

Daily News 13 / 03 / 2019

Third Brussels Conference “Supporting the future of Syria and the region” – Day 2

The Brussels III Conference “[Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region](#)” (#SyriaConf2019), co-chaired with the United Nations, continues today with the second day of the [Days of Dialogue](#) at the European Parliament. Yesterday’s panels were dedicated to the issues of youth economic and civic empowerment in Syria and the region, and comprehensive solutions for displacements. They were preceded by the Syria Digital Lab side event on “Unlocking the potential of the Syrian digital space”. This morning, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** [opened](#) together with the UN the second day of dialogue. European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** co-chaired the panel on protection with the UN. He will also chair a panel on education and child protection with UNICEF at 14:30 (broadcast on [EbS](#)). Two more panels co-chaired by the EU and the UN on the regional socio-economic recovery, and on justice and social cohesion in Syria are also taking place today. In the afternoon, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will meet with the Syrian NGO Women Advisory Board and discuss the role women play in conflict resolution. She will hold a press point at the European Parliament at 16:30 (live on [EbS](#)) with UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen. Following her participation to the closing session of the Days of Dialogue with Commissioner Stylianides at 17:00 (broadcast on [EbS](#)), High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** together with UN Women will co-host a dinner with Syrian women at Palais d’Egmont. More information on the Conference is available on the dedicated [website](#) and more information on the “Days of dialogue” is available [here](#) (focus on resilience and regional/development) and [here](#) (focus on humanitarian support). 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)*

EU budget for 2021-2027: Commission welcomes the provisional agreement on funding for the environment and climate action

The European Commission welcomes the provisional agreement reached by the European Parliament and Council on the [LIFE programme for the Environment and Climate Action](#), as part of the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027. The funding will focus on protecting the environment and mitigating climate change, supporting a clean energy transition with increased energy efficiency and a higher share of renewables in the energy mix. This will be one of the tools enabling the EU to meet its climate goals and seek to become [climate-neutral by 2050](#). Welcoming the agreement Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** said: “Every day we see hundreds of thousands of young Europeans marching for the future of our planet and

demanding that we do more. With more funding, we can better address these concerns, speed up the transition to a circular economy and reduce our footprint on nature and biodiversity.” Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** added: *“A stronger LIFE programme will play an important role in expanding investments in climate action and sustainable energy across Europe. By continuing to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, LIFE will also continue to help the EU deliver on its climate goals and commitments under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.”* The LIFE programme is among the EU funding programmes for which the Commission [has proposed](#) the largest proportional increase for the period 2021-2027. Raising the level of ambition for climate financing, the Commission has also proposed that at least 25% of EU expenditure across all EU programmes should contribute to climate objectives. The provisional agreement is now subject to formal approval by the European Parliament and the Council. A [press release](#) is available online. *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Anna Kaisa-Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Aikaterini Apostola – Tél.: +32 229 87624; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)*

Energy Union: Commission adopts delegated act on sustainability criteria for biofuels as requested by the co-legislators

The Commission today adopts a delegated act on sustainability criteria for biofuels as requested by the European Parliament and Member States. Climate change is a serious concern for Europeans and the Commission is increasing efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions with the ultimate aims to become the first major economy to be climate neutral by 2050. The enhanced use of electricity produced from renewable sources including in the transport sector, is crucial for the decarbonisation of our economy. A new binding, EU-wide renewable energy target for 2030 of at least 32% was agreed between the Member States and the European Parliament in June 2018. It includes a review clause by 2023 for a possible upward revision of the EU level target. The Directive, already in force, includes a gradual reduction of the amount of certain types of biofuels for which a significant expansion of the production area into land with high-carbon stock is observed (so-called high Indirect Land-Use Change (ILUC) risk biofuels), to be counted towards the renewable energy targets. ILUC can occur when pasture or agricultural land previously destined for food and feed markets is diverted to biofuel production. In this case, food and feed demand still needs to be satisfied, which may lead to the extension of agriculture land into areas with high carbon stock such as forests, wetlands and peatlands. This implies land use change (by changing such areas into agricultural land) and may cause the release of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ stored in trees and soil) that negates emission savings from the use of biofuels instead of fossil fuels. Acting on the clear request of the Co-legislators and in order to implement the new approach, the Commission has today adopted a delegated act. With today's decision the Member States will still be able to use (and import) fuels included in the category of high ILUC-risk biofuels, but they will not be able to include these volumes when calculating the extent to which they have fulfilled their renewable targets. For further information see [MEMO](#). *(For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229*

Sécurité routière: nouvelles règles pour une mobilité propre, connectée et automatisée dans l'Union

La Commission européenne a adopté aujourd'hui de nouvelles règles visant à intensifier le déploiement, sur les routes de l'Union, des systèmes de transport intelligents coopératifs (STI-C). Cette nouvelle technologie permettra aux véhicules de communiquer entre eux, avec l'infrastructure routière et avec d'autres usagers de la route, et d'échanger des informations concernant, par exemple, des situations dangereuses, des travaux routiers et le minutage des feux de circulation, rendant ainsi les transports routiers plus sûrs, plus propres et plus efficaces. Les nouvelles règles sont conformes aux propositions sur la mobilité propre représentées par la Commission Juncker et marquent une nouvelle étape dans la modernisation du secteur européen de la mobilité, le conduisant vers la neutralité climatique dans la seconde moitié du siècle et contribuant à l'objectif à long terme de l'UE de faire en sorte que le nombre de morts et de blessés graves sur les routes s'approche de zéro d'ici à 2050 («Vision zéro»). Mme Violeta **Bulc**, la commissaire européenne chargée de la mobilité et des transports, a déclaré: *«Tout en restant ouvert à de nouvelles technologies et évolutions commerciales, l'acte adopté aujourd'hui apporte aux constructeurs automobiles et aux exploitants routiers, entre autres, la sécurité juridique tant attendue dont ils ont besoin pour commencer le déploiement à grande échelle des services STI-C dans toute l'Europe. Véritable tremplin vers une mobilité connectée et automatisée, il contribue de manière significative à la réalisation de nos ambitions en matière de sécurité routière.»* Un [communiqué de presse](#) et un [MEMO](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tél.: + 32 229 56172; Stephan Meder – Tél.: +32 229 13917)

Foreign Direct Investment report: continuous rise of foreign ownership in key sectors

Today the Commission released a detailed overview of the foreign direct investment situation in the EU. The [report](#) is the first of its kind in terms of the detailed company level data used. It confirms a continuous rise in foreign company ownership in key sectors in the EU and an increase in investments from emerging economies, such as China. It illustrates the need for effective implementation of the freshly adopted EU [investment screening framework](#). As part of its proposal on the screening of foreign direct investments into the European Union presented in September 2017, the Commission committed to carry out a detailed analysis of these investments. Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said *“This report provides a comprehensive overview of investment into the EU and reveals some important trends that we need to consider carefully. Europe benefits a lot from an open investment policy but we must be ready to act where our security and public interest are at risk. Together with the new framework on the screening of foreign direct investments we are now better equipped and better informed to*

deal with these types of scenarios in the future.” Based on that information, the Commission will continue monitoring EU-wide investment trends, contributing to the implementation of the new EU foreign investment screening framework. For more information, see the [press release](#) concerning the report as well as press material related to the new EU investment screening framework: [press release](#) and [factsheet](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

La production industrielle en hausse de 1,4% dans la zone euro

En janvier 2019 par rapport à décembre 2018, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 1,4% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 1,0% dans l’UE28, selon les estimations d’Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. En décembre 2018, la production industrielle avait reculé de 0,9% dans la zone euro et de 0,4% dans l’UE28. En janvier 2019 par rapport à janvier 2018, la production industrielle a diminué de 1,1% dans la zone euro et de 0,4% dans l’UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél. +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein-Gesbold – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of DIA by LetterOne

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of Distribuidora Internacional de Alimentación, S.A. (‘DIA’) of Spain by LetterOne Investment Holdings S.A. (‘LetterOne’) of Luxembourg. DIA is an international food retailer and distributor of fast-moving and home and personal care goods. LetterOne is an investment holding company in the sectors of telecoms and technology, healthcare and retail, and energy. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because there are no horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the activities of DIA and the companies controlled by LetterOne. 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.9303](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Avramopoulos in Vienna for the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Tomorrow, the Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will represent the European Union and its Member States at the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs organised by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna, Austria. The

meeting will be attended by Heads of State and Government, Ministers, representatives of Member States, heads of the UN agencies, civil society and scientific community, academia, youth groups and other stakeholders. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: *"Tomorrow's meeting is crucial for stepping up our global efforts to counter the world drug problem. This matters for our society and especially our youth, our future. The EU and its Member States will continue working relentlessly, using all the instruments at our disposal and in close cooperation with the international community."* The Commissioner will deliver a statement on behalf of the EU where he will affirm the importance of enhanced cooperation between states, UN entities and civil society to improve international drug policy. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423*)

La commissaire Crețu participe au 8^e Sommet Européen des Régions et des Villes à Bucarest

La commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** s'adressera aux dirigeants régionaux de l'Europe lors du [8e Sommet Européen des Régions et des Villes](#) qui se tiendra à Bucarest demain et vendredi. Elle prononcera un discours sur le renforcement de la cohésion dans l'Union européenne et évoquera les bénéfices des fonds structurels et d'investissement européens avec les gouverneurs des régions. Le président de la Commission européenne Jean-Claude **Juncker** et le premier vice-président Frans **Timmermans** contribueront par message vidéo à cet événement bisannuel, soulignant le rôle important des villes et des régions dans la prise de décision démocratique en Europe. En marge du sommet, la commissaire **Crețu** parlera de la politique de cohésion de l'UE à l'horizon 2021-2027 lors d'une conférence organisée par les autorités locales roumaines demain et rencontrera vendredi la maire de Bucarest, Gabriela Firea. Le sommet est co-organisé par le Comité européen des régions, la présidence roumaine du Conseil de l'UE et la délégation roumaine au Comité européen des régions. (Pour plus d'informations: *Christian Spahr – Tél .: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169*)

Commissioner Gabriel in Copenhagen, Denmark to participate in Digital Summit 2019 and hand over two WiFi4EU vouchers

Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, Mariya **Gabriel**, will travel to Copenhagen, Denmark tomorrow in order to participate in the Digital Summit 2019. She will also have a press point with Mr. Rasmus Jarlov, Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs and will discuss with him about various [Digital Single Market](#) files, such as artificial intelligence and data ethics, the importance of boosting digital skills and education and the free flow of data in the EU. Commissioner **Gabriel** will also meet with the mayors of the Municipalities of Hillerod and Fredensborg, Ms Kirsten Jensen and Mr Thomas Lykke Pedersen respectively, in order to hand over two [WiFi4EU](#) vouchers. The Municipalities of Hillerod and Fredensborg are two

of the 2,800 municipalities in Europe that were [recently selected](#) to receive a WiFi4EU voucher worth €15,000. This voucher can be used to set up Wi-Fi hotspots in public spaces, such as town halls, libraries, museums, parks, squares and other places of public interest. (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Marietta Grammenou- Tel.: +32 229 83583*)

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