

# Daily News 07 / 03 / 2018

## **European Semester Winter Package: reviewing Member States' progress on their economic and social priorities**

The European Commission has presented the [European Semester](#) Winter Package. The package includes 27 Country Reports (for all Member States except Greece, which is under a stability support programme), the annual analysis by Commission staff on the economic and social situation in Member States and progress made in implementing Country-Specific Recommendations over the years. For the 12 Member States selected last November for an in-depth review, the Country Reports include an assessment of possible macroeconomic imbalances and the package provides an update of the categorisation of countries under the so-called Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure. For the first time, the Country Reports put a special emphasis on mainstreaming the priorities of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed in November 2017. A [press release](#) and [memo](#) are available online. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

## **European Commission outlines EU plan to counter US trade restrictions on steel and aluminium**

The College of Commissioners discussed today the EU's response to the possible US import restrictions for steel and aluminium announced on 1 March. The EU stands ready to react proportionately and fully in line with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules in case the US measures are formalised and affect EU's economic interests. The College gave its political endorsement to the proposal presented by President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström**. Speaking after the College meeting, Commissioner **Malmström** said: *"We still hope, as a USA security partner, that the EU would be excluded. We also hope to convince the US administration that this is not the right move. As no decision has been taken yet, no formal action has been taken by the European Union. But we have made clear that if a move like this is taken, it will hurt the European Union. It will put thousands of European jobs in jeopardy and it has to be met by firm and proportionate response. Unlike these proposed US duties, our three tracks of work are in line with our obligations in the WTO. They will be carried out by the book. The root cause of the problem in the steel and aluminium sector is global overcapacity. It is rooted in the fact that a lot of steel and aluminium production takes place under massive state subsidies, and under non-market conditions. This can only be addressed by cooperation, getting to the source of the problem and working together. What is clear is that turning inward is not the answer. Protectionism cannot be the answer, it never is."* The EU remains available to continue working on this together with the United States. The EU has been and remains a strong supporter of an open and rules-based global trade system. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

## **Eurostat: 8 mars 2018: Journée internationale de la femme**

Les femmes ont gagné en moyenne 16% de moins que les hommes dans l'UE en 2016, l'écart de rémunération le plus faible en Roumanie et en Italie, le plus élevé en Estonie. En 2016, l'écart de rémunération non ajusté entre les hommes et les femmes était juste supérieur à 16% dans l'Union européenne (UE). Autrement dit, pour chaque euro gagné dans l'heure par un homme, une femme gagnait en moyenne 84 centimes. L'écart de rémunération dans les États membres, en 2016, allait de juste plus de 5% en Roumanie et en Italie à plus de 25% en Estonie, suivie par la République tchèque et l'Allemagne (près de 22% chacune). Le communiqué Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

## **More Commission support for industrial regions to build resilient and competitive economies**

Today the Commission has selected 7 additional EU regions and Member States for tailored assistance under [the Commission pilot action](#) on industrial transition: Cantabria (Spain), Centre-Val de Loire (France), East-North Finland, Grand-Est (France) and Greater Manchester (United Kingdom) as well as Lithuania and Slovenia, in addition to [the regions already selected](#) in December 2017. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said: *“Industrial transition is a major challenge for our economy and society. I am very glad that we will be working with 10 regions and two Member States to help them make full use of their strengths and potentials to embrace innovation, decarbonisation, digitisation, and to develop the skills for the future.”* The selected authorities will be able to develop or redesign strategies for regional economic transformation based on their [smart specialisation](#) priorities i.e. the regions' niche areas of competitive strengths. Tailored assistance will be offered by the Commission services, external experts and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to help prepare for the jobs of the future, broaden innovation, support the transition to a low-carbon economy, encourage entrepreneurship and promote inclusive growth. A [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) are available online. More information on smart specialisation in the participating Member states and regions is available on [DG REGIO's website](#). A signature ceremony between Commissioner Crețu and representatives from the Member States and regions will take place today at 14h at the Commission's VIP corner, which you can follow live on [EBS](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

**Eurostat: Estimation du PIB et des principaux agrégats pour le quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB en hausse de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28, +2,7% et +2,6% respectivement par rapport au quatrième trimestre 2016**

Au cours du quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB corrigé des variations

saisonniers a progressé de 0,6% 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 troisième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait augmenté de 0,7% dans les deux zones. En comparaison avec le même trimestre de l'année précédente, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est accru de 2,7% dans la zone euro et de 2,6% dans l'UE28 au quatrième trimestre 2017, après +2,7% dans les deux zones au troisième trimestre 2017. Au cours du quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB des États-Unis a progressé de 0,6% par rapport au trimestre précédent (après +0,8% au troisième trimestre 2017). Par rapport au même trimestre de l'année précédente, le PIB a progressé de 2,5% (après +2,3% au troisième trimestre 2017). Sur l'ensemble de l'année 2017, le PIB a augmenté de 2,3% dans la zone euro et de 2,4% dans l'UE28, contre 1,8% et 2,0% en 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint d'European Broadcaster Exchange par les sociétés ProSiebenSat.1, TF1, Mediaset et Channel Four Television**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de European Broadcaster Exchange (EBX) Limited basée au Royaume-Uni par les sociétés ProSiebenSat.1 Media SE, basée en Allemagne, Télévision Française 1 S.A., basée en France, Mediaset S.p.A., basée en Italie et Channel Four Television Corporation, basée au Royaume-Uni. European Broadcaster Exchange est active dans la commercialisation et la vente, au niveau pan-européen, de l'inventaire publicitaire vidéo affiché avant, pendant et après le contenu vidéo disponible sur les médias numériques exploités par les entreprises actionnaires ou par des tiers. ProSiebenSat.1 Media SE est la société holding de l'un des grands réseaux de télévision à accès libre en Allemagne. Télévision Française 1 SA, appartenant au groupe Bouygues, est la société holding de l'un des grands réseaux de télévision à accès libre et à péage en France. Mediaset SpA, appartenant au groupe Fininvest, est la société holding de l'un des grands réseaux de télévision à accès libre et à péage en Italie et en Espagne. Channel Four Television Corporation est la société holding de l'un des grands réseaux de télévision au Royaume-Uni. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché sur le territoire de l'Espace économique européen. L'opération 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.8714](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of controlling shares in Hyperion by CDPQ**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of controlling shares in Hyperion Insurance Group Limited

("Hyperion") of the UK by Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec ("CDPQ") of Canada. Hyperion is an insurance and reinsurance broker, and underwriting agency, active worldwide. CDPQ is a long-term institutional investor that manages funds for public as well as private pension and insurance funds, active worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because there are no overlaps between the companies' activities in the European Economic Area. 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.8767](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Century by Nufarm**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Century, a portfolio of assets belonging to Adama Agricultural Solutions Ltd of Israel and Syngenta AG of Switzerland, by Nufarm of Australia. Century comprises a portfolio of pesticides including herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, seed treatment products, as well as plant growth regulators. It is sold as part of the [commitments offered by ChemChina](#) to the Commission to approve the acquisition of Syngenta. Nufarm is a public company that offers pesticides including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and seed technologies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the presence of several alternative competitors in various pesticide markets within the European Economic Area. The operation 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 the case number [M.8725](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Security Union: EU Mayors to discuss security of public spaces**

Tomorrow, mayors from cities across Europe will gather in Brussels to discuss lessons learned from recent terrorist attacks and to share best practices to enhance the protection of public spaces. The EU Mayors' Conference, "Building Urban Defences Against Terrorism", jointly organised by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, will notably focus on "security by design" solutions, measures to enhance the prevention of radicalisation at local level, public-private cooperation and funding opportunities for public spaces under the different EU financial instruments. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "In a Europe that protects, it is fundamental that our citizens feel safe when walking down the street. Security by design should become a cornerstone of the way we protect our public spaces from terrorism. We are here to concretely help our Member States with funds and expertise so they step up their efforts at all levels – European, national and local." Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** said: "We are committed to

*working closely with cities and local authorities to strengthen the protection of our public spaces, without compromising the very values that we are defending: openness, tolerance and freedom.”* Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“Security in our cities has a social dimension: access to quality and non-segregated basic services, urban regeneration, community empowerment. Solutions will be found by working together at all levels, so we are able to tackle extremism and violence before they can take roots in our streets.”* President of the European Committee of the Regions Karl-Heinz **Lambertz** said: *“Community safety is a priority and by bringing together every level of government, the EU is taking the right steps to counter terrorism. We need to cooperate across borders, invest locally to tackle radicalisation and ensure our security services are ready to prevent future attacks. This work starts in our cities”.* Following up on the [Nice Declaration](#) of 29 September 2017, the conference is one of the key deliverables of the [EU Action Plan](#) to support the protection of public spaces, presented by the Commission in October 2017. A press conference with Commissioner Julian King, French Minister of Interior, Gérard Collomb, the Mayor of Mechelen, Bart Somers on behalf of the European Committee of the Regions, and the Mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi will take place tomorrow at 9:45 and will be broadcast on [EbS](#). Factsheets on the Commission’s efforts to [protect public spaces](#) and [fight radicalisation](#) are available online. More information on the conference is available on the event’s [website](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

### **Commissioner Andriukaitis in Sofia for the ‘Role of the Wildlife in Animal Health Management’ workshop and Citizens’ Dialogue**

On 8 March, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food safety will be in Sofia to participate in the multi-country workshop on the ‘Role of the Wildlife in Animal Health Management’ organised by the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) of the European Commission and the Bulgarian Presidency. *‘Clearly there is no one-size-fits-all overall strategy to deal with wildlife in relation to animal health management. The EU animal health policy that covers all animals in the EU kept for food, farming, sport, companionship, entertainment, as well as animals used in research and kept in zoos is currently covered in many different pieces of EU legislation. The intention is to replace it, over time, by the new Animal Health Law and its implementing legislation which will be presented and discussed in more detail during the event.’* said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** ahead of the visit. In Sofia the Commissioner is scheduled to meet with Mr Rumen Porodzanov, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Mr Kiril Ananiev, Minister for Health and coordinators of European Reference Networks. During his visit Commissioner will also participate in the Citizens’ Dialogue “Towards more sustainable food production and healthier consumption in the EU” alongside Ms Desislava Taneva, Member of the Parliament and Chair of Agriculture and Food Committee, webstream available [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

## **Commissioners Avramopoulos, Jourová and King to attend the Justice and Home Affairs Council**

Commissioners Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Věra **Jourová** and Julian **King** will participate in the Justice and Home Affairs Council taking place in Brussels on 8 and 9 March. On Thursday, Home Affairs Ministers together with Commissioners Avramopoulos and King will exchange views on the implementation of the [Passenger Name Record \(PNR\) Directive](#), cooperation between CSDP missions and EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies and the work with the Western Balkan countries in the area of security and counter terrorism. Over lunch, the Ministers will discuss the issue of terrorist content online and the recent [Recommendation](#) presented by the Commission. In the afternoon, the discussion will focus on the Commission's proposal on [interoperability of EU information systems](#) and the state of play on migration. A press conference is scheduled to take place after the meeting at 18:00 CET and will be streamed live on [EbS](#). On Friday, Commissioner Jourová will discuss with Justice Ministers the reform of the Brussels IIa [Regulation](#) on cross-border matrimonial matters and parental responsibilities. Commissioner Jourová will also inform Ministers on the state of play of the setting up of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPP0). Ministers will exchange views on improving the [cross-border access to electronic evidence](#), a session which Commissioner King will also participate in, ahead of Commissioner Jourová's visit to the U.S. and the presentation of a proposal by the Commission on this topic. Finally, the lunch session will be dedicated to the issue of radicalisation in prisons. A press conference is scheduled to take place after the meeting at around 15:30 CET and will be broadcast on [EbS](#). *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Christian Wigand Tel.: +32 2 29 62253*

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