

Daily News 06 / 09 / 2019

Hurricane Dorian: EU channels initial emergency aid to Bahamas

After the strongest Atlantic storm on record hit the Bahamas earlier this week, the EU is mobilising an initial €500,000 in immediate emergency funding to assist those affected by Hurricane Dorian. The funding will address urgent needs such as shelter, water, hygiene and food. *“Hurricane Dorian has left a large trail of destruction with many casualties and leaving homes in ruins. We will do all we can to help, getting aid in to the people on the ground. Our thoughts are with all those affected by this tragedy and with the Bahamian authorities and brave first responders on the scene. The EU stands ready to provide further assistance,”* said Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. The European Union’s 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre is in close contact with the authorities of the Bahamas to monitor the situation and channel further EU assistance. In addition, the Commission has deployed a Humanitarian Expert to conduct a rapid needs assessment and the EU’s emergency Copernicus satellite service is currently providing maps of the area. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Roma integration: Evaluation of national strategies shows efforts in area of education, but more needs to be done

Today, the Commission adopted its annual [report](#) on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies, summarising the most important trends focusing on the four policy areas of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (education, employment, health, housing), as well as fighting discrimination and antigypsyism. The report highlights that education is the area where Member States are doing the most work to promote Roma inclusion. EU Member States have put in place a number of measures in this field, including to limit early school-leaving of Roma children. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, said: *“It is really encouraging to see the progress that has been made by Member States in the past year, especially on the integration of Roma in their education systems. This is an essential foundation for long-term integration in the labour market and in broader European society.”* Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová**, said: *“Receiving proper education from an early age gives every child a chance in life. Member States have worked hard. Now, 90% of Roma children attend primary and lower secondary school. This is an encouraging step towards promoting integration of the Roma in society. Still, a lot remains to be done to help Roma integrate fully in society, in particular on access to public utilities, decent housing, employment and healthcare. I call on all Member States to continue their efforts, so that all Roma can enjoy the same rights as any other European citizen.”* The report further examines the success factors for Roma inclusion. A lot of work still remains to be done: first results of a [Eurobarometer](#) on discrimination that will be published in the coming weeks reveal that 61% of the respondents feel that discrimination against Roma is widespread in their country, and only 19% of

the respondents think their country's efforts to integrate its Roma population are effective. The report, a factsheet including examples of initiatives from the Member States and further information about the National Roma Integration Strategies is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: + 32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094; Athina Reuter – Tel.: +32 229 82390)

EU-funded research that captured first image of a black hole wins Breakthrough Prize

The 2020 Breakthrough Prize was awarded yesterday to the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT), a global scientific collaboration involving EU-funded scientists that captured the [first-ever image of a black hole](#). Known as the "Oscar of Science", the [Breakthrough Prize](#), awarded since 2013, recognises achievements in life sciences, fundamental physics and mathematics. Each award is worth \$3 million. EU funding through the European Research Council (ERC) provided crucial support to the Event Horizon Telescope. In particular, the EU has made available a grant of €14 million for three of the leading scientists and their teams involved in the discovery. And over the past 15 years some €30 million from the EU's [Horizon 2020](#) and previous research framework programme supported the development and upgrading of the large telescope infrastructure essential to the success of the project. It was revealed in April this year and marked a paradigm shift in our understanding of black holes. It also confirmed the predictions of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity and opened up new lines of enquiry into our universe. (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de M7 Group par Canal +

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de M7 Group, entreprise basée au Luxembourg, par Canal +, entreprise contrôlée par Bolloré Group et basée en France. M7 Group est active dans certains pays de l'Espace économique européen (EEE) dans la fourniture de services de télévision payante au détail, la diffusion de chaînes de télévision et la distribution en gros de chaînes de télévision. Canal + est active dans la fourniture de services de télévision payante au détail dans plusieurs pays à l'échelle mondiale (y compris en France et en Pologne au sein de l'EEE), la production et diffusion de contenu audiovisuel, la diffusion de chaînes de télévision, la vente en ligne et hors ligne de fenêtres publicitaires. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, car les chevauchements entre les activités des entreprises sont limités. De même, la Commission a exclu tout problème de concurrence résultant de liens verticaux entre les entreprises. 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.9416](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Saint-Gobain Building

Distribution Deutschland by Lone Star/Stark

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Saint-Gobain Building Distribution Deutschland of Germany by Lone Star of the US, through its subsidiary Stark. Saint-Gobain Building Distribution Deutschland ('SGBDD') is a retailer of building materials selling mainly to professional customers in Germany. Lone Star is a private equity firm which operates globally and which controls the building material manufacturer Xella, the insulation materials manufacturer Ursa, and the carpet producer Balta. Stark is a retailer and distributor of building materials currently active only in the Nordic region. The Commission examined the impact of the proposed transaction on the markets where SGBDD and Lone Star are active, in particular wholesale markets for autoclaved aerated concrete ('AAC') blocks, AAC large format prefabricated compound units and calcium silicate units ('CSUs'), and the retail markets for such products in Germany. The Commission concluded that the vertical links created by the transaction in Germany would raise no competition concerns because of the limited impact of Lone Star on the market and SGBDD has only a moderate position in retail markets within Germany. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under case number [M.9406](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Aleris by Triton

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Aleris of Sweden by Triton of Luxembourg. Aleris provides specialty healthcare services. Triton is an investment firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the absence of horizontal overlaps and vertical links 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.9493](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat : Le PIB en hausse de 0,2% et l'emploi en hausse de 0,2% dans la zone euro ; le PIB en hausse de 0,2% et l'emploi en hausse de 0,3% dans l'UE28 (deuxième trimestre 2019)

Au cours du deuxième trimestre 2019, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a progressé de 0,2% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l'estimation publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au cours du premier trimestre 2019, le PIB avait augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l'UE28. En comparaison avec le même trimestre de l'année précédente, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est accru de 1,2% dans la zone euro et de 1,4% dans l'UE28 au deuxième trimestre 2019, après respectivement +1,3% et +1,6% au trimestre précédent. L'UE et la zone euro ont ainsi connu une croissance pendant 25 trimestres consécutifs. Les chiffres publiés aujourd'hui par Eurostat montrent que l'emploi est au plus haut niveau jamais

enregistré dans l'Union européenne et dans la zone euro. Eurostat estime qu'environ 241 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient employés dans l'UE, dont environ 160 millions dans la zone euro au deuxième trimestre 2019. Cela signifie que depuis l'entrée en fonction de cette Commission, l'UE a créé environ 14,1 millions d'emplois, dont environ 9,9 millions dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Annika Breidhardt – Tél. : +32 229 56153; Christian Wigand – Tél.: +32 229 62253 ; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976; Sara Soumillion – Tél.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini to travel to Central and Latin America

From Sunday 8 to Thursday 12 September, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini**, will travel to Cuba, Mexico and Colombia. During her visit to Cuba on 8-9 September, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will co-chair the [second EU-Cuba Joint Council on Monday in Havana](#). While in Cuba, she will meet with the Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel, Minister for Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, and Cuban civil society representatives. During her bilateral visit to Mexico on 10-11 September, Federica **Mogherini** will hold bilateral meetings, including with Mexican Minister of Interior Olga Sánchez Cordero, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard and representatives of the Mexican civil society. Finally, in Colombia on 12 September, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will have meetings, inter alia, with Colombian President Iván Duque and representatives of the Colombian civil society. Photo and video coverage of the entire visit will be provided via [Europe by Satellite](#). To know more about EU's relations with the three countries, see the following: [Cuba](#), [Mexico](#) and [Colombia](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel: +32 229 92256)

Commissioner Oettinger travels to Cyprus to discuss EU's next long-term budget

Commissioner in charge of Budget and Human Resources, Günther H. **Oettinger**, is arriving in Cyprus today for a series of high-level meetings dedicated to the EU budget for 2021-2027. In Nicosia, the Commissioner will meet with the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, with the Minister of Finance, Harris Georgiadis, and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Christodoulides. The meetings are part of the ongoing efforts of the Commission to take forward the negotiations on EU's next long-term budget, in view of an agreement in the autumn of this year. Ahead of his visit, Commissioner **Oettinger** said: *"The clock is ticking and the autumn is fast approaching. The Commission is working hard to make sure the next EU budget is agreed on time to the benefit of Europe's entrepreneurs, farmers, researchers and everybody beyond our borders who counts on our valuable support. We are convinced that all our partners – including Member States and*

the European Parliament – are equally committed to this objective.” On 2 May 2018, the European Commission put forward a proposal for a modern, balanced and fair long-term budget to deliver on Europe’s priorities as set out by Leaders in Bratislava in 2016 and in Rome in 2017. Since then, the Commission has worked hand in hand with the rotating Presidencies of the Council, and in close collaboration with the European Parliament, to take the negotiations forward. In line with the [conclusions](#) from the European Council meeting of 20 and 21 June 2019, an agreement should be reached before the end of the year. The Commission shares the firm believe that sticking to this timeline is essential, for the hundreds of thousands of students, farmers and researchers across Europe, as well as everybody else who benefits from the EU budget. To facilitate this objective, Commissioner **Oettinger** travelled earlier this summer to Finland, which currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. He also [visited](#) the Netherlands in August and [travelled to](#) Poland earlier this week. More information about why a timely agreement is of key importance is available [here](#) and [here](#). *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 2 29 57857)*

[CALENDAR](#) – Commissioner’s weekly activities

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