

Daily News 15 / 11 / 2017

Migration: la Commission présentera les progrès réalisés en ce qui concerne l'agenda européen en matière de migration

En amont du Conseil Européen de décembre, la Commission européenne présentera aujourd'hui un rapport sur les progrès réalisés en ce qui concerne l'agenda européen en matière de migration. Le rapport rassemblera, pour la première fois, tous les volets de l'agenda, y compris les aspects internes et externes de la gestion de la migration, et identifiera les domaines dans lesquels une action concertée de l'UE, de ses États membres et de ses pays partenaires est encore nécessaire. Le commissaire **Avramopoulos** présentera le rapport lors d'une conférence de presse aujourd'hui à 16h30 CET, qui sera diffusée en direct sur [EBS](#). Le [matériel de presse](#) sera disponible en ligne au début de la conférence de presse. (Pour plus d'informations: *Natasha Bertaud – Tél.: +32 229 67456, Tove Ernst – Tél. : +32 229 86764, Catherine Ray – Tél. : +32 229 69921, Esther Osorio – Tél. : +32 229 62076*)

Commission reports on progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism

The European Commission issued today its latest reports on steps taken by Bulgaria and Romania to meet their commitments on judicial reform and the fight against corruption, and in the case of Bulgaria organised crime, in the context of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) set up when the countries joined the European Union in 2007. Today's reports looks concretely at the progress made to meet the recommendations issued by the Commission in its January 2017 CVM Reports. On Bulgaria, First Vice-President **Frans Timmermans** said: *"We have seen progress in many areas but there is still more work needed. Bulgaria has met or made progress on several of our recommendations, but not yet all. I count on the Bulgarian Government to implement all the planned reforms, and to avoid backtracking, so that we can move towards the goal of ending the CVM under this Commission's mandate."* On Romania, **Timmermans** said: *"We have seen progress in some areas but there is still more work to be done. Romania has met some of our recommendations, but there is not enough progress yet on others. I count on the Romanian Government to pursue the necessary reforms, and to avoid backtracking, so that we can work together towards the goal of ending the CVM under this Commission's mandate."* The Commission's last reports in January 2017 took stock of overall progress in the past ten years and identified 12 specific recommendations for Romania and 17 specific recommendations for Bulgaria, which would help them move towards fulfilment of all CVM benchmarks. The Commission will assess progress again towards the end of 2018. Press releases are available online on the reports for [Bulgaria](#) and [Romania](#), and a [Memo](#) provides more information about the CVM process and the benchmarks and recommendations. The CVM Reports are available online [here](#). (For more information: *Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Tim McPhie –Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

The future of EU finances: Commissioner Crețu discusses Cohesion policy after

2020 in the Council

This morning, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** discussed the future of EU funds with the ministers in charge of cohesion, on the basis of [the 7th Cohesion Report](#). Commissioner **Crețu** said: *“Cohesion policy should keep on investing in all EU regions and address the main challenges of our times; the fight against social exclusion and youth unemployment, migration, adaptation to globalisation and climate change. It should continue to support sustainable transport, health and digital infrastructure, small businesses and innovation, focusing on areas where the highest EU value added can be achieved.”* On how Cohesion policy can best support structural reforms, Commissioner **Crețu** suggested that the process of fulfilling and assessing [the preconditions to successful investments](#) (so-called “[ex-ante conditionalities](#)”) should be reviewed. Incentives for reforms could be provided throughout the funding period and not only in the beginning. *“We should also reflect on whether the European Semester annual cycle and the mid-term planning of Cohesion policy could be better linked,”* the Commissioner added. Commissioner **Crețu** called for *“a lighter, proportionate and tailor-made approach”* to claiming EU payments for beneficiaries: *“Real or simplified costs should not be the only options. Many countries support payments upon fulfilment of pre-agreed conditions.”* Finally, the Commissioner suggested that similar projects financed under different EU funds should be treated the same way, for example as regards public procurement. The Commissioner’s speaking points are available [here](#). A press conference with Commissioner **Crețu** and Mr Jaak Aab, Minister of public administration and political representative of the Estonian Presidency responsible for Cohesion policy, is organised in the Council’s Europa building at 13h CET and live on [EbS](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Agriculture: €179 millions pour promouvoir les produits agro-alimentaires européens en 2018

Les producteurs européens disposeront d’un budget de €179 million en 2018 pour assurer la promotion des produits agricoles tant à l’extérieur qu’à l’intérieur de l’Union et continuer à trouver de nouveaux marchés. Le budget adopté aujourd’hui par la Commission co-financera des campagnes de promotion ciblant principalement des pays tiers à fort potentiel de croissance, notamment la Chine, le Japon, l’Asie du sud-est, le Mexique, la Colombie, le Canada. Cette orientation s’inscrit dans la continuité du mouvement lancé au début de l’année par l’offensive diplomatique du commissaire **Hogan** visant à trouver de nouveaux débouchés et à soutenir la consommation des produits de l’Union à l’étranger. Au sein du territoire de l’Union, l’accent sera mis sur les labels de qualité existants: label bio, IGP, AOP, etc. Par ailleurs, une enveloppe spécifique sera destinée aux campagnes visant à promouvoir la consommation de fruits et légumes, d’une part pour encourager les citoyens européens dans des habitudes alimentaires saines, et d’autre part pour soutenir les producteurs européens de fruits et légumes. Un appel à propositions pour bénéficier du budget alloué à la promotion en 2018 sera lancé au plus tard au mois de janvier de l’année prochaine. Les organisations concernées pourront soumettre leurs projets. Plus d’informations [en ligne](#).

(Pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)

Commission to amend Land Transport Agreement with Switzerland

The Commission has asked today the Council for a mandate to negotiate with Switzerland an amendment of the 1999 bilateral [Land Transport Agreement](#). This amendment is necessary to allow Switzerland to participate in the [European Union Agency for Railways](#), as foreseen by the Agency regulation. Switzerland applies rules equivalent to those in the EU in the areas of railway interoperability and railway safety, it fulfils the conditions for participation as a third country in the work of the Agency. Commissioner for Transport, Violeta **Bulc** said: *“Switzerland is an important partner for the EU, situated at the heart of the European rail network. Its participation in the work of the Agency European Union Agency for Railways would be mutually beneficial, particularly for railway safety and interoperability.”* The mandate requested by the Commission is needed exclusively to negotiate the necessary amendment to the bilateral Land Transport Agreement. Following this action, the exact terms of Swiss participation in the Agency would be negotiated directly between the Agency and Switzerland. *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)*

Bringing inland waterways to the forefront of efficient, digital and low-carbon transport

Commissioner for Transport, Violeta **Bulc** is attending the Inland waterways and ports dialogue in Strasbourg today. The event gathers stakeholders and EU decision-makers to discuss a vision for inland waterways transport towards 2030. At this occasion Commissioner **Bulc** said: *“European inland waterways and ports have united people and facilitated growth for centuries. Therefore I welcome the sector’s vision towards even more sustainability and innovation. It is high time to boost the potential for a digitally connected, low-carbon, and highly skilled inland navigation and port sector. A major step was achieved yesterday, with the adoption of the Directive on professional qualifications in inland waterways by the European Parliament. The Directive is now only pending the approval of the Council of the EU.”* Inland waterway transport, that is, the use of rivers, canals and lakes for connecting people and trade, provide a reliable and environmentally-friendly transport option. The sector is small in relative terms, but with 140 billion tonne kilometres makes a considerable contribution to the EU’s transport system and the aim is to realise more multimodal integration. The EU seeks to make inland waterways a decarbonised, digital and innovative alternative, which provides efficient mobility throughout the EU. EU-supported projects in the sector do not only improve navigability, but also the ecological status and resilience against climate change. This can be achieved for example by promoting smart, clean and modular barges, and multimodal inland ports, as well as by deploying alternative fuels. *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)*

EU and China strengthen cooperation on education, culture, youth, gender equality and sport

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and Chinese Vice-Premier Liu Yandong met on 13-14 November 2017 on the occasion of the 4th EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue in Shanghai. The dialogue was launched in 2012 to build trust and understanding between the peoples of the EU and China. This year's exchanges focused on culture, but education, gender equality, youth and, for the first time, sport were also discussed. Following the meeting, Commissioner Navracsics said: *"EU and China increasingly share global responsibilities. We work together on complex issues, from fighting poverty and tackling climate change to boosting trade and security. We build on shared views but sometimes we need to bridge differences. Promoting mutual understanding and respect between our people and cultures is therefore today more important than ever if we want to succeed."* Over the past decade the EU and China have closely cooperated in the areas of education, training, culture, multilingualism and youth through sector-focused policy dialogues. In 2012, the European Commission and China decided to integrate these sectoral activities under the High Level People-to-People Dialogue, which complements the EU-China High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue and High Level Strategic Dialogue. The full [press release](#) in EN/FR/DE is available online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

EU and ASEAN step up their cooperation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) are marking a milestone in their [40 years of bilateral relations](#), as they are holding their first high level dialogue on Sustainable Development on 17 November in Bangkok. More specifically, the two regions aim to promote green growth, address the challenges posed by climate change and empower women and girls as key drivers of change. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica, who is representing the EU at the high level dialogue, said: "The EU and ASEAN are two of the most advanced examples of regional integration. We are therefore natural partners for promoting Sustainable Development, and our cooperation is growing: we are launching today three new ASEAN-EU flagship programmes for a total of EUR 85 million." The new programmes will further strengthen EU-ASEAN cooperation and support the ASEAN states' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, as well as the Paris Agreement on climate change. Recognising that empowering women is a key component for sustainable development, the project launched today under the [Spotlight Initiative](#) will empower women migrant workers in the ASEAN region. Secondly, the EU will support policy dialogue, which will facilitate experience sharing among policy makers, experts and civil society across all sectors from trade and economic development, to social, environmental and security affairs, bringing the ASEAN region and the EU closer together. Thirdly, the EU also promotes

sustainable trade and economic integration in line with the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025. The EU has significantly stepped up its support to the ASEAN region, having doubled it to over EUR 170 million for 2014 to 2020. This is in addition to EUR 2 billion already provided to ASEAN Member States at the national level. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Irish credit union resolution scheme

The European Commission has found the prolongation of an Irish scheme for the orderly winding-up of credit unions to be in line with EU state aid rules, in particular with the [2013 Banking Communication](#) (see also [MEMO](#)). The objective of the scheme is to safeguard financial stability when a credit union becomes unable to meet regulatory requirements. It allows Ireland to provide aid for transferring the assets and liabilities of a failing credit union to an acquirer through a competitive process. This will help to achieve the maximum value for the assets and liabilities, ensuring that the aid is limited to the minimum necessary for an orderly winding-up, and that no buyer gains an undue economic advantage through the acquisition of under-priced assets and liabilities. The scheme is valid until 31 May 2018. The Commission initially approved the scheme in December 2011. It has been prolonged several times since then, the last time in [July 2017](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.49274. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Axion by BP and Bidas

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Axion Energy Holding S.L. of Spain by BP p.l.c. of the UK and Bidas Corporation of the British Virgin Islands. Axion is active in the refining of crude oil and the sale of petroleum products and its derivatives in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. It is currently solely controlled by Bidas. BP is active in crude oil and natural gas exploration and production as well as in the refining, supply and transportation of petroleum and related products, along with alternative energies. Bidas is a holding company with indirect activities in exploration, development, production and transportation of crude oil and natural gas, in power generation, and the sale of fuels, lubricants and associated products. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Axion has negligible activities within the European Economic Area. 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.8671](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740).

Eurostat: Septembre 2017, excédent de 26,4 milliards d'euros du commerce

international de biens de la zone euro, excédent de 3,1 mrds d'euros pour l'UE28

D'après les premières estimations pour le mois de septembre 2017, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 187,1 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 5,6% par rapport à septembre 2016 (177,2 mrds). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 160,7 mrds d'euros, en hausse de 5,1% par rapport à septembre 2016 (152,9 mrds). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en septembre 2017 un excédent de 26,4 mrds d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +24,3 mrds en septembre 2016. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 157,6 mrds d'euros en septembre 2017, soit +4,9% par rapport à septembre 2016. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est [disponible en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

STATEMENTS

European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2017 – Statement by Vytenis Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, and Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

Today we mark the 10th anniversary of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day, by raising awareness once more about the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – one of the biggest threats to global health. With 25 000 deaths per year and €1.5 billion in healthcare costs and productivity losses in the EU, a robust communication effort is needed more than ever. But raising awareness is not enough, we need action that bridges differences and raises the level of all Member States to that of the highest performer. With increasing resistance even to last-resort antibiotics such as Colistin, we face a frightening “post-antibiotic” future where we could lose the ability to perform any major surgery, organ transplant or successfully implant devices like new hips or heart valves. By 2050, AMR could potentially kill one person every three seconds and become a more common cause of death than cancer. It is precisely to avoid this unthinkable future that on 29 June we presented a new One Health action plan against AMR, building on nearly two decades of EU action in both the human health and veterinary health sectors, taking account of the lessons learnt from the previous [EU actions](#). It stresses that we need to tackle antimicrobial use in people and animals simultaneously, while better addressing the role of AMR in the environment. It stresses that the EU should play a leading role in the fight against AMR and should add value to Member States' actions. The goal of the new Action Plan is to preserve our ability to effectively treat infections in humans and animals. The [key objectives](#) are: ‘Making the EU a best practice region’; ‘Boosting research and innovation’; and ‘Shaping the global agenda’. The Statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Lucia Caudet +32 229 56182 Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová participates in the first G7 Ministerial on gender

equality in Taormina, Italy

Today and tomorrow, Commissioner **Jourová** is representing the European Union at the G7 Ministerial meeting on gender equality, held in Taormina, Italy. This is the first ever G7 Ministerial dedicated to the topic of gender equality. Ministers from the G7 countries will discuss the implementation of the [G7 Roadmap](#) for a Gender Responsive Economic Environment, adopted by G7 Leaders at the Summit held last May. Commissioner **Jourová** said ahead of the meeting: *"This first G7 ministerial on gender equality is an important statement to the world. The #MeToo campaign reminded us that violence and sexual harassment is not a problem limited to one country or one region, or just to some women. Also in all G7 countries, women continue to earn less than men. We need to fight the persisting gender inequalities together at international level. We want women to be able to participate fully in order for our economies and societies to thrive."* The Commissioner will attend a working lunch on Women's economic and political empowerment and then take part in a working session on preventing and combating gender-based violence. On Thursday, the participants will adopt a Final Declaration calling on all G7 countries to adopt national Action Plans on combatting gender-based violence. Commissioner Jourová will also participate in the press conference at 13:30. The European Commission dedicated [2017](#) to fighting violence against women; it will dedicate its annual [Colloquium on Fundamental Rights](#) on 20-21 November to *"Women's rights in turbulent times"*, and present an Action Plan to tackle the gender pay gap on 20 November. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Andriukaitis attends World Health Organisation Ministerial Conference on Tuberculosis in Moscow

On 16-17 November, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, is in Moscow participating in the first World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Ministerial Conference "Ending Tuberculosis in the Sustainable Development Era: a Multisectoral Response". Ahead of the visit, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said: *"Tuberculosis is the world deadliest infectious disease. The time has come to join forces and strengthen our efforts – across borders, across sectors, across organisations – to eradicate this disease. I am looking forward to work together with colleagues from WHO, OIE, the global fund, UNICEF, OECD and the World Bank towards this goal"*. Later on Thursday, he will hold a bilateral meeting with the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. On Friday, the Commissioner will attend the ministerial parallel panel on research and innovation. In the margins of the Conference, bilateral meetings with the Minister of Healthcare of the Russian Federation, Ms Veronika Skvortsova, and the Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, Mr Alexander Tkachev are also foreseen. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Forum sur la qualité de l'air, Paris: l'UE continue de lutter contre la pollution atmosphérique, en mettant l'accent sur le rôle des villes

Du 16 au 17 novembre, la Commission organise le Forum sur la qualité de l'air à Paris. Représentée par le Commissaire à l'environnement Karmenu **Vella** et le

commissaire aux affaires économiques et financières, à la fiscalité et aux douanes Pierre **Moscovici**, la Commission invitera des décideurs et des acteurs-clés du secteur pour échanger et activer la mise en œuvre des politiques européennes, nationales et locales sur la qualité de l'air. Le Forum vise à catalyser les énergies et renforcer les efforts de la Commission, à travers tous les secteurs économiques et les niveaux décisionnels, pour un air plus pur pour les citoyens. Cela fait suite à l'adoption du [paquet sur la Mobilité Propre](#) la semaine dernière, tandis que l'UE se montre à la pointe du combat pour une meilleure qualité de l'air et pour faire avancer l'Accord de Paris à Bonn à la [COP23](#). Le forum se concentrera sur trois domaines: la qualité de l'air dans les villes; l'agriculture et la qualité de l'air; et des nouvelles opportunités pour les entreprises dans le domaine de la qualité de l'air. Parmi les conférenciers figureront la maire de Paris, Anne Hidalgo et l'adjointe au maire de Londres, Shirley Rodrigues, qui présenteront la façon dont leurs villes luttent contre la pollution atmosphérique. Plus d'informations [ici](#). (*Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tél .: + 32 229 56172, Iris Petsa – Tél .: +32 229 93321*)

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