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Commission offers further support to European farmers dealing with droughts

The European Commission is standing by Europe's farmers this summer, as they grapple with the difficulties of extreme droughts. Farmers will be able to receive their direct and rural development payments in advance and will be granted more flexibility to use land that would normally not be used for production, in order to feed their animals. Commissioner for agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, said: *"I am very concerned about these prolonged climatic developments. I have been in contact with a number of ministers from affected countries to discuss the situation and get up-to-date assessments of its impact. The Commission, as always, is ready to support farmers affected by drought using a number of instruments, including higher advance payments, derogations from greening requirements and state aid. The Common Agricultural Policy already provides a safety net for farmers who have to deal with unpredictable events. I am encouraging all Member States to look into all possible actions and measures provided for in our legislation."* The ongoing and prolonged drought situation in several EU countries is having a significant impact on the production of arable crops, as well as animal feed which could also have an impact on animal welfare. In addition, the reduction in the level of animal feed is having a particular impact on the income of livestock farmers, as this will increase their input costs if there is a shortage of fodder later in the year. In addition to higher advance payments and derogations from specific greening requirements, existing support under the CAP can be used, including state aid, de minimis, rural development investments and risk management instruments. The Commission is in contact with all Member States to receive by 31 August updated information of the impact of the spring and summer drought on their farmers. A press release is [online](#) with further information. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Clémence Robin –Tel.: +32 229 52509)

"Prix Nobel de mathématiques": la Commission félicite Alessio Figalli, lauréat de la médaille Fields 2018 soutenu par l'Union européenne

Alessio Figalli, bénéficiaire d'une bourse du Conseil européen de la recherche ([ERC](#)) et basé à l'École polytechnique fédérale (EHT) de Zurich (Suisse), a reçu hier une des quatre médailles Fields, qui récompensent les mathématiciens âgés de moins de quarante ans les plus méritants. Cette médaille prestigieuse lui a été décernée pour ses travaux sur les équations différentielles partielles et le calcul des variations. L'un des problèmes sur lequel ce chercheur travaille est la théorie du transport optimal – une étude sur la répartition idéale des ressources dans le transport quotidien, un sujet qui intéresse les mathématiciens depuis l'époque de Napoléon. Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire en charge de la recherche, de la science et de l'innovation, a félicité le chercheur et a commenté: *"Ce prix confirme que le Conseil européen de la recherche, qui promeut l'excellence scientifique grâce au soutien offert par Horizon 2020, attire irrésistiblement les grands*

talents scientifiques". Alessio Figalli a reçu une [bourse "Consolidator" de l'ERC](#), conçue pour les chercheurs déjà expérimentés, en 2017. Outre ce mathématicien italien, un chercheur britannique, d'origine iranienne, Caucher Birkar, et l'Allemand Peter Scholze ont également reçu chacun une médaille Fields pour leurs travaux. Un communiqué de presse de l'ERC est disponible [ici](#) et une interview du lauréat italien [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tél.: +32 229 80100; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229 80379)

Water for Gaza: EU switches on the biggest solar energy field to improve dire drinking water conditions in Gaza

The EU has completed the biggest photovoltaic solar field in Gaza. It will provide 0.5 Megawatts of electricity per day to fuel the EU-funded [Southern Gaza Desalination Plant](#), which currently provides drinking water to 75,000 inhabitants in the Khan Younis and Rafah governorates. With the new energy field and new investments foreseen the Desalination Plant will eventually reach 250,000 people in Southern Gaza by 2020. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, commented: *"Limited energy supplies in Gaza are one of the main challenges when improving access to safe and drinkable water to the local population. The photovoltaic solar field is essential to respond to the urgent water needs in Gaza and create dignified living conditions for its people, thus mitigating tensions in a highly conflict sensitive area."* The full [press release](#) is available online. (for more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

The EU mobilises €6 million for disaster preparedness in South and Southeast Asia

As Southeast Asia is faced with the yearly monsoon season and its potentially devastating effects, the European Commission has released €6 million for disaster preparedness initiatives in the region. This funding comes on top of the €7 million announced in May to support Bangladesh scale up preparedness measures for the rainy season. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** said: *"From cyclones to floods, from landslides to droughts and earthquakes: natural hazards pose a recurring threat to the Southeast Asian countries, and the current monsoon rains battering the region are a sobering reminder. The EU believes in empowering communities to be better prepared in the face of natural disasters, and especially the most vulnerable, who are often the ones bearing the hardest brunt. Today's assistance will strengthen the disaster preparedness initiatives already in place across the region, while improving the livelihoods and resilience of those most affected."* From the funding announced today, €2 million will support **Myanmar** to build up its response system against earthquakes and tsunamis; **Nepal** will be assisted with an additional €2 million targeting the most vulnerable communities in earthquake-affected areas; €1 million will support the implementation of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building initiatives in the **Philippines**, and €1 million will focus on multi-country initiatives to strengthen response capacities at the regional level across Southeast Asia, including in **Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam**. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela –

Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Eurostat: Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28

En juin 2018 par rapport à mai 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En mai 2018, les prix avaient augmenté de 0,8% dans la zone euro et de 1,1% dans l'UE28. En juin 2018 par rapport à juin 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 3,6% dans la zone euro et de 4,4% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse peut être trouvé [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tél.: +32 229 80100; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229 80379)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and Schwermetall

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and of Schwermetall under the EU Merger Regulation. Wieland and Aurubis Rolled Products both produce rolled copper products and copper alloys. Rolled copper products are used as an input in the manufacturing of many products, including transformers, semiconductors, heat exchangers and roofing materials. In addition, Aurubis Rolled Products produces billets, an input in the manufacturing of copper tubes. Schwermetall produces pre-rolled strip made of copper, and copper alloys. Pre-rolled strip is used as an input in the manufacturing of rolled copper products. Schwermetall sells pre-rolled strip to both Wieland and Aurubis Rolled Products, as well as to other copper manufacturers. The Commission's initial market investigation identified preliminary competition concerns in relation to (i) rolled copper products, notably some specific copper alloys and some specific end-applications, (ii) pre-rolled strips and (iii) billets. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of this transaction and determine whether its initial competition concerns are confirmed. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "Copper is used not only in many industries but also in our homes, in electrical equipment or piping. The proposed transaction would bring together the top two suppliers of copper rolled products in an industry that is already highly concentrated and where, just a few days ago, we opened another in-depth investigation. Therefore, the Commission will closely analyse the impact on competition of Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and Schwermetall, to ensure their customers and final consumers are not harmed." A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Bonaldi by Eurocar

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Bonaldi Motori S.p.A. and Bonaldi Tech S.p.A. (together “Bonaldi”) of Italy by Eurocar Italia S.r.l. (“Eurocar”) of Italy. Eurocar is ultimately controlled by the Volkswagen Group (“VW”). Both Bonaldi and Eurocar are active in Italy in (i) the retail distribution of new and used passenger cars and light commercial vehicles of the VW brands (ii) related repair activities and (iii) the sale of original equipment manufacturer (OEM) spare parts. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns due to the limited overlaps between the companies’ activities in the different Italian provinces and the lack of incentive for the combined entity to shut out downstream competitors from the market. The case was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8963](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344).*

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