

## [Bailout of East Coast rail is undoubtedly good news for the pay packet of Richard Branson – Andy McDonald](#)

**Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary**, responding to Richard Branson's comments defending the Government for the bailout of Virgin's East Coast Rail franchise, said:

"The bailout of the East Coast rail franchise is undoubtedly good news for the pay packet of Richard Branson, but not for taxpayers and passengers who have been short-changed by up to £2 billion.

"This bailout is yet another example of the Tories defending profiteering train companies and the rich elite at the expense of the British public who pay for and use our rail services."

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## [News story: Defence Secretary praises UK efforts as RAF operations against Daesh continue](#)

In his first visit to Iraq, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson praised UK service personnel as British airstrikes continue to wipe out Daesh.

RAF aircraft flew on operations against the terrorist group every day over the Christmas period, striking terrorist compounds, trucks, mortars and pockets of fighters engaged in close quarter, street fighting with Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The dangers we face are changing and are intensifying rapidly. Eliminating the threat from terrorism is critical to our security at home and abroad. Our brave Armed Forces are working tirelessly, day and night, to defeat Daesh after helping to recover significant territory in Iraq.

Only by defeating this evil and barbaric group for good will we reduce the deadly threat they pose to us, which is why we won't

stop until their global network is destroyed.

RAF aircraft have carried out over 1,700 strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria since 2014 and in his first visit to Cyprus, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also met the crews who are playing a vital role in the coalition campaign to totally defeat Daesh.

Fast jets flying out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and remotely piloted Reaper aircraft continue to provide support to the SDF on the ground who are clearing the last remaining pockets of Daesh terrorists in Eastern Syria.

Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers worked closely with coalition partners, offering vital intelligence and close air support throughout December, destroying Daesh targets near Abu Kamal, Abu Hardub and Abu Hammam.

He also visited UK personnel in Taji and Baghdad, as well as Kuwait, praising their efforts as part of the UK's contribution to the global coalition fight Daesh.

In Kuwait, he met with US Lieutenant General Paul Funk the Commanding General of the global coalition as well as Major General Felix Gedney, Deputy Commander-Strategy and Support and the most senior UK officer in the military campaign against Daesh.

They discussed the success of the military campaign in both Iraq and Syria, but also reflected that Daesh have not yet been defeated as pockets of fighters still remain and will continue to pose a threat at home and abroad.

In Baghdad, Mr Williamson met with the Iraqi Defence Minister and visited the Iraqi National Security Agency, commending the efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces and reiterating the UK's commitment to the long-term security and stability of Iraq. This follows from the Prime Minister's pledge in her recent visit to address the evolving threat from Daesh and countering the dispersal of foreign fighters as Daesh is squeezed out of the battlefield in Syria and Iraq

He also visited UK troops stationed in Taji who, along with over 600 British soldiers on the ground in Iraq, are helping to train that country's forces. UK troops have so far helped train around 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces in battle-winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills. In addition to personnel on the ground in Iraq, the UK has provided over 1,400 military personnel from all three Services as part of its three year involvement.

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# Daily News 05 / 01 / 2018

## **Commissioner Stylianides to meet with Ministers of Luxembourg, The Netherlands and Belgium on rescEU, the EU's civil protection proposal**

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** meets today with the Interior Minister of Luxembourg, Mr Dan Kersch. He will subsequently travel to the Netherlands to meet with the Dutch Minister of Justice and Security, Mr Ferdinand Grapperhaus, on 8 January, before meeting the Belgian Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Security and Home Affairs in charge of Urban Policy and State Buildings, Mr Jan Jambon, on 9 January. During the meetings the Commissioner will present and discuss [rescEU](#), the Commission's ambitious new plan to strengthen Europe's ability to deal with natural disasters. A more robust civil protection mechanism will enable the EU to better support all Member States in responding to natural and man-made disasters. The Commission proposal was announced on 23 November 2017 and focuses on two strands of action: 1) Strengthening European response capacities: rescEU and 2) Stepping up disaster prevention and preparedness. The proposal also aims to simplify administrative procedures in order to reduce the time needed to deploy life-saving assistance. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

## **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge Hotel par Starwood Capital Group et Accor-Pannonia Hotels**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge Hotel par Starwood Capital Group et Accor-Pannonia Hotels. Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge Hotel est un hôtel de luxe (5 étoiles) situé à Budapest, Hongrie. Starwood Capital Group est une société d'investissement dont le siège social est situé aux Etats-Unis et dont l'activité principale est l'immobilier international. Accor-Pannonia est une société immatriculée en Hongrie qui détient et gère des hôtels en Hongrie. Elle appartient à un groupe de sociétés contrôlé par Accor S.A situé en France. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8718](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Eurostat: Novembre 2017 comparé à octobre 2017 – Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,6% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28**

En novembre 2017 par rapport à octobre 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union

européenne. En octobre 2017, les prix avaient crû de 0,4% dans les deux zones. En novembre 2017 par rapport à novembre 2016, les prix à la production industrielle ont progressé de 2,8% dans la zone euro et de 3,1% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est en ligne [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

### **Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro en baisse à 1,4%**

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro est estimé à 1,4% en décembre 2017, contre 1,5% en novembre 2017, selon une estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. S'agissant des principales composantes de l'inflation de la zone euro, l'énergie devrait connaître le taux annuel le plus élevé en décembre (3,0%, comparé à 4,7% en novembre), suivie de l'alimentation, alcool & tabac (2,1%, comparé à 2,2% en novembre), des services (1,2%, stable comparé à novembre) et des biens industriels hors énergie (0,5%, comparé à 0,4% en novembre). Un communiqué de presse est en ligne [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Oettinger launches High-Level conference on “Shaping Our Future – Designing the Next MFF”**

Ahead of the College debate on the European Union's long-term budget, the Commissioner for Budget and Human resources, Günther H. **Oettinger** launches a High-Level conference on “Shaping Our Future – Designing the Next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)”, which is hosted by the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), the Commission's in-house think tank on 8 and 9 January. This conference opens the final stretch of preparing the next multi annual financial framework, before the Leaders' informal meeting in February and the Commission's proposal which will be presented in May 2018. The full programme and the list of the high-profile speakers including, from the Commission, President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, Vice President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competition, Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina **Crețu** can be found [here](#). The conference will take place in the Commission's Charlemagne building. Registrations are now closed but accredited journalists can register on the day of the conference and the event can be followed online on [EbS](#). During the conference, you can share your views by using the hashtag #EUBudget on Twitter. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740, Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## [Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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

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## [\*\*November 2017 compared with October 2017 – Industrial producer prices up by 0.6% in both euro area and EU28\*\*](#)

In November 2017, compared with October 2017, industrial producer prices rose by 0.6% in both the **euro area** (EA19) and the **EU28**, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In October 2017, prices increased by 0.4% in both zones.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

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## [\*\*CALENDRIER du 08 au 14 janvier 2018\*\*](#)

*(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)*

### *Déplacements et visites*

#### **Lundi 08 janvier 2018**

President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, Mr Jyrki **Katainen**, Mr Günther **Oettinger** and Ms Corina **Crețu** participate in [“Shaping our future: Designing the next Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)” conference](#), organised by the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), and deliver speeches, in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Borut Pahor, President of Slovenia.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister for EU, Art, Culture and Media of Austria.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Mário Centeno, Minister for Finance of Portugal.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives representatives of the European Chemical Industry

Council (Cefic).

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in The Hague, the Netherlands: meets Mr Ferdinand Grapperhaus, Minister for Justice and Security of the Netherlands.

Ms Věra **Jourová** meets Mr Martin Stropnický, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Budapest, Hungary: delivers a speech at the [Budapest Circus Festival](#): 250th Anniversary event of the birth of the modern circus art in Europe.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Agerskov, Denmark: delivers a keynote speech on the future of the EU at a New Year's Reception of Danish Farmers.

M. Julian **King** à Paris, France: rencontre M. Louis Gautier, Secrétaire Général de la Défense et de la Sécurité nationale (DGDSN); et M. Laurent Nunez, Chef de la Direction Générale de la Sécurité intérieure (DGSI).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Nicolas Brusson, CEO and Co-founder of BlaBlacar.

Mme Mariya **Gabriel** reçoit M. Radu Mihăileanu, Président de la Société Civile des Auteurs-Réalisateurs-Producteurs (l'ARP), M. Pierre Jolivet, Vice-président; et d'autres membres de l'ARP.

## **Mardi 09 janvier 2018**

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Poland, for a working dinner.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Horst Köhler, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** and Mr Jyrki **Katainen**, together receive Mr Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Mr Andrus **Ansip**, Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Ms Věra **Jourová**, Mr Julian **King** and Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receive representatives of online platforms for a roundtable to discuss the actions to fight illegal content online.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives Mr Daniel Ek, CEO and Founder of Spotify.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Robert Ophèle, Chairman of the French Financial Markets Regulator (AMF).

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** attends a working dinner with the Presidency of the European People's Party (EPP) Group in the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** receives Mr Horst Köhler, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** in Stockholm, Sweden: participates in an event on free trade and trade policy organised by Rotary International; visits BabyBjörn AB.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete**, receives Mr Motoo Hayashi, Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, Minister in charge of Industrial Competitiveness, and of the Response to the Economic Impact caused by the Nuclear Accident.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives the CEOs of the renewable energies' sector.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Andrew McDowell, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Alberto Nadal, State Secretary for the Budget and Expenditure of Spain.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** delivers a speech at the second annual Counterterrorism Experts Seminar, in Brussels.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** participates in a Roundtable on 'Tackling illegal content online', in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France: rencontre M. Alexis Kohler, Secrétaire Général de la présidence de la République française.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Horst Köhler, Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** meets Mr Jan Jambon, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Security and Home Affairs, in charge of Urban Policy and State Buildings of Belgium, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in The Hague, the Netherlands: meets Ms Carola Schouten, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands; participates in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) with Ms Carola Schouten; and attends the official opening of the Dutch Federation of Agriculture and Horticulture (LTO Nederland) Office.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives EU Prosecutors to discuss cross-border access to electronic evidence in criminal matters.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives Mr Daniel Ek, CEO and Founder of Spotify.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives experts on the evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Hervé Morin, President of the Association of French Regions.

Mr Julian **King** participates in a meeting with CEOs and high-level representatives of online platforms, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Daniel Ek, CEO and Founder of Spotify.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Christian Van Thillo, Chairman of the European Publishers Council (EPC).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Evan Spiegel, CEO and Founder of SnapChat.

### **Mercredi 10 janvier 2018**

College meeting

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Steven Maijoor, Chair of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA).

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** participates in the 35th anniversary of the European Parliament's resolution supporting independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, co-organised by the European Commission, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** delivers opening remarks at the meeting of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr David Malpass, Undersecretary of Treasury for International Affairs of the United States.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr José Portilla, Director-General of SERNAUTO.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** delivers a speech at the Our Ocean Conference follow-up event organised by the European Parliament Intergroup for Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEARICA): "[What next steps for Our Ocean?](#)", in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** hosts a discussion "Baltic States' call for the freedom heard" at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit M. David Malpass, Sous-secrétaire du Trésor pour les affaires internationales des Etats-Unis.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit M. Ming Zhang, Chef de la Mission de la République populaire de Chine auprès de l'Union européenne.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives Mr Pim van Ballekom, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Bruges, Belgium: attends the National Hungarian Week for a dialogue with citizens at the College of Europe; and meets Mr Jörg Monar, Rector of the College of Europe.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Peter Gašperšič, Minister for Infrastructure of Slovenia.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** receives Mr Torsten Fels, CEO of the Danish labour market pension fund, (PenSam); Ms Marie Foltmann, Director; and Mr Dennis



Kristensen, Chairman.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Philippe Vannier, Chairperson of the European Cyber Security Organisation (ECSO), and Mr Luigi Rebuffi, Secretary General of ECSO.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Paul-Bernhard Kallen, CEO of Hubert Burda Media.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Harald Flemming, Managing Director of the German Association of Private Radio and Telemedia (VPRT), Mr Hans Demmel, Chairman of the Board, and Ms Julia Maier-Hauff, Senior Counsel European Affairs.

### **Jeudi 11 janvier 2018**

President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, together with Members of the College, attends the King of the Belgians' New Year's reception, in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and the College of Commissioners in Sofia, Bulgaria (until 12/01): for the official launch of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union: participates in the opening ceremony of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU; and in the official dinner for the beginning of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** delivers an opening address at the [Connected Smart Cities Conference](#), organised by the European Commission, in Brussels.

### **Vendredi 12 janvier 2018**

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in Sofia, Bulgaria: meets Mr Boyko Borissov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria; Mr Rumen Radev, President of Bulgaria; together with Members of the College, participates in a working lunch with the Bulgarian Government; and meets Ms Tsveta Karayancheva, President of the Bulgarian National Assembly, and the chairs of the National Assembly committees.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** in Tychy, Poland: meets entrepreneurs, local authorities and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

### **Samedi 13 janvier 2018**

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** participates in the opening of the "Lithuanian Freedom run" organised by the Lithuanian community in Brussels.

### **Prévisions du mois de janvier:**

15-18/01 European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg.

22/01 – Foreign Affairs Council, in Brussels.

22/01 – Eurogroup, in Brussels.

23/01 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council, in Brussels.

25-26/01 – Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers, in Sofia, Bulgaria.

29/01 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council, in Brussels.

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