

Daily News 13 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Stepping up the EU's role as a security and defence provider

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing to increase the EU's strategic autonomy, bolster the EU's ability to protect its citizens and make the EU a stronger global actor. A €13 billion European Defence Fund will provide the financial firepower for cross-border investments in state-of-the-art and fully interoperable technology and equipment in areas such as encrypted software and drone technology. In addition, the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, is proposing today a new €10.5 billion European Peace Facility, an instrument outside of the EU's long-term budget, which will help improve the EU's ability to prevent conflicts, build peace and guarantee international security. Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, said: *"The EU has [...] taken steps in security and defence that seemed unthinkable before. We can now support research and cooperation to develop defence capabilities. We are taking measures that will facilitate the rapid movement of Member States' forces in Europe. [...] I am proposing the establishment of a European Peace Facility that will improve the financing of EU military operations and improve our support for actions by our partners."* Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President in charge of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"What we are proposing will help the EU take its destiny into its own hands. We are taking greater ownership in defending and protecting our citizens. For the first time in the history of the EU, a part of the European budget is devoted to investing collectively to develop new technologies and equipment to protect our people. [...]"* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: *"The European Defence Fund is a game changer for defence cooperation in Europe. [...] we are now scaling it up into an ambitious European instrument to support collaborative defence projects throughout their entire development cycle. The €13 billion Fund shows that this Commission is serious about building a Europe that defends and protects its citizens."* A [press release](#) and [factsheets and FAQs](#) are available online. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Budget de l'UE: 4,8 milliards d'euros de financement pour la sécurité, pour une Europe qui protège

La Commission propose d'augmenter considérablement le financement de la sécurité, de 3,5 milliards d'euros actuellement à 4,8 milliards d'euros dans le prochain cadre budgétaire à long terme de l'UE pour 2021-2027. Face à des menaces internationales de plus en plus complexes, les fonds européens peuvent aider notre Union à relever les défis futurs en matière de sécurité et à être mieux équipée pour répondre aux urgences. Les 2,5 milliards d'euros du Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure (FSI) renforcé s'ajoutent à près de 1,2

milliard d'euros pour un démantèlement plus sûr des activités nucléaires dans certains États membres, ainsi qu'à 1,1 milliard d'euros pour renforcer les agences européennes dans le domaine de la sécurité. Le premier vice-président Frans **Timmermans** a déclaré: "Se sentir en sécurité chez soi ou dans la rue est l'un des droits de l'homme les plus élémentaires; les Européens attendent de leur gouvernement et de leur Union qu'ils garantissent cette sécurité. Un cadre de financement de la sécurité plus souple et plus adapté aux besoins des États membres assurera, comme il se doit, une meilleure protection des Européens." Le commissaire Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, chargé de la migration, des affaires intérieures et de la citoyenneté, a déclaré: "Pour la sécurité de nos citoyens, nous devons accroître nos efforts – et notre budget doit en faire autant. C'est pourquoi nous augmentons le budget de la sécurité d'un tiers pour les années à venir, à 4,8 milliards d'euros. Nous aidons ainsi les États membres à mieux se préparer aux futurs défis sécuritaires et aux urgences. Nous construisons une Europe plus sûre et plus robuste pour nos citoyens. Une Europe qui protège." Le commissaire Julian **King**, chargé de l'Union de la sécurité, a déclaré: "Nous devons préparer une réponse forte face aux terroristes, aux criminels et aux menaces sécuritaires qu'ils posent – multidimensionnelles, transfrontalières et en évolution permanente. Cette réponse ne doit pas être redondante par rapport aux efforts des États membres; elle doit plutôt les compléter et créer des ponts à l'intérieur de l'UE et au-delà de ses frontières. C'est précisément ce que nous proposons aujourd'hui avec un Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure clairement renforcé, pour une Europe plus robuste comme fondement d'une authentique et efficace Union de la sécurité." Un [communiqué de presse](#), un [mémo](#) ainsi que des textes juridiques et des fiches d'information sur le futur financement de la sécurité sont [disponibles en ligne](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

A Europe that protects: EU works to build resilience and better counter hybrid threats

The European Commission and the High Representative propose today further steps to build on the work already carried out in response to hybrid and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, following up on the European Council's invitation to take this work forward and report on progress after the Salisbury attack. They also report on the implementation of the [Joint Framework](#) on countering hybrid threats. In addition, the Commission is taking stock of the progress made on key security files, including the CBRN Action Plan. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: "In times of new challenges around the world, we are reinforcing our work within the European Union to counter hybrid threats – be it in the field of cyber, on disinformation or counter intelligence. Together with our Member States and partners, such as NATO, we are working to strengthen our capabilities to address these challenges and build up our resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks, to effectively protect our citizens." Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "Security has been our priority since day one – but we need to do more to deny hostile foreign actors and terrorists the means and the space to act. Today, we are further

accelerating our efforts to their access to life-threatening chemical substances – building a more resilient Europe, fully equipped to face complex and dynamic security threats.” Commissioner for Security Union, Julian King said: *“The Salisbury attack was a stark reminder that the threat posed by chemical, biological radiological and nuclear risks is very real. Today, we are following up our CBRN Action Plan from last year to be better prepared for such threats as well as other hybrid threats, which can cause serious harm and spread instability. We need to be especially vigilant in view of upcoming elections.”* The Commission is also presenting today the [Security Union progress report](#), an [EU Action Plan](#) to improve the security of rail passengers and a [Report](#) of the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation. A [press release](#) and factsheets on [hybrid threats](#) and the [Security Union](#) are available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229-67456; Tove Ernst – +32 229-86764)

Countering the illicit arms trade: new proposal for an integrated EU approach

The High Representative and the Commission adopted today a Joint Communication proposing elements for a comprehensive EU Strategy against illicit firearms and small arms and light weapons (SALW). Illicit weapons are contributing to global terrorism and conflicts, thwarting the EU’s development, humanitarian and stabilisation efforts in parts of the EU’s neighbourhood and Africa. Within the European Union, illicit firearms are fuelling organised crime and amplifying the impact of terrorist attacks. A broad range of governmental agencies, including police, customs, border guards, armed forces, export control and judicial authorities are required to act in a more integrated manner to tackle such transnational threats. Today’s Joint Communication aims to guide collective EU action inside the EU and abroad, to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of firearms by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors, as well as to promote accountability and responsibility with regard to the legal arms trade. The elements proposed today for the new Strategy takes into account the evolving security context and relevant elements, such as the growing threat of terrorism inside the EU, technological and legislative developments. It entails a set of actions to be taken at national, regional and international level and would replace the one that was adopted by the European Council in 2005. Please see the full text of the Joint Communication [here](#). More information is available on the EEAS and [Commission](#) website. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Commission holds second negotiating round with parliament and Council on a mandatory Transparency Register

Yesterday evening, 12 June, in Strasbourg, negotiators from the three EU institutions continued their discussions on strengthening the EU Transparency Register, and committed to make further progress towards a common interpretation of the key issue of conditionality. The three institutions discussed ways to make their interactions with interest representatives conditional on the registration of such representatives in the Transparency Register. Establishing this principle will provide citizens with more information about who seeks to influence the EU legislative process, allowing

them to better scrutinise how EU decision-making works. Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“Being on the Transparency Register must be a pre-condition for lobbyists to get access to lawmakers. The Commission has applied this principle for almost four years, and it works. Now we must agree on the practicalities for extending it to other European decision-makers. Further work is needed to ensure that we can agree on how all three institutions commit to meaningful implementation of the principle ‘no registration, no meeting’”*. At the meeting the three institutions reiterated their common ambition to reach a meaningful improvement on the status quo, and their commitment to ensure the transparency of the negotiating process itself. More information is available in a press release [here](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

Commission provides support for a further 32 reform projects in Greece

Today, the Commission adopted a [decision](#) approving 32 additional requests by Greece for technical support through the [Structural Reform Support Programme](#) (SRSP). The projects will be financed from Greece’s voluntary transfer of €20 million from their technical assistance component under the European Structural and Investment Funds to the SRSP. The new measures will come on top of the more than 100 support projects coordinated by the Commission in Greece. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“Nearing the end of its stability support programme, Greece is at an important juncture. It is crucial that the country continues with modernising its economy and administration and the Commission is committed to supporting these reform efforts. Reforms take time to bear fruit, but if fully implemented they can lead to robust and sustainable growth. We already see the first positive signs in Greece – economy is growing, confidence is strengthening, employment is set to increase steadily, investment started to recover, which ultimately means more and better quality jobs.”* The [Work Programme](#) annexed to the decision outlines the actions that will be financed by the €20 million and sets out the priorities, objectives and expected results of the reform projects. The reforms aim to help Greece face economic and social challenges, to make the country more cohesive and competitive. The wide range of projects will contribute to boosting jobs and growth and improve the daily lives of the people in tangible ways. The press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: 32 229-5615; Enda McNamara– Tel.: +32 229-64976)

Commission announces members of the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance

The European Commission is today publishing the [list of members](#) of the new Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance. The Group, which will start meeting in July 2018, comprises 35 members from civil society, academia, business and the finance sector. The Technical Expert Group was announced in the Commission’s [Action Plan on Sustainable Finance](#) from March 2018 and in the subsequent package of legislative measures on 24 May 2018. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said: *“Today’s launch of the*

Technical Expert Group is another step in our ambitious timetable to lay the foundations for a more sustainable financial system. Already as of July, this diverse and highly qualified group of experts will get to work, helping us determine which economic activities are truly green, define an EU standard for green bonds, and more. I am committed to a swift follow-up on their expert advice, in line with our Action Plan on Sustainable Finance and following our legislative proposals last month.” As well as developing an EU classification system – or so-called taxonomy – for environmentally-sustainable activities, the group will also support the Commission in the creation of an EU Green Bond Standard, in improving the disclosure of climate-related information and by helping develop a category of low-carbon indices. The Commission selected highly-qualified candidates out of 185 eligible applications on the basis of their personal expertise, their contribution to work relevant to sustainable finance and the prominence of their affiliation in this area. Several European and international institutions have been invited as members or observers, including the European Supervisory Authorities, development, the European Environment Agency and United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative. More information available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: + 32 229 56194; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL by T-Mobile NL in the Netherlands

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL by T-Mobile NL under the EU Merger Regulation. The proposed transaction would combine Deutsche Telekom’s subsidiary T-Mobile NL with Tele2’s subsidiary Tele2 NL, respectively the third and fourth largest operators in the Dutch retail mobile telecommunications market. This would reduce the number of mobile network operators in the Netherlands from four to three. The Commission has concerns that the transaction would have a negative impact in two ways: through a reduction in the number of players and by limiting the merged entity’s incentives to compete effectively with the remaining operators. This could lead to higher prices and less investment in mobile telecommunications networks. The Commission will also investigate further: i) the fact that the reduction in the number of mobile network operators following the merger may weaken competitive pressure and increase the likelihood that operators would coordinate their competitive behaviour, and raise prices on the retail markets; ii) its concern that prospective and existing mobile virtual network operators may face more difficulties in obtaining favourable wholesale access terms from mobile network operators. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“Access to affordable and good quality mobile telecom services has become increasingly important in modern life. We are opening this in-depth investigation to ensure, that the proposed transaction between T-Mobile NL and Tele2 NL will not lead to higher prices or less choice in mobile services for Dutch consumers”*. A full press release is available in [NL](#), [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over two new joint ventures by BHAP and Gestamp China

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of Gestamp Auto Components Co., Ltd, a manufacturing joint venture, and Gestamp Auto Components Sales Co., Ltd, a sales joint venture, by Beijing Hainachuan Automotive Parts Co., Ltd (“BHAP”) and Gestamp (China) Holding Co., Ltd (“Gestamp China”), all of China. The manufacturing joint venture will manufacture flat steel automotive components including lightweight body parts, chassis and other components in China. The sales joint venture will sell those automotive components and provide after-sales, technical and consultation services to the automotive industry, also in China. BHAP, controlled by Beijing Automotive Group Co., Ltd of China, is active in manufacturing interior and exterior components of automobiles, automobile seats, powertrain, chassis and body systems, automotive electronics and other series, as well as in supplying automotive components in China. Gestamp China, ultimately controlled by Acek Desarrollo y Gestión Industrial, S.L of Spain, is a manufacturer and seller of automotive components, including flat steel components and mechanisms, and assemblies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the joint ventures will only be active in China. 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.8903](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Professional Fee Protection Ltd by HPS Investment Partners and Madison Dearborn Partners

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Professional Fee Protection Ltd (“PFP”) of the UK by HPS Investment Partners (“HPS”) and Madison Dearborn Partners (“MDP”), both of the US. PFP is a provider of risk management services and tax advisory services. HPS is an investment company focusing on acquisitions and strategic financing of recapitalisation of companies that require financial assistance. MDP is a private equity investment company, with investments in a broad range of industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minor horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the companies’ activities. 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.8961](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Tax revenues as a percentage of GDP grew slightly in 2016, according to new Commission study

Tax revenues rose in 19 Member States in 2016 as a percentage of GDP in 2016, a [study published today by the European Commission](#) has found. However, the level of taxation in EU Member States differs greatly. The findings are in the 2018 edition of the Taxation Trends report, a yearly snapshot of tax

systems in the EU, Iceland and Norway that provides extensive and comparable data on the different tax structures and rates of Member States. The report also shows that the share of labour taxes in total tax revenues shrank progressively from 2010 to 2016 when it accounted for 49.8% – similar to its pre-crisis level. Corporate income tax revenues, on the other hand rose to 2.7% of GDP in 2016 compared with 2.6% in 2015, continuing their gentle increase since the crisis though not yet at pre-crisis levels. The report also provides an analysis on the medium- to long-term evolution of these trends. Taxation is a top priority for the Juncker Commission and providing quality data is a must if we want to develop robust and effective tax policies for the future. This report offers a breakdown of comparative tax levels in the EU and of tax revenues raised from consumption, labour and capital. It also contains data on energy, environmental and property taxation, plus rates for personal and corporate income taxes. Download the report [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Eurostat: L'emploi en hausse de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28

Le nombre de personnes ayant un emploi a augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro (ZE19) ainsi que dans l'UE28 au premier trimestre 2018 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon les estimations basées sur les comptes nationaux et publiées par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au quatrième trimestre 2017, l'emploi avait progressé de 0,3% dans la zone euro et de 0,2% dans l'UE28. Ces chiffres sont corrigés des variations saisonnières. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Eurostat: La production industrielle en baisse de 0,9% dans la zone euro

En avril 2018 par rapport à mars 2018, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,9% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,8% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En mars 2018, la production industrielle avait progressé de 0,6% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l'UE28. En avril 2018 par rapport à avril 2017, la production industrielle a augmenté de 1,7% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Malta

Commissioner **Jourová** will be in Malta tomorrow and Friday. She will meet Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, Minister for EU Affairs and Equality, Helena Dalli, Minister for Finance, Edward

Scicluna and the EU Sherpa to the Prime Minister, Jonathan Cardona, to stress the importance of the investigation into Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder, and discuss Malta's participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office, implementation of the anti-money laundering rules as well as the investor citizenship scheme. She will then exchange views on the functioning of the judiciary with Joseph Azzopardi, Chief Justice, the Association of Judges and Magistrates, and the Chamber of Advocates. Her meeting with the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit and the Malta Financial Services Authority will focus on the implementation of anti-money laundering rules in Malta. Her visit also includes a meeting with the leader of the Nationalist Party, Adrian Delia and a participation to the first Consumers' Dialogue dedicated to the *"Main points of the New Deal for Consumers Proposal: What is the European Commission doing for Consumers?"*. Finally, she will honour the late Daphne Caruana Galizia. On Thursday evening, she will give a press conference at the European Commission representation in Valletta at 17:00, which will be recorded and available on [EBS](#) at around 18:30 the same day. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Andriukaitis in Bulgaria

On 14 June, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food safety will be in Plovdiv, Bulgaria to open the 2nd FOOD 2030 High Level Event "Research and Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security: Transforming our food systems" organised by the Bulgarian Presidency. Later that day, Commissioner will hold a Citizens' Dialogue alongside Ms Daniela Daritkova-Prodanova, Member of Parliament from the 44th National Assembly and chairperson of the National Assembly's Healthcare Committee. Webstream of the Citizens' Dialogue available [here](#). *"I am looking forward to discussing the sustainable production of food for a healthier Europe, as well as future challenges linked to sustainability, and the need for cross cutting policies linked to antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare, nutritional quality of food, and food waste"*, said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** ahead of the event. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Thyssen in Berlin

Tomorrow, 14 June, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will be in Berlin, Germany. She will meet with Ms Franziska Giffey, German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and Mr Hubertus Heil, Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. She will also meet Ms Andrea Nahles, President of the German Social-Democratic Party and leader of the SPD in the Bundestag; the Committees on European Affairs and Social Affairs in the Bundestag, as well as with representatives of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group. These meetings will be an opportunity to discuss ongoing files in the field of employment and social affairs. (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229

62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Commissioner Stylianides visits Luxembourg

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is visiting Luxembourg where he will address Members of the National Parliament. The Commissioner will inform members of the Bureau and of the Committee for foreign and European affairs, defence, cooperation and immigration on EU humanitarian aid priorities and discuss the [Commission's rescEU proposal](#) to strengthen EU civil protection response. He will then meet Ms Bettina Jakobsen, Member of the EU Court of Auditors. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Vice-President Dombrovskis in Greece

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, will be in Athens tomorrow and on Friday. On Thursday morning, he will deliver an opening keynote at the [22nd Roundtable with the Government of Greece](#) organised by The Economist. His speech will be available [online](#). He will meet Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Minister of Finance Euclid Tsakalotos and the Governor of the Bank of Greece Yannis Stournaras. The Vice-President will also meet the President of Nea Dimokratia Kyriakos Mitsotakis and have a discussion with the social partners. The joint press statements with Minister Tsakalotos will take place on Friday 12.30 and can be followed via [Europe by Satellite](#). *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)*

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