

## Daily News 02 / 05 / 2018

### **COLLEGE MEETING: EU budget: Commission proposes a modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends**

The Commission is today proposing a pragmatic, modern, long-term budget for the 2021-2027 period. It is an honest response to today's reality in which Europe is expected to play a greater role in providing security and stability in an unstable world, at a time when Brexit will leave a sizeable gap in our budget. Today's proposal responds to this twin challenge through cuts to expenditure and through fresh resources in equal measure. Funding for the Union's new and main priorities will be maintained or reinforced which inevitably means some cuts in other areas. With the stakes so high, it is time to act responsibly. Today's budget proposal is therefore both focused and realistic. The Commission's proposal aligns the Union's budget to our political priorities – as reflected in the positive agenda set out by President Jean-Claude Juncker in his [State of the Union address](#) on 14 September 2016 and agreed by the EU27 Leaders in Bratislava on 16 September 2016 and in the Rome Declaration of 25 March 2017. By focusing on the areas where the Union is best placed to deliver, it is a budget for a Europe that protects, empowers and defends. President **Jean-Claude Juncker** said: *"Today is an important moment for our Union. The new budget is an opportunity to shape our future as a new, ambitious Union of 27 bound together by solidarity. With today's proposal we have put forward a pragmatic plan for how to do more with less. The economic wind in our sails gives us some breathing space but does not shelter us from having to make savings in some areas. We will ensure sound financial management through the first ever rule of law mechanism. This is what it means to act responsibly with our taxpayers' money. The ball is now in the court of Parliament and Council. I strongly believe we should aim to have agreement before the European Parliament elections next year."* Commissioner **Günther H. Oettinger** in charge of Budget and Human Resources said: *"This budget proposal is truly about EU added value. We invest even more in areas where one single Member State cannot act alone or where it is more efficient to act together – be it research, migration, border control or defence. And we continue to finance traditional – but modernised – policies, such as Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion Policy, because we all benefit from the high standard of our agricultural products and regions catching up economically."* Press release is available [here](#) (all language versions will be available shortly) as well as a detailed [Q&A](#) and a set of [factsheets](#). (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Mina Andeeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

### **State aid: Commission clears HRK 105.6 million in restructuring aid for Croatian shipping company Jadroplov**

The European Commission has found Croatian plans for restructuring the shipping company Jadroplov to be in line with EU State aid rules. Jadroplov, which is based in Split and suffered from reduced volumes and falling prices

in worldwide trade of dry bulk cargo has started carrying out a comprehensive restructuring program aimed at reducing costs, focusing on core business and alleviating the financial pressure stemming from high-indebtedness. Croatia is supporting the process with a subsidy and two State guarantees on bank loans for a total State support amount of HRK 105.6 million (around €14.2 million). The Commission found that Jadroplov's restructuring plan will enable the company to become viable in the long term without continued State support. Jadroplov will make a significant own contribution to the cost of restructuring of HRK 144.9 million (around €19.5 million), in particular by securing financing from the private market and through asset sales. Moreover, the assets sale contributes to reducing the potential distortions of competition brought about by the restructuring aid. The Commission therefore concluded that the restructuring plan was in line with EU State aid rules, in particular the [2014 Rescue and Restructuring Guidelines](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.48121. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Big bang theory: Stephen Hawking's last paper co-authored with EU funded researcher Thomas Hertog**

Professor Hawking's final theory of the origin of the universe, on which he worked in collaboration with Professor Thomas Hertog from KU Leuven, was published in the latest issue of the renowned [Journal of High-Energy Physics](#). The paper, which was submitted for publication before Hawking's death earlier this year, predicts the universe is finite and far simpler than many current theories about the big bang say. In 2014, Professor Hertog was awarded a €2 million grant from the European Research Council (ERC) for his 5 year-long project on holographic quantum cosmology. Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos **Moedas** said: *"I am extremely pleased that yet again EU funded research lives up to its reputation of excellence. The universe might not be infinitely expanding, but the list of successful ERC grantees continues to grow. They dare to put concepts into question and push our knowledge over the edge into new realms."* Modern theories predict that our local universe came into existence, when the overall universe expanded after the big bang. It is widely believed that some regions of the universe then never stopped growing, others did. In their new paper, Hawking and Hertog say that this concept of eternal inflation is wrong. They predict that our universe is not a fractal structure, but reasonably smooth and what's more finite. Their results, if confirmed by further work, would imply a significantly smaller range of possible universes. Professor Hertog said: *"This kind of work is ambitious, high-risk, and lies entirely in the realm of the curiosity-driven, fundamental sciences. It fits in very well with the goals and the vision of the ERC. I used my ERC grant to set up a kind of school in theoretical cosmology which has proven to be a fertile and stimulating research environment to explore new ideas."* More information is available in an [ERC press release](#) and an [ERC interview](#) with Professor Hertog. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von

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

**Eurostat: Le taux de chômage à 8,5% dans la zone euro, à 7,1% dans l'UE28 (Mars 2018)**

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 8,5% en mars 2018, stable par rapport à février 2018 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 9,4% de mars 2017. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis décembre 2008. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 7,1% en mars 2018, stable par rapport à février 2018 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 7,9% de mars 2017. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis septembre 2008. Eurostat estime qu'en mars 2018, 17,481 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient au chômage dans l'UE28, dont 13,824 millions dans la zone euro. Par rapport à février 2018, le nombre de chômeurs a diminué de 94 000 dans l'UE28 et de 83 000 dans la zone euro. Comparé à mars 2017, le chômage a baissé de 1,930 million de personnes dans l'UE28 et de 1,414 million dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

**Eurostat: Estimation rapide préliminaire pour le premier trimestre 2018, le PIB en hausse de 0,4% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28, +2,5% et +2,4% respectivement par rapport au premier trimestre 2017**

Au cours du premier trimestre 2018, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l'estimation rapide préliminaire publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au cours du quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait progressé de 0,7% dans la zone euro et de 0,6% dans l'UE28. En comparaison avec le même trimestre de l'année précédente, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a enregistré une hausse de 2,5% dans la zone euro et de 2,4% dans l'UE28 au premier trimestre 2018, après respectivement +2,8% et +2,7% au quatrième trimestre 2017. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055)

**Tackling illegal content online: Commission launches a public consultation [updated on 02/05/2018 at 16:58]**

Following the Commission's [Recommendation](#) presented in March to further step up the work against all forms of illegal content ranging from terrorist content, incitement to hatred and violence, child sexual abuse material, counterfeit products and copyright infringement, the European Commission launched an open [public consultation](#). All respondents are asked to share their experience and challenges faced with the spread and detection of illegal content online. The consultation aims at collecting information on perceptions and various opinions in regard to the effectiveness of voluntary measures to tackle illegal content online. The consultation also aims to gather information and views concerning the need for additional steps from the Commission in this area. The consultation targets specifically citizens, but also online platforms and other online hosting service providers, as well

as organisations who detect and flag illegal content, digital rights organisations, competent authorities, law enforcement bodies, national governments and academia. On 28 September 2017, the Commission adopted a [Communication](#) with guidance on the responsibilities of online service providers regarding illegal content online, followed by a [Recommendation](#) on measures to effectively tackle illegal content online on 1 March 2018. The Commission has published an [inception impact assessment](#) and is collecting evidence on the effectiveness of the voluntary measures and the scale of the problem. The Commission will explore before the end of 2018 possible further measures to improve the effectiveness of combating illegal content online. A factsheet is available [here](#). The public consultation on the illegal content online will be open until 25 June and can be accessed [here](#). (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698*)

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