

Daily News 01 / 08 / 2018

Follow-up to the EU-U.S. Joint Statement of 25 July: Imports of U.S. soybeans increase by over 280%

Today the European Commission has published the [latest figures](#) on EU imports of soybeans, showing an increase of 283% in imports of soybeans from the U.S., bringing the EU's total share of imports of U.S. soybeans to 37%, up from 9% one year ago. President Juncker has now put in place a bi-monthly reporting mechanism on the evolution of trade in soybeans from the U.S. to the EU. This is the first concrete follow-up to the [EU-U.S. Joint Statement](#) agreed in Washington between Commission President Juncker and U.S. President Trump. *"The European Union can import more soybeans from the U.S. and this is happening as we speak,"* President Juncker said today. *"This is a win-win situation for European and American citizens."* EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Phil Hogan, said: *"The European Union and the United States have been longstanding partners and there is room to further strengthen our trade relationship. We expressed our willingness to import more soybeans from the United States and this is already happening. European and American farmers have much to gain by working together."* The EU needs soya in Europe as a source of protein to feed our animals, including chicken, pigs and cattle, as well as for milk production. The EU currently imports about 30 million tonnes per year because it cannot produce sufficient quantities. U.S. prices for both soybeans and soymeal are currently the most competitive on the market and therefore a very attractive feed option for European importers and users. A [press release](#) is online with more information. *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: + 32 229 51383)*

Migration: Commission supports improving reception conditions in Greece with extra €37.5 million

Today, the European Commission has awarded an additional €37.5 million in emergency assistance under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to improve reception conditions for migrants in Greece. The Greek authorities will receive €31.1 million to support the provisional services offered to migrants, including: healthcare, interpretation and food, and to improve the infrastructure of the Reception and Identification Centre of Fylakio in the Evros region in Northern Greece. The extra funding will also contribute to the creation of additional accommodation spaces within existing and new sites in mainland Greece. A further €6.4 million has been awarded to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to improve reception conditions and to provide site management support to selected sites on the mainland. Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship said: *"The Commission is doing everything in its power to support all Member States facing migratory pressures – whether that is in the Eastern, Central or Western Mediterranean. Migration is a European challenge and we need a European solution, where no Member State is left alone. Greece has been on the frontline since 2015 and while the situation has greatly improved since the EU-Turkey Statement, we continue to assist the country*

with the challenges it is still facing. The Commission's political, operational and financial support for Greece remains tangible and uninterrupted." Today's funding decision comes on top of more than €1.6 billion of funding support awarded by the Commission since 2015 to address migration challenges in Greece. Under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF), Greece has been awarded €456.5 million in emergency funding, in addition to €561 million already awarded under these funds for the Greek national programme 2014-2020. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

European Public Prosecutor's Office: The Netherlands becomes 21st country to join common efforts to protect EU budget against fraud

Today, the European Commission confirmed the Netherlands as the 21st EU-Member State to join the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) which will play a key role in fighting crimes against the EU budget such as fraud, corruption, money laundering or serious cross-border VAT fraud above €10 million. It will be operational by the end of 2020 in all participating Member States. EU Commissioner for Justice, Gender Equality and Consumers, Vera **Jourová**, said: *"Crime knows no borders, therefore we have to work together to fight it. I welcome the Netherlands today as a new member of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The more EU countries join, the broader the reach of the EPPO, and the more money can be recovered. This is why I urge all remaining Member States to join this essential network in the fight against fraud and corruption, so that we can ensure that every cent of the EU budget is spent to the benefit of our citizens."* Member States that have not yet chosen to participate in the European Public Prosecutor's Office can join at any time after the adoption of the Regulation, if they wish to do so. On 14 June 2018, Malta notified the Commission of its intention to participate. The Commission is examining this notification in line with the procedure set out in Article 331 TFEU and is expected to take a decision shortly. The following EU countries are already participating to the EPPO: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Slovenia. The full press release is available [here](#), and a memo with more information [here](#). (For more information: *Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Commission report shows that Member States are stepping up measures to protect marine environment

A new Commission report shows that Member States have made considerable efforts to address pressures on the marine environment. Despite this, the measures are not yet sufficient to achieve good, healthy and productive seas by 2020. The report published today on the implementation of the EU [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) assesses the measures put in place by Member States to achieve 'good environmental status' by 2020. Under the Directive, EU Member States are required to set up six-year strategies through which they assess their waters. This concept is defined by measures conserving biodiversity and tackling pressures like overfishing, seabed damage, marine litter and contaminants. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment,

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *“Oceans and seas are essential to the well-being of our planet, and we cannot compromise on their protection. This is why the EU has one of the most ambitious marine environment policies in the world. Over the last years, Member States have put a lot of effort to ensure that the seas’ resources are used and managed sustainably, relying a lot on regional cooperation. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, the measures taken so far are not yet sufficient to achieve good, healthy and productive seas by 2020. I therefore urge Member States to take heed of the recommendations made by the Commission to move a step closer to achieving this goal.”* More details [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

State aid: Commission approves German support scheme for electricity self-suppliers using efficient cogeneration

The European Commission has endorsed under EU State aid rules German plans to reduce renewable energy surcharges for electricity users producing their own electricity using highly efficient cogeneration plants. Today’s Commission decision follows an agreement in principle reached on 7 March 2018 between Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, and the German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Peter Altmaier. The German Renewable Energy Act (“Erneuerbare Energien Gesetz” – EEG) provides support for the production of renewable electricity. This support is financed through a surcharge, the ‘EEG-surcharge’, imposed since August 2014 on all electricity users, including users producing their own electricity (self-suppliers). Germany grants reductions to users generating their own electricity by using cogeneration, i.e. combined heat and power (CHP). The Commission has assessed this support measure under EU State aid rules, in particular the [2014 Guidelines on State aid for environmental protection and energy](#), which allow support to cogeneration installations on condition that the support is necessary to trigger the investment and does not lead to overcompensation. The German support scheme takes account of several criteria, which influence the self-supplier’s profitability: the electro-intensity of the sector in which they are active (in line with the [Guidelines](#)), the installed electrical capacity and the number of running hours of the installation. Based on these criteria, the scheme defines several categories of installations and grants an appropriate level of reduction in EEG surcharge. For installations that entered into operation between August 2014 and December 2017, the Commission in 2014 approved an adjustment plan notified by Germany, ensuring an annual increase of the EEG surcharge until 2017. Under the measure approved today a transitional regime will apply for an additional year 2018, before the same surcharge mechanism applies as for all other installations, in line with the [Guidelines](#). On this basis, the Commission concluded that the German support scheme is designed to prevent overcompensation of self-suppliers using highly efficient cogeneration and is in line with EU State aid rules, while any distortion of competition caused by the public support is minimised. A full press release is available in [DE](#), [EN](#) and [FR](#) (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344).

Concentrations: la Commission autorise la création de CA CF – Bankia Consumer

Finance par CA Consumer Finance et Bankia

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, la création d'une entreprise commune de plein exercice, CA CF – Bankia Consumer Finance, basée en Espagne, par CA Consumer Finance S.A. ("CACF"), basée en France, et Bankia S.A., basée en Espagne. L'entreprise commune offrira une gamme de services financiers destinés aux particuliers exclusivement en Espagne, via des canaux de distribution non bancaires, notamment par téléphone, internet ou au sein de magasins tiers. CACF, filiale de Crédit Agricole S.A. (France), est spécialisée dans les crédits à la consommation à travers 19 pays principalement européens. Bankia, filiale de BFA Tenedora de Acciones S.A.U. (Espagne), est un fournisseur de services financiers et assurantiels en Espagne. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché espagnol. 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.8999](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344).

STATEMENTS

Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová ahead of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day on 2 August

"Ahead of the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, we honour the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Roma victims of the Holocaust. Around 500,000 Roma from all over Europe were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators, representing at least a quarter of their total population at that time. The dehumanisation of the Roma and other minorities was the first step in facilitating these heinous crimes. We must remember this today and defend forcefully and passionately our shared European values of equality and non-discrimination. The Roma are forgotten victims of the Holocaust for many Europeans. Remembering their historical persecution reminds us of the need to tackle the challenges which they still face today and which are too often overlooked. Seven decades on, Sinti and Roma still face hatred, violence, discrimination and racism on a daily basis. And many still do not have access to basic necessities such as decent housing, education and healthcare. It is the duty of all EU Member States to ensure effective policies for the remembrance of historical atrocities, to safeguard and preserve historic sites, and to promote education and research in this field. And it is the duty of each and every one of us in the EU to treat our fellow citizens with dignity and respect, in particular the most vulnerable ones in our society." The full statement can be found [online](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on official visit to Asia and Oceania

From 3 to 8 August 2018, Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, will travel to Singapore, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand and Australia. In Singapore on 3-4 August, the High Representative/Vice-President will co-chair the annual Post-Ministerial Conference between the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), just three months after EU Foreign Ministers [decided to enhance EU security cooperation in and with Asia](#). Federica Mogherini will also represent the European Union in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), where discussions are expected to focus on regional and global challenges, including maritime security, nuclear proliferation, climate change, and disaster management. While in Singapore, Federica Mogherini will [deliver a public lecture on *The European Union as a global actor*](#) and will have a number of bilateral meetings with Ministers from both Singapore, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and other ARF members. High Representative Mogherini will visit the Republic of Korea on 5-6 August for meetings, *inter alia*, with Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, with Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha, with whom she will speak to the press, and Minister of Unification Cho Myung-gyun. The European Union continues to work towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, in full coordination with the Korean government and other international partners, as well as for long-lasting peace and reconciliation. Federica Mogherini will then travel to Wellington on 7 August and to Sydney on 8 August, on which further details will follow. Coverage of all parts of the visit will be provided by [EBS](#). The websites of the respective EU Delegations contain more information on EU relations with [Singapore](#), [ASEAN](#), the [Republic of Korea](#), [New Zealand](#) and [Australia](#). Detailed information on the [EU's policy vis-à-vis the DPRK](#) and how it [engages with ASEAN](#) is also available in dedicated factsheets. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Judith Hebekeuser – Tel.: +32 229 52656)

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