

# Daily News 11 / 04 / 2018

## **COLLEGE MEETING: Commission acts to boost trust in scientific studies on food safety**

Today the Commission is responding to the concerns expressed by citizens in a successful European Citizens' Initiative, with a proposal to improve the transparency of scientific studies in the food safety area. The proposal, drawing also on the [Commission's Fitness Check](#) of the [General Food Law](#), which dates back from 2002 and thus needs an update, will: give citizens greater access to information submitted to the European Food Safety Authority ([EFSA](#)) on approvals concerning the agri-food chain; provide the possibility for additional studies to be requested by the Commission and, will involve Member States' scientists more closely in approval procedures. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"Today we are addressing citizens' concerns, to improve transparency about decision making, to offer better access to relevant information and to ensure that trustworthy, science-based risk assessment remains at the heart of decision making in this sensitive area of food safety."* Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"The EU's science-based risk assessment for food safety is one of the most stringent in the world. We are now making it even stronger through clearer transparency rules and more effective risk communication throughout the process. With this reform citizens will have immediate access to scientific studies supporting applications for authorisation."* [Press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

## **COLLEGE MEETING: A New Deal for Consumers: Commission strengthens EU consumer rights and enforcement**

Today, the European Commission is proposing a New Deal for Consumers to ensure that all European consumers fully benefit from their rights under Union law. While the EU already has some of the strongest rules on consumer protection in the world, recent cases like the Dieselgate scandal, have shown that it is difficult to enforce them fully in practice. First Vice-President **Timmermans** said: *"Today's New Deal is about delivering a fairer Single Market that benefits consumers and businesses. We introduce a European collective redress right for when groups of consumers have suffered harm, like we have seen in the recent past, with proper safeguards so there can be no misuse. Consumers will know who they are buying from online, and when sellers have paid to appear in search results. The majority of traders who play fair will see burdens lifted. The handful of traders who deliberately abuse European consumers' trust will be sanctioned with tougher fines."* Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality added: *"In a globalised world where the big companies have a huge advantage over individual consumers we need to level the odds. Representative actions, in the European way, will bring more fairness to consumers, not more business for law firms. And with stronger sanctions linked to the annual turnover of a*

*company, consumer authorities will finally get teeth to punish the cheaters. It cannot be cheap to cheat.” Concretely, the New Deal for Consumers will empower qualified entities to launch representative actions on behalf of consumers and introduce stronger sanctioning powers for Member States’ consumer authorities. It will also extend consumers’ protection when they are online and clarify that dual quality practices misleading consumers, are prohibited. More information will be made available in this [press release](#) and [memo](#), in addition to a series of factsheets explaining the various elements of the proposal. Commissioner **Jourová** will give a press conference later today, which can be followed on [EBS](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

### **Support to peace and development in Colombia: EU signs projects worth €14.3 million**

The European Union continues to support sustainable development and peace building in Colombia, with ten new projects worth €14.3 million. This assistance underlines the EU’s commitment to promote a better quality of life for Colombians, notably for young people, to peace building and to equal sustainable development for all. The new projects, signed yesterday in Bogota, will be implemented by Colombian civil society organisations and will help to strengthen their capacity to contribute to democratic governance, overcome poverty and support equal and sustainable development. For instance, two projects will help to better connect humanitarian aid and development support, while another programme seeks to improve public planning in municipalities, as many of these are located in historical conflict zones and are facing challenges to overcome social inequalities. The projects will reach a total of 355 organisations and around 1.7 million participants in Antioquia, Bolivar, Cauca, Caquetá, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, Tolima, Putumayo, Valle del Cauca and Bogotá. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

### **Les étudiants en journalisme sont invités à postuler pour une expérience directe dans le journalisme européen**

Les candidatures pour l’édition 2018 du programme [Youth4Regions](#) sont désormais ouvertes. Les étudiants en journalisme peuvent envoyer leurs meilleurs articles ou vidéos sur un projet cofinancé par le Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER) ou le Fonds de cohésion et ainsi gagner un voyage à Bruxelles pour couvrir la [Semaine européenne des villes et régions 2018](#), en octobre; il s’agit du principal événement européen sur la politique de cohésion, rassemblant de nombreuses personnalités politiques européennes, nationales et locales ainsi que des journalistes venant de toute l’Europe. Les lauréats pourront également participer à des sessions de formation sur le journalisme, la communication et la politique de cohésion à Bruxelles et verront leurs meilleurs articles sur la Semaine européenne des villes et régions publiés sur le [site web](#) du département de la Commission pour la politique régionale et urbaine (DG REGIO) et dans le magazine [Panorama](#). 28

étudiants (un par Etat membre) seront sélectionnés. Les candidatures sont ouvertes jusqu'au 29 juin 2018. Les étudiants peuvent postuler dans les 24 langues officielles de l'UE. *(Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169)*

### **Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections concerning distribution of sports media rights and other related rights**

The European Commission can confirm that on 10 April 2018 its officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in the distribution of media rights and related rights pertaining to various sports events and/or their broadcasting. The Commission has concerns that the companies involved may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices. Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step into suspected anticompetitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings. A full [statement](#) is available online. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de Datix par TA Associates et Rothschild**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de Datix Holdings Ltd (Royaume-Uni) par TA Associates Cayman Ltd (Îles Caïmans) et Rothschild & CO S.C.A (France). Datix fournit un logiciel de sécurité des patients médicaux et de rapport d'incidents. TA Associates investit généralement dans les services aux entreprises, les produits de consommation, les services financiers, et dans les secteurs de la santé et des technologies en Amérique du Nord, en Europe et en Asie. Rothschild est un groupe de conseil financier indépendant fournissant des conseils en fusions et acquisitions, stratégie et financement, ainsi que des solutions d'investissement et de gestion de patrimoine aux grandes institutions, familles, individus et gouvernements, à l'échelle mondiale. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu des chevauchements horizontaux limités entre les activités de Datix et celles des sociétés du portefeuille de TA Associates et Rothschild. 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.8845](#). *(Plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de deux locaux commerciaux par AXA et la Caisse des dépôts et consignations**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les

concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de trois lots de copropriété qui consistent en deux coques à usage de commerce au sein d'un centre commercial situé dans la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, en France, par AXA et la Caisse des dépôts et consignations, toutes deux basées en France. AXA est un groupe d'assurances global actif dans le secteur de l'assurance vie, santé et d'autres formes d'assurance ainsi que dans la gestion d'investissements. La Caisse des dépôts et consignations est un établissement public réalisant des activités d'intérêt général telles que la gestion des fonds privés auxquels les pouvoirs publics souhaitent apporter une protection particulière et des activités ouvertes à la concurrence dans les secteurs de l'environnement, de l'immobilier, de l'investissement et du capital investissement ainsi que des services. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du 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.8853](#). (Plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

#### **State aid: Commission approves €38 million public support for broadband network project in the region of Rivierenland, the Netherlands**

The European Commission has endorsed, under EU State aid rules, €38 million of public support to a newly established public entity of the Rivierenland region in the Dutch province of Gelderland, for the roll-out of a wholesale-only broadband network providing to third party network operators and service providers access on equal and non-discriminatory terms. This network will only cover areas where there is no next generation access broadband infrastructure at present or in the foreseeable future (known as "NGA white areas"). The new entity will provide open access to the physical infrastructure, such as ducts, poles, dark fibre and street cabinets. It will not offer active electronic communication services such as Internet access. The Commission assessed the measure under its [2013 Broadband Guidelines](#) and concluded that the measure is in line with EU State aid rules because the positive effects on competition in the Dutch broadband market outweigh any distortion of competition brought about by the State aid. More information will be available, once potential confidentiality issues have been resolved, on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.46613. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Thyssen on European Semester visit in the Netherlands**

Tomorrow, 12 April, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will travel to the Netherlands. Aim of the visit is to discuss the Commission's [country report on the Netherlands, published on 7 March in the context of the European Semester of economic and social policy coordination](#), as well as current social files. Commissioner

Thyssen will first meet with members of the standing committee on EU Affairs and Social Affairs and Employment at the Dutch House of Representatives. She will then meet with State Secretary of Social Affairs, Ms Tamara van Ark, to discuss the [European Labour Authority](#), [posting of workers](#), and the [coordination of social security systems](#). The meeting will be followed by a joint meeting with Minister of Social Affairs, Mr Wouter Koolmees and State Secretary for Finance, Mr Menno Snel, to discuss the country-specific recommendations. Commissioner Thyssen will conclude her visit by a meeting with the social partners from the Dutch Social and Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad, SER). *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)*

### **Commissioner Navracsics in Slovenia to discuss culture and creativity**

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Ljubljana, Slovenia, tomorrow to participate in the [Creative Forum](#) and in the [European Festival Associations' Arts Festivals Summit 2018](#). At the Creative Forum, the Commissioner will take part in a political roundtable entitled "Creativity as a tool for regional cooperation". He will highlight the importance of EU cooperation with countries from the Western Balkans and the Southern Mediterranean, notably regarding education exchanges, youth programmes and cultural cooperation fostering direct contacts between people. The theme of this year's Arts Festival Summit is "The (Herit)age of the ARTS – audiences in the heart of the places". Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics** will highlight the role that festivals play in urban and regional development and acknowledge their contribution to the [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#) celebrated throughout 2018. The European Commission will shortly present a revised European Agenda for Culture, which will be instrumental in improving awareness of Europe's common identity and heritage. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)*

### **Vice-President Jyrki Katainen in Ljubljana and Zagreb for European Semester visits**

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, is in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Zagreb, Croatia on 12-13 April. The aim of these European Semester visits is to engage with Slovenian and Croatian citizens and high-level political decision makers on the Future of Europe and the reform agendas essential for growth and jobs. In Ljubljana Vice-President **Katainen** will meet Mr Borut Pahor, President of Slovenia, and Mr Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of Slovenia. He will participate in a joint session of the Parliamentary Committees on EU Affairs and on Economic Affairs in the Slovenian National Assembly. The recording of the debate will be broadcast at Slovenian public TV, [Channel 3](#) at 22.00. He will also attend a working lunch with Mr Mateja Vranicar Erman, Minister of Finance. Vice-President **Katainen** will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue at the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences Novo mesto to discuss the Future of Europe, the European Semester, investment, the economy and cohesion funds. The discussion can be followed [online](#) from 16.30 onwards. Vice-President **Katainen** will then visit Zagreb, Croatia, on Friday 13 April. He will meet Ms Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic, President of Croatia. He will also participate in a working

lunch with Mr Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister, Mr Zdravko Marić, Minister of Finance and Ms Gabrijela Žalac, Minister of EU Funds and Regional Development. He will deliver a keynote speech at the conference on the Investment Plan for Europe: "Opportunities for Croatia". Vice-President **Katainen** will also participate in a Citizens' Dialogue on Jobs and Growth in Tomorrow's Europe, which is [livestreamed](#) from 11.45 onwards. In addition, he will participate in a meeting at the Croatian Parliament, chaired by the Chair of the European Affairs Committee, with the participation of MPs representing several Committees. (*For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361*)

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