

Daily News 03/08/2017

European Commission President Juncker: New US sanctions on Russia only after consultation of allies

In the wake of Donald Trump signing off on stricter US sanctions against Russia, President Jean-Claude **Juncker** expressed his satisfaction, in principle, over the softening of the bill after the EU had expressed its concerns. *“I stated at the G7 summit in Taormina, Italy, and at the G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, that if the Americans proceeded [with the adoption of new sanctions], we would be ready to react adequately in a matter of days. As a result, a significant proportion of the intended sanctions against Russia have been dropped. Moreover, the US Congress has now also committed to only apply sanctions after the country’s allies are consulted. And I do believe we are still allies of the US”*, President Juncker said. European interests can thus be taken into account in the implementation of any sanctions. If not, the President of the European Commission reserves the right to take adequate measures. If the US sanctions specifically disadvantage EU companies trading with Russia in the energy sector the EU is prepared to take appropriate steps in response within days. *“We are prepared”*, President **Juncker** said during a radio interview with the ARD’s European studio in Brussels, broadcast on 2 August on NDR Info. *“We must defend our economic interests vis a vis the United States. And we will do that.”* The full statement is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

Eurostat: Le volume des ventes du commerce de détail en hausse de 0,5% dans la zone euro

En juin 2017 par rapport à mai 2017, le volume des ventes du commerce de détail corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,5% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,4% dans l’UE28, selon les estimations d’Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. En mai, le commerce de détail avait progressé de 0,4% dans la zone euro et de 0,3% dans l’UE28. En juin 2017 par rapport à juin 2016, l’indice des ventes de détail s’est accru de 3,1% dans les deux zones. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

Antitrust: Commission sends supplementary Statement of Objections to Visa on inter-regional interchange fees

The European Commission has sent a supplementary Statement of Objections to Visa Inc. and Visa International. This is a procedural step in the Commission’s ongoing investigation under EU antitrust rules into the collective setting of the fees that merchants are charged by the Visa card

holder's bank for each Visa card payment carried out at their shops. The cost increase caused by these fees is not charged directly to the Visa card user but is spread across all consumer transactions at different merchants (shops). It could potentially lead to higher prices for consumer goods and services. The supplementary Statement of Objections follows the one [adopted in 2012](#) against Visa. In [February 2014](#), the Commission adopted a decision that rendered legally binding commitments from Visa Europe and closed the proceedings against it. The current supplementary Statement of Objections covers inter-regional interchange fees. These fees are charged on payments made with cards issued outside the European Economic Area (EEA) for purchases in the EEA, most typically by tourists or other travellers. Inter-regional fees represent an important part of the total fees within the Visa scheme. Since Visa Inc. and Visa International did not offer commitments in 2014, the case against these companies continued. The supplementary Statement of Objections sent today: i) focuses the analysis on the conducts that were not already addressed by the Visa Europe commitments of 2014; ii) includes inter-regional fees applied on transactions with consumer debit cards (in addition to the inter-regional fees with credit cards); and iii) takes into account the fact that in June 2016 Visa Europe became a subsidiary of Visa Inc. and ceased to exist as a separate undertaking. More information is available on the Commission's competition website, in the public case register under the case number [AT.39398](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture by Magna and HAPM in automotive sector

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Magna International Inc. of Canada, and Hubei Aviation Precision Machinery Technology Co., Ltd. (HAPM), ultimately controlled by AVIC Electromechanical Systems Co. Ltd., of China. Magna is active in the supply of a broad range of automotive components, including body, chassis, exterior, seating, powertrain, active driver assistance, vision, closure and roof systems, as well as complete vehicle engineering and contract manufacturing. HAPM supplies seat mechanisms and structure components. The joint venture will cover the manufacturing and sale of components for automotive seats for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the joint venture will not be active 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.8560](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Vantage Data Centers by Digital Bridge, PSPIB and TIAA

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Vantage Data Centers Holding Company of the US by Digital

Bridge Holdings LLC, the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (TIAA) both of the US, and the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSPIB) of Canada. Vantage Data Centers owns and operates five fully leased data centres across two US campuses in Santa Clara, California and Quincy, Washington. Digital Bridge owns interests in communication infrastructure companies in the US. PSPIB is the investment manager of the pension plans of the Canadian Federal Public Service, the Canadian Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Reserve Force. TIAA provides investment products and services to those who work in the academic, research, medical and cultural fields in the US. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns since Vantage Data Centers is only active in the US. 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.8558](#). *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Færch Plast by Advent

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Færch Plast Group A/S of Denmark by Advent International Corporation (Advent) of the US, through certain investment funds. Færch Plast manufactures plastic trays for food packaging. Advent is a private equity investment firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited horizontal overlaps and vertical links between the companies' activities. 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.8551](#). *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control of Wirtgen by Deere

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of Wirtgen of Germany by Deere of the United States. Wirtgen is active in the manufacture and sale of road construction and mining equipment worldwide. Deere manufactures and sells agricultural, construction and forestry machinery, lawn care equipment as well as diesel engines and other components globally. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' product portfolios are complementary and the market is characterised by the presence of several large competitors all over Europe. The operation was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8493](#). *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

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