

# Daily News 11 / 03 / 2019

## **Third Brussels Conference “Supporting the future of Syria and the region” kicks off tomorrow**

The EU will host the third Brussels conference on “[Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region](#)” (#SyriaConf2019) co-chaired with the United Nations on 12-14 March. This year’s conference will address the most critical humanitarian and resilience issues affecting Syrians and communities hosting Syrian refugees, both inside the country and in the region. Specific attention will be placed on hearing the perspectives of Syrian women. The conference will reaffirm the international community’s political and financial support for Syria’s neighbours, in particular Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. Iraq and Egypt’s efforts will also be highlighted. The conference will also be the main pledging event for Syria and the region in 2019. Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 will be devoted to the “Days of Dialogue”, attended by hundreds of representatives of Syrian, regional, and international non-governmental and civil society organisations for an in-depth exchange with the international community at the European Parliament. More information on the “Days of dialogue” is available [here](#) (focus on resilience and regional/development) and [here](#) (focus on humanitarian support). On Thursday 14, the Foreign Ministers segment of the conference at the European Council will bring together participants from more than 85 countries and regional organisations at ministerial level to discuss all key aspects of the Syria crisis: political, humanitarian and regional development. The conference will seek to maintain international engagement in delivering assistance to the Syrian people and host communities. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will co-chair the conference on behalf of the European Union, together with Johannes **Hahn**, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and Christos **Stylianides**, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. On the UN’s side, the conference is held under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, who will be represented in Brussels by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination Mark Lowcock. He will be accompanied by UNSG Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. Other Heads of UN agencies will also be present. Remarks of the High Representative/Vice-President and the Commissioners, as well as the press conferences, will be available on [EBS](#). More information on the Conference is available on the dedicated [website](#). For further insight into the EU response to the Syrian crisis, our [factsheet](#) and infographics on the EU response to the Syrian crisis in [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [Turkey](#) and [inside Syria](#) are also available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Matteo Arisci – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

**European Remembrance Day for Victims of Terrorism: Commission commemorates victims and welcomes report on strengthening the rights of all victims of**

## crimes in the EU

Today the European Commission marks the 15th European Remembrance Day for Victims of Terrorism – an annual event to commemorate the Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004 which took the lives of 193 EU citizens and injured thousands more. Commemorating the event the Commission has issued the following [statement](#): *“Today, we remember all those who have lost their lives or loved ones to terror, irrespective of whether those terrorist attacks took place inside the European Union or beyond its borders. We pay tribute to all those affected by these heinous crimes, families and friends, and commit to stand united in our fight against terrorism. [...] We also thank the everyday heroes, first responders working together on the front line to make sure that no victim is left behind. Europe is a safer place because of their work. This is who we are.”* Today the Commission has also organised a dedicated [event](#) bringing victims of terrorism, victim associations and first responders, together with European and Member States’ representatives, to share their stories and experiences. The opening remarks by Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** are available on [EBS](#). The European Commission also welcomes a report on “Strengthening victims’ rights: from compensation to reparation”, written by Joëlle Milquet, Special Adviser to President **Juncker** on compensation for victims of crime. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 299 63444)

## Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, 11 and 12 March 2019

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the Commission at today’s Eurogroup and tomorrow’s ECOFIN meetings. The Commission will present the [second Enhanced Surveillance Report for Greece](#), published on 27 February, which assesses progress with implementing policy commitments made at the [Eurogroup of June 2018](#). The Eurogroup will discuss the updated [Draft Budgetary Plan of Latvia for 2019](#), on the basis of the [Opinion adopted by the Commission](#), which found it to be broadly compliant with the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact. There will also be a discussion on housing markets in the euro area following a presentation by Professor Lars E.O. Svensson, Professor of Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics. The Eurogroup will then continue in an inclusive format to follow up on the [December 2018 Euro Summit](#) and discuss the state of play of the ongoing work on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union. Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. At tomorrow’s ECOFIN meeting, Ministers are expected to agree on an updated list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions. First conceived as part of the Commission’s EU external strategy for effective taxation in 2016, the list is an important tool to tackle risks of tax abuse and unfair tax competition globally. The updated list follows [the original agreement amongst Member States in December 2017](#). Ministers will discuss the taxation of the digital economy, following the [proposals made by the Commission in March 2018](#) and in view of international developments. The Council is also set to agree on new rules to simplify [VAT collection on online sales](#) and will aim to reach a political agreement on the Commission proposals for new rules on

excise duty for alcohol. The Commission will present its assessment of the economic and social situation of each Member State for 2019 following the presentation of the [European Semester Winter Package](#) in February. Ministers will also discuss [InvestEU](#), the proposed programme which aims to boost private and public investment in Europe in the next long-term EU budget. A press conference with Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will follow the meeting. *(For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229-56153; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)*

## **Produits pharmaceutiques dans l'environnement: la Commission définit des actions pour faire face aux risques et aux défis posés**

[“L’approche stratégique relative aux produits pharmaceutiques dans l’environnement”](#) que la Commission présente aujourd’hui recense six domaines d’action concernant toutes les étapes du cycle de vie des produits pharmaceutiques dans lesquels des améliorations peuvent être apportées. Le texte porte sur les produits pharmaceutiques vétérinaires aussi bien que ceux destinés aux humains. Les domaines recensés couvrent toutes les étapes du cycle de vie des produits pharmaceutiques, depuis la conception et la production jusqu’à l’élimination et la gestion des déchets, conformément aux principes du document de travail des services de la [Commission sur les produits durables dans une économie circulaire](#). Les six domaines concernés comprennent des mesures visant à accroître l’utilisation prudente des produits pharmaceutiques et la sensibilisation à ce thème, à améliorer la formation et l’évaluation des risques, à récolter des données de surveillance, à encourager une “conception verte” de ces produits, à diminuer les émissions des fabricants, à réduire les déchets et à améliorer le traitement des eaux usées. Karmenu **Vella**, commissaire pour l’environnement, les affaires maritimes et la pêche, a déclaré: *“Nous avons tous pour la plupart été amenés à prendre des médicaments au cours de notre vie. Nous ne sommes toutefois pas nombreux à être conscients qu’une partie de ce que nous consommons finit dans l’environnement, ce qui a des effets sur les espèces sauvages comme les poissons présents dans nos cours d’eau. Nous devons réduire l’introduction de produits pharmaceutiques dans nos sols et nos cours d’eau, dans notre propre intérêt et afin de protéger la vie sauvage ainsi que l’environnement.”* Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, commissaire pour la santé et la sécurité alimentaire a quant à lui ajouté ce qui suit: *“Il est temps que nous attirions collectivement l’attention sur les risques des antimicrobiens pour l’environnement. Cette communication identifie les domaines dans lesquels une action est nécessaire et nous sert de tremplin pour nos discussions futures.”* Un [communiqué de presse](#) complet et [MEMO](#) sont disponibles en ligne. *(Pour plus d’informations: Enrico Brivio – Tél.: + 32 229 56172; Anca Paduraru – Tél.: +32 229 91269; Daniela Stoycheva – Tél.: +32 229 53664; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624)*

## **Clean energy transition: new clearer energy efficiency labels to simplify, bring more choice and savings for EU consumers**

To make energy labels more understandable for consumers and help them make better informed purchasing choices, the Commission adopted today **new energy efficiency labels** covering dishwashers, washing machines and washer-driers,

refrigerators, lamps, electronic displays including televisions, and refrigerating appliances with a direct sales function. "Energy efficiency first" is a central principle of the [Energy Union strategy](#). It is an effective way to cut emissions, bring savings to consumers and reduce the EU's fossil fuel import dependency. Since its introduction twenty years ago, the success of energy labelling has encouraged the development of ever more energy efficient products. This has resulted in the current label system becoming too complex. In 2017, the EU [agreed](#) clearer energy efficiency labelling rules, by moving from the current A+++ to G scale to an A to G energy scale, which is simpler and better understood by consumers. A product showing an A+++ energy efficiency class could for example become a B class after rescaling, without any change in its energy consumption. This will allow the top classes to have room for more energy efficient models. These new labels will be visible for European consumers in physical stores and on-line as of March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. For more information: see DG Energy [website](#) and the [MEMO](#). (For more information: Anna Kaisa-Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

### **Road safety: Commission responds to need for safe and secure parking areas for trucks**

There is a need for 400.000 safe and secure parking spaces in the EU. This is the conclusion of a [study](#) published by the European Commission today. Cargo trucks are subject to thefts and intrusions, and about 75% of these incidents occur when trucks are parked in unsecure parking facilities. As a response to this phenomenon, the study presents a detailed mapping of the needs and locations for safe and secure parking spaces in the EU and presents a series of minimum standards necessary to provide reliable and clear information on such spaces to drivers, cargo owners and hauliers. It is against this context that the Commission is promoting safe and secure parking areas, having made available Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) support funding worth €45 million and setting up an expert group to implement the common standards. Violeta **Bulc**, Commissioner for Transport said: *"Drivers in Europe deserve to be comfortable and safe from harm when resting. This is vital for their safety and the safety to their work across the European roads. The current situation is not acceptable. With a view to improving the working conditions of truck drivers in Europe and protect their social rights as part of [Mobility Package I](#), this study proposes a way forward. We will take the necessary steps to ensure our drivers and cargo owners benefit from safe and secure parking areas in the EU."* You can find more information [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 2 295 61 72; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Telepizza by KKR**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of indirect sole control of Telepizza, based in Spain, by KKR, based in the US. Telepizza manages a network of fast-food restaurants operated both through proprietary and franchised stores, as well as food delivery services. In December 2018, Telepizza and Pizza Hut, part of the YUM! Group, announced a strategic deal and master franchise alliance, under

which Telepizza's network will expand to approximately 2,560 restaurants in 37 countries, largely concentrated in the Iberian Peninsula, Mexico, and Central and South America. The Commission cleared the [Pizza Hut/Telepizza](#) transaction last December. KKR is a global investment firm which offers a broad range of alternative asset management services to public and private market investors and provides capital markets solutions for the firm, its portfolio companies and clients. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the very limited impact brought about by the transaction on the market. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9267](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Stylianides visits Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates to discuss current humanitarian crises in the region**

Today Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management is visiting Abu Dhabi where he will have a series of meetings with government officials to discuss current humanitarian crises in the region, especially the dire humanitarian conditions in Yemen. On Tuesday 12 March, the Commissioner will deliver a keynote speech at the [16<sup>th</sup> Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition](#) (DIHAD 2019), underlining the importance of education in emergencies as a strategic investment and will emphasize the need for total support of all actors, involving the donor community, humanitarian partners and the private sector. *(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)