

# Daily News 16 / 02 / 2018

## **President Juncker attends the Munich Security Conference**

President **Juncker** will participate tomorrow in the [Munich Security Conference](#), together with First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioners Johannes **Hahn**, Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, and Julian **King**. The President will deliver a speech in which he will present further steps to promote Europe as a strong global actor on security and defence. He will use this opportunity to show progress on the delivery of the European Defence Fund, including with the unveiling of a further set of EU-funded defence research projects. These projects will be signed in the coming weeks and aim at supporting maritime surveillance and interdiction missions at sea, as well as at improving soldiers' equipment. The European Defence Fund, [launched](#) by President **Juncker** in June 2017, is a catalyst for the creation of a strong EU defence industry. It boosts defence capabilities and builds new partnerships across borders. More information on the EU-funded projects in our [press release](#). The speech can be followed live [here](#) from 10.30 CET. The agenda of the Vice-President and the Commissioners can be found [here](#). *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)*

## **State aid: Commission approves Belgian certificates schemes for renewable electricity and high-efficiency cogeneration in Flanders**

The European Commission has concluded the certificates schemes for renewable electricity and high-efficiency cogeneration implemented in Flanders (Belgium) to be in line with EU State aid rules. Under the green certificates scheme, renewable electricity producers receive one green certificate for each MWh they generate. Under the combined heat and power (CHP) certificates scheme, high-efficiency cogeneration installations receive one certificate for each MWh of energy saving they realise. The Commission assessed the compatibility of the two schemes under EU State aid rules, in particular the provisions of the [2014 Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy](#). It concluded that the two certificates schemes will support the production of electricity from renewable energy sources and high-efficiency cogeneration, in line with EU environmental objectives, while any distortion of competition caused by the public support is minimised. The two schemes will help Belgium to meet its 2020 target of producing 13% of its energy needs from renewable sources. A full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [NL](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

## **Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed merger between Praxair and Linde**

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed merger between Praxair and Linde under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission is concerned that the merger may reduce competition in the supply of several crucial gases, like oxygen and helium. Commissioner Margrethe

**Vestager**, responsible for competition policy, said: *“Gases – like oxygen and helium – are crucial inputs for a large variety of products we use every day. Manufacturers need to buy these gases from a small number of suppliers. We will carefully assess whether the proposed merger between Praxair and Linde would lead to higher prices or less choice for European consumers and businesses.”* Praxair and Linde are two of the four largest companies active worldwide across the whole supply chains of industrial, medical and speciality gases. At this stage, the Commission is concerned that the proposed transaction would reduce the competitive pressure in markets covering a significant part of the activities of Praxair and Linde. In particular, the Commission is concerned that there is a risk of price increases due to the increased market power of the merged entity, or the increased likelihood of coordination between the remaining players in the markets. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of this transaction to further explore its initial concerns. A full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Impello by Shell**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Impello Limited by the Shell Petroleum Company, both of the UK. Impello is an independent energy supplier to household customers in the UK and Germany, active under the brand First Utility. Shell Petroleum, which is part of the Shell group of companies, is active in the energy and petrochemical sectors. Among other things, the Shell group has activities in the trading and wholesale supply of electricity and gas, including in the UK and Germany. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited positions of the companies on the markets for the wholesale and retail supply of electricity, as well as gas in the UK and Germany. 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.8775](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Bake & Co by Dr. Oetker**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Bake & Co of Belgium by Dr. Oetker of Germany. Bake & Co supplies frozen bakery products sold as ‘bake-off’ to retail and food service customers. Dr. Oetker is active in the supply of food products, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, specialty phosphates, hotel accommodation, as well as logistical, financial and hosting services. The companies’ activities overlap in the supply of frozen cakes, breakfast pastry and rolls, and savoury snacks sold as bake-off in several countries in the European Economic Area. However, the Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies’ combined positions in overlapping markets are limited. 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 case number [M.8748](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Fedrigoni by Bain Capital**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of Fedrigoni of Italy by Bain Capital of the US. Fedrigoni is active in the production and sale of various types of paper, including graphic or fine paper, security paper and solutions (such as paper for banknotes and traded securities and security elements), self-adhesive label stock and stationery. Bain Capital is a private equity investment firm that invests in companies across a number of industries, including information technology, healthcare, retail and consumer products, communications, financial services and manufacturing. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as there are no overlaps between the companies' activities. 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.8804](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger visits Germany**

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is visiting Germany on 19 February as part of his tour across EU Member States (#MFFtour27) aimed at gathering views on the future of EU finances and the EU's multiannual budget post-2020 (#EUBudget). In Germany, the Commissioner will meet with Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel. He is also giving a keynote speech on the Global Business Strategy Day of the Handelsblatt. Commissioner Oettinger is also meeting the President of the Bundestag, Mr Wolfgang Schäuble and the Chairman of the Committee for the Affairs of the European Union of the Bundestag, Mr Gunther Krichbaum. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication of its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#), available in all EU languages (also in [German](#)). Stakeholders' views will be taken into account when preparing the next MFF, to be presented in [May 2018](#). See a speech "[A Budget Matching our Ambitions](#)" given by Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** at the conference "[Shaping our Future](#)" on 8 January 2018. (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Renewable energy: EU has cost-effective potential to use more renewables**

On Monday 19 February, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** and the Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Adnan Amin will [launch in Brussels a new report on renewable energy prospects in the European Union](#). Prepared by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the report identifies cost-effective renewable energy options across all EU countries, sectors, and technologies, in order to meet – and even exceed – the proposed 27% renewables target for

2030. It also provides an open platform for EU countries to assess the impacts of their national renewable energy plans at an EU level, provides insights into the environmental and economic impacts of further deployment of renewables in the EU, and highlights the role that renewables could play in the long-term decarbonisation of the European energy system. The report also shows that all individual Member States have the potential to deploy more renewables cost effectively, especially by generating more solar and wind energy. Moreover, in the heating and cooling sector, which accounts for about half of the EU's energy demand, more than two thirds of the renewables options identified in the report are cheaper than the conventional alternative. The report makes a number of recommendations aimed at helping the EU decarbonise its economy and limit global warming to well below 2°, in line with the [Paris Agreement](#), as well as bringing substantial health benefits for citizens. In its [“Clean Energy for All Europeans”](#) package the Commission made proposals to stimulate investment in the clean energy transition by [putting energy efficiency first](#), [achieving global leadership in renewable energies](#) and [providing a fair deal for consumers](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 5618; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel. +32 229 87624)

### **Commissioner Navracsics to debate new European Agenda for Culture with stakeholders**

On Monday, 19 February, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will discuss plans for a renewed [European Agenda for Culture](#) with stakeholders. This event, hosted by the European Commission, will be an opportunity to bring together 70 important organisations from across the cultural sector including UNESCO, the Council of Europe and Europa Nostra, to hear their views on what a new and ambitious Cultural Agenda should look like and how it could be implemented. The consultation meeting will reflect on the implementation and achievements of the current Agenda for Culture and consider what might be improved in light of societal and technological changes. This new European Agenda for Culture is one of the deliverables of the Communication on [“Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture”](#), the European Commission's input to the Leaders' Summit in Gothenburg in November 2017. Building on this political momentum from the discussion on education and culture in [Gothenburg](#) and the December 2017 European Council meeting, the Commission will develop a new, ambitious and innovative Cultural Agenda with an emphasis on promoting a European identity through culture and values. The proposal for the New European Agenda for Culture will be presented in the spring. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

### [Calendar](#)

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