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Juncker Plan: €250 million for female entrepreneurs in Spain; €500 million for SMEs in Central Europe

The European Investment Bank (EIB) Group has signed two new deals under the Juncker Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), providing €750 million in financing to small businesses in the EU. The first is a €250 million agreement with Caixa Bank in Spain which will focus on supporting innovative projects led by female entrepreneurs. The second is an agreement with UniCredit to finance SMEs in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania; as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (not backed by EFSI). Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The geographical reach of the European Fund for Strategic Investments is of paramount importance and under today's agreement with UniCredit, six Central EU countries will benefit. SMEs in those Member States – as well as in two neighbouring countries – can now apply to UniCredit for loans with the EU budget guarantee to start up and scale up their businesses. I'm also glad that with the EFSI support more female entrepreneurs can get financing for their innovative projects."* (Full press releases can be found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Snapchat joins the EU Code of Conduct to fight illegal hate speech online

Snap.Inc announced today that it is joining the EU's Code of Conduct on countering illegal online hate speech. It is the seventh major IT platform committing to combat this phenomenon, and the next additional participant after Instagram and Google+ announced their participation in January 2018. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said, *"I welcome Snapchat's commitment to tackle illegal online content. The growing number of participants proves that the EU Code of Conduct is an efficient way to make the Internet a safer place. This is particularly important as it will help protect the younger generations that use Snapchat."* To respond to the proliferation of racist and xenophobic hate speech online, the European Commission and four major IT companies (Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube) presented a "[Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online](#)" in May 2016. Since then, the Commission with the help of NGOs has carefully monitored how the Code is implemented by the companies. The latest monitoring exercise in January 2018 showed that the Code is delivering important progress in the response to hate speech notices: 70% of the content is removed and in more than 81% of the cases this happens within 24 hours ([press release](#)). The Commission has also recently adopted a Recommendation to more generally reinforce the EU response to illegal content online ([press release](#) from 1 March) and will decide whether additional steps are necessary in the coming months. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083; Melanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commission publishes evaluation reports on EU rules on machinery safety and product liability

Technology is developing rapidly and Europe needs to seize the opportunities ahead. In addition to supporting industry modernisation with initiatives such as [measures on artificial intelligence](#) and an upcoming strategy on connected and automated driving, the Commission wants to ensure that EU legislation is apt for emerging digital technologies and innovative products. As part of this exercise, the Commission has evaluated the Product Liability Directive ([Directive 85/374/EEC](#)) and the Machinery Directive ([Directive 2006/42/EC](#)). The results published today show that both Directives are fit for purpose and conducive to innovation. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *“European industry is competitive, not only because we have great innovative minds, but also because we have a conducive framework. We are happy to see that our existing legislation is fit for purpose in a changing world. It makes our EU products both safe and competitive. Technology changes fast, so we will continue to monitor the situation and are ready to act if the need arises.”* The Machinery Directive sets general health and safety requirements for products, such as robots or 3D printers. Which technical solutions should be deployed to meet the high safety level is then left to manufacturers. For this reason, the Directive functions like an umbrella framework leaving leeway for products to be innovated. The Commission will launch a study to further look into certain aspects of emerging technologies, such as issues arising from human-machine collaboration, which are not explicitly addressed by the Directive. The Product Liability Directive foresees that if a product causes damage to a person or their private property, the producer is liable to pay compensation. The evaluation shows that the Directive continues to strike a good balance between consumer protection and encouraging innovation in the EU. The Commission will publish interpretative guidance in mid-2019 to facilitate a common understanding between Member States and to further clarify to what extent it applies to emerging technologies. Find the evaluation of Product Liability Directive [here](#) and the Machinery Directive [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Festival de Cannes: 18 films soutenus par le programme MEDIA mis à l’honneur

L’édition 2018 du [Festival de Cannes](#), qui ouvre ses portes demain, ainsi que ses sélections parallèles, [La Quinzaine des Réalisateurs](#) et la [Semaine de la Critique](#), présenteront 18 films cofinancés par [MEDIA](#), le programme de l’UE de soutien au secteur audiovisuel. Quatre films soutenus par MEDIA seront en compétition cette année pour remporter la Palme d’Or: “Dogman”, de Matteo Garrone (France, Italie), “Les filles du soleil”, d’Eva Husson (France, Belgique, Suisse et Géorgie), “Lazzaro Felice”, d’Alice Rohrwacher (Italie, France, Allemagne et Suisse) et “Cold War”, de Pawel Pawlikowski (Pologne, France et Royaume-Uni). Quatorze autres films soutenus par MEDIA seront présentés dans d’autres sélections du festival. Lundi 14 mai, Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l’économie numérique et à la société, ouvrira le [Forum du film européen](#) qui mettra l’accent sur la puissance des réseaux et de la

collaboration afin d'augmenter la visibilité des œuvres européens. A cette occasion, la commissaire a déclaré : *“Le Festival de Cannes consacre la liberté d'expression artistique qui est au cœur de notre démocratie. Je suis très fière d'y présenter les priorités du programme MEDIA qui soutient depuis 1991 la création et la distribution cinématographiques en Europe. Je viens à Cannes pour porter un message fort d'une Commission qui a proposé d'intensifier ses actions futures en faveur d'un modèle européen du cinéma, fondé sur la liberté, la diversité et les collaborations transfrontalières au service du citoyen”*. Dans le cadre de [l'Année européenne du patrimoine culturel 2018](#) et de la stratégie #Digital4Culture de la Commission, la Commissaire participera à une table ronde sur la promotion et l'accès au patrimoine cinématographique européen. Elle animera un déjeuner-débat sur le thème «Les femmes dans l'audiovisuel» en présence de députés européens, de cinéastes et de représentants de l'industrie. Le Forum du film européen sera précédé par une conférence intitulée «Soyez créatifs, parlez à la banque» qui mettra en lumière les premiers résultats de la [Facilité européenne de garantie pour les secteurs culturels et créatifs](#). Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#) et [ici](#), ainsi que dans une [brochure](#) et une [fiche d'informations](#). (Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

Mergers: Commission clears ArcelorMittal's acquisition of Ilva, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Ilva by ArcelorMittal. The decision is conditional on the divestiture of an extensive remedy package to preserve effective competition on European steel markets to the benefit of consumers and businesses. In particular, it is subject to the divestiture of several steel plants, which would be sold to one or more buyers that will continue to operate and develop them, so they can compete effectively with ArcelorMittal. Today's decision follows an [in-depth review](#) of the deal, which combines ArcelorMittal, the largest producer of flat carbon steel in Europe and worldwide, with the main assets of Ilva, notably its steel plant in Taranto, Italy, which is Europe's largest single-site integrated flat carbon steel plant. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“Steel is a critical input for many European industries and products we use every day. Today's decision makes sure that ArcelorMittal's acquisition of Ilva, creating the by far largest steelmaker in Europe, does not result in higher steel prices – at the expense of European industries, the millions of people they employ and consumers. ArcelorMittal has proposed to sell a number of steel plants throughout Europe to one or more buyers, who will run them to compete with ArcelorMittal on a lasting basis. This will preserve effective competition on European steel markets. It goes hand in hand with decisive EU action to protect our steel industry from unfair trade distortions from third countries. Finally, the sale of Ilva's assets to ArcelorMittal should also help accelerate the urgent environmental clean-up works in the Taranto Region. This essential de-pollution work should continue without delay to protect the health of Taranto's inhabitants.”* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [IT](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100;

Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Rockwell Collins by UTC, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Rockwell Collins by United Technologies Corporation (UTC) in the aerospace sector. The decision is conditional on divestment of businesses in actuators, pilot controls, ice protection and oxygen systems. On the basis of its preliminary investigation, the Commission was concerned that the transaction, as originally notified, would have reduced competition in the markets for trimmable horizontal stabiliser actuators (THSA), certain pilot controls, pneumatic wing ice protection and oxygen systems. To address the Commission's preliminary concerns, UTC offered to divest the following activities: i) Rockwell Collins' entire global THSA and pilot control businesses, located at several sites mainly in the US and Mexico; ii) Rockwell Collins' entire global business in ice protection, located in a single facility in the US; iii) UTC's two research projects in oxygen systems. The Commission found that the proposed commitments fully remove the overlaps between UTC and Rockwell Collins in the markets where competition concerns had been identified. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy said: *"When we take a trip on a plane, we usually don't think about all the different components that go into building the aircraft. UTC and Rockwell Collins are two of the biggest suppliers of these components to aircraft makers worldwide. We need to ensure that competition is preserved for all of them. We can allow this merger to go ahead because in all the markets where we raised concerns, UTC has committed to divest activities covering the entire overlap between the two companies."* A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Stylianides visits Greece, holds Citizens Dialogue

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is in Greece this week to participate in a series of events to celebrate Europe Day. Today he will hold a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) in Kavala, Greece, to discuss the future of Europe and the Commission's new proposal [rescEU](#) to upgrade the European system of civil protection. He will also meet with officials from the local authorities, and the Rector and the academic community of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology. On Europe Day, May 9, the Commissioner will speak at a High Level Breakfast on "Europe in front of Strategic Dilemmas", organised by DIKTIO-Network for Reform in Greece and Europe, and he will visit the premises of the organisation "Smile of the Child". On May 10, he will meet with Greece Migration Minister Dimitris Vitsas and Deputy Minister of Economy and Development Stergios Pitsiorlas. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

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