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Closing the loop: Commission delivers on Circular Economy Action Plan

The European Commission today published a comprehensive report on the implementation of the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) it adopted in December 2015. All 54 actions under the plan have now been delivered or are being implemented. This will contribute to boost Europe's competitiveness, modernise its economy and industry to create jobs, protect the environment and generate sustainable growth. The report presents the main results of implementing the action plan and sketches out open challenges to paving the way towards a climate-neutral, competitive circular economy where pressure on natural and freshwater resources as well as ecosystems is minimised. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, responsible for sustainable development, said: *"Circular economy is key to putting our economy onto a sustainable path and delivering on the global Sustainable Development Goals. This report shows that Europe is leading the way as a trail blazer for the rest of the world. At the same time more remains to be done to ensure that we increase our prosperity within the limits of our planet and close the loop so that there is no waste of our precious resources."* Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness, said: *"This report is very encouraging. It shows that Europe is on the right track in creating investment, jobs and new businesses. The future potential for sustainable growth is huge and Europe is indeed the best place for an environmentally-friendly industry to grow. This success is the result of European stakeholders and decision-makers acting together."* The findings of the report will be discussed during the annual [Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference](#) taking place in Brussels on 6 and 7 March. Today Eurostat is also publishing Euro-indicators on the circular economy, which can be found [here](#). A [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available online. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

Plan Juncker : 300 millions d'euros pour le déploiement de la fibre optique en France

Le Plan d'Investissement pour l'Europe – le Plan Juncker – soutient un prêt de la Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) de 300 millions d'euros au groupe Iliad, propriétaire de Free, l'un des acteurs français de la fibre optique. Iliad compte plus d'un million d'abonnés fibre dans plus de 90 départements et confirme son objectif de disposer de 20 millions de prises raccordables à la fibre à fin 2022. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire européen en charge des affaires économiques et financières, de la fiscalité et des douanes, a déclaré: *"Je me réjouis de la signature de cet accord dans le cadre du Plan Juncker, qui soutient l'un des acteurs français de la fibre. Cet accord va contribuer à améliorer le déploiement du numérique en France, et par là même la cohésion de nos territoires."* Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). Le Plan Juncker a déjà généré près de 380 milliards d'euros d'investissement, dont près de 62 milliards en France, et soutenu 842 000 entreprises dans toute l'Europe. (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)

The Coalition for Vaccination holds first meeting in Brussels

Accurate and transparent information on vaccination must be made available to patients and to the general public and the EU is taking action. Delivering on the key actions adopted by the [Council Recommendation](#) on 7 December 2018, the European Commission hosts today in Brussels the first Coalition for Vaccination's meeting, bringing together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students' associations in the field. The Coalition is also being set-up as the World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)) declared vaccine hesitancy one of the major global threats and confirming that 1.5 million deaths could be avoided if immunisation coverage improved. The Coalition further aims to increase confidence in vaccines and improve the uptake of vaccination by citizens. Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, said: *"I am very proud to see so many healthcare professionals participating today at the kick-off meeting of the Coalition for Vaccination – the first fruit of the Council Recommendation. By being the first interlocutors in delivering correct information on vaccination to their patients, the role of healthcare workers in making the lives of all of us safer is immense. I strongly welcome the commitment of the Coalition to make vaccination the easiest choice, and wish them success in their valuable work."* (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tél.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624)

The European Union and Qatar reach aviation agreement

The European Union and the State of Qatar initialled today an aviation agreement, the first such agreement between the EU and a partner from the Gulf region. The agreement will upgrade the rules and standards for flights between Qatar and the EU, and will set a new global benchmark by committing to strong, fair competition mechanisms, and including provisions not normally covered by bilateral air transport agreements, such as social or environmental matters. Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said: *"We delivered! Qatar was the first partner with whom we launched negotiations following our adoption of the [Aviation Strategy for Europe](#) – now it is also the first one to cross the finish line! More than that – the agreement sets out ambitious standards for fair competition, transparency or social issues. It will provide a level playing field and raise the bar globally for air transport agreements. This is a major upgrade compared to the existing framework, and our joint contribution to making aviation more sustainable!"* The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of FH Investments by Clayton, Dubilier & Rice

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of FH Investments Limited ("FHI") of Jersey by Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, LLC ("CD&R") of the US. FHI is active in the operation of

restaurants, delis and cafes. CD&R is a private investment firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the lack of horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the activities of FHI and CD&R. 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.9261](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Grupo Konectanet and Konecta Activos Inmobiliarios by Intermediate Capital Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger regulation, the acquisition of Grupo Konectanet and of Konecta Activos Inmobiliarios (together “Konecta Group”) of Spain by Intermediate Capital Group (“ICG”) of the UK. Konecta Group is active globally in the provision of business process outsourcing and contact centre services to telecommunications, utilities, banking, insurance, public administration and transport companies. ICG is an investment firm active in the structuring and provision of mezzanine finance, leveraged credit and minority equity, managing assets from third party investors and its balance sheet with investment portfolios in Europe, Asia Pacific and the US. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because there are no vertical or horizontal overlaps between the activities of the companies. 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.9275](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Rolls-Royce Commercial Marine by Kongsberg

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Rolls-Royce plc.'s commercial marine products, systems and aftermarket services business (“Rolls-Royce Commercial Marine”) of the UK by Kongsberg Gruppen ASA (“Kongsberg”) of Norway. Rolls-Royce Commercial Marine is the commercial marine business within the Rolls-Royce group that supplies components, systems and digital elements primarily for civil marine vessels. It does not include Rolls-Royce's power systems business. Kongsberg is the holding company of the Kongsberg group, which supplies technological systems and solutions for use in the marine, defence, aerospace and oil and gas industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minor horizontal and vertical relationships 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.9145](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat : les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,4% dans la

zone euro, hausse de 0,3% dans l'UE28

En janvier 2019 par rapport à décembre 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,3% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En décembre 2018, les prix avaient diminué de 0,8% dans la zone euro et de 0,9% dans l'UE28. En janvier 2019 par rapport à janvier 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 3,0% dans la zone euro et de 2,9% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél. +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein-Gesmold – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Citizens' Dialogue linking two universities in Budapest and Milan with Commissioner Navracsics

This morning, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, was in Budapest to hold a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) with around 250 participants at Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and the University of Milan in Italy. To facilitate the debate students were connected simultaneously via video link. Bringing together universities across Europe is one of the main aims of the [European Education Area](#) that this Commission started to build with Member States, and in particular the [new European Universities initiative](#) that is currently in its pilot phase. The motto of the debate was 'Cross-border dialogue on Europe's Education and Future'. Participants discussed topics such as the biggest challenges facing youth today, what national governments and the EU could do better to support young people as well as the role of youth in the upcoming European Parliament elections. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Future of EU finances: Commissioner Oettinger visits Madrid to talk about EU's next long-term budget

Commissioner for Budget and Human resources, Günther H. **Oettinger**, will be in Madrid, Spain, on Monday and Tuesday, 4 and 5 March 2019, to talk about the EU's next long-term budget, the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. During his visit on Monday, Commissioner **Oettinger** is meeting several government representatives starting with María Jesús Montero Cuadrado, Minister for the Treasury; Josep Borrell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation; and Nadia Calviño, Minister for the Economy and Business. He is also participating in a roundtable discussion with the Chamber of Commerce of Spain, on invitation by its President, José Luis Bonet. On Tuesday, 5 March, Commissioner **Oettinger** will participate in a working breakfast organised by the 'Forum Nueva Economía' together with José

Luis Rodríguez, President of the organisation, and Nadia Calviño, Minister for the Economy and Business of Spain. *(For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)*

Vice-President Katainen in Malta for a Citizens' Dialogue

Tomorrow, Tuesday 5 March Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** will be in Valletta, Malta, where he will meet Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta. He will participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the Future of Europe at the G.F. Abela Junior College in Msida. He will also attend a working breakfast with Roberta Metsola, Member of the European Parliament, as well as business representatives on "Bringing Europe's Investment Plan to SMEs and industry in Malta". The Vice-President will then take part in a working lunch with representatives of the Malta Development Bank. *(For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

Commissioner Gabriel in Spain to discuss various digital files and hand over a WiFi4EU voucher

Tomorrow Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, will travel to Spain, where she will have several meetings, including with Nadia Calviño, Minister for the Economy and Business, Francisco Polo, Secretary of State for Digital Advancement and José Luis Bonet, President of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce. She will discuss various topics related to the [Digital Single Market](#), such as the digitisation of the European industry and the future Digital Europe Programme proposed by the Commission in the context of the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027. The Commissioner will also participate in the event titled 'España Empresa Digital', organised by the Chamber of Commerce of Spain. Furthermore, she will meet with Elena Biurrun, Mayor of Torrelodones, and will hand over a [WiFi4EU](#) voucher. The municipality of Torrelodones is one of the 2,800 municipalities in Europe that were [recently selected](#) to receive a WiFi4EU voucher worth €15,000. This voucher can be used to set up Wi-Fi hotspots in public spaces, such as town halls, libraries, museums, parks, squares and other places of public interest. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Marietta Grammenou- Tel.: +32 229 83583)*

Migration: Commissioner Avramopoulos in Athens for an inter-ministerial meeting with Greek authorities

Today, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** is in Athens, Greece, to participate in an inter-ministerial meeting with the Greek Minister of Migration Policy, Dimitris Vitsas, Minister for Citizen Protection, Olga Gerovasili, Minister of Health, Andreas Xanthos, Alternate Minister of Defence Panagiotis Rigas, Alternate Minister for Social Solidarity, Theano Fotiou, Deputy Minister for Education, Research and Religious Affairs Meropi Tzoufi as well as representatives of the Ministry of Economy. Discussions will focus on the coordination of migration management in Greece. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

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