre coopération à l'échelon de l'Union. Nous devons utiliser pleinement le potentiel de l'éducation pour construire des sociétés résilientes, créer un sentiment d'appartenance et permettre aux citoyens de faire l'expérience de l'identité européenne dans toute sa diversité. A cette fin, nous souhaitons stimuler l'apprentissage des langues et faire en sorte que votre diplôme soit reconnu où que vous soyez dans l'Union, que les universités européennes puissent maximiser leur coopération et qu'étudier dans un autre Etat membre devienne plus facile que jamais. Voilà ce que représente un véritable espace européen de l'éducation, et le sommet de demain constitue une mesure concrète en vue de sa réalisation* ». Ce sommet est une occasion importante pour 18 ministres de l'éducation de l'UE, plus de 450 professionnels de l'éducation et représentants de toute l'Europe de se réunir pour [débattre de l'avenir de l'éducation en Europe](#). Ce sommet européen de l'éducation sera diffusé [en ligne](#) et constitue le point de départ d'une série, puisqu'un deuxième suivra à l'automne 2019. Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 229 67083, Joseph Waldstein – Tél .: +32 229 56184)

Informal Justice and Home Affairs Council in Sofia: Commissioners Avramopoulos, Jourová and King to discuss migration, border management and judicial cooperation

Commissioners Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, **Věra Jourová** and Julian **King** will attend an informal meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Sofia, Bulgaria on 25 and 26 January. On Thursday, Commissioners **Avramopoulos** will join Home Affairs Ministers to exchange views on the reform of the Common European Asylum System and, together with Commissioner **King**, on next steps to strengthen the EU's external borders. Over lunch, participants will discuss global efforts to manage migration under the future Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. A press conference is scheduled to take place after the meeting at around 16:00 CET and will be broadcast on [EbS](#). On Friday, Commissioner **Jourová** will update Justice Ministers on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office ([EPP0](#)) and discuss the Brussels IIa [Regulation](#) on cross-border matrimonial matters and parental responsibilities. She will present to ministers the results of the 3rd monitoring of the [Code of Conduct](#) countering illegal online hate speech and the Commission guidance on the General Data Protection Regulation. Finally, they will discuss justice aspects of Artificial Intelligence. A press conference will take place around 13:00 CET and will be [web streamed](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Christian Wigand Tel.: +32 2 29 62253)

Commissioner Neven Mimica in Rome to discuss the future of Italian development and cooperation policy

Today, the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, will be in Rome for the [first National Conference on Development and Cooperation](#). Closer cooperation and joint-up action between the EU and its

Member States is one of the cornerstones of the new [European Consensus on Development](#). Ahead of the visit, Commissioner **Mimica** commented: “A regular dialogue between the European Union and our Member States on development and international cooperation is indispensable to tackle major global challenges. Poverty, gender inequality, migration and mobility, and the protection of human rights are just a few examples where more joint-up action is needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Today we are already working with Italy in 35 developing countries, covering all continents. I want to see us step up this common effort further, to increase our collective impact and to support effectively our partners’ sustainable development strategies.” The two-day event, hosted by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, will see a number of high level attendants, including the President of the Central African Republic, Mr Faustin-Archange Touadera. (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

25 years of the Single Market: Commissioner Bieńkowska participates in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Maastricht

Tomorrow, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** will engage with some 200 students in Maastricht (The Netherlands) to discuss: *What benefits does the Single Market bring to you? What future do Europe’s citizens want for the Single Market? Is the Single Market fit for the digital age and is it sustainable?* The debate takes place against the backdrop of the [debate on the Future of Europe initiated by President Juncker](#) and coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Single Market, one of Europe’s greatest achievements. The Commission has been delivering on the [Single Market Strategy](#) – a roadmap to unlock the full potential of the Single Market and make it the launch pad for European companies to thrive in the global economy (see [press release](#) on the most recent initiative). More broadly, the Commission is acting to further develop the Single Market with a focus on energy markets, the digital single market, fair labour markets, less fragmentation in financial markets, and fighting tax avoidance. The [Citizens’ Dialogue](#) takes place in Maastricht from 11:00 to 12:30 CET and can be watched live [here](#). Join #EUdialogues (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Commissioner Gabriel in Budapest for Regional Digital Summit and Citizens’ Dialogue

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will be in Budapest, Hungary tomorrow to participate in the 2nd [Regional Digital Summit](#) as well as in a [Citizens’ Dialogue on fake news and digital Europe](#). The Citizens’ Dialogue will start at 15:40 CET in the House of the European Union in Budapest. The event will be livestreamed [here](#). The Commissioner will additionally meet Hungary’s Minister for National Economy Mihály Varga and hold a discussion with Secretary of State for European Union Affairs Szabolcs

Takács. The Commissioner will also meet Hungarian stakeholders to discuss illegal content online. At the Regional Digital Summit, Commissioner **Gabriel** will deliver a speech and participate in a ministerial panel discussion on digital economy. At noon, the high-level guests of the Summit will sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of regional urban mobility platform. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

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

[Commission publishes guidance on upcoming new data protection rules](#)

With just over 100 days left before the application of the new law, the guidance outlines what the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations should still do to bring the preparation to a successful completion.

While the new regulation provides for a single set of rules directly applicable in all Member States, it will still require significant adjustments in certain aspects, like amending existing laws by EU governments or setting up the European Data Protection Board by data protection authorities. The guidance recalls the main innovations, opportunities opened up by the new rules, takes stock of the preparatory work already undertaken and outlines the work still ahead of the European Commission, national data protection authorities and national administrations.

Andrus Ansip, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, said: “Our digital future can only be built on trust. Everyone’s privacy has to be protected. Strengthened EU data protection rules will become a reality on 25 May. It is a major step forward and we are committed to making it a success for everyone.”

Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, added: “*In today’s world, the way we handle data will determine to a large extent our economic future and personal safety. We need modern rules to respond to new risks, so we call on EU governments, authorities and businesses to use the remaining time efficiently and fulfil their roles in the preparations for the big day.*”

Commission calls on EU governments and data protection authorities to be ready and provide support

Since the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2016, the Commission has actively engaged with all concerned actors – governments, national authorities, businesses, civil society – to prepare the application

of the new rules.

Preparations are progressing at various speeds across Member States. At this stage, only two of them have already adopted the relevant national legislation. Member States should speed up the adoption of national legislation and make sure these measures are in line with the Regulation. They should also ensure they equip their national authorities with the necessary financial and human resources to guarantee their independence and efficiency.

The Commission is dedicating EUR 1.7 million to fund data protection authorities, but also to train data protection professionals. A further EUR 2 million is available to support national authorities in reaching out to businesses, in particular SMEs.

New online tool supporting practical application

Knowledge of the benefits and opportunities brought by the new rules is not evenly spread. There is in particular a need to step up awareness and accompany compliance efforts for SMEs.

Today, the Commission launches a new practical [online tool](#) to help citizens, businesses, in particular SMEs, and other organisations to comply and benefit from the new data protection rules.

The Commission will also engage in events organised across the Member States to help the stakeholders in their preparation efforts and inform the citizens about the impact of the Regulation.

Recalling the main innovations and new opportunities

The General Data Protection Regulation enables the free flow of data across the Digital Single Market. It will better protect the privacy of Europeans and reinforce trust and security for consumers, while at the same time opening up new opportunities for businesses, especially smaller ones.

The guidance recalls the main elements of the new data protection rules:

- **One set of rules across the continent**, guaranteeing legal certainty for businesses and the same data protection level across the EU for citizens.
- **Same rules apply to all companies offering services in the EU**, even if these companies are based outside the EU.
- **Stronger and new rights for citizens**: the right to information, access and the right to be forgotten are strengthened. A new right to data portability allows citizens to move their data from one company to the other. This will give companies new business opportunities.
- **Stronger protection against data breaches**: a company experiencing a data breach, which put individuals at risk, has to notify the data protection authority within 72 hours.
- **Rules with teeth and deterrent fines**: all data protection authorities will have the power to impose fines for up to EUR 20 million or, in the case of a company, 4% of the worldwide annual turnover.

Next steps

In the run up to 25 May, the Commission will continue to actively support Member States, Data Protection Authorities and businesses to ensure the reform is ready to enter into effect. From May 2018 onward, it will monitor how Member States apply the new rules and take appropriate action as necessary. One year after the Regulation enters into application (2019) the Commission will organise an event to take stock of different stakeholders' experiences of implementing the Regulation. This will also feed into the report the Commission is required to produce by May 2020 on the evaluation and review of the Regulation.

On 6 April 2016, the EU agreed to a major reform of its data protection framework, by adopting the data protection reform package, comprising the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) replacing the twenty years old [Directive](#). On 25 May 2018, the new EU-wide data protection rules will become applicable, two years after its adoption and entry into force.

In January 2017, the Commission proposed to align the rules for electronic communications ([ePrivacy](#)) with the new world-class standards of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation. In September 2017, the Commission proposed a [new set of rules to govern the free flow of non-personal data](#) in the EU. Together with the already existing rules for personal data, the new measures will enable the storage and processing of non-personal data across the Union to boost the competitiveness of European businesses and to modernise public services. Both proposals still need to be agreed by the European Parliament and Member States.

For more information

[Commission guidance](#)

[Q&A](#)

[Online tool](#)

Factsheets:

- [Better rules for European businesses](#)
 - [Better Data Protection rights for European citizens](#)
 - [Next steps before 25 May](#)
 - [General Data Protection Regulation: ensuring its enforcement](#)
 - [Successful application of the Data Protection Reform: a concerted effort](#)
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Slovakia: Commission initiative helps a low-income region catch up

Prešov's GDP is rapidly growing but remains well under the EU and Slovak average. In the framework of the [Catching up initiative](#), Commission and World Bank experts on the ground will provide tailored support to the region, in partnership with the Slovak national authorities.

Thanks to this support, by early 2019 the region should have designed and implemented a solid action plan for economic transformation, including a series of measures for structural reforms in order to improve the local investment environment.

Commissioner for Regional policy Corina Crețu said: *"Cohesion Policy makes sure no region, no one is left behind. We work closely on the ground with governments and citizens to help them carry out reforms that lead to bright economic prospects and improved citizens' quality of life. Today's initiative puts this principle in practice: the Prešov region will benefit from tailor-made support to strengthen its economy for future generations."*

Together, the region and the Commission and World Bank experts will address the challenges that currently hamper Prešov's economic development: brain drain, high unemployment rate, especially for young people, social exclusion, mismatch between the education offer and the needs of the local labour market and a lack of cooperation in the field of innovation between the business sphere, research centres and the regional public university.

At the same time, the action plan will build on the region's competitive assets, in line with the national [smart specialisation strategy](#); a unique position on the border with Poland and Ukraine, important natural and cultural resources and heritage and potential for tourism as well as the presence of a faculty of Manufacturing Technologies.

In addition, regional and EU experts will seek to draw funding from the 10 different Cohesion Policy programmes that the region can access, in order to support this action plan.

Next steps:

The action plan should be ready in March 2018. Its implementation should take place between the spring of 2018 and March 2019.

Background:

In June 2015, the Commission launched a broad [initiative](#) to examine the factors that hold back growth and investment in low-income and low-growth regions in the EU.

Low-growth regions have a GDP per capita of up to 90% of the EU average but a persistent lack of growth, while low-income regions' GDP per head is growing,

but is still below 50% of the EU average. These regions are home to 83 million inhabitants, i.e. 1 out of 6 EU residents.

A Commission [report](#) published in April 2017 detailed the investment needs, growth determinants, macro-economic framework and need for structural reforms in these regions (see [MEMO 17/895](#)).

A first local pilot initiative was launched in two Polish regions in March 2016, and another one in two Romanian regions shortly afterwards. A [first assessment](#) of the Polish experience showed that the initiative was successful, while in Romania, the tailored support led to faster and more efficient use of the available EU funds in the concerned regions.

The initiative is part of the Commission's wider commitment to provide tailored assistance to regions in order to help them improve the way they manage and invest Cohesion Policy funds (see [MEMO 15/4654](#)) and foster more ownership, coordination and prioritisation in regional investment and development strategies.

[How we save our NHS](#)

This Winter's NHS Crisis is one of the worst for a long time – and for me, it's brought one thing into sharp focus.

Our NHS needs urgent investment – and we are the only party that is honest about how we do that.

You can read the plan in full here: libdems.org.uk/health

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Author:

[Press release: North east rivers get fish stocks boost](#)

The Environment Agency has released more than 40,000 young fish into north east rivers during last year to give stocks a boost.

The fish – chub, dace, roach, bream, barbel, tench, grayling, crucian carp and rudd – are just some that were released right across the region during

2017.

And on Monday (22 January), the Environment Agency's north east fisheries team started off the new year by releasing 4,000 chub and 5,000 roach into the River Skerne at Darlington.

All the fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, using funding from rod licence sales.

Last year fish were released into rivers such as the Tees, Wear, Skerne, Gaunless, Browney, Blyth, Pont, Clow Beck and Langley Beck as well as Stillwater fisheries.

The work is part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plan to develop and restore rivers and fisheries in the region, targeting those which have previously been affected by pollution or where barriers affect fish passage.



Paul Frear, Fisheries Officers for the Environment Agency in the north east, said:

Restocking is one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the impact of pollution, improving habitats and removing barriers to fish migration.

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways annually. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity using data from national fish surveys

to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival. Paul added:

By releasing fish into the rivers it helps the process of natural recovery and development. We're pleased to be able to provide these young fish as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers. Restoration and the creation of new fisheries for all people to enjoy is a very important aspect of our work.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.



Fishing is free for children under 16, although those aged between 12 and 16 still need a junior licence. For anyone over 16, a full annual licence costs from just £30, with some short term and concessionary licences also available. You can buy your rod licence online at the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)