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Juncker Plan: €50 million for social and micro-entrepreneurs in Finland

The European Investment Bank has signed two agreements with Finnish bank Oma Säästöpankki Oyj in order to provide social and micro-entrepreneurs with better access to finance. A microfinance guarantee agreement will provide €40 million worth of loans to 2,600 Finnish micro-entrepreneurs, while a social entrepreneurship agreement will support around 100 social enterprises, primarily cooperatives, with €10 million worth of loans. These new agreements were made possible by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), and [EaSI](#), the European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: *"With these new agreements, thousands of Finnish entrepreneurs will get better access to the funding they need to turn their ideas into concrete projects. This shows again that the Investment Plan is not only delivering on its commitment to create jobs and growth in the EU, but is also actively promoting social fairness and equal opportunities."* Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said: *"Thanks to EU support, we will make €40 million available to support about 2,600 micro-enterprises in Finland. The European Commission is fully committed to boosting employment in Europe and getting more people into jobs, including the most vulnerable people in the labour market."* In October 2018, the Juncker Plan already mobilised €344.4 billion of additional investments in Europe, including €7.2 billion in Finland, with 793,000 small and medium businesses set to benefit from improved access to finance. A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Sara Soumillon – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Cohesion Policy invests in modernisation and safety of railways in Bulgaria

The EU is investing over €293 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) in a more modern, faster and safer railway connection between the cities of Plovdiv and Burgas, linking some of Bulgaria's largest cities and one of the most important ports on the Black Sea. The investment is contributing to the completion of the high-speed railway line on the [Orient/East Med corridor](#) of the trans-European transport network ([TEN-T](#)), connecting Central and South-East Europe. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"Thanks to this EU-funded project, Bulgarian people will enjoy shorter travel time and increased safety. Because this project promotes clean mobility in the country, they will also ultimately benefit from better air quality."* The project will reduce travel time for both passenger and freight transport by 40 minutes, with trains reaching speeds between 130 and 160 km/h along the 293km stretch. This will make train rides competitive with road transport, promoting a cleaner mobility in the country. At the same time, a number of measures will improve safety on the line, thanks to new signalling and telecommunications systems and the replacement of the existing level crossings by 29 overpasses, a pedestrian bridge and an underpass. (For more

information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2018: we must join forces to stop the unnecessary use of antibiotics

The Commission released the results of a new [Eurobarometer](#) study on the public knowledge on antibiotics and overall trends in their use ahead of the 11th European Antibiotic Awareness Day. The study shows that there has been a positive evolution in the use of antibiotics: 32% of people said they had taken antibiotics in the last twelve months, compared to 40% in the 2009 survey. However, many of these antibiotics were taken unnecessarily: 20% of antibiotics were taken for flu or a cold and 7% took them without a medical prescription. 66% of the respondents know that antibiotics are of no use against colds, and 43% are aware that antibiotics are ineffective against viruses. Over two thirds of people would like to have more information about antibiotics. Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis** commented: *“This Eurobarometer shows that more effort is needed to raise awareness and knowledge on antimicrobials among fellow citizens. Moreover, the latest estimates of 33,000 deaths per year in Europe due to antimicrobial resistance must serve as a wake-up call to us all. Most of these deaths are avoidable. I call on everyone who has influence in the prevention and treatment of infection to redouble their efforts to combat the threat from antimicrobial resistance. On top of raising awareness and improving knowledge, we must join forces and tackle antimicrobial resistance from the animal health and environmental perspectives, as well as the human health angle. In a few days, the Council will give its green light for a new European legislation on veterinary medicines and medicated feed, a major breakthrough in this field.”*

Commissioner **Andriukaitis** also delivered a [speech](#) today in Brussels at the European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2018 conference: *“[One Health to Keep Antibiotics working](#)”* during which the results of the Eurobarometer and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [report](#) are presented. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Europac by DS Smith, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Europac by DS Smith, both manufacturers of paper and packaging products. The Commission’s investigation focused on the markets for corrugated case materials, sheets and cases. The Commission was concerned that the proposed acquisition would significantly reduce the level of competition in (i) the market for corrugated sheets, and consequently corrugated cases, in Portugal, and (ii) the market for corrugated cases in Western France. To address the Commission’s competition concerns, DS Smith offered to divest (a) Europac’s box plant in Ovar, Portugal, for the manufacture and supply of corrugated sheets and cases in Portugal; and (b) two DS Smith plants in France: “DSS Normandie” and “DSS Normandie (Cabourg)”,

which produce corrugated sheets and cases for supply in Western France, in particular in Brittany. These commitments fully remove the overlap between DS Smith and Europac with regard to corrugated cases in Western France. The commitments also largely eliminate the overlap as regards the supply of corrugated sheets in Portugal and as such any foreclosure concerns with regard to corrugated cases. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns in the EEA. The decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [ES](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat: Excédent de 13,1 milliards d’euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro, déficit de 1,8 milliard d’euros pour l’UE28 (septembre 2018)

D’après les premières estimations pour le mois de septembre 2018, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 184,8 milliards d’euros, en baisse de 1,0% par rapport à septembre 2017 (186,6 milliards). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 171,7 milliards d’euros, en hausse de 6,4% par rapport à septembre 2017 (161,3 milliards). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en septembre 2018 un excédent de 13,1 milliards d’euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +25,3 milliards en septembre 2017. Le commerce intra-zone euro s’est établi à 161,1 milliards d’euros en septembre 2018, soit +2,2% par rapport à septembre 2017. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tél.: +32 229 201383)

Eurostat: Transferts personnels dans l’UE: Les fonds envoyés à l’étranger par les résidents de l’UE en hausse à 32,7 milliards d’euros en 2017, 10,7 milliards d’euros de fonds reçus de l’étranger

En 2017, les sommes d’argent envoyées par les résidents de l’Union européenne(UE) dans les pays hors-UE, appelées transferts personnels, se sont élevées à 32,7 milliards d’euros, contre 31,8 milliards en 2016. Les flux entrants dans l’UE se sont quant à eux établis à 10,7 milliards d’euros, contre 10,1 milliards en 2016. Ainsi, il en a résulté un solde négatif (-22,0 milliards d’euros) pour l’UE avec le reste du monde. La majorité des transferts personnels se compose de flux d’argent envoyés par les migrants dans leur pays d’origine. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 229 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tél.: +32 229 51958)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini attends Kimberley Process Plenary

Tomorrow High Representative / Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will attend the Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process taking place in Brussels from

12-16 November. In 2018, the European Union holds the Chairmanship of the Kimberley Process, a global partnership bringing together governments, industry and civil society, with the aim to stem the trade in conflict diamonds worldwide. For more information on the EU's Chairmanship, a [factsheet](#) and a [web feature](#) are available online. After the Plenary meeting on Friday, a Communiqué on the conclusions of the plenary will be published [here](#). The closing remarks by HRVP **Mogherini** can be followed live around 11:30 CET on [EBS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Commissioner Navracsics to visit Malta to hold a Citizens's Dialogue and a series of meetings

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Malta today and tomorrow, 15 and 16 November, for a series of events and meetings. Today, he will hold a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on youth and education with **Evarist Bartolo**, Minister for Education and Employment, at the University of Malta in Msida, to discuss what the EU is doing for young people and how it is tackling education challenges. On Friday, the Commissioner will be in Valletta, 2018 European Capital of Culture, to attend the Annual Conference of the Network of European Museum Organisations at MUZA, Malta's new museum of art. This year's conference takes place in the framework of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) and brings together around 150 participants from European and national museum organisations, and stakeholders from the cultural and cultural heritage sectors. The Commissioner will take part in a question-and-answer session with Tere Badia, Secretary General of [Culture Action Europe](#), about the European Year of Cultural Heritage, its legacy and the role that museums play in this context. Also on Friday, Commissioner **Navracsics** will have meetings with the Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, Minister for Education and Employment, Evarist Bartolo, and Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, Owen Bonnici. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Commissioner Andriukaitis visits the Vatican

On 16 November, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** is in the Vatican City to attend the conference "A mission-oriented approach to cancer in Europe: Boosting the social impact of innovative cancer research", where he will deliver an opening speech. The conference is co-organised by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the European Academy of Cancer Sciences. It will gather leading oncological researchers, physicians and policy makers, and it aims to highlight the importance of the social impact of cancer research. Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said, "I welcome the initiative to highlight the social impact of cancer research and commend the work being done in this field. We must always maintain the balance between fostering new cancer research and ensuring the maximum positive impact for patients and communities. After all, that is what boosting the social impact of innovative cancer research really refers to". (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

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