

## Daily News 12 / 03 / 2019

### **COLLEGE MEETING: Commission reviews relations with China, proposes 10 actions**

Against the backdrop of China's growing economic power and political influence, the European Commission and the High Representative review European Union-China relations and the related opportunities and challenges. With today's Joint Communication on "[EU-China – A strategic outlook](#)", the European Commission and the High Representative aim to start a discussion to refine Europe's approach to be more realistic, assertive and multi-faceted. In particular, they are setting out 10 concrete actions for EU Heads of State or Government to discuss and endorse at the European Council of 21 March. These actions are formulated in the context of relations with China, but some of them relate to the EU's global competitiveness and security. Vice-President, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica **Mogherini**, said: *"China is a Strategic Partner of the European Union. We pursue strong bilateral and multilateral cooperation on files where we share interests, from trade to connectivity, from the JCPOA to climate change. And we are willing to keep engaging robustly where our policies differ or compete. This is the aim of the 10 actions that we are proposing to strengthen our relations with China, in a spirit of mutual respect."* Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for jobs, growth, investment and competitiveness, said: *"EU and China are strategic economic partners as well as competitors. Our economic relationship can be hugely mutually beneficial if competition is fair and trade and investment relations are reciprocal. With this Communication we make concrete proposals on how the EU can act to strengthen its competitiveness, ensure more reciprocity and level playing field, and protect its market economy from possible distortions."* In general, the EU's response should pursue three objectives: First, based on clearly defined interests and principles, the EU should deepen its engagement with China to promote common interests at global level. Then, the EU should robustly seek more balanced and reciprocal conditions governing the economic relationship. Finally, in order to maintain its prosperity, values and social model over the long term, there are areas where the EU itself needs to adapt to changing economic realities and strengthen its own domestic policies and industrial base. More information is available in [this press release](#). A factsheet on EU-China relations is also available [online](#). (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229-56153; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169; Adam Kaznowski – Tel: +32 229 89359)

### **RÉUNION DU COLLÈGE: la Commission européenne enregistre l'initiative citoyenne européenne « Housing for All »**

La Commission européenne a décidé aujourd'hui d'enregistrer une initiative citoyenne européenne intitulée « Housing for all ». L'objectif de cette initiative est d'« améliorer les conditions-cadres juridiques et financières facilitant l'accès au logement pour tous en Europe ». Les organisateurs

demandent à la Commission européenne «un accès facilité pour tous à des logements sociaux et à des logements abordables, la non-prise en compte des investissements publics dans les logements sociaux et les logements abordables dans les critères de Maastricht, un meilleur accès aux fonds de l'Union en faveur des promoteurs de logements durables et sans but lucratif, l'instauration de règles sociales fondées sur la concurrence pour les locations de courte durée et l'établissement de statistiques sur les besoins de logement en Europe. » En vertu des traités, l'UE peut adopter des actes juridiques dans ce domaine, par exemple lorsque cela concerne les règles du marché intérieur et le renforcement de la cohésion économique, sociale et territoriale en Europe. La Commission a dès lors considéré l'initiative comme recevable sur le plan juridique et décidé de l'enregistrer. À ce stade du processus, la Commission n'en analyse pas le fond. L'enregistrement de cette initiative aura lieu le 18 mars 2019 et marquera le début d'un processus de douze mois au cours duquel les signatures de soutien seront collectées par ses organisateurs. Si, en l'espace d'un an, l'initiative recueille un million de déclarations de soutien, provenant d'au moins sept États membres différents, la Commission procédera à son analyse et disposera d'un délai de trois mois pour réagir. Le communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Mina Andreeva – Tél.: +32 229-91382; Andreana Stankova – Tél.: +32 229 57857)

## **Fair Taxation: EU updates list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions**

EU Finance Ministers have updated the EU list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions, based on an intense process of analysis and dialogue steered by the Commission. The list has proven a true success with many countries having changed their laws and tax systems to comply with international standards. Over the course of last year, the Commission assessed 92 countries based on three criteria: tax transparency, good governance and real economic activity, as well as one indicator, the existence of a zero corporate tax rate. Today's update shows that this clear, transparent and credible process delivered a real change: 60 countries took action on the Commission's concerns and over 100 harmful regimes were eliminated. The list has also had a positive influence on internationally agreed tax good governance standards. Based on the Commission's screening, ministers blacklisted today 15 countries. Of those, 5 have taken no commitments since the [first blacklist adopted in 2017](#): American Samoa, Guam, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, and US Virgin Islands. 10 countries were moved today from the grey list to the blacklist following commitments they had taken but not having followed up: Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu and Dominica. Another 34 countries will continue to be monitored in 2019 (grey list), while 25 countries from the original screening process have now been cleared. "The EU tax havens list is a true European success. It has had a resounding effect on tax transparency and fairness worldwide", said Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs. "Thanks to the listing process, dozens of countries have abolished harmful tax regimes and have come into line with international standards on transparency and fair taxation. The countries that

*did not comply have been blacklisted, and will have to face the consequences that this brings. We are raising the bar of tax good governance globally and cutting out the opportunities for tax abuse.” Find a [press release](#) and a [Q&A](#) online. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: + 32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)*

### **La Commission européenne se félicite de l'accord provisoire visant à mieux protéger les lanceurs d'alerte dans toute l'UE**

Aujourd'hui, le Parlement européen et les États membres sont parvenus à un accord provisoire sur de nouvelles règles qui garantiront un niveau élevé de protection aux lanceurs d'alerte signalant des infractions au droit de l'Union. Ces nouvelles règles, qui fixent des normes de protection à l'échelle de l'Union pour les lanceurs d'alerte, ont été proposées pour la première fois par la Commission européenne en avril 2018. Frans **Timmermans**, Premier vice-président, a déclaré: « *Nous devons protéger les lanceurs d'alerte contre le risque d'être sanctionné, licencié, rétrogradé ou poursuivi en justice pour avoir fait ce qui est juste pour la société. C'est précisément la finalité de ces nouvelles règles de protection des lanceurs d'alerte à l'échelle de l'UE, qui garantissent que ces derniers puissent signaler en toute sécurité les infractions au droit de l'UE dans de nombreux domaines. Ces règles contribueront ainsi à la lutte contre la fraude, la corruption, l'évasion fiscale des entreprises et les atteintes à la santé publique et à l'environnement. Nous encourageons les États membres à mettre en place des cadres globaux pour la protection des lanceurs d'alerte qui soient fondés sur les mêmes principes.* » Věra **Jourová**, commissaire pour la justice, les consommateurs et l'égalité des genres, a ajouté pour sa part: « *Les scandales « Diesegate » et « Panama Papers » et les révélations dans l'affaire « Cambridge Analytica » nous ont fait comprendre à quel point les lanceurs d'alerte aident à mettre au jour des activités illicites qui portent atteinte à la fois à l'intérêt public et à notre bien-être général. Nous devons soutenir et protéger les personnes courageuses qui mettent en lumière des activités illégales. Je suis heureuse que nous soyons parvenus à un système équilibré qui encourage les employeurs à résoudre les problèmes au niveau interne tout en permettant aux lanceurs d'alerte de se tourner vers les pouvoirs publics sans crainte de représailles.* » Les nouvelles règles couvrent un large éventail de domaines du droit de l'Union, notamment la lutte contre le blanchiment de capitaux et la fiscalité des entreprises, la protection des données, la protection des intérêts financiers de l'Union, la sécurité des denrées alimentaires et des produits, la protection de l'environnement et la sûreté nucléaire. Le communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tél.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tél.: +32 229 5865)

### **Commission welcomes agreement on new rules paving the way for better VAT collection on online sales**

The Commission has welcomed the agreement reached by EU Member States on detailed measures needed to simplify VAT rules for sales of goods online, also ensuring that online marketplaces play their part in the fight against

tax fraud. The new rules agreed today will ensure a smooth introduction of the new VAT measures for e-commerce [agreed in December 2017](#) and which will come into force in January 2021. They should also help Member States to recover the €5 billion in tax revenues lost in the sector each year – a figure due to rise to €7 billion by 2020. EU Economic and Financial Affairs ministers took the decision at their meeting in Brussels this morning. Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Union, Pierre **Moscovici**, said: *“Step by step we are plugging the gaps through which tax revenues are lost, depriving EU countries of funds that could be used for public services and investment. At the same time we are bringing VAT rules into the 21st century, adapting them to an increasingly digital and globalised economy. Businesses should look forward to a smooth transition to the broader VAT system for e-commerce in 2021.”* Find a press release [online](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: + 32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

### **Capital Markets Union: Commission welcomes progress on the proposal for an EU classification system for sustainable economic activities**

The Commission welcomes the vote by the European Parliament’s Economic affairs (ECON) and Environment Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Joint Committee on a EU classification system for sustainable economic activities (‘taxonomy’), [proposed by the Commission](#) in May 2018 as part of the [Sustainable Finance Action Plan](#). This is another step towards enabling the financial sector to support the transition towards a climate-neutral economy. The development of an EU-wide taxonomy for environmentally sustainable economic activities is an integral part of the EU efforts, under the [EU’s sustainable development agenda](#) and the [carbon neutrality agenda](#), to connect finance with needs of the real economy and drive forward the Capital Markets Union. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“I welcome the European Parliament’s committees’ vote on the law establishing an EU classification for climate and environmentally friendly economic activities. To invest in projects with a positive impact on the planet, investors first need to know what is green. The lack of clarity makes us lose precious time in the fight against climate change. This is why I urge Member States to agree on a general approach as soon as possible.”* Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, added: *“With this vote, the EU taxonomy project has received much-needed political backing. This sends a strong signal globally about the determination of the EU to enable the transition to a climate-neutral and circular economy, supported by private capital. Given the urgency and importance of this project, I hope that both co-legislators will reach a deal before the end of this year.”* This proposal would provide market participants and investors with a common understanding of what is unambiguously green and thus fight greenwashing. This will bring clarity on which activities are considered sustainable so that economic actors and investors take more informed decisions, and should facilitate intra-EU sustainable investments. The Commission invites the Council of the European Union to reach an agreement on the proposed rules shortly so that trilogue negotiations with the European Parliament could start. More information available [here](#). (For

more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: + 32 229 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

## **European Commission paves the way for safe, secure and green drone operations**

The Commission today adopted common EU-wide rules setting technical requirements for drones. They will set features and capabilities that drones must have in order to be flown safely and, at the same time, help foster investment and innovation in this promising sector. The new rules build on national rules that were in place and now provide a harmonised framework across the European Union. Commissioner for Transport, Violeta **Bulc** said: *“Today’s decision is vital for the further development of the European drone sector. We wholeheartedly support the development of these new technologies and services, which are essential for the digitalisation and decarbonisation of the European economy. However, above all, we have to ensure that they are safe for other airspace users and people on the ground. The rules adopted today are a first building block for a comprehensive set of rules, which will ensure safe, secure and green drone operations throughout the European Union.”* The approach taken by the Commission, with the support of the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, is to apply the highest safety standards achieved in manned aviation to drones as well. The rules are based on an assessment of the risk of operation, and strike a balance between the obligations of drone manufacturers and operators in terms of safety, respect for privacy, the environment, protection against noise, and security. For example, new drones will have to be individually identifiable, allowing the authorities to trace a particular drone if necessary. In addition to the technical requirements for drones adopted today, the Commission intends to adopt provisions covering the operation of drones. The rules will cover each operation type, from those not requiring prior permission, to those involving certified aircraft and operators, as well as minimum remote pilot training requirements. Today’s adoption contributes to a major deliverable under the [Commission’s Aviation Strategy for Europe](#) whose core objective is to support the competitiveness of the EU’s Aviation Industry and reinforce its global leadership. Please find more information [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 2 295 61 72; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

## **Équité dans la chaîne d’approvisionnement alimentaire: la Commission se félicite du soutien du Parlement pour interdire les pratiques commerciales déloyales**

Le Parlement européen a voté aujourd’hui de nouvelles règles européennes qui garantiront la protection de 100% des agriculteurs européens ainsi que des fournisseurs de petite et moyenne taille contre les pratiques commerciales déloyales dans la chaîne d’approvisionnement alimentaire. Après le vote d’aujourd’hui en plénière à Strasbourg, Phil **Hogan**, Commissaire à l’agriculture, a déclaré: « *La question de l’équité pour les agriculteurs de la chaîne d’approvisionnement alimentaire est au cœur du vote d’aujourd’hui. La Commission a présenté cette proposition en avril 2018 afin de garantir que les agriculteurs soient traités équitablement par tous les acteurs de la chaîne d’approvisionnement alimentaire et afin d’assurer cette protection*



*minimale dans l'ensemble de l'UE. Cette loi était l'une des propositions clés du groupe de travail sur les marchés agricoles. Le vote d'aujourd'hui témoigne de notre capacité à apporter des réponses concrètes aux citoyens européens. »* La nouvelle législation européenne couvre les produits agricoles et les denrées alimentaires commercialisés dans le cadre de la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire et interdit pour la première fois jusqu'à 16 pratiques commerciales déloyales imposées de manière unilatérale par un partenaire commercial, quel qu'il soit (détaillants, transformateurs de denrées alimentaires, grossistes, coopératives, organisations de producteurs, producteur isolé). Les États membres devront désigner des autorités chargées de l'application des nouvelles règles, y compris d'imposer des amendes et d'ouvrir des enquêtes à la suite de plaintes. Un [communiqué de presse](#) est en ligne, ainsi qu'une brochure explicative en [français](#) et en [anglais](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tél: +32 229 52 509)

## **European Parliament adopts EU Cybersecurity Act to reinforce cybersecurity in the EU**

Today, the European Parliament adopted the [Cyber Security Act](#), which European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** initially proposed in his State of the Union Address in September 2017. The Act will improve the European response to the increasing number of cyber threats by strengthening the role of the [European Agency for Network and Information Security](#) (ENISA) and establishing a common European cybersecurity certification framework for IT services, systems and equipment. In September 2018 the Commission proposed to create a [European network of centres of cybersecurity expertise](#), which will help to reinforce research and deployment of new cybersecurity capacities in the EU. Under the next long-term EU budget, the Commission has proposed more than €2 billion to reinforce cybersecurity in the Digital Europe Programme as well as under HorizonEurope. To lay the ground work for building this network, the Commission is investing more than €63.5 million in [four pilot projects](#). Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, will meet tomorrow in Strasbourg a number of representatives of these projects, which involve more than 160 partners, including large companies, SMEs, universities and cybersecurity research institutes from 26 EU Member States. More information on ENISA is available [online](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Paul Street East by PSP, Allianz and Greystar**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Paul Street East of the UK by the Public Sector Pension Investment Board ("PSP") of Canada, Allianz Real Estate Investments S.A. ("Allianz") of Germany, and Greystar Real Estate Partners LLC ("Greystar") of the US. Paul Street East is a student accommodation property located in London, UK. PSP is the pension investment manager of the pension plans of the Canadian Federal Public Service, the Canadian Forces, the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police and the Reserved Force. Allianz is part of the Allianz Group, a multinational financial service provider active worldwide in the insurance and asset management business. Greystar develops, acquires and manages rental housing projects and portfolios for itself and on behalf of various institutional, sovereign wealth and private investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of its limited impact on the market structure. 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. 9260](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Esterline by TransDigm**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Esterline Technologies ("Esterline") by TransDigm Group, both of the US. Esterline is active in the design, manufacture and marketing of highly engineered products, principally for aerospace and defence customers. TransDigm business includes the design, production and supply of engineered aerospace components, systems and subsystems. Its products are used on both commercial and military aircrafts. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because there are only minimal horizontal and vertical overlaps between the activities of the companies and, where these activities overlap, sufficient alternatives will remain following the transaction. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9211](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Eurostat: Plus de 5 millions de naissances dans l'UE en 2017**

En 2017, 5,075 millions de bébés sont nés au sein de l'Union européenne (UE), contre 5,148 millions en 2016. L'indicateur conjoncturel de fécondité de l'UE s'établissait à 1,59 naissance par femme en 2017, contre 1,60 en 2016. Depuis le début des séries temporelles comparables, l'indicateur conjoncturel de fécondité le plus élevé a été enregistré en 2010 quand il s'est élevé à 1,62. Ce taux est inférieur au niveau de renouvellement de la population, qui correspond à 2,1 naissances vivantes par femme. Sur les 5,075 millions de naissances, 45% concernaient un premier enfant, 36% un deuxième enfant et 19% un troisième enfant ou un enfant de rang supérieur. En moyenne dans l'UE, les femmes qui ont donné naissance à leur premier enfant en 2017 étaient âgées de 29,1 ans. Sur cinq ans, l'âge moyen est passé progressivement de 28,7 ans en 2013 à 29,1 ans en 2017. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tél.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumilion – Tél.: +32 229 67094)

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