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Clean air: Commission improves car emissions tests further

Member States meeting in the Technical Committee of Motor Vehicles (TCMV) have agreed on the Commission's latest proposal to strengthen car emissions testing. [New and improved car emissions tests](#) became mandatory on 1 September 2017: tests in real driving conditions ("Real Driving Emissions" – RDE) and an improved laboratory test ("World Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure" – WLTP). Now the Commission has finished its technical follow-up to improve these tests further. Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: *"By continuously tightening the screws on the way emissions tests are conducted, we aim to better protect our health and environment, restore consumer confidence, and add yet another incentive for a quick shift to zero emissions vehicles."* The proposal reduces margins of technical uncertainty in RDE testing, increases emissions checks of cars already in circulation and testing by independent and accredited third parties. It also improves the WLTP procedure by eliminating test flexibilities and introduces on-board fuel and energy consumption monitoring devices, thereby allowing for the first time to compare laboratory results for CO₂ emissions with the average real driving situation. Following the positive vote in comitology, the proposal will be transmitted to the European Parliament and Council for a three-month scrutiny period. It will then be adopted by the Commission and published in the [EU Official Journal](#), and would apply from 1 January 2019. More information is available in the [FAQs](#). Continuously improved emissions tests are one of the many Commission initiatives for a clean, sustainable and competitive car industry, including the [Commission proposal for a fully overhauled type approval framework](#) recently approved by the European Parliament and expected to be adopted by Council in the coming weeks (see new [FAQs](#) on reform points). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Fifty innovation grantees to bring research findings to the market

Today, 50 winners of an innovation grant competition from the [European Research Council](#) (ERC) have been announced. The so-called 'proof of concept' grants, each worth up to €150,000, are dedicated to researchers that want to bridge the gap between their pioneering research and early phases of its commercialisation. The researchers will now investigate business opportunities, establish intellectual property rights or conduct technical validation to proof their scientific concept. They will for example work on the development of a universal flu vaccine, put together an atlas of the human sub-cortex for deep brain stimulation of people suffering Parkinson's and other neurological diseases, refine an environmentally friendly production of menthol or employ deep learning algorithms for the automatic detection of fake news (see more [project examples](#)). The European Research Council is the premiere European funding organisation for excellent frontier

research and is part of the EU's [Horizon 2020](#) research and innovation programme. It will remain a key component of Horizon Europe, the [future research funding programme](#) outlined in the [Commission's proposal for the long-term budget](#) for the 2021-2027 period. ERC grantees can apply for 'proof of concept' grants during three rounds in 2018 with an overall budget of €20 million. More information including the list of winners is available in a [news item](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Citizens' Panel on the Future of Europe

For the first time, the Commission is convening a Citizens' Panel to draft a public consultation on the Future of Europe. Hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee on 5-6 May, a group of 80 Europeans will meet in Brussels to work together on the creation of a 12-question online consultation to be launched on 9 May, Europe Day. This unique exercise in participative democracy means that citizens are truly shaping the conversation on the Future of Europe. The online consultation follows on from the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe published in March 2017 and will run in parallel to the 500 Citizens' Dialogues being organised by the Commission in the next 12 months, and the Citizens' Consultations being run by all EU27 Member States, following the initiative of President Macron. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie-Tel.: +32 229 58602)

Nitrates: less water pollution from agriculture but more efforts needed

The Commission today published a new report on the implementation of the [Nitrates Directive](#). With this Directive, the EU aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources and by promoting the use of good farming practices. Today's report shows that the Directive has been successful in reducing water pollution caused by nitrates in both surface and groundwater in the last two decades. The report however points to some disparities among Member States, which calls for renewed efforts to bring waters in the European Union to a good status. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said, "*Clean water is vital for healthy ecosystems and for citizens' quality of life. I am happy to see that EU rules to reduce pollution from nitrates in water are delivering. Member States' longstanding efforts to put them into practice are paying off. Still further effort is needed to achieve a more sustainable agriculture in the EU. Farmers should always be looking for ways to manage the nutrient cycle more sustainably. This will reduce the costs for public authorities to treat polluted water, make it safe for drinking and is in the long-term interests of the farmers themselves.*" More information on today's report is available [here](#). In February 2018, the European Commission proposed legislation to improve the quality of drinking water and access to it as well as provide better information to citizens. More details can be found [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 [6 91 43](#))

New data protection rules for the police and criminal justice sector apply as of 6 May

As of 6 May, new data protection rules for law enforcement authorities will apply. The new Data Protection Directive will allow police and judicial authorities to exchange information necessary for investigations and prosecutions more efficiently based on common high data protection standards. This will contribute to the EU's [Agenda on Security](#), further improving cooperation in the fight against terrorism and other serious crime in Europe. Commissioner Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: *"This directive makes sure that our police and judicial authorities can exchange data smoothly in time to keep our citizens safe. At the same time the personal information of victims, witnesses or suspects of a crime will be adequately protected. This set of rules ensures both fundamental rights and security and strengthens mutual trust between Member States."* The Directive creates a harmonised set of rules on how personal data can be used by law enforcement authorities throughout the EU. The rules ensure that suspects, victims, and witnesses will have their fundamental right to personal data protection properly upheld. Individuals will also have the right to ask police and criminal justice authorities for access to their data. The Commission will work closely with those Member States who have not finalised transposition yet to make sure the important new rules are implemented swiftly. These new rules were agreed by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2015 (see [press release](#)). The Law Enforcement Directive (also known as the "Police Directive") is part of the Data Protection Reform along with the General Data Protection Regulation – due to apply across the EU as of 25 May. You'll find more information on the Law Enforcement Directive in a [factsheet](#) and online on our pages dedicated to [data protection](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Melanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

State aid: Commission approves €10 million extension of Irish support scheme for SMEs in difficulty

The European Commission has found that a €10 million extension of an aid scheme to facilitate the restructuring of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in financial difficulty in Ireland is in line with EU State aid rules. The original scheme was [approved by the Commission on 30 November 2017](#). The extension of the scheme will allow the granting of temporary restructuring support in the form of loans to SMEs in financial difficulty or facing acute liquidity needs. The extension, like the original scheme, will run until 2020 and will be open to all sectors of the economy except the steel, coal and financial sectors. The Commission assessed this measure under its 2014 [Guidelines on rescue and restructuring](#), which allow companies in difficulty to receive State aid only under certain strict conditions. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the extension is compatible with EU State aid rules. The non-confidential version of the decision will be published under the case number SA.50651 in the [State Aid Register](#) on the Commission's [competition website](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria

Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission partially refers acquisition of Stahlgruber by LKQ to Czech competition authority; clears proposed acquisition outside Czech Republic

The European Commission has partially referred the acquisition of Stahlgruber GmbH of Germany by LKQ of the US to the Czech competition authority, and cleared the proposed acquisition outside the Czech Republic. Stahlgruber and LKQ both manufacture and supply automotive spare parts, and are wholesale distributors of automotive spare parts in the European Economic Area (EEA). After a preliminary investigation, the Commission has found that the proposed acquisition could threaten to significantly affect competition in the market for wholesale distribution of automotive spare parts for the independent aftermarket for light vehicles in the Czech Republic. The Commission has partially referred this part of the merger assessment to the Czech Republic's competition authority, at the latter's request. This will now be examined under the Czech Republic's national competition law. At the same time, the Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the part of the transaction affecting EEA markets outside the Czech Republic. The Commission concluded that this part of the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, in particular given that the companies only have limited overlapping activities in the Netherlands. The transaction 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.8766](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Appel à candidatures d'experts sur l'économie des plateformes en ligne

La Commission lance aujourd'hui un appel à candidatures d'experts pour soutenir le travail de l'Observatoire de l'Union européenne sur l'économie des plateformes en ligne. La création de l'Observatoire a été annoncée la semaine dernière à l'occasion de l'annonce de la proposition pour de [nouvelles règles pour les plates-formes en ligne](#) visant à créer un environnement commercial équitable, transparent et prévisible pour les petites entreprises et les commerçants. Cet Observatoire suivra et rendra compte des enjeux actuels ainsi que des opportunités dans l'économie numérique. L'objectif de l'appel est de sélectionner jusqu'à 15 experts indépendants ayant une compétence et une expérience dans l'économie des plateformes en ligne. Ils aideront ainsi l'Observatoire pendant au moins deux ans à réfléchir sur l'accès et l'utilisation des données, la prise de décision algorithmique, le classement et la transparence, ainsi que les pratiques discriminatoires potentielles des plateformes envers leurs utilisateurs. Les experts sont invités à accorder une attention toute particulière à l'évolution des politiques et des approches réglementaires en Europe. Le groupe produira des avis et des rapports pour aider les décideurs politiques européens et nationaux à développer une approche européenne aux plateformes en ligne. En fonction des progrès réalisés et sur la base des connaissances acquises grâce à l'Observatoire, la Commission évaluera la nécessité de prendre de nouvelles mesures et ce dans un délai de trois ans. [L'appel à experts](#) est ouvert jusqu'au 5 juin. Plus d'informations sur l'appel

peuvent être trouvées [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083, Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tél.: +32 229 80707)

Eurostat: Le volume des ventes du commerce de détail en hausse de 0,1% dans la zone euro

En mars 2018 par rapport à février 2018, le volume des ventes du commerce de détail corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,1% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et a diminué de 0,1% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En février 2018, le commerce de détail avait progressé de 0,3% dans la zone euro et de 0,4% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tél. +32 229-80379)

Eurostat: Selon les estimations, les émissions de CO2 dans l'UE ont augmenté en 2017 par rapport à 2016

Selon les estimations d'Eurostat, les émissions de dioxyde de carbone (CO2) provenant de la combustion de combustibles fossiles ont augmenté de 1,8% dans l'Union européenne (UE) en 2017 par rapport à l'année précédente. Les émissions de CO2 contribuent fortement au réchauffement de la planète et représentent environ 80% de l'ensemble des émissions de gaz à effet de serre dans l'UE. Elles sont influencées par des facteurs tels que les conditions climatiques, la croissance économique, la taille de la population, les transports et les activités industrielles. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tél.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tél.: +32 229 52589)

STATEMENTS

Joint statement by Vice-President Ansip and Commissioners Avramopoulos, King and Gabriel on the first EU-wide legislation on cybersecurity

Vice-President **Andrus Ansip**, responsible for the Digital Single Market, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for the Security Union **Julian King** and Commissioner **Mariya Gabriel**, in charge of Digital Economy and Society, issued a statement on the first EU-wide legislation on cybersecurity – the Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems ([NIS Directive](#)) that Member States have to transpose into national law by 9 May 2018. They said: "The adoption of the NIS Directive two years ago was a turning point for the EU's efforts to step up its cybersecurity capacities. Thanks to this first EU cybersecurity law, Member States have strengthened their cooperation for a European cybersecurity policy and are coordinating efforts to build their response capacities." The full statement is available [here](#). The Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS Directive) entered into force in August 2016. Member States have had 21 months to transpose the Directive into their national laws and have 6 months more to identify operators of essential services. It is the first EU-wide legally binding set

of rules on cybersecurity. The Directive establishes a high common level of security of network and information systems across the EU. Additionally, to equip Europe with the right tools to deal with cyber-attacks, the European Commission proposed in [September 2017](#) a wide-ranging set of measures to build strong cybersecurity in the EU. This included a proposal for strengthening the EU Agency for Cybersecurity as well as a new European certification framework to ensure that products and services in the digital world are safe to use. More details on the new rules are available in the [Q&A](#) as well as a [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Ansip to attend the UN Broadband Commission and Transform Africa Summit in Rwanda

Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** is travelling to Kigali, Rwanda to attend the biannual UN meeting of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development (on Sunday and Monday) and to participate in the fourth Transform Africa Summit (on Tuesday). The Broadband Commission's meeting will concentrate this time on 5G development to promote high-speed [connectivity for the Gigabit society](#), [digital skills](#) as well as specific issues for Africa to boost the digital economy and broadband. Vice-President Ansip will also chair the Working Group on Digital Entrepreneurship. The Transform Africa 2018 Summit will be held under the theme "Accelerating Africa's Single Digital Market". Vice-President Ansip will participate in the panel discussion "Digital Identity, Connectivity and Regulation" on the EU's [Digital Single Market](#) efforts to increase innovation and accessibility of [broadband communication networks](#) as well as the [electronic ID systems](#). Both topics are priorities also under the [Digital4Development](#) strategy the Commission presented a year ago to promote digital technologies in the EU development policy. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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