

Daily News 07 /11/ 2017

Future of Europe: Commission brings together religious leaders to discuss a values-based and effective Union

Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** today hosted the 13th annual high-level meeting with religious leaders from across Europe, alongside European Parliament First Vice-President Mairead McGuinness. The annual high-level meeting is part of the regular dialogue with churches, religious communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations foreseen by Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty, and entrusted to First Vice-President **Timmermans** by President **Juncker**. This year's meeting took place against the background of the ongoing debate on the Future of Europe, launched by the Commission's White Paper on 1 March 2017. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"The future of Europe is in the hands of its citizens. Shaping that future is our collective responsibility, our shared values our compass. The regular dialogue with confessional organisations, like the one with non-confessional organisations, allows us to address the issue of our common future from different perspectives. It is through inclusive dialogue that we can chart the best course for our common future."* The participants discussed the human dimension of Europe, in particular its social and environmental dimensions and the principles of solidarity, social justice and sustainability. The leaders present were invited to work with the Commission throughout the reflection process on the future of Europe and to bring their respective communities into the debate. The press conference can be watched on [EbS](#) and the press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

EU reduced CO2 emissions by 23% – while economy grew by 53%

Greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union were reduced by 23% between 1990 and 2016, while the economy grew by 53% over the same period, the latest Commission's report reveals as this year's UN Climate Conference [COP23](#) kick-start in Bonn. The [report](#) "Two years after Paris – Progress towards meeting the EU's climate commitments" shows that while economic growth has recently picked up, the EU remains firmly on track to meet its 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target. Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"Two years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the EU remains fully committed to reducing its domestic emissions by at least 40% between 1990 and 2030. We are on track to meet our 2020 target and close to finalising our climate legislation for the next decade. Our emissions decline while the economy grows, largely thanks to innovative technologies, showing that growth and climate action can go hand in hand. However, there are still challenges ahead, as transport emissions in the EU continue to grow. This is why the Commission will present tomorrow measures to slash emissions from cars and vans in the decade starting 2021"*. Under the [Paris agreement](#), the EU has committed to cut CO2 emissions by at least 40% by 2030 while modernising

the EU's economy and delivering on jobs and growth for all European citizens. In 2016, EU emissions decreased by 0.7% while GDP grew by 1.9%. The EU is one of the major economies with the lowest per capita emissions, and the emissions per unit of GDP continue to fall. The progress report also looks at the EU's contribution to international climate action. In 2016, the EU and its Member States continued to be a major provider of [climate finance](#) to developing countries, increasing their overall contribution to last year reach EUR 20.2 billion. More information on the Commission's website [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Investment Plan provides financial boost for medium-sized companies in Finland

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed an agreement with OP Bank worth €150 million under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the Investment Plan for Europe. This guarantee agreement under the EFSI allows OP to lend up to €300 million to companies with a minimum turnover of €30 million. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *“The Investment Plan for Europe has proven incredibly successful when it comes to providing financing to small and medium-sized companies in Europe. In relative terms, Finnish SMEs have benefitted less from EFSI financing than SMEs in many other Member States. Therefore, I'm very happy that thanks to this new €150 million agreement with OP Bank, medium-sized Finnish businesses will benefit from the Investment Plan, and as a result, be able to expand their operations and create new jobs across the country.”* (For full press releases on all EFSI projects see the [Investment Plan website](#) and for more information contact Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Commission proposes fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2018

Today the Commission presents its proposal for fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and the North Sea for 2018. The Commission proposes quotas for 78 stocks: for 53 stocks the fishing quota is either increased or remains the same and for 25 stocks is reduced. The fishing opportunities, or Total Allowable Catches (TACs), are quotas set for most commercial fish stocks that keep the stocks healthy, while allowing the fishing industry to profit from fishing the highest amount of fish. As the size of some key fish stocks is increasing – notably for sole in the North Sea, northern hake and southern horse mackerel – so is the profitability of the fishing sector, with an estimated EUR 1.5 billion profit for 2017. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *“Our fleet is becoming more profitable and that is because some of the EU's key fish stocks are healthier and more abundant. The perseverance of the fishermen and the responsible fisheries management decisions stand to prove that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand. That being said now is not the time for complacency. We must continue our joint efforts to manage our seas and*

oceans in a way that works for the environment, for the economy and for future generations.” Today’s proposal will be submitted for discussion and decision by the Member States at the December Fisheries Council (11-12 December in Brussels), to be applied as from 1 January 2018. [Press release](#) and [MEMO](#) available online. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Commission awards Paris as most innovative European city in 2017

Today, the European Commission awarded the 2017 European Capital of Innovation ([iCapital](#)) prize of €1,000,000 to Paris. The award, granted under the EU’s research and innovation programme Horizon 2020, recognises Paris for its inclusive innovation strategy. Tel Aviv and Tallinn were selected as runners-up, and were both awarded €100,000. Innovation Commissioner Carlos **Moedas** announced the results at the [Web Summit](#) in Lisbon. He said: “*Cities are not defined by their size and population, but by the breadth of their vision and the power bestowed upon their citizens. Some cities are not afraid to experiment. They are not afraid to involve their citizens in developing and testing out new ideas. These are the cities that empower their citizens. Today we are here to acknowledge these cities.*” Over the last decade, Paris has built more than 100, 000 square meters of incubators, and hosts now the world’s largest start-up campus. Tallinn has been awarded for its initiative to act as a testing ground for potential breakthrough technologies such as self-driving cars or parcel delivery robots. Tel Aviv has set up a Smart City Urban Lab that links up innovative start-ups with leading technology companies. During their participation at the Web Summit, Commissioner **Moedas** and Commissioner for Competition Margrethe **Vestager** took the opportunity to promote another Commission award in a [Facebook Live chat](#): the EU Prize for Women Innovators 2018. It supports gender equality in innovation and emphasizes the importance of creating positive role models for women innovators and entrepreneurs. [Applications](#) are still open until 15 November. A press release on the [iCapital Award winners](#) and information on the [EU Prize for Women Innovators 2018](#) are available online. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de Croatie

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d’inscription du [«Slavonski kulen»/«Slavonski kulin»](#) dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Le Slavonski kulen, aussi appelé Slavonski kulin, est un saucisson sec fabriqué chaque année du 1^{er} novembre au 31 mars dans la région croate de Slavonie dans le nord-est du pays. La production de ce saucisson dans la région s’appuie sur une tradition de plus de 200 ans. Ce produit constitue une importante source de revenus pour certaines exploitations agricoles de la région. Le «Slavonski kulen»/«Slavonski kulin» est traditionnellement dégusté lors de fêtes religieuses, de jours fériés ou de fêtes familiales. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1410 produits déjà protégés dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données

[DOOR](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (Pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)

La politique de cohésion de l'UE protège l'environnement et la santé des Lettons

Près de 25 millions d'euros du [Fonds européen de développement régional](#) vont contribuer à l'assainissement d'étangs contenant du goudron acide à Inčukalns, à 35 km au Nord de Riga, en Lettonie. Le projet vise à empêcher les infiltrations acides dans les nappes phréatiques et à réhabiliter le site pour protéger la santé des habitants ainsi que l'environnement. Un système de surveillance de la qualité de l'eau des nappes phréatiques et de l'environnement sera mis en place, pour permettre la ré-exploitation du site. La commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a déclaré: *“Voici un nouvel exemple de la valeur ajoutée de l'Europe; je me réjouis de savoir que les habitants d'Inčukalns vivront dans un environnement plus sain grâce à nos investissements.”* Plus d'informations sur la politique de Cohésion en Lettonie sont disponibles sur la [Plateforme Open Data](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

L'UE investit pour un meilleur accès à l'eau potable en Roumanie

Plus de 17 millions d'euros du [Fonds de Cohésion](#) sont investis dans quatre projets d'infrastructures de gestion et distribution de l'eau en Roumanie. La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a déclaré: *“Un meilleur accès à l'eau potable, c'est un quotidien transformé pour des milliers d'habitants. Je suis fière que la politique de Cohésion investisse pour une qualité de vie meilleure, partout en Europe.”* 7 millions d'euros financeront l'achèvement des travaux sur les réseaux de distribution et de collecte de l'eau dans des agglomérations urbaines du comté de Gorj, au Sud-Ouest du pays, notamment dans le chef-lieu, Târgu Jiu. Dans le comté de Suceava, au Nord de la Roumanie, 5 millions d'euros sont investis dans l'extension du système de gestion et traitement de l'eau. 7766 habitants de plus bénéficieront ainsi d'un accès à une eau plus saine à la fin des travaux. 2,8 millions d'euros serviront à achever la rénovation et extension du réseau de distribution d'eau et d'égouts dans huit zones urbaines du comté d'Ilfov, qui entoure Bucarest. Enfin, dans la région de Constanța-Ialomița, 2,5 millions d'euros contribueront à achever la réhabilitation et l'extension des infrastructures de gestion et distribution de l'eau dans 19 communes, dont vont bénéficier 24 000 habitants de plus. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Education: new report documents the broad scope of citizenship education

across European countries

A [report](#) published by the European Commission's [Eurydice Network](#) today provides a comprehensive picture of citizenship education in schools across Europe. Covering 42 education systems including those of the 28 EU Member States, it confirms that citizenship education is part of the national curricula for general education in all countries and that it is about far more than simply teaching students about a country's constitutional structure. Tibor **Navracsics**, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"This report provides important new evidence on how schools build up shared values in our societies by teaching pupils and students the necessary skills for acting responsibly. Its publication is timely as we prepare to present shortly a draft Council Recommendation on promoting social inclusion and common EU values through education and non-formal learning."* Many countries have revised curricula on citizenship education whilst a few have increased the number of teaching hours; some have upgraded teacher training and improved guidance and support material. However, gaps are also identified, for example the lack of centralised regulations or recommendations with regard to citizenship education for prospective teachers in a large number of education systems. The report also contains four case studies on recent policy initiatives in the area of citizenship education in Belgium (Flemish Community), Estonia, France and Austria. For more information, see this [factsheet](#). *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)*

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Portuguese guarantee scheme

The European Commission has authorised, under EU State aid rules, the prolongation of a guarantee scheme for credit institutions in Portugal until 7 May 2018. The Commission found the extension of the measures to be in line with its [2013 Banking Communication](#), according to which the Commission can authorise schemes providing for liquidity measures for banks, which do not have a capital shortfall. The scheme [was initially approved in October 2008](#) and prolonged several times, the [last time in February 2017](#). The Commission approved the prolongation of the scheme because the measure is well targeted, proportionate and limited in time and scope. In line with the 2013 Banking Communication, the Commission is authorising guarantee schemes on banks' liabilities for periods of six months. Each prolongation is based on a review of the developments in financial markets and the scheme's effectiveness. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.48550. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Portuguese Guarantee Scheme on EIB lending

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a prolongation of a Portuguese guarantee scheme on European Investment Bank (EIB) lending until 7 May 2018. The scheme covers State guarantees to banks that guarantee EIB loans granted to companies in Portugal. The Commission found the prolongation of the scheme to be in line with its [2013 Banking Communication](#) because it is well targeted, proportionate and limited in time

and scope. It was [initially approved on 27 June 2013](#) and prolonged several times, the last time [in February 2017](#). The prolonged scheme will allow the continuation of funding provided by the EIB to the real economy and prevent the disruption of the credit granted by the EIB through the banks participating in the scheme. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.48549. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Eurostat: September 2017 compared with August 2017 – Volume of retail trade up by 0.7% in euro area, up by 0.3% in EU28

In September 2017 compared with August 2017, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade rose by 0.7% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.3% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In August, the retail trade volume decreased by 0.1% in the euro area, while it rose by 0.5% in the EU28. In September 2017 compared with September 2016, the calendar adjusted retail sales index increased by 3.7% in the euro area and by 3.5% in the EU28. A Eurostat press release is [available online](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Navracsics on the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Marie Skłodowska-Curie

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Marie Skłodowska-Curie, Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“On 7 November 2017, we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Marie Skłodowska-Curie’s birth. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and the only female scientist who was awarded the Prize twice, in both physics and chemistry. She discovered two new elements, polonium and radium, which led to the founding of the discipline of atomic physics. Marie Skłodowska-Curie succeeded in studying abroad when almost all universities were closed to women. She excelled in her scientific studies and research in male-dominated fields and travelled the world to acquire more knowledge. Long before the concept of a work-life balance existed in our minds, Marie Skłodowska-Curie managed to combine ground-breaking scientific achievements with raising a family.”* The full statement is available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Arias Cañete meets Governor of California Jerry Brown

Building on concrete efforts by both California and the EU to implement carbon markets and zero-carbon transportation policies, and in light of the global momentum generated by the Paris Agreement, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** and Governor of California Jerry Brown met today in Brussels and agreed to step up cooperation on emissions trading and zero-carbon transportation. On carbon markets, the EU and California will hold regular political and technical dialogues on the design and implementation of their carbon markets, including cooperation with other carbon markets such as China. Hosted by China's Special Representative on Climate Change Affairs, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** and Governor Brown will open a high-level event on carbon markets and the role of carbon pricing in China on 14 November at COP 23 in Bonn. The EU and California will also work together to scale zero-carbon transportation solutions globally, including by bringing new commitments and new partners to the Global Climate Action Summit which California will host 12-14 September 2018. The Summit will emphasize how subnational actors have already contributed to emissions reductions, spur bold new commitments, and galvanize a global movement for everyone to do more. Following today's meeting, Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"The EU and California are natural partners in the fight against climate change and have been pioneers in the early years of carbon markets and clean mobility. Today Governor Brown and I agreed to strengthen our cooperation so that we remain leaders in these areas – both of which will be key for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement."* The European Union is the largest carbon market in the world, with its emissions trading system a key part of the EU's policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while California also has a well-established carbon market, that is linked with markets in Quebec and Ontario. The EU's low-emission mobility strategy for the transport sector is also a key element of the bloc's climate policy, with a major new proposal on CO₂ emission standards for cars and vans to be considered by the Commission tomorrow. California introduced its first regulation to accelerate the uptake of zero-emissions vehicles in 1990 and its current standards have been adopted by nine other US States. The state also has a goal to put more than 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles on its roads by 2025. More information on the [Commission's website](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioner Moscovici in Berlin, Germany

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, will be in Berlin tomorrow, 8 November to attend the [French-German Business Forum 2017](#). He will also hold a number of meetings, including with Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag; Peter Altmaier, Federal Minister of Finance; Christian Lindner, Chair of the Free Democratic Party; and Cem Özdemir, Co-Chair of the Alliance 90/The Greens party. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

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