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European Commission steps up support to counter-terrorism, the prevention of violent extremism and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

The European Commission, through its [Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace](#), has allocated €8.5 million to support Sri Lankan efforts to prevent violent extremism, build community resilience, and promote peace and tolerance. It will also contribute to the ongoing peacebuilding process through internally displaced persons and refugees being able to return to their land. This allocation follows High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**'s meeting earlier this month with the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, where [she underlined the EU's readiness to support Sri Lanka in the face of the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism](#). The [Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka](#) killed 258 people and injured many more. Preventing and responding to terrorist attacks like this is an additional challenge for Sri Lanka along with numerous other challenges in transitioning to durable peace after many years of conflict, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, and land identified as potentially contaminated with mines and explosive remnants. The €8.5 million Commission support will follow a three-pronged approach: It will support Sri Lankan policy makers, competent authorities and the security and judicial branches in their mission to prevent and respond to terrorist threats and attacks in a human rights compliant manner; it will focus on the prevention of violent extremism and will support relevant local stakeholders to develop and disseminate positive awareness raising campaigns, notably via partnerships with global social media actors; and it will contribute to the last stages of mine clearance in the three northern districts of Sri Lanka, and focus on peacebuilding to reinforce national cohesion and reconciliation. For more information on EU-Sri Lanka relations, visit the [website of the European Union Delegation](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

rescEU assets mobilised to help Greece fight devastating forest fires

Following yesterday's request for assistance from Greece, [rescEU](#) assets have been mobilised to tackle forest fires ravaging several areas of Greece. As an immediate response, the European Union has already helped to mobilise 3 forest fighting planes from rescEU reserve from Italy and Spain to be dispatched swiftly to the affected regions. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides**, said: *"The EU stands in full solidarity with Greece at this difficult time. The planes are already in action, fighting the fires. This immediate response proves the added value of rescEU which makes our response more robust, quick and efficient. Moreover, this is a real example of the common European values on which rescEU is based: solidarity and protection of lives of our European citizens. I am thankful to Italy and Spain for their offers of assistance. We stand ready to provide further assistance."* Today, the Commissioner is in Athens where he met with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and visited the Crisis Centre of the Greek Civil Protection to be briefed along with the Minister for the

Protection of Citizens Michalis Chrysochoidis and oversee the operation of the rescEU assets. The [European satellite mapping system Copernicus](#) is helping to provide damage assessment maps of the affected areas. Read the full press release [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

EU co-funded Sarajevo Film Festival puts Western Balkans on the big screen

On 16 August, the 25th edition of the Sarajevo Film Festival, co-funded by the EU, will kick off in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, bringing together over 100,000 spectators and filmmakers to celebrate regional, European and international cinema at the biggest film festival of the region. The European Union supports the thriving film scene of the Western Balkans through its [Creative Europe MEDIA programme](#). So far, the programme mobilised €4.2 million for the production and distribution of films from Europe in the Western Balkans and vice-versa. Of over 30 film projects that have been realised with Creative Europe MEDIA, some have gone to win internationally acclaimed awards and prizes and reach audiences across the world. EU support to culture aims to promote artistic quality, cultural diversity and exchange, but also recognises the positive impact of culture on economic growth and job creation. As most films today are co-produced between different countries, the film industry also helps deepen regional and European cooperation. This week's Sarajevo film festival will again be a powerful demonstration of how arts and culture can promote dialogue and tolerance. Read the full article [here](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Commission continues to support pilot scheme giving artists opportunities to work across the EU

Today, [i-Portunus](#) is launching its third and final call for applications this year. [i-Portunus](#) is a pilot project funded by the European Commission providing financial support for artists to work in another country for a period of 15 to 85 days. The first and second calls together received more than 2300 applications from individual artists and cultural professionals. A total of 253 people were selected and funded so far. The third [i-Portunus](#) call is the last chance this year for those in the performing and visual arts to apply. Following its investment of €1 million this year, the Commission will invest another €1.5 million in similar trials next year. The aim is to prepare for 2021 when the mobility of artists is proposed to be a permanent action under the new [Creative Europe programme](#). Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“Creating opportunities for more artists to work abroad and create new projects and partnerships is an important part of our work to boost innovation in our cultural and creative sectors and to make them even more competitive. I am pleased that our pilot to test new formats to support the mobility of European artists is in high demand and welcomed by so many. This means that we are making progress towards a key objective included in our new European Agenda for Culture: to support an ‘Erasmus’ scheme for artists.”* The third [i-Portunus](#) call will be open until 5 September 14:00 CET. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control of AmTrust by Centerbridge

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of AmTrust Corporate Member Limited and certain other business assets ("AmTrust") of the UK by Centerbridge Partners L.P. of the U.S. AmTrust provides a range of non-life insurance and reinsurance services in the European Economic Area. Centerbridge is an investment management firm focused on private equity and distressed investment opportunities. Amongst other businesses, Centerbridge solely controls Canopus AG, which provides non-life insurance and reinsurance services. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the companies' modest combined market shares in reinsurance and non-life insurance (including in the sub-segments where the companies' activities overlap, i.e. credit and suretyship, property, liability, accident and sickness, motor, and marine, aviation and transport) and the presence of a number of competitors in these markets. 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.9398](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tél.: +32 229 56153 and Giulia Astuti +32 229 55344)

Eurostat: Le PIB et l'emploi en hausse de 0,2% dans la zone euro

Au cours du deuxième trimestre 2019, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,2% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l'estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au cours du premier trimestre 2019, le PIB avait augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l'UE28. En comparaison avec le même trimestre de l'année précédente, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a enregistré une hausse de 1,1% dans la zone euro et de 1,3% dans l'UE28 au deuxième trimestre 2019, après respectivement +1,2% et +1,6% au trimestre précédent. En ce qui concerne l'emploi dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28, le nombre de personnes ayant un emploi a augmenté de 0,2% dans la zone euro ainsi que dans l'UE28 au deuxième trimestre 2019 par rapport au trimestre précédent. Au cours du premier trimestre 2019, l'emploi avait augmenté de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28. Par rapport au même trimestre de l'année précédente, l'emploi a augmenté de 1,1% dans la zone euro et de 1,0% dans l'UE28 au deuxième trimestre 2019, après respectivement +1,3% et +1,2% au premier trimestre 2019. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Vanessa Mock – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Christian Wigand – Tél.: +32 229 62253; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976; Annikky Lamp – Tél.: +32 229 56151 ; Sara Soumillion – Tél.: + 32 229 67094)

Eurostat: La production industrielle en baisse de 1,6% dans la zone euro

En juin 2019 par rapport à mai 2019, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 1,6% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 1,5% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de

l'Union européenne. En mai 2019, la production industrielle avait augmenté de 0,8% dans la zone euro et de 0,9% dans l'UE28. En juin 2019 par rapport à juin 2018, la production industrielle a diminué de 2,6% dans la zone euro et de 1,9% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (*Pour plus d'informations : Vanessa Mock – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169*)

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