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VAT Gap: EU countries lost €137 billion in VAT revenues in 2017

EU countries lost €137 billion in Value-Added Tax (VAT) revenues in 2017, according to a study released by the European Commission today. The VAT Gap describes the overall difference between the expected VAT revenue and the amount actually collected. It has reduced somewhat compared to previous years but remains very high, highlighting once more the need for comprehensive reform of the EU VAT rules, as proposed in 2017 by the Commission. New rules would help clamp down on VAT fraud and improve the rules for legitimate businesses and traders. Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, Pierre **Moscovici** said: *“The favourable economic climate and some short-term policy solutions put in place by the EU helped to lower the VAT Gap in 2017. However, to achieve more meaningful progress we will need to see a thorough reform of the VAT system to make it more fraud-proof. Our proposals to introduce a definitive and business-friendly VAT system remain on the table. Member States cannot afford to stand by while billions are lost to illegal VAT carousel fraud and inconsistencies in the system.”* Romania recorded the largest national VAT Gap with 36% of VAT revenues going missing in 2017. This was followed by Greece (34%) and Lithuania (25%). The smallest gaps were in Sweden, Luxembourg and Cyprus where only 1% of VAT revenues on average fell by the wayside. In absolute terms, the highest VAT Gap of around €33.5 billion was in Italy. The VAT Gap measures the effectiveness of VAT enforcement and compliance measures in each Member State, as it provides an estimate of revenue loss due to fraud and evasion, tax avoidance, bankruptcies, financial insolvencies as well as miscalculations. You can find a [press release](#), [FAQ](#) and [factsheet](#) online. The report itself is available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Security Union: Eurojust launches a new Counter-Terrorism Register

Today, with the Commission’s support, Eurojust, the EU’s agency on judicial cooperation, has launched a Counter-Terrorism Register, which will help EU countries exchange information on terrorist offences in a quick, efficient and uniform manner. Member States already share information with each other on the suspects of terrorist offences who are under criminal investigation or prosecution in their countries. The new Counter-Terrorism Register launched today will enable them to do so more efficiently and effectively, as Eurojust will be able to better detect links between terrorist cases in different Member States and provide timely and proactive feedback to national authorities as well as follow-up measures needed. Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová** said: *“Eurojust plays a key role in supporting the fight against cross-border crime and terrorism. Fast exchange of data can make or break effective investigation and this new tool will put Eurojust on stronger footing to protect Europeans against terrorism.”* Speaking at today’s official launch of the Register, Commissioner for the Security Union, Julian **King** said: *“The new Counter-Terrorism Register will help judges and prosecutors to proactively establish links between cases*

to ensure that criminals and terrorists do not go unpunished. This new tool is yet another building block in our Security Union.” Following the terrorist attacks in France in November 2015, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands took the initiative to set up a register at Eurojust. Today’s Register is a result of Eurojust developing this initiative into a tool available to all EU countries. The press conference from the official launch is available on [EbS+](#). For more information, see the [press release](#) from Eurojust and information from the European Commission on [judicial cooperation](#) and [fighting terrorism](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444).

L’Union européenne en tête du commerce agroalimentaire mondial

Dans un [rapport publié aujourd’hui](#), l’UE confirme pour une nouvelle année sa position de premier exportateur mondial de produits agroalimentaires, avec des exportations atteignant 138 milliards d’euros en 2018. Cette même année, le secteur agro-alimentaire de l’UE a connu un excédent commercial de 22 milliards d’euros. Les produits agricoles représentent 7 % de la valeur totale des biens exportés par l’UE en 2018, se classant ainsi au quatrième rang après les machines, les autres biens manufacturés et les produits chimiques. L’agriculture et les industries et services liés à l’alimentation fournissent ensemble près de 44 millions d’emplois dans l’UE. Phil Hogan, commissaire à l’agriculture, a déclaré : *“La politique agricole commune, de plus en plus axée vers les marchés, a contribué de manière décisive au succès des échanges agricoles de l’UE. La réputation de l’UE d’avoir des produits sûrs, produits de manière durable, nutritifs et de qualité est une formule gagnante sur le marché mondial. La Commission est là pour aider les producteurs à tirer pleinement parti des possibilités qui s’offrent à eux dans le monde entier, tout en veillant toujours à ce que nos secteurs les plus sensibles bénéficient de garanties et de protections suffisantes”*. Les cinq principales destinations des produits agroalimentaires de l’UE restent les États-Unis, la Chine, la Suisse, le Japon et la Russie, qui représentent 40% des exportations communautaires. L’UE devient aussi le deuxième plus grand importateur mondial de produits agro-alimentaires. Un communiqué de presse est [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tél.: +32 229 52509)

Antitrust: Commission invites comments on roadmap for the evaluation of rules on horizontal agreements

The European Commission is inviting comments on the roadmap for the evaluation of the [“Horizontal Block Exemption Regulations”](#) which exempt certain horizontal agreements from EU rules that prohibit anticompetitive agreements between companies. Such agreements between actual or potential competitors that operate at the same level of production or distribution in the market may restrict competition. In that case, they would be prohibited under EU antitrust rules, unless they create benefits that outweigh the harm to competition. The Horizontal Block Exemption Regulations define certain research and development and specialisation agreements that can be considered more beneficial than harmful, and are therefore allowed under antitrust rules. The Regulations will expire on 31 December 2022. The Commission has

today taken the first step in the review process to help it determine whether the Regulations should lapse, be extended or amended. The review process will also include the existing guidelines on horizontal cooperation agreements. With the publication of the roadmap, the Commission is inviting stakeholders to comment on the purpose, consultation strategy, timing and methodology of the evaluation phase of the review process. Stakeholders can comment on the roadmap on the Commission's [Better Regulation Portal](#) until 3 October 2019. Before the end of the year, the Commission also plans to launch a public consultation inviting stakeholders to comment on the functioning of the Horizontal Block Exemption Regulations. *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of control over PPT by Charlesbank and GTCR

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over PPT Holdings I, LLC (PPT) by Charlesbank Capital Partners LLC (Charlesbank) and GTCR LLC (GTCR), all of the US. PPT is a third party maintenance provider offering storage, server and network maintenance, hardware services and proactive monitoring. Charlesbank is active in investment across a range of industries, primarily in the US. GTCR is active in investment in growth companies in the financial services & technology, healthcare, media & telecommunications and growth business services industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, as the transaction does not create any horizontal or vertical overlaps between 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.9487](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of DigiCert by Clearlake and TA

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of DigiCert Parent Inc (“DigiCert”), by Clearlake Capital Group, L.P. (“Clearlake”) and TA Associates Management, L.P. (“TA”), all of them based in the US. DigiCert provides enterprise security technology and/or software solutions and Public Key Infrastructure solutions for identity and encryption. Clearlake is a private investment firm, with portfolio companies active in software and technology-enabled services, energy and industrials, and consumer products/services. TA is a private equity investment firm, with portfolio companies active in selected industries, including business services, consumer, financial services, healthcare and technologies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the companies’ very limited combined market position resulting from the proposed transaction. 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.9471](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture between Toyota Tsusho and Maruti Suzuki

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture in India, by Toyota Tsusho India Private Limited (“TTIPL”) of India, its parent Toyota Tsusho Corporation (“TTC”) of Japan, and Maruti Suzuki India Limited (“MSIL”) of India. The joint venture will supply, dismantle and process end-of-life vehicles and market and sell scrap and other products generated from such activities in India. TTIPL is active in the manufacturing and trading of auto parts and components, steel shearing and processing, import and export of automobile components and logistics management services. TTC is active in metals, parts and logistics, automotive, machinery, energy and projects, chemicals, electronics, food, and consumer services. MSIL is a subsidiary of the car, motorcycle and outboard motor manufacturer Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan and manufactures, purchases and sells motor vehicles, components and spare parts. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the joint venture will have no activities in the European Economic Area. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9476](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat: Nombre de décès évitables en 2016: Les maladies cardiaques et pulmonaires, principales catégories de décès évitables

Dans l’Union européenne (UE), 1,7 million de décès ont été enregistrés en 2016 pour les personnes âgées de moins de 75 ans. Sur ce total, 1,2 million de décès pourraient être considérés comme prématurés en vertu de la liste Eurostat-OCDE récemment élaborée en ce qui concerne la mortalité évitable. Quelque 741 000 de ces décès évitables auraient pu être évités grâce à des interventions efficaces dans le domaine de la santé publique et de la prévention primaire, et 422 000 auraient pu être traités dans le cadre d’interventions en temps utile et efficaces. Les crises cardiaques (174 000 décès), les cancers de la trachée, des bronches et des poumons (168 000 décès) et les accidents vasculaires cérébraux (87 000 décès) ont représenté au total plus d’un tiers (37%) de l’ensemble des causes évitables de décès de personnes âgées de moins de 75 ans. Par rapport à 2011, le nombre de décès évitables en proportion du nombre total de décès a diminué de 1,7 point de pourcentage, passant de 69,7% du total des décès en 2011 à 68,0% en 2016. Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Anca Paduraru – Tél.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Energy Union: Commissioner Arias Cañete in Oslo to co-host the European high level conference on carbon capture and storage

Today Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** is in Oslo where he is co-hosting the European High-Level Conference on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) together with Kjell-Børge Freiberg, the Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy. Building on the growing recognition for the necessity of increased climate action and the emerging momentum for low carbon emission technologies in Europe, such as Carbon Capture and Storage, this European high-level conference brings together European Ministers and CEO's from key European industry and energy companies. In the [Commission's "Clean Planet for All" Communication](#), Carbon Capture and Storage was identified as a crucial element to tackle remaining CO2 emissions. Together with the land use sink, it could compensate for remaining greenhouse gas emissions in our economy and help us achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The conference will focus on Europe, and more specifically, on the role of Carbon Capture and Storage in the EU's strategic long-term vision, but will draw upon experiences from other countries with relevant Carbon Capture and Storage activities. More information as well as the webstream of the conference is available [here](#).
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[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)