

Daily News 05 / 04 / 2018

Commission takes further action to better protect workers against cancer-causing chemicals

Today, the European Commission is taking another important step to protect workers in the European Union from workplace-related cancer as well as other health problems. The Commission proposes to limit workers' exposure to five cancer-causing chemicals, in addition to the 21 substances that have already been limited or proposed to be limited since the beginning of this mandate. Estimates show that today's proposal would improve working conditions for over 1,000,000 EU workers and prevent over 22,000 cases of work-related illness. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *"Today, the Commission has taken another important step towards fighting work-related cancer and other relevant health problems on the work floor. We propose to limit workers' exposure to five additional cancer-causing chemicals. This will improve protection for over 1 million workers in Europe and help create a healthier and safer workplace, which is a core principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights."* The proposal is based on scientific evidence and follows broad discussions with relevant stakeholders, in particular employers, workers and Member States' representatives. More information can be found in this [press release](#) and [memo](#) online. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Horizon 2020 to provide over €12 million in support for SMEs to bring their innovations faster to the market

Horizon 2020, the EU research and innovation programme, will support 257 small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) from 31 countries with €12.65 million of funding under the [SME instrument](#). Each SME will receive €50,000 to prepare feasibility assessment plans, known as phase 1 of the SME instrument. The companies will also receive [coaching and business acceleration services](#). Examples of selected projects among the 257 chosen are solar street lights, a diagnosis tool for sleep apnoea, an innovative mobile payment technology and a wrapping machine for sustainable packaging. Most of the SMEs work in the field of health, engineering and information and communication technology. Under the SME instrument, which is part of the [European Innovation Council pilot](#), companies can apply for two distinct non-related phases, depending on the maturity of their innovation. In phase 1 each project receives €50,000 to carry out a feasibility study and, if selected, in phase 2 each project can receive up to €2.5 million to finance innovation activities. The next application deadline for phase 1 is in May 2018. More information including the list of beneficiaries can be found in this [news item](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Commission publishes a new agricultural production forecast

The Commission published today a report presenting a [short-term agricultural markets' outlook](#). The report also highlights the recovery of EU cereal production, increasing by 10mt from 2016 to 2017, and an expected increase in oilseed production, led by rapeseed marking a 9% increase compared to 2016/17. For the dairy sector, sustained demand for dairy products will be matched with a growth in milk production from 165.1mt in 2017 to 167.1mt in 2018. As far as the meat sector is concerned, EU beef exports, after a sustained increase in the last few years, will stabilise at a record high level with 0.24mt of live animals and 0.28mt of meat exports in 2018, while production is expected to slightly decrease. Sheep meat production and exports are expected to stabilise in 2018. As for the poultry sector, production and trade are expected this year to recover from the effects of 2017 bird flu. The EU sugar production is on rise. The 2017/18 levels are estimated to be 20% above the average of previous years. The full in-depth analysis is available [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Italo by Global Infrastructure Management

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Italo – Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori S.p.A. (“Italo”) of Italy by Global Infrastructure Management, LLC of the US. Italo is Italy’s first privately-owned high-speed rail passenger transport operator, connecting 19 stations in 14 Italian cities. Global Infrastructure Management is a US-based global infrastructure investor in the energy, transport and water and waste sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies are not active in the same market or in vertically related markets. 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.8839](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

EU report: Moldova advances in reform implementation but considerably more progress is needed

[The Republic of Moldova](#) has managed to stabilise its economic situation and, with constant but conditional support from the European Union and other international partners, has progressed with the implementation of some reforms, for example in the business and financial sectors, however, further efforts by the Moldovan authorities are required, in particular to address high level corruption, the one billion dollar banking fraud, reform the judicial system and ensure inclusiveness in the electoral process. These are among the conclusions presented today in a [Joint Report](#) by the European External Action Service and the European Commission on the implementation of

Moldova's commitments under the [EU-Moldova Association Agreement](#) since the last meeting of the [EU-Moldova Association Council](#). "We have a comprehensive agenda with the Republic of Moldova", said the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini**. "Some reforms have recently advanced [...] and further progress is needed in other areas, notably the fight against corruption and reforming the judiciary. Our support to the people of Moldova is clear and we expect satisfactory reform progress by the authorities, which would bring tangible benefits for Moldovan citizens." Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn** added: "The EU is Moldova's main trading partner [...]. Since the Association Agreement including the DCFTA entered into force, the EU's share in Moldova's exports has increased and accounts now for more than half of Moldova's total trade. [...] To fully reap the rewards of our Association Agreement, Moldova needs to keep on implementing further reforms, without delay." The report was published ahead of the next EU-Moldova Association Council, which is scheduled to take place on 3 May 2018 in Brussels. A full [press release](#) is available online. For more information see the [Joint Report, factsheet](#) and [website](#) of the EU Delegation. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

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

En février 2018 par rapport à janvier 2018, le volume des ventes du commerce de détail corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,1% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,2% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En janvier 2018, le commerce de détail avait reculé de 0,3% dans la zone euro et était demeuré stable dans l'UE28. Vous pouvez trouver le communiqué de presse [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,1% dans la zone euro

En février 2018 par rapport à janvier 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,1% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et sont restés stables dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En janvier 2018, les prix avaient augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro ainsi que dans l'UE28. En février 2018 par rapport à février 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont progressé de 1,6% dans la zone euro et de 1,8% dans l'UE28. Vous pouvez trouver le communiqué de presse [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Stylianides visits Portugal

Today, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is in Lisbon, Portugal to attend the International Conference on Higher Education in Emergencies 'Doing More, Better And Faster'. The conference focusses on the provision of higher education in emergencies and opportunities for refugees in vulnerable situations, affected by conflicts or natural disasters. Since the Juncker Commission took office, it has consistently increased the amount of humanitarian aid dedicated to education in emergencies. From only 1% in 2015, the EU dedicated 6% of its annual humanitarian aid budget in 2017 to education in emergencies, one of the most underfunded sectors of humanitarian aid. In 2018, this amount will increase to 8% with an EU contribution of over €86 million. Some 5 million girls and boys in 52 countries around the world have benefited from EU funding between 2012 and 2017. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Commissioner Vestager visits Copenhagen and participates in a Citizens' Dialogue

Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe **Vestager** travels to Denmark today and will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue on the future of Europe, the EU's competition policy and other issues at the top of the EU's agenda. The Citizens' Dialogue will take place at Gorrissen Federspiel Advokatpartnerselskab and will start at 16:30 CEST. More information is available [online](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Vice-President Katainen in Milan

Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, travels to Milan and Cernobbio, Italy, on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 April. He will discuss jobs and growth with students from Milan's universities at the [Citizens' Dialogue](#) at the Bocconi University. The event will be livestreamed from 11.30 CET onwards. Vice-President Katainen will participate in a working lunch with representatives of European [Creative and Cultural Industries](#) and he will meet the Mayor of Milan, Mr. Giuseppe Sala. Furthermore, he will attend the European House [Ambrosetti Finance Workshop](#) "The Outlook for the Economy and Finance" in Cernobbio, where he will deliver a keynote speech on the future of European Industry on Saturday 7 April. *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Enda MacNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)*

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