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Le président Juncker participe à l'ouverture de la Semaine européenne des Régions et des Villes 2018 lundi à Bruxelles

Du lundi 8 au jeudi 11 octobre, 6000 participants – des décideurs et des experts locaux, régionaux, nationaux et européens – se réuniront à Bruxelles pour débattre et échanger au cours de ce qui est devenu “l'événement” annuel de la politique de cohésion à l'échelle européenne. Plus de 600 intervenants et 200 journalistes pourront également participer à plus de 150 ateliers au cours de cette édition de la Semaine européenne des Régions et des Villes consacrée à la politique de cohésion après 2020. Le Président **Juncker** ouvrira la Semaine lundi à 14h30, aux côtés de la Commissaire en charge de la politique régionale, Corina **Crețu**, du Président du Comité des Régions, Karl-Heinz Lambertz et du député européen Pavel Telička. *«Cette édition de la Semaine européenne des Régions et des Villes n'est pas comme les autres», a déclaré la Commissaire **Crețu** avant l'événement, “puisque'il s'agit de la première après la présentation par la Commission de sa proposition sur la politique de cohésion 2021-2027. Je suis fière de ce que nous avons accompli: une politique radicalement modernisée, plus flexible et simplifiée. Et je suis impatiente d'entendre les impressions de ceux qui consacrent leur vie à la réussite de cette politique sur le terrain.»* Parmi les temps forts de la Semaine, citons la cérémonie annuelle des RegioStars Awards, le mardi 9 au soir, et l'annonce des lauréats du troisième appel d'offre pour les [Urban Innovative Actions](#), le mercredi 10. La session d'ouverture avec le président **Juncker** sera [retransmise en direct](#) et les journalistes accrédités sont invités à participer au [programme média](#) de la Semaine qui se tiendra au Square (Bruxelles 1000, près de la Gare Centrale). *(Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)*

EU and Western Balkans strengthen cooperation on border management, counter-terrorism and organised crime

Today, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** participated in the EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum in Tirana, Albania, where he reaffirmed strong cooperation between the EU and Western Balkan partners on border management, counter-terrorism and organised crime. An important milestone was reached on border management with Albania with the [signature of an agreement](#) allowing for operational cooperation between the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and Albania. The agreement, signed by Commissioner Avramopoulos, Austrian Minister of the Interior, Herbert Kickl and Albanian Minister of the Interior Fatmir Xhafaj, is the first one to be concluded with a third country. Commissioner Avramopoulos and Western Balkans partners also signed the Joint EU-Western Balkans [Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism](#), which sets out concrete steps for enhanced cooperation in countering terrorism and preventing radicalisation over the next two years. It is a key deliverable under the [Commission's strategy](#) for ‘A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans’ of February 2018. Finally,

the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) tightened its cooperation on drugs monitoring with Albania [initialling a working arrangement](#). More information on the [European Border and Coast Guard agreement with Albania](#), Joint EU–Western Balkans [Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism](#) and [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction](#) cooperation with Albania is available online. The press conference in which Commissioner **Avramopoulos** participated can be followed on [EBS](#). In the margins of the meeting, Commissioner **Jourová** attended the signing ceremony of the Eurojust – Albania cooperation agreement by the Albanian Minister of Justice, Etilda Gjonaj, and the President of Eurojust, Ladislav Hamran. This agreement will facilitate the cooperation between Albanian judicial authorities and Eurojust to better fight crime. More information is available on Eurojust’s [website](#). A joint EU-Western Balkans statement will be signed at the end of the meeting and will be available later [online](#). *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: 32 229 63444; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

Juncker Plan supports clean energy in Belgium and cohesion projects in Hungary

In Belgium, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed an agreement to support the construction of the Northwester 2 wind farm off the Belgian coast with a loan of €210 million. Upon completion, its 23 wind turbines will deliver an estimated 219 Megawatts, enough to supply green energy to hundreds of thousands of Belgian homes. In Hungary, the EIB is providing €100 million to Magyar Villamos Muvek (MVK) Zrt, the major player in the Hungarian power and gas sectors, to modernise the power transmission network, improving the reliability of the network and increasing interconnections with neighbouring Slovakia. This is the first direct EFSI corporate loan in Hungary. The EIB is also providing a €25 million loan to Budapest Bank, the first EFSI operation with a local commercial bank in Hungary, to provide better access to finance for small and medium businesses, particularly in the country’s rural areas. All these projects are guaranteed under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar the Juncker Commission’s [Investment Plan for Europe](#). In addition, the EIB is lending €225 million to Hungary under the “[Cohesion Fund Framework Loan IV](#)”, a loan programme that covers the national financing part in infrastructure projects (water, transport and energy) co-funded by Cohesion Policy funds. In September 2018, the Juncker Plan had already mobilised €344 billion of investment in the EU, including €1.8 billion in Hungary and €8.3 billion in Belgium. *(Full press release are available [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 229 50055; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

Cohesion Policy backs €230 million for better water service and infrastructure in Bulgaria

The Commission welcomes the signature yesterday of an agreement between the [Fund Manager of Financial Instruments in Bulgaria \(FMFIB\)](#) and the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\)](#), setting the first Cohesion

Policy backed financial instrument for the water and wastewater sector in Bulgaria. With €115 million from the Cohesion Fund and national co-financing, together with additional resources from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and private sources, this agreement is expected to trigger up to €230 million of investment, to provide 16 regional water operators with access to finance for the delivery of quality service to citizens. With the funding, operators will be able to run and upgrade their water supply, waste water and water treatment facilities. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said: *“This agreement shows that financial instruments have the power to multiply the benefits of Cohesion Policy investments, also in public services. Thanks to this agreement, 220,000 Bulgarian citizens will have access to better water supply and 1.5 million to improved waste water treatment.”* In the 2014-2020 period, over €1 billion from the Cohesion Fund will be invested in better water supply and water treatment in Bulgaria. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Alliance Afrique-Europe: La Commission mobilise 5 millions d’euros pour soutenir les autorités douanières africaines dans leur travail afin de mettre en œuvre des règles mondiales et à faciliter les échanges

La Commission européenne mobilise 5 millions d’euros en faveur d’un nouveau projet de renforcement des capacités visant à soutenir les pays africains à mettre en œuvre et à appliquer les règles mondiales en matière de douane et de facilitation des échanges, à la suite d’un accord signé hier avec l’Organisation mondiale des douanes (OMD). Le projet, qui sera mis en œuvre par l’OMD, vise principalement à promouvoir le “Système harmonisé” ou SH actualisé. Ce système est un élément fondamental du commerce mondial et de l’application des règles douanières mondiales. Il permet aux autorités de reconnaître et de classer les marchandises à leur entrée et à leur sortie des territoires douaniers. Plus généralement, le système aide les pays à coordonner et à harmoniser leurs règles douanières tout en réduisant les coûts liés au commerce international. Ce nouveau financement devrait soutenir les pays africains, les communautés économiques régionales et la Commission de l’Union africaine à utiliser la dernière version du SH de façon coordonnée sur tout le continent, permettant ainsi aux marchandises de circuler plus facilement et plus rapidement. Ce projet est lié à la mise en œuvre du [Plan d’investissement extérieur de l’UE](#) et de la Communication pour [une nouvelle Alliance Afrique-Europe pour des emplois et des investissements durables](#), annoncée par le Président Juncker dans son [discours sur l’état de l’Union 2018](#) et adoptée le même jour par la Commission. Cette action vient en soutien à la création de la zone de libre-échange continentale africaine (ZLEC), officiellement créée par l’Assemblée de l’Union africaine lors de sa dixième session extraordinaire le 21 mars 2018 à Kigali, au Rwanda. Elle est ainsi ancrée dans les engagements communs pris lors du [5e sommet Union africaine – Union européenne](#) en novembre 2017 à Abidjan. (Pour plus d’informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 2 29 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

EU Code Week 2018 kicks-off – more than 1 million participants expected

Tomorrow, the [‘EU Code Week 2018’](#) will start on 6 October with thousands of events taking place in over 45 countries in and outside the EU until 21 October. This year’s edition, which is like previous years run by volunteers, has a special focus on schools. More than 1 million people are expected to participate in interactive activities, including children, parents and teachers. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said: *“EU Code Week is a remarkable grassroots initiative where people of all ages can learn about programming, computers and other tech-related activities in an engaging way. My aim is that significantly more schools, pupils and teachers participate and equip themselves with digital skills that are necessary to thrive in an increasingly digitised world.”* Events being organised include for instance [Code Hunting Games](#) developed by a team at the University of Urbino, Italy in which groups of players compete in solving coding puzzles. In France, the [Limoges Resistance Museum](#) invites visitors of all ages to become an undercover agent solving enigmas based on computer science and cryptograph while in Romania, the [IT & hope for kids with autism](#) workshop will promote interactive learning with the help of technology. The EU Code Week is a yearly grassroots movement supported by the European Commission as part of its strategy for a [Digital Single Market](#). The full list and map of events is available on the [EU Code Week](#) website which also lists the “Code week [ambassadors](#)” who have been promoting the initiative in their home countries. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Food: further steps taken to cutting down presence of fatty acids

The Commission launched a [feedback mechanism](#) to seek stakeholders’ views on setting a maximum limit of [trans fats](#) of 2 grams per 100 grams of fat in the food intended for the final consumer. Commission’s proposed Regulation comes as a follow-up of the [Report](#) adopted in 2015 and of discussions with stakeholders (notably NGOs, industry...) which have been taking place since.

The proposal is also based on a number of scientific studies, such as the recent one from the [European Food Safety Authority](#) which stresses again that dietary intakes of trans fatty acids should be as low as possible in order to avoid health risks. Despite health warnings in some Central and Southern European countries, industrial trans fats levels in pre-packaged biscuits, cakes and wafers have not dropped meaningfully since mid-2000. Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, in charge of Health and Food Safety said: *“For many years now, scientific studies have shown that a high intake of trans fats undoubtedly increases the risk of heart disease. With the proposed Regulation, the Commission acts on its commitment to deliver on the matter. I look forward to constructive input during this feedback mechanism so that the Regulation can be adopted as soon as possible for the benefit of our citizens’ health”.* (For more information: Anca Padurararu – Tel.: [+32 229 91269](#); Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: [+32 229 87624](#))

World Teachers’ Day: bringing Europe’s cultural heritage to the classroom

Today is UNESCO World Teachers’ Day, and EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, is launching a cultural heritage toolkit for teachers in all 24 official EU languages. The initiative is part of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#). It creates opportunities for

children and young people to discover and explore the value of Europe's shared heritage – be it literature, art, monuments, or crafts and traditions. Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *“Our motto for the European Year is ‘Cultural heritage – where the past meets the future’ – what better way to support this than to enable children and young people to learn about and appreciate their cultural heritage? I am delighted that today, on World Teachers’ Day, we are providing our educators with the tools to do so.”* The educational resources presented today have been created to help teachers of any subject or discipline to introduce and discuss cultural heritage in the classroom and outside, targeting students between 10 and 15 years old. The playful and engaging activities are an invitation to reflect on the following questions: What is cultural heritage and why is it important to cherish and preserve it? Why is cultural heritage shared beyond national borders? The toolkit in 24 languages is available [here](#). A new online game “Cultural Heritage Detectives” is available [here](#). The Commission is also publishing the [annual report](#) by its Eurydice Network today, showing the evolution in teachers’ pay in 2016/2017, as well as differences in salary conditions and salary progression across Europe. (For more information: *Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#)*)

Eurostat: Le prix des logements en hausse de 4,3% dans la zone euro, également en hausse de 4,3% dans l’UE (Deuxième trimestre 2018 comparé au deuxième trimestre 2017)

Le prix des logements, tel que mesuré par l’indice des prix des logements, a augmenté de 4,3% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE au deuxième trimestre 2018 par rapport au même trimestre de l’année précédente. Par rapport au premier trimestre 2018, les prix des logements ont progressé de 1,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE au deuxième trimestre 2018. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: *Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182*)

Concentrations : la Commission autorise l’acquisition d’Imerys par Lone Star Funds

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition d’Imerys TC, société par actions simplifiée basée en France, par LSF10 Impala Investments S.a.r.l., société basée au Luxembourg contrôlée par Lone Star Fund X basée aux U.S.A (ensemble “Lone Star Funds”). Imerys conçoit et fournit des produits de toiture, notamment des tuiles en terre cuite, des solutions photovoltaïques, des toitures thermiques et des accessoires. Lone Star Funds est une société de capital-investissement qui investit dans l’immobilier, le crédit, des actions et d’autres actifs financiers dans le monde entier. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, car les chevauchements entre les activités des entreprises sont très limités. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d’affaire [M.8977](#). (Pour plus d’informations: *Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn at the third Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean

On Monday 8th October, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will co-chair, together with Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Ayman Safadi, the [third meeting](#) of the Regional Forum of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in Barcelona. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will also participate. Hosted by Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell, the meeting, which marks the 10th anniversary of the organisation, will gather Ministers from the 43 UfM member countries and observers, including the League of Arab States, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), in the presence of the recently appointed Secretary General of the UfM Secretariat, Nasser Kamel. The Regional Forum will be an opportunity to review the organisation's achievements in its first decade, exchange views on the way forward and discuss the potential of this unique platform for dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will open the Forum and participate in the press conference. Commissioner **Hahn** will open the event [Mediterranean Initiative for Jobs](#) (Med4Jobs), on the engagement and the impact of the private sector in the region and will hold a series of bilateral meetings including with UfM Secretary General Mr Nasser Kamel. Audio-visual coverage of the Forum will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Commissioner Mimica discussed development partnership with Latin America and Caribbean

During his official trip to Chile, Commissioner for Development and Cooperation Neven Mimica addressed the High Level Dialogue on future development cooperation between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean that took place in Santiago. The event focused on development challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as growing inequalities, climate change and security. Commissioner Mimica said: "This meeting is an excellent opportunity to explore how to innovate our development cooperation with the more advanced developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. We want to adapt our tools to the more diverse, dynamic and local circumstances. We want to support the transition of our partners through triangular cooperation, exchanging good practices, knowledge transfers, and bringing in private investments – with the ambition to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals". The EU is committed to an innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – as reflected in [the new "European Consensus on Development"](#). In order to support smooth and successful countries' transitions to higher income levels, the EU is implementing the [Regional Facility for Development in Transition](#)

[for Latin America and the Caribbean](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejeula – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Vice-President Katainen in Finland to attend the Ministerial Conference on Artificial Intelligence

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, will be in Helsinki, Finland, on 8-9 October. On Monday 8 October he will meet Ms Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, Minister of Education of Finland, over a working lunch to discuss the [European Education Area](#), together with rectors and stakeholders. The Vice-President will also participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the same topic; the event can be followed [live](#) from 13.30-15.00 (Finnish time). Vice-President Katainen will then deliver a keynote address at the event on "Trade Policy in a changing World" at the Finnish Chamber of Commerce, meet Mr Nenad Popovic, Minister for Innovation and Technological Development of Serbia and attend the working dinner of the [Ministerial Conference on future of Artificial Intelligence in Europe](#) (AI Forum 2018). On Tuesday 9 October, Vice-President Katainen will attend the working breakfast of the Directors' Institute Finland and EVLI Bank to deliver a keynote address on "EU and Artificial Intelligence from growth and competitiveness perspective". Then, he will participate in a panel discussion about "Tech unicorns born in Europe" at the Ministerial Conference on future of Artificial Intelligence. He will meet Mr Antero Vartia, Member of the Finnish Parliament and Ms Suvi Haimi, CEO and Co-founder of Sulapac. Finally the Vice-President will deliver a keynote address on "EU investment supporting growth in Finland" at the Grannenfelt Finance event. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

[Calendar](#) – Commissioners' weekly activities

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