

## Daily News 15 / 05 / 2018

### **Contribution de la Commission au Leaders' Agenda : investir dans la Recherche et l'Innovation, c'est investir dans l'avenir de l'Europe**

La Commission présente aujourd'hui sa contribution au débat informel que les chefs d'État et de gouvernement tiendront sur la recherche et l'innovation, mercredi, à Sofia. Cette [communication](#) identifie les mesures qui permettront d'assurer la compétitivité de l'Europe. La recherche et l'innovation améliorent déjà la vie quotidienne de millions de personnes en Europe et dans le monde entier, en aidant à résoudre certains de nos plus grands défis. Cette communication va plus loin et présente un ensemble d'actions concrètes visant à renforcer la capacité d'innovation européenne et à assurer une prospérité durable. Le vice-président de la Commission, Jyrki **Katainen**, chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, a déclaré: *"L'Europe dispose d'une recherche de classe mondiale et d'une solide base industrielle, mais il faut transformer cette excellence en succès. Nous devons agir rapidement pour être en mesure de mener la nouvelle vague d'innovation"*. Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire chargé de la recherche, de la science et de l'innovation, a ajouté: *" Nous devons réformer le soutien à l'innovation de rupture par le biais d'un nouveau Conseil européen de l'innovation et renouer avec les citoyens grâce à une approche de la recherche et de l'innovation axée sur des missions, clairement identifiables."* En parallèle, un ensemble des meilleurs pratiques est présenté par la Commission aujourd'hui sur les [marchés publics innovants](#). Notre communiqué de presse se trouve [ici](#), nos fiches d'information [ici](#) et [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229 80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040;)

### **EU Leaders' meeting in Sofia: completing a trusted Digital Single Market for the benefit of all**

Ten days ahead of the entry into application of the [General Data Protection rules](#), the European Commission is today presenting a set of concrete actions that European leaders can take to protect citizens' privacy and make the EU's Digital Single Market a reality before the end of 2018. The [Communication](#) presented today is the Commission's contribution to the informal discussions that EU leaders will hold in Sofia tomorrow. The Commission believes that it is in the shared interest of all Member States to manage the digital transformation by following the European approach, which links investment in digital innovation with strong data protection rules. This will allow the EU to effectively deal with the challenges of an increasingly data-based global economy. Three years after adopting the [Digital Single Market strategy](#), the Digital Single Market has progressed, with 12 legislative proposals agreed by the European Parliament and Council out of the 29 tabled by the Commission since May 2015. Major new laws on data protection, cybersecurity, and the end of mobile roaming charges are either already in place or will be in a matter of days or weeks. Member States must now ensure these agreed rules work in

practice. The benefits of the Digital Single Market are already being enjoyed by citizens, for instance through a four-fold increase in data use when travelling to other Member States thanks to the abolition of roaming charges. Altogether the Digital Single Market could contribute €415 billion per year to our economy and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. All other pending Digital Single Market proposals should be agreed by the end of 2018, in line with the call of the [European Council of October 2017](#). These include, for instance, the modernisation of EU copyright rules to protect creators online better and facilitate the access to European works across borders. Further details are available in the [press release](#) as well as a number of factsheets: on the [progress of the Digital Single Market](#), the [Commission actions since 2015](#) as well as [stronger privacy rules for electronic communications](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

### **Commission advises public buyers on how to capitalise innovation**

In the context of the [Renewed Agenda for Research and Innovation](#) presented today as input to the upcoming Leaders' agenda meeting in Sofia, the Commission has published [guidance](#) to encourage public buyers of goods and services in using public procurement as a tool to stimulate innovation. *"Public authorities in the EU spend nearly 14% of GDP purchasing services and products. If spent strategically on innovative solutions, public procurement can contribute to higher quality and sustainable public service and lead to economic and social benefits. It creates demand for new ideas and innovative start-ups to emerge and grow. We are here to assist the Member States that choose to do so."*, said Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**. A greater shift to the strategic public procurement is a choice of the Member States but it is at the same time a very strong tool supporting our shared objectives such as research and innovation. [EU public procurement legislation](#) was modernised in 2014 and the Commission put forward in October 2017 an [initiative to carry out procurement more efficiently and in a modern and sustainable manner](#). The guidance complements these efforts. It contains good-practice examples on reducing administrative burden, adjusting selection criteria, mobilising innovation brokers and designing an SME-friendly payment scheme to better attract innovators to public procurement. Alternative public procurement procedures can specifically cater for innovation (for example competitive dialogues, design contests or innovation partnerships) and have been bundled in a flexible toolbox to inspire new approaches. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

### **EU prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards – 29 winners announced**

Today, the European Commission and Europa Nostra, the leading European heritage network, have announced the winners of this year's EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. The 29 laureates from 17 countries have been recognised for their accomplishments in conservation, research, dedicated service, and education, training and awareness-raising. Cultural heritage is in the spotlight throughout 2018 as the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) sees many initiatives and events being organised across the

continent to celebrate Europe's rich cultural heritage.

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport said: *"Cultural heritage in all its different forms is one of Europe's most precious assets. It builds bridges between people and communities, as well as between the past and the future. It is central to our identity as Europeans, and also has a vital role in driving social and economic development. I congratulate the winners of the 2018 EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards and their teams for their exceptional and innovative work. Thanks to their talent and commitment, numerous European cultural heritage treasures have been safeguarded and revitalised. And importantly, their work enables people from all backgrounds to discover, explore and engage with our rich cultural heritage, fully in the spirit of the European Year of Cultural Heritage."* More information on the award winners can be found [here](#). They will be honoured at a high-level [European Heritage Awards Ceremony](#), co-hosted by Commissioner **Navracsics** and the President of Europa Nostra, Maestro [Plácido Domingo](#), [on 22 June](#) in Berlin, during the first ever European Cultural Heritage Summit. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

### **State aid: Commission approves prolongation of UK Enterprise Management Initiative scheme**

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules the prolongation of the UK Enterprise Management Initiative scheme, which reduces the taxation of employee share options for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Under the scheme, employees of SMEs will benefit from reductions from income tax and/or national insurance contributions, when exercising their share options. Furthermore, also the employer (i.e. SMEs that are listed companies and would therefore be subject to national insurance contributions when the share options are exercised) will benefit from reductions from such contributions. The aim of the scheme is to allow SMEs to recruit and retain employees, and thus enable their growth, without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. The Commission initially [authorised the scheme in 2009](#). In March 2018, the UK authorities notified their plans to prolong the scheme to the Commission. The Commission's assessment found that the prolongation of the measure is necessary to help UK SMEs attract and retain talented and skilled personnel. It also found that the measure contains a number of safeguards, such as a cap on the value of the share options that can be subject to the tax advantage both at the employee and employer level, ensuring that potential distortions to competition are limited. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the measure is in line with EU State aid rules. Without prejudice to any provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement, which is under negotiation, this Commission decision only applies until the UK ceases to be a Member State. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.47789. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. [+32 229 56182](#); Yizhou Ren – Tel.: [+32 229 94889](#); Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: [+32 229 13740](#))

### **State aid: Commission approves CZK 400 million public support for intermodal transport in the Czech Republic**

The European Commission has approved a CZK 400 million (around €16 million) aid scheme to support the shift of freight traffic from road to rail and inland waterways in the Czech Republic. The scheme, which will run until 31 December 2023, will support the purchase of transport units dedicated to combined transport, such as intermodal road trailers and freight containers. The beneficiaries will be operators of intermodal transport. The government will support up to 30% of the eligible costs, with the scheme being partially funded by the EU Cohesion Fund. The Commission concluded that the measure is necessary to improve the competitiveness of intermodal transport services in the Czech Republic and that it is proportionate in accordance with EU State aid rules. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.49153. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

**Eurostat: Estimation rapide pour le premier trimestre 2018 – Le PIB en hausse de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28 – +2,5% et +2,4% respectivement par rapport au premier trimestre 2017**

Au cours du premier trimestre 2018, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro (ZE19) ainsi 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 quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait crû de 0,7% dans la zone euro et de 0,6% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**European Labour Authority on track: Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Thyssen attend first meeting of the Advisory Group**

Tomorrow, 16 May, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, as well as Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will attend the very first meeting of the Advisory Group for the European Labour Authority (ELA). The Advisory Group aims to facilitate the establishment of the Labour Authority and make sure it is rapidly operational once established by the European Parliament and the Council. The Advisory Group is composed of representatives of Member States' authorities, Union-level social partners, and existing EU agencies in the employment and social area. Member countries of the European Free Trade Area and Europol will have an observer status in the Advisory Group. Ahead of the meeting, Commissioner **Thyssen** said: "Tomorrow's meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the upcoming activities of the Advisory Group. I'm happy to see the European Labour Authority is on track, as it will fulfil a very important role in ensuring fair EU labour mobility." The Commission presented its [proposal to establish a European Labour Authority](#), first announced by President Juncker in his [2017 State of the Union address](#), in March 2018. The European Labour Authority will aim to ensure that EU rules on

labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. It will act as a permanent structure to support national authorities, businesses, and mobile citizens and will be established as a new decentralised EU agency. The Commission's aim is to have it up and running in 2019. *(For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)*

### **Commissioner Stylianides visits Belgian Federal Parliament to discuss current humanitarian aid challenges and rescEU: the EU's plan to strengthen its emergency response to disasters**

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** meets with members of the International Relations Committee, the Federal Advisory Committee for EU Affairs and the Interior Committee of the Belgian Federal Parliament. **Commissioner Stylianides** will discuss current humanitarian aid challenges. He will also present [rescEU](#) – the Commission's proposal to strengthen Europe's ability to deal with disasters. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

### **Commissioner Hogan leads business delegation to promote EU food and drink in China**

Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, is continuing his series of business offensives to promote EU food and drink products with a trip to Shanghai, China, from 14-17 May. Commissioner **Hogan** said: *"China is a key trading partner for the EU agri-food sector. There is strong and growing demand among China's increasing consumer class for our high quality food and drink products, and by meeting directly with our Chinese counterparts, we can build the business and political relationships required to accelerate this growth. The EU is the global leader in free and fair trade, and we will continue to vigorously pursue increased trade with our global partners for our mutual benefit."* The commissioner will be accompanied by a business delegation of 70 representatives from across the European agri-food sector, representing national associations or businesses from 22 different countries, as well as a number of EU-wide associations. As with the Commissioner's recent visits to Canada, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the aim of the visit is to facilitate potential business agreements between European and Chinese agri-food sector companies. China is the second largest importer of EU agricultural and processed agricultural products, accounting for 8.7% of all EU agricultural exports in 2016, and European food and drink products are becoming increasingly popular with China's emerging middle class in particular. To underline this growing importance, the EU has been chosen as the region of honour at the SIAL China in Shanghai, Asia's largest food exhibition. Commissioner **Hogan** will officially open the exhibition on 16 May. A full programme of activities is organised for the business delegation, including seminars on the characteristics of the local market and consumer trends, retail visits, networking opportunities and a visit to SIAL. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)*

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