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Juncker Plan: €300 million for Italian SMEs in creative and cultural sectors

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Italy's national promotional institution Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP) have signed an agreement under the [Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility](#) of the EU's [Creative Europe Programme](#) with the aim of generating €300 million in new financing for around 3,500 SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors in Italy. The agreement is supported by the EU budget under the [Juncker Plan's](#) European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Access to finance in the creative and cultural sectors can be difficult to obtain, primarily due to the intangible nature of their assets and collateral, the limited size of the market, demand uncertainty, and lack of financial intermediary expertise in addressing sector specificities. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, and Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"Culture and the creative sectors build bridges between art, business and technology. They are a catalyst for innovation and foster risk-taking attitudes, which are key in building resilience. Helping these companies scale up and stimulate creativity is high on the European Commission's agenda. This guarantee agreement helps to bridge the financing gap faced by these sectors and will have important economic and social benefits."* A press release can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

C'est la rentrée: les écoliers recevront du lait, des fruits et des légumes à l'école grâce à un programme européen

Le programme européen "[fruits, légumes et lait dans les écoles](#)" recommence en ce début d'année scolaire pour les écoliers européens. Ce programme vise à promouvoir de bonnes habitudes alimentaires chez les enfants qui, en plus de recevoir du lait, des fruits et des légumes, apprennent les bases de la nutrition et l'origine des produits alimentaires. De plus en plus d'écoles prenant part au programme et ce sont plus de 30 millions d'enfants qui en ont bénéficié durant l'année scolaire 2017-2018. Le commissaire européen à l'agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, a déclaré: *"Il est important de savoir d'où vient notre nourriture et de comprendre tous les efforts nécessaires pour produire nos aliments. Avec le programme européen "fruits, légumes et lait dans les écoles", non seulement les enfants se familiarisent avec la production agricole et alimentaire mais ils goûtent également à des produits sains et savoureux. Il n'est jamais trop tôt pour apprendre à bien manger!"* Avec ce programme, 150 millions d'euros sont alloués chaque année pour la distribution de fruits et légumes et, 100 millions d'euros pour le lait et d'autres produits laitiers. Bien que la participation soit volontaire, tous les pays membres de l'UE ont choisi d'y participer. Un communiqué de presse est [en ligne](#) dans toutes les langues de l'UE. (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tél.: +32 229 52509)

EU-US Trade: European Commission recommends settling longstanding WTO dispute

The Commission decided today to ask the Council for a mandate to discuss with the United States the review of the functioning of an existing quota to import hormone-free beef into the European Union which should settle a longstanding World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute on export of US beef. The European Commission remains committed to deliver on the letter and the spirit of the Joint Statement agreed on 25 July by Presidents Juncker and Trump to launch a new phase in the trade relationship between the European Union and the United States. Besides implementing the specific elements identified in the Joint Statement, the two sides should also endeavour to work on outstanding trade issues. Commissioner for Agriculture Phil **Hogan** said: *“By requesting this mandate to the Council the Commission is delivering on an engagement taken earlier this year to try to address some concerns raised by the United States on the functioning of the quota in a mutually satisfactory solution that is fully in line with WTO rules. By taking this step, we are also contributing to ease tensions across the Atlantic, in line with the agreement reached by President Juncker in July. As we send this proposal to the Council I want to reassure European producers that the already existing beef quota under the Memorandum of Understanding will remain at exactly the same level. And I want also to reassure our consumers that the said quota will continue to cover only products complying with Europe’s high food safety and health standards, in this case only non-hormone treated beef.”* The negotiation mandate intends to address US concerns and to find a mutually satisfactory solution in line with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. A press release is [online](#) with more information. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)*

Trade: Commission decides not to extend trade defence measures on solar panels from China

After having been in place for almost five years, the EU [anti-dumping](#) and [anti-subsidy](#) measures on solar panels from China will expire today at midnight. After considering the needs of both producers and those using or importing solar panels the Commission decided it was in the best interests of the EU as a whole to let the measures lapse. This decision also takes into account the EU’s new renewable energy targets. The EU first imposed definitive anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures in December 2013 for a period of two years. These were then renewed in March 2017 for a period of 18 months only, as opposed to the usual five years. The level of the measures has gradually decreased over time to allow the prices of the imports into the EU to align progressively with world market prices. The Commission observed that the market situation has not changed to the extent that this would justify a further extension of the measures now beyond the scheduled 18 months. It therefore rejected the EU industry’s request for an expiry review investigation. More information is available [here](#). *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)*

L'UE débloque 138 millions d'euros d'aides humanitaire et au développement en faveur de la région africaine du lac Tchad

Pour aider les populations les plus vulnérables dans le bassin du lac Tchad, en Afrique, la Commission a annoncé aujourd'hui une enveloppe supplémentaire de 138 millions d'euros combinant aide humanitaire et aide au développement. Cela fait partie d'un programme d'aides global de l'Union européenne pour la région, doté au total de 232 millions d'euros. Le commissaire pour l'aide humanitaire et la gestion des crises, Christos **Stylianides**, s'est exprimé aujourd'hui lors de la conférence de haut niveau sur la région du lac Tchad, qui s'est tenue à Berlin : *“Les effets désastreux des conflits armés et de la violence dans le bassin du lac Tchad ont durement frappé une région déjà touchée par la pauvreté et les conséquences extrêmes du changement climatique. L'UE est résolue à continuer d'aider les plus vulnérables. (...) L'essentiel, c'est que toutes les parties engagées dans le conflit qui affecte cette zone garantissent un accès total à l'ensemble de la région, de sorte que notre aide puisse atteindre ceux qui en ont besoin.»* Neven **Mimica**, commissaire pour la coopération internationale et le développement, a également déclaré : *“La situation humanitaire reste préoccupante et nous devons également préparer la région à la transition du conflit vers la paix et, de la fragilité vers la résilience. Notre nouvelle enveloppe d'aides servira à investir dans les services sociaux, ainsi qu'à lutter contre la pauvreté, la dégradation de l'environnement et les effets du changement climatique. Nous renforcerons également certains de nos programmes existants dans le nord-est du Nigeria (...)”* Le communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tél.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tél.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control of Wind Tre by Hutchison, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation Hutchison's acquisition of sole control of Wind Tre, currently controlled by Hutchison and VEON. Wind Tre was created in 2016 from the combination of the activities of VimpelCom's (now VEON) subsidiary WIND with those of Hutchison's subsidiary H3G, respectively the third and fourth largest operators in the Italian retail mobile market. The Commission [cleared](#) the 2016 transaction because its concerns were fully addressed through effective structural remedies offered by Hutchison and VimpelCom. The Commission's review of Hutchison's acquisition of sole control over Wind Tre found that the new transaction does not alter the existing competitive situation resulting from the first transaction and did not identify any further competition concerns. However, the Commission concluded that, should the remedies cease to be implemented, the new transaction would raise the same concerns identified by the Commission in the 2016 clearance decision. To address these concerns, Hutchison has offered to assume full responsibility for complying with the commitments submitted jointly with VimpelCom (now VEON) in 2016. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. The decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments.

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Today's decision confirms that the structural remedies accepted by the Commission in order to clear the creation of Wind Tre in 2016 were effective. They have not only preserved but also incentivised competition in the mobile telecommunications market in Italy. It is important to ensure full implementation of those remedies so that Italian consumers can continue to enjoy high quality mobile services at fair prices."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [IT](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of joint venture by ZF Friedrichshafen, Magura, BFO and BMZ

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Sachs Micro Mobility GmbH, a newly established joint venture, by ZF Friedrichshafen GmbH, Gustav Magenwirth GmbH & Co. KG ("Magura"), Brake Force One GmbH ("BFO") and BMZ Batterien-Montage-Zentrum GmbH ("BMZ"), all of Germany. The joint venture will be active in research, development, production and distribution of anti-lock braking systems and drive systems for light electric vehicles, including e-bikes. While all of four of the mother companies are active in the production and sale of various components for bikes and light electric vehicles, there are no significant horizontal or vertical overlaps with regard to the activities of the joint venture. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9043](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of Miogas by Spigas and Canarbino

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Miogas by Spigas and Canarbino, all of Italy. Miogas is a regional supplier of natural gas and electricity for about 35 000 customers in south-west region of Milan, Italy, mainly in the municipalities of Gaggiano, Binasco, Rozzano and Melegnano. Miogas is currently solely controlled by Spigas. Spigas is active on the markets for the wholesale supply of gas, primarily in Italy, but also in other markets in the EU. Canarbino operates a vertically integrated company in the energy supply chain, both in gas and electricity, in Italy. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given Miogas' limited activities within the European Economic Area. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8983](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Hahn on official visit to Georgia

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, is today and tomorrow in Tbilisi, Georgia for an official visit. Today, Commissioner **Hahn** will have a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaniani. Tomorrow, Commissioner will meet President of Georgia Mr Giorgi Margvelashvili. The meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss ongoing implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, and possibilities for enhanced cooperation in the bilateral, regional and multilateral agendas. The visit comes just a few days after a [Memorandum of Understanding was signed](#) between the European Union and Georgia for up to €45 million in Macro-Financial Assistance, to support economic reforms and cover part of the country's financing needs. Commissioner **Hahn** will also meet today with the first student cohort of the new Eastern Partnership European School, which will be officially opened at a ceremony tomorrow. The school constitutes a major deliverable of the Eastern Partnership initiative following the [November 2017 Summit](#). Ahead of the school opening, the Commissioner will also have a meeting with the First Deputy Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Ms Tamar Chugoshvili, together with members of the opposition. More information on the Eastern Partnership European School will be available tomorrow in a [press release](#). Coverage of the Commissioner's visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: [+32 229 86570](#); Adam Kaznowski – Tel: [+32 229 89359](#))

Le commissaire Vytenis Andriukaitis en déplacement en France

Lundi 3 et mardi 4 septembre, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, commissaire à la santé et à la sécurité alimentaire, sera en déplacement dans le sud de la France (Occitanie). Lundi, le Commissaire sera à l'Union Coopérative des Vignobles de Foncalieu où il rencontrera les représentants du Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles (Copa-Cogeca) et de la Confédération Européenne des Vignobles Indépendants (CEVI). L'objectif de cette première journée de visite est d'échanger sur le sujet de l'étiquetage. Mardi, le commissaire visitera la Coopérative Artisanale des Métiers de la Viande de l'Aude. Ensuite il se rendra à Carcassonne, à la rencontre des citoyens de la région, en compagnie d'André Viola, le président du conseil départemental de l'Aude, pour débattre des questions d'alimentation et de gaspillage alimentaire et sur l'actualité européenne en la matière. *"Notre objectif pour l'avenir et de permettre aux Européens d'avoir accès à des régimes alimentaires sains et durables et pour cela il me semble essentiel de les informer non seulement sur ce qu'ils mangent mais aussi sur ce qu'ils boivent. Je me réjouis de discuter de ces questions et particulièrement dans une région clé pour tous les sujets liés à l'alimentation"*, a déclaré le commissaire **Andriukaitis** avant la visite. (Pour plus d'informations: Anca Paduraru – Tél.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624)

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