

# Daily News 15 / 06 / 2017

## **EU celebrates end of roaming charges while Commission will watch the implementation carefully**

Today is a historic day. From now on, high roaming bills for Europeans will be confined to history. *“Eliminating roaming charges is one of the greatest and most tangible successes of the EU”*, President **Juncker**, President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani and Prime Minister of Malta Joseph Muscat [stated](#). It demonstrates that *“the European Union is about bringing people together and making their lives easier. (...) Operators have had 2 years to prepare for the end of roaming charges, and we are confident that they will seize the opportunities the new rules bring to the benefit of their customers”* they said in their joint statement. The work does not stop here however. The Commission will continue to carefully watch the implementation of the new rules, and make sure that Europeans fully benefit from them and that the European market remains competitive. An overview of the new roaming rules is available on the [roaming website](#). Details on how ‘roam like at home’ works in practice are available in all official EU languages in the [frequently asked questions](#), [general factsheet](#), and a [detailed factsheet](#). The [end of roaming charges in the EU](#) is at the top of the agenda for the [Digital Assembly](#) – a two-day conference organised by the Maltese Presidency and the Commission, currently under way in Malta. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** will deliver a keynote speech (at around 14:45, web streamed [here](#) and later available [here](#)). All discussions can be followed live [here](#). Four thematic working sessions will focus on the key digital priorities: data economy, new digital opportunities, cybersecurity and Internet of Things, and digital transformation. In parallel, there will also be briefings held on several EU policies, including [ePrivacy](#), [WiFi4EU](#), [Next Generation Internet](#), Interoperability, International connectivity, the [Digital Single Market mid-term review](#), the [European Broadband Fund](#) and the [Data economy](#). The Assembly will conclude with a discussion among young people on their ideas for the digital economy and society, with the participation of the [‘Digital Tomorrow’ video contest](#) winners. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Johannes Bahrke – Tel. +32 229 58615)

## **Rapport UE témoigne du partenariat étroit entre l’Union européenne et la Jordanie**

Un rapport conjoint publié par la Commission européenne et le SEAE évalue l’état du partenariat UE-Jordanie pour la période 2015-2017. Il note le renforcement de la coopération entre l’UE et la Jordanie dans un grand nombre de domaines clés ainsi que les progrès de réforme initiés par la Jordanie, notamment dans les sphères économiques et politiques, malgré la période difficile que traverse le pays. Confronté à de nombreux défis, notamment dû à la crise Syrienne, la Jordanie a pu compter sur le soutien durable de l’UE et se distinguer par son rôle unique sur le front diplomatique et sécuritaire. La HR/VP **Mogherini** a dit *“L’UE et la Jordanie sont des partenaires solides et*

*partageant des vues similaires sur de nombreux dossiers régionaux clés. L'UE continuera à soutenir la Jordanie dans la mise en œuvre de son ambitieux programme de réformes, ainsi que pour renforcer notre coopération dans la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent, mettant à profit le rôle actif et de premier plan de la Jordanie dans la région." Le Commissaire Hahn a ajouté "L'UE soutient pleinement les efforts déployés par la Jordanie pour promouvoir une croissance économique inclusive qui garantira la prospérité sur le long terme, au-delà de la crise syrienne, alors que nous sommes aux côtés du pays pour l'aider à relever les défis actuels." L'intensification de la coopération UE-Jordanie a également visé à améliorer la stabilité macro-économique du pays, renforcer les relations commerciales entre l'UE et la Jordanie, intensifier la coopération dans le domaine de l'éducation et renforcer la gouvernance démocratique et la résilience du peuple jordanien et des institutions du pays. Le rapport est disponible [ici](#) et le communiqué de presse complet [ici](#). De plus amples informations sur les relations UE-Jordanie [ici](#) et [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)*

## **EU announces €143 million support package for the crisis in North East Nigeria**

The European Commission has announced a support package of €143 million today for the early recovery and reconstruction needs in Borno State in Nigeria which is suffering from a worsening humanitarian crisis. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"Our support package of €143 million will assist approximately 1.3 million internally displaced people and affected communities in and around the Borno State in Nigeria. Our assistance will not only target the immediate needs of the people but, it will also help to restore basic services, stimulate employment and create livelihood opportunities, particularly for women and young people."* Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** added: *"The European Union is committed to get lifesaving aid to those in need in Nigeria. Emergency aid can help them but to do so aid organisations need safe and full access to do their job. We also need to think about the long term affects and how to help communities recover. I have visited the country several times and seen the suffering caused by the victims of terrorism but also the strength and determination of the local people to rebuild their lives. It is this desire to rebuild a better future that the EU will support."* This brings total EU support for the crisis in Nigeria's Borno state to €224.5 million for 2017, following earlier announcements of €81.5 million in humanitarian aid. Read the full press release [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65355; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

## **L'Union européenne poursuit son engagement en faveur de la sécurité et de la résilience en Afrique de l'Ouest**

Une semaine après la présentation de [sa nouvelle stratégie pour la résilience](#), la Commission européenne a adopté de nouveaux projets pour un montant total de 88 millions d'euros, destinés au renforcement de la sécurité

et de la résilience en Afrique de l'Ouest. Aujourd'hui, Neven **Mimica**, Commissaire pour la coopération internationale et le développement, a signé quatre nouveaux projets avec la Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) et l'Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (UEMOA). Dans ce contexte, le Commissaire **Mimica** a déclaré: *"Ces projets, d'une valeur total de 88 millions d'euros, renforceront la sécurité, faciliteront le commerce et amélioreront la résilience des populations en Afrique de l'Ouest. Ces nouveaux programmes sont cruciaux dans la conjoncture actuelle. Ils soutiendront les efforts déjà entrepris par nos partenaires pour renforcer la sécurité et soutenir le développement économique de la région. En même temps, ils soutiendront aussi les importants projets d'infrastructure rendu possible grâce au nouveaux instruments de mixage prêts-dons."* Ces programmes sont destinés à apporter des réponses aux problématiques régionales en matière de sécurité, de développement économique, d'investissements dans les infrastructures – tout en contribuant à la résilience de cette région et de sa population. Le communiqué de presse complet est à lire [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65355; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

### **Education: New report shows need to better support teaching in higher education**

Teaching staff at universities and other higher education institutions are rarely provided with high quality training focusing on teaching skills. This is one of the findings of the 'Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Academic Staff 2017' [report](#) published today by the European Commission's [Eurydice](#) network. This report is a first mapping of the situation of academic staff in higher education institutions across 35 European countries. Tibor **Navracsics**, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"This report shows how important it is to invest in the teaching capacities of academic staff. The Commission's recently adopted [renewed EU agenda for higher education](#) can help Member States in this. It proposes actions to improve academic teaching, for instance by strengthening cooperation between teacher training centres across the EU and providing more mobility opportunities focused on pedagogical training. Better supporting teachers is crucial in building high quality education systems that deliver for young people from all backgrounds."* Other key findings point to a lack of national strategies for human resource planning in higher education leading to mismatches between staff and student numbers; an increase in job insecurity among academic staff; imbalances in the opportunities open to junior academics compared with their more senior colleagues; and underrepresentation of women in the academic world, especially among the higher ranks. In terms of internationalisation of higher education, academics increasingly participate in joint international programmes or teach in other languages, but there is a long way to go as regards the use of accessible online resources, concludes the report. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

### **Commission welcomes agreement on EU Macro-Financial Assistance to Moldova**

The European Commission welcomes the [endorsement by the Council](#) of the

agreement reached with the European Parliament to provide [Macro-Financial Assistance](#) (MFA) to Moldova worth EUR 100 million. Under the assistance, which was [proposed by the Commission in January 2017](#), the country would receive up to EUR 40 million in grants and up to EUR 60 million in medium-term loans at favourable financing conditions. This operation is a significant opportunity to help Moldova address its macroeconomic challenges and meet its short-term financing needs. Under the terms of the agreement, the assistance would be strictly conditional on good progress with the IMF programme and on implementing key conditions to be agreed with Moldova in a Memorandum of Understanding. The Commission also welcomes today's [joint statement adopted by the three institutions and included in the compromise text](#), which reiterates that respecting effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law, remains a pre-condition throughout the lifecycle of the macro-financial assistance. *(For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Juliana Dahl Tel.: +32 229 59914)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Vitanas by Oaktree**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of sole control over Burkart Healthcare Real Estate Beteiligungsholding GmbH, Vitanas Holding GmbH and PUW Pflegenundwohnen Beteiligungs GmbH (jointly referred as “Vitanas”), all of Germany, by Oaktree Capital Group, LLC of the U.S., by way of purchase of shares. Vitanas is a private nursing care provider in the German market, offering a full spectrum of care services. Oaktree is a globally active investment management company headquartered in Los Angeles. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because of its limited impact on the market structure. 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.8476](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Eurostat: Niveaux des prix à la consommation en 2016 – Les niveaux des prix ont varié quasiment du simple au triple parmi les États membres de l'UE**

En 2016, les niveaux des prix des services et biens de consommation ont présenté de fortes disparités dans l'Union européenne (UE). Le Danemark (139% de la moyenne de l'UE) affichait le niveau de prix le plus élevé, suivi de l'Irlande (125%), du Luxembourg ainsi que de la Suède (124% chacun), de la Finlande et du Royaume-Uni (121% chacun). À l'autre extrémité de l'échelle, le niveau de prix le plus bas a été relevé en Bulgarie (48%), alors que la Pologne (53%) et la Roumanie (52%) se situaient à quelque 50% de la moyenne. En d'autres termes, les niveaux des prix des services et biens de consommation dans l'UE variaient quasiment du simple au triple entre l'État membre le moins cher et celui le plus onéreux. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Juliana Dahl – Tél.: +32 229 59914)*

## **Eurostat: Excédent de 17,9 milliards d'euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro – Déficit de 0,1 mrd d'euros pour l'UE28**

D'après les premières estimations pour le mois d'avril 2017, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 167,7 milliards d'euros, en baisse de 3% par rapport à avril 2016 (172,5 mrd). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 149,8 mrd d'euros, en hausse de 3% par rapport à avril 2016 (145,9 mrd). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en avril 2017 un excédent de 17,9 mrd d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +26,6 mrd en avril 2016. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 144,7 mrd d'euros en avril 2017, quasi stable par rapport à avril 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 5138399)

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Preparation of the Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, Luxembourg 15-16 June 2017**

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the European Commission at today's Eurogroup and tomorrow's ECOFIN meetings. The Eurogroup will consider the next steps towards concluding the second review of the stability support programme for Greece and will continue its discussion on the sustainability of Greece's public debt. As part of the thematic discussions on jobs and growth, ministers will continue their discussion on how to improve the quality and sustainability of public finances. Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Christine Lagarde, will present the IMF's assessment of the euro area's economic situation, while the European Commission, the Chair of the Single Resolution Board and the Vice-Chair of the ECB Supervisory Board will inform ministers about the recent European bank resolution case. The meeting will be followed by a press conference with Commissioner **Moscovici**. At tomorrow's ECOFIN meeting, ministers are expected to agree on [new EU rules](#) to allow e-publications to benefit from the same reduced VAT rates available to their printed equivalents and will also discuss a proposal for a generalised VAT reverse charge mechanism in the EU. Ahead of trilogues with the European Parliament, the Council will try to come to an agreement on its negotiating mandate on two [Banking Union](#) proposals: new rules for the ranking of unsecured debt instruments and transitional arrangements for the introduction of new international financial reporting standards. In addition, the Council is expected to approve [European Semester Country-Specific Recommendations for 2017](#), close Excessive Deficit Procedures for Croatia and Portugal and endorse a revised Code of Conduct of the Stability and Growth Pact. Finally, ministers will hold an exchange of views on the [Mid-term Review of the Capital Markets Union](#). Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will participate in the press conference following the ECOFIN session. (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Enda Mc Namara – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

## **Commissioners Avramopoulos, Jourová and King in Malta for EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial meeting**

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová** and Commissioner for the Union Security Julian **King** will be in Valetta, Malta today and tomorrow to represent the EU together with the Maltese Minister of Home Affairs and National Security Michael Farrugia and Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government Owen Bonnici, on behalf of the Maltese Presidency, at the EU-U.S. Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial meeting. The U.S. will be represented by Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Elaine C. Duke. The meeting, which is held twice a year to advance transatlantic cooperation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, will focus on the fight against terrorism, aviation security, criminal justice in cyberspace, transnational organised crime, border management, migration and visa reciprocity. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253)*

## **First Vice-President Timmermans visits the Czech Republic**

On Thursday 15 and Friday 16 June, First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** will be in Prague, Czech Republic, where he will meet bilaterally with Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and with Minister for Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek. The First Vice-President will also participate in the [Prague European Summit](#), taking part in an on-stage discussion with Minister Zaorálek. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

## **Commissioner Hahn in Azerbaijan**

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will visit [Azerbaijan](#) on 16 June in order to prepare for the Eastern Partnership Summit. Ahead of the mission, Commissioner Hahn said: *“I am visiting Azerbaijan, an important partner for the European Union, to discuss the Eastern Partnership Summit and how to best broaden and deepen our cooperation in the near future. The European Union is ready to support Azerbaijan with its efforts to achieve substantial economic and democratic transformation, involving civil society in this process”*. Commissioner will meet with high-level state representatives to discuss the ongoing negotiations of the [new EU-Azerbaijan agreement](#) as well as the Partnership Priorities and future areas of cooperation. Commissioner **Hahn** will address Human Rights issues with all interlocutors. He will further meet private sector representatives and International Financial Institutions to follow up on the EU-Azerbaijan Business Forum, which took place in Baku on 8 June. A visit to the Port of Baku will provide the opportunity for an exchange on issues related to transport and interconnection. Commissioner Hahn will also meet with civil society representatives. Videos and photos of the visit will be available on EbS. A [factsheet](#) on EU – Azerbaijan relations is available online. *(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo*

*Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)*

### **Commissioner Stylianides in Cyprus on 16 June**

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** will visit Cyprus tomorrow to present the [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) during the national Parliament's plenary session. The White Paper sets out the main challenges and opportunities for Europe in the coming decade. It presents five scenarios for how the Union could evolve by 2025 depending on how it chooses to respond. To encourage this debate, the European Commission, together with the European Parliament and interested Member States, is hosting a series of 'Future of Europe Debates' across Europe's cities and regions. Commissioner **Stylianides** will also meet with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and members of government. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

### **Commissioner Navracsics on visit to Bulgaria**

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, is currently visiting Varna, Bulgaria. Yesterday evening he attended a dinner hosted by Lilyana Pavlova, Minister for the EU Presidency, and Krasen Krlev, Minister of Youth and Sport, for discussions on the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency of the EU. Today, the Commissioner will officially open "Youth Spaces", the annual meeting of Bulgarian youth organisations co-organised by the Bulgarian National Youth Forum, Varna Municipality and the [Varna 2017 European Youth Capital](#) organisation. He will also have meetings with Krasimir Valtchev, Minister of Education and Science, and the rectors of Varna's six universities where the Commission's recent [communication on a renewed agenda for higher education](#) and the proposal for a [Council Recommendation on graduate tracking](#) will be discussed. Commissioner **Navracsics** will also meet Varna University alumni who have become successful entrepreneurs as well as Ivan Portnih, Mayor of Varna. The Commissioner's visit will finish with a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on education and training, opportunities for young people, cultural activities and the future of Europe alongside the President of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev, and Minister Krlev. The Citizens' Dialogue can be followed live [on 15 June at 16.15](#) (EEST) [here](#) as well as on the [Facebook page](#) of the EC Representation in Sofia and on the Commissioner's [Twitter account](#). *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

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