

Daily News 15 / 12 / 2017

Investment Plan now set to trigger €256.1 billion in investment after new projects approved

Following this week's meeting of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Board of Directors, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is now expected to trigger €256.1 billion in investments. The deals approved under the EFSI amount to €51.1 billion in financing and are located in all 28 Member States. Around 539,600 small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are expected to benefit from improved access to finance. As of December, the top five countries ranked in order of investment triggered relative to GDP are Estonia, Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain. Also this week, Members of the European Parliament [voted to adopt](#) the Regulation to extend and enhance the EFSI, the central pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"EFSI-backed investments approved until now will increase EU GDP by 0.7% and create nearly 700,000 jobs by 2020. Now thanks to EFSI 2.0, even more jobs will be created. The Investment Plan is proving particularly successful when it comes to SME financing, with 539,000 small businesses already set to benefit from finance to grow their companies."* (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Call for innovative projects: up to €100 million of EU funds made available to cities

Cities are invited to apply [here](#) as of today and until April 2018 to get EU funding under the 3rd ["Urban Innovative Actions"](#) call for projects. Up to €100 million from the European Regional Development Fund ([ERDF](#)) will help finance creative projects in the following areas: adaptation to climate change, air quality, housing and jobs and skills for the local economy, in line with the objectives of the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). A [series of seminars](#) will be organised in the Member States to help applicants submit solid proposals and increase their chances of getting funding. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"The Urban Innovative Actions give cities the funding they need to turn their good ideas into ground breaking projects that can inspire other cities in Europe. This 3rd call, focused on urban climate actions, is another brick to the wall of our commitments and achievements under the [Paris Agreement](#), just a few days after the [One Planet](#) summit in Paris."* (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

€5 million prize for innovations that use blockchain technology for social good

The European Commission will award 5 prizes of €1 million each to social innovations as part of the Horizon Prize on “Blockchains for Social Good”. The prizes will be awarded to innovators that use [blockchain technology](#) to bring about positive social change, including for support of fair trade, allowing transparency in production processes, decentralising data governance and enhancing privacy, enabling accountability and contributing to financial inclusion. This prize encourages the development of scalable, efficient and effective solutions using Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), the ground-breaking digital technology supporting decentralised methods of consensus reaching or transactions. The official launch is taking place today in Turin, organized by the city of Turin and innovation foundation Nesta Italia. The prize is the third of six European Innovation Council (EIC) Horizon Prizes and funded under [Horizon 2020](#), the EU’s research and innovation programme. Detailed rules of contest will be available in February 2018, and the deadline for applications is 25 June 2019 in order to allow applicants to demonstrate the viability of their ideas in practice. More information is on the [prize page](#) and the [EIC pilot website](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Combatting illicit trade in tobacco products: Commission adopts EU-wide track and trace system

Today, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** welcomed the adoption of a set of legal acts aimed at combatting illicit trade in tobacco products: *“Today the EU has taken a big step forward in combatting the illicit trade in tobacco products. The new EU-wide track and trace system adopted today will ensure that tobacco products in the EU are easily traceable with a [unique identifier](#) for each product. In addition, we are also making sure that tobacco products meet specific security requirements, with at least five types of authentication elements required per packet. The track and trace system and the security requirements should be in place by 20 May 2019 for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco and by 20 May 2024 for all other tobacco products (such as cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco products).”* Full [statement](#) and [Q&A](#) are available online. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over CEPSA Gas by CEPSA

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over CEPSA Gas Comercializadora, S.A. (“CEPSA Gas”) by Compañía Española de Petróleos, S.A.U. (“CEPSA”), both of Spain. CEPSA Gas specialises in the wholesale and retail supply of natural gas to both large industrial customers and small and medium enterprises. CEPSA covers a wide range of activities from oil production and exploration activities to oil refining, and the supply of gas and fuels. It is also active in the production of petrochemicals and other oil-derivative products. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no

competition concerns because CEPSA already had joint control over CEPSA Gas together with Total S.A. before the transaction. 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.8699](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Toshiba Memory Corporation by Bain Capital

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Toshiba Memory Corporation (“TMC”) of Japan, by Bain Capital Investors LLC (“Bain Capital”), of the US. TMC is a global manufacturer and supplier of NAND flash memory products and solid-state-drive memory products for use in a variety of consumer and enterprise applications. Bain Capital is an investment firm with activities in a variety of industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Bain Capital's portfolio companies and TMC are not active on the same or related markets. 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.8680](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

La Commission approuve deux nouvelles appellations d'origine protégées pour des vins français et slovaques

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de deux dénominations de vins au registre des appellations d'origine protégées (AOP), «La Clape» et «Skalický rubín». Les cépages pour les vins d'appellation [«La Clape»](#) sont cultivés sur le territoire du même nom situé dans le département de l'Aude dans le sud de la France. Les vins blancs «La Clape» présentent une robe jaune d'intensité moyenne, et une riche palette aromatique où se conjuguent le plus souvent fleurs blanches, fruits, notes balsamiques. Les vins rouges présentent une robe brillante à l'intensité profonde, le plus souvent de couleur pourpre. Cultivé et produit dans l'Ouest de la Slovaquie, dans la ville de Skalica et autour, le [«Skalický rubín»](#) est un vin rouge avec une couleur rouge rubis intense qui donne au vin son nom. Les cépages utilisés proviennent des variétés des variétés Frankovka modrá, Svätovavrinecké et Modrý Portugal. Ces deux nouvelles appellations vont rejoindre plus de 1750 appellations de vins déjà protégées dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [e-bacchus](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). *(Pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)*

STATEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová met with the Japanese Data protection authority to advance their dialogue on the promotion of high data protection standards

Commissioner Věra **Jourová** met yesterday with the Commissioner of the Personal Information Protection Commission of Japan, Haruhi Kumazawa, to advance their dialogue on data protection as a fundamental right and a central factor of consumer trust in the digital economy. After their meeting, they issued a [joint press statement](#) welcoming the work carried out over the course of the last months and agreed to meet in Brussels early 2018 to finalise the negotiations. A [speech](#) of Commissioner Jourová delivered in front of the Japanese Business Federation, Keidanren, on data protection topics is also available online. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Avramopoulos meets President el-Sisi in Egypt

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in Cairo, Egypt tomorrow to meet President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi and discuss the cooperation between the European Union and Egypt. In addition, Commissioner Avramopoulos will jointly launch the EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry. He will also discuss EU cooperation with Egypt on security matters with the Minister of the Interior, Magdy Abdel Ghaffar. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Thomas Kramer – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

Commissioner Moscovici in London on Monday, 18 December 2017

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs will visit the United Kingdom Monday, 18 December, where he will participate in a roundtable discussion hosted by the [Policy Network](#) and deliver remarks at the [London School of Economics](#). While in London, the Commissioner will also meet Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183; Enda McNamara – +32 229 64976)*

Commissioner Hogan launches the 2017 EU agricultural outlook conference in Brussels

Commissioner for agriculture Phil **Hogan** will open on Monday morning 18 December the third edition of the EU agricultural outlook conference. Running over two days, this annual conference gathers participants from the EU institutions, governments and international organisations, stakeholders involved in the food supply chain, market experts, academics, think tanks and civil society. Discussion on day one will focus on the modernisation and simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy, led by a number of high-level panels, including one keynote speech by Commissioner for budget and human resources Günther H. **Oettinger**. The second day will examine the latest

outlook reports covering EU dairy, meat and crop markets over the next ten years. The full programme is [online](#). The conference will be webstreamed [here](#) for 18 December, day 1, and [here](#) for 19 December, day 2. The discussions can also be followed online with the hashtag #AgriOutlook. Following his speech, Commissioner **Hogan** will hold a press point at 10:00 in the Charlemagne building on Monday morning. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56185; Clemence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

La Commissaire Crețu en Roumanie

Lundi 18 et mardi 19 décembre la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** se rendra en Roumanie, où elle rencontrera le Premier ministre, Mihai Tudose, le ministre en charge des fonds européens, Marius Nica, la ministre aux affaires intérieures, Carmen Dan, le ministre en charge des transports, Felix Stroe, le ministre délégué aux affaires européennes, Victor Negrescu et le Secrétaire d'Etat à la Santé, Raed Arafat. Lors de sa visite, la Commissaire **Crețu** visitera des projets financés par l'Europe et participera à un [Dialogue Citoyen](#). *“De nombreux efforts ont été mis en œuvre dans l'exécution des programmes roumains de la politique de Cohésion et les progrès sont indéniables. Il faut continuer sur cette voie. Comme je le dis souvent, des investissements efficaces, dont les bénéfices sont rapidement visibles pour les citoyens, voilà le meilleur argument pour conserver une politique de Cohésion importante après 2020,”* a commenté la Commissaire avant sa visite. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

La Commissaire Gabriel participera au Forum sur la gouvernance d'internet à Genève

Du 18 au 19 décembre, Mariya Gabriel, commissaire à l'économie et à la société numériques, se rendra à Genève pour participer au douzième [Forum sur la gouvernance d'internet](#) (FGI). Sur le thème « Façonnez votre avenir numérique ! », le forum mettra l'accent sur les nouveaux enjeux des nouvelles technologies, notamment sur l'intelligence artificielle, la réalité virtuelle, le big data et la problématique des fausses nouvelles ou des droits de l'homme. A la veille de sa visite à Genève, la Commissaire a déclaré: *“ Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, nous sommes confrontés à la nécessité de construire un internet ouvert. Les citoyens doivent être au centre de politiques numériques inclusives qui garantissent nos libertés et nos valeurs dans un monde numérique qui évolue de plus en plus rapidement. C'est un moment clé et l'Europe est prête à prendre ses responsabilités pour défendre sur la scène mondiale un internet ouvert et transparent, au service de la démocratie et de ses valeurs fondamentales ”*. Au cours de sa visite, la Commission rencontrera notamment David J. Redl, représentant de l'administration des télécommunications et de l'information aux États-Unis (NTIA), Goran Marby, Directeur-général et Président de la Société pour l'attribution des noms de domaine et des numéros sur internet (ICANN), Houlin Zhao, Secrétaire général de l'Union internationale des télécommunications, ainsi que des représentants d'entreprises américaines et européennes. Au cours du forum, la Commissaire **Gabriel** donnera deux discours, l'un sur la construction d'une future gouvernance globale d'internet et l'autre sur l'impact de la numérisation sur les actions politiques, la confiance publique

et la démocratie. (*Pour plus d'informations : Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083 ; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707*)

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

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities