

Daily News 15 / 01 / 2018

Commission blocks Austrian regulator from introducing measures which would unduly favour the national broadcaster

The European Commission decided to block today a proposal by Austrian broadcasting regulator KommAustria, as it is not compatible with the EU telecoms rules and principles of competition law. Following two months of in-depth investigation the Commission required KommAustria to withdraw plans for continued regulation of the wholesale market for analogue terrestrial radio transmission in Austria. Such plans would place the national radio broadcaster (ORF) at an undue competitive advantage over other broadcasters. The Commission is particularly concerned regarding the lack of competitive developments on this market. KommAustria proposed to impose a practically unchanged set of regulatory obligations but excludes from the regulated market the supply of radio transmission services by Austrian Broadcasting Service (ORS) to its parent company ORF. ORF and its competitors depend on ORS' transmission network for the broadcasting of their content. As a result, ORF would receive a different and arguably better service than its direct competitors and, as the majority owner, can influence ORS' decisions concerning infrastructure developments (such as where to build radio transmission masts). According to the plans of KommAustria, ORF is also subject to different price conditions than competing radio broadcasters. Further details on the case are available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

State aid: Commission approves Polish investment aid to SMEs in the shipbuilding sector; opens investigation into Polish tax incentive for shipyards

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules Polish support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the shipbuilding sector. This measure aims to support SMEs in the shipbuilding sector in the Polish Pomorskie and Zachodniopomorskie regions, with an overall budget of around PLN 77 million (around €18 million). The Commission found that the aid was limited to the minimum necessary and will encourage new investment to modernise a sector that has traditionally been very important for the local economy. It therefore concluded that the positive effects of the project on regional development clearly outweigh any distortion of competition brought about by the State aid. Separately, the Commission opened an in-depth investigation into a Polish tax scheme for shipyards. This measure gives shipyards operating in Poland an option to pay a 1% flat-rate tax on sales from the building and conversion of ships, instead of paying the generally applicable corporate or personal income tax. The Commission has concerns that the scheme would give some shipyards a selective advantage over competitors. The Commission does not question Poland's right to decide on its tax system. However, under the EU Treaty the Commission has to verify that the tax system

respects EU State aid rules and does not selectively favour certain companies over others. The Commission will now investigate further to determine whether its initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of an in-depth investigation gives interested third parties the opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudge the outcome of the investigation. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#), [PL](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Eurostat: Excédent de 26,3 milliards d’euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro – Excédent de 8,0 mrd d’euros pour l’UE28 en Novembre 2017

D’après les premières estimations pour le mois de novembre 2017, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 197,5 milliards d’euros, en hausse de 7,7% par rapport à novembre 2016 (183,5 mrd). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 171,2 mrd d’euros, en hausse de 7,3% par rapport à novembre 2016 (159,6 mrd). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en novembre 2017 un excédent de 26,3 mrd d’euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +23,8 mrd en novembre 2016. Le commerce intra-zone euro s’est établi à 165,5 mrd d’euros en novembre 2017, soit +6,9% par rapport à novembre 2016. Le communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

EU steps up support to address the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh

The European Union has adopted a new €5 million programme to support the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, aimed at supporting their identification and registration, facilitating the provision of humanitarian support, and ensuring the better protection of particularly vulnerable individuals. This is the latest in a significant number of EU-led actions in response to the crisis, notably the EU co-hosted [donors’ conference](#) in Geneva in October; its initiative to establish the independent, international Fact-Finding Mission at the UN Human Rights Council; and several high-level visits to both Myanmar and Bangladesh of the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Christos **Stylianides**. The EU’s initiative is a demonstration of its commitment to support the creation of all necessary conditions for the eventual voluntary, safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar to Bangladesh, back to their place of origin. In this respect, the EU’s initiative aims to support the implementation of the [bilateral repatriation agreement](#) between the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh, which was signed on 23 November 2017, and will build on ongoing identification and registration efforts. As High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** said during her [visit to the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar](#) on 19 November 2017, “the European Union will continue to lead the work of the donor community because we believe that human dignity and peoples’ lives must always be

protected.” A full press release is available [online](#), as is a [factsheet](#) on the EU-Myanmar relations. For more information, visit the websites of the EU Delegations in [Bangladesh](#) and [Myanmar](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

La Commissaire Bulc en visite au Luxembourg pour des réunions politiques et un dialogue citoyen

La Commissaire en charge des Transports Mme Violeta **Bulc** est aujourd’hui au Luxembourg pour une série de rencontres à haut-niveau ainsi qu’un dialogue citoyen. Ce matin, elle a rencontré M. François Bausch, Ministre du Développement durable et des Infrastructures du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg, avec qui elle a visité le terminal intermodal de Bettembourg-Dudelange ainsi que la gare de Pfaffenthal-Kirchberg. Cet après-midi, ils participeront ensemble à un [dialogue citoyen sur le futur de l’Europe](#). Celui-ci sera retransmis en direct [à cette adresse](#) à partir de 12.30. Plus tard dans l’après-midi, la Commissaire Bulc participera à une rencontre avec des parlementaires membres des commissions des Affaires étrangères et européennes, de l’Economie ainsi que du Développement durable de la Chambre des Députés. Cette rencontre sera diffusée [sur le site de la Chambre](#). Enfin, elle s’entretiendra avec M. Xavier Bettel, Premier Ministre du Grand-Duché. (Plus d’information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43)

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