

Daily News 16 / 07 / 2018

EU-China Summit: deepening the strategic global partnership

Today in Beijing, the European Union and China held their 20th Summit. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** and President of the European Council Donald Tusk represented the European Union at the Summit, with Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, Trade Commissioner Cecilia **Malmström**, and Transport Commissioner Violeta **Bulc** also participating. *“I have always been a strong believer in the potential of the EU-China partnership. And in today’s world that partnership is more important than ever before. Our cooperation simply makes sense”, [said](#) President Juncker. “Europe is China’s largest trading partner and China is our second largest. The trade in goods between us is worth over €1.5 billion every single day. But we also know that we can do so much more. This is why it is so important that today we have made progress on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment through a first exchange of offers on market access, and towards an agreement on Geographical Indications. That shows that we want to create more opportunities for people in China and in Europe.”* In the margins of the Summit, President **Juncker** also participated in the **EU-China Business Roundtable**. *“The EU is promoting multilateralism, stepping up to global challenges and defending our interests in the world. We will continue to defend a rules-based, open and fair trade. L’Europe est ouverte, mais pas offerte. Let’s go forward together, promoting peace, growth and security.”* The full speech is available [here](#) (in French). The EU and China have agreed a [Joint Summit Statement](#), illustrating the breadth and depth of the relationship and the positive impact that such a partnership can have, in particular when it comes to addressing global and regional challenges such as climate change, common security threats, the promotion of multilateralism, and the promotion of open and fair trade. In addition to the [Joint Statement](#), a number of other **concrete deliverables** were agreed at the Summit, including: [a Leaders’ Statement on Climate Change and Clean Energy](#); an exchange of offers on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment; [a Partnership Agreement on Oceans](#); [a Memorandum of Understanding on Circular Economy Cooperation](#); [a Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Cooperation on Emissions Trading](#); agreement to conclude before the end of October, if possible, the negotiations on an Agreement on Geographical Indications; [an Action Plan Concerning China-EU Customs Cooperation on Intellectual Property Rights \(2018-2020\)](#); a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Investment Fund and the Silk Road Forum confirming the first co-investment carried out under the recently established [China-EU Co-Investment Fund](#); and a Strategic Administrative Cooperation Arrangement and an Action Plan (2018-2020) between the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the General Administration of China Customs. The outcomes of the 20th EU-China Summit can be found online in a [full press release](#). A factsheet on EU-China relations is available [online](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

EU consumer rules: The European Commission and EU consumer authorities push Airbnb to comply [updated on 16/7/2018 at 12:12]

The European Commission and EU consumer authorities are calling on Airbnb to align their terms and conditions with EU consumer rules and be transparent on their presentation of prices. Commissioner **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"More and more consumers book their holiday accommodation online and this sector has brought many new opportunities to holidaymakers. But popularity cannot be an excuse for not complying with EU consumer rules. Consumers must easily understand what for and how much they are expected to pay for the services and have fair rules e.g. on cancellation of the accommodation by the owner. I expect Airbnb to follow up swiftly with the right solutions."* Airbnb's current pricing presentation and a number of its terms do not comply with the [Unfair Commercial Practices Directive](#), the [Unfair Contract Terms Directive](#), and the [Regulation](#) on the jurisdiction in civil and commercial matters. Therefore the European consumer authorities and the Commission have demanded from Airbnb a number of changes. The company has until the end of August to present their proposals. Once Airbnb proposes solutions to rectify this, the Commission and the EU consumer authorities will review the proposed changes. If they are not considered satisfactory, Airbnb could face an enforcement action. A [press release](#) and the authorities' [common position](#) are available online. Commissioner Jourová will give a press statement today at 12:00, which can be followed live on [EBS](#). (For more information Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Melanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

TRADE: Commission unveils new tool to show EU towns and cities exporting to Japan

Interested in what opportunities the EU's trade deal with Japan might bring to your country or your home town? Today, the European Commission published [EU-Japan trade in your town](#), an interactive map showing towns and cities around Europe that export to Japan. For example, Cork in Ireland ships pharmaceuticals, dairy products and chemicals to Japan, while the town of Páty in Hungary sends pork, self-checkout terminals and manicure products. The tool includes infographics for each EU country, detailing the number of exporting companies, the number of jobs supported by exports to Japan, a list of products exported from each member state, and other import/export statistics. Today's publication follows a similar tool, [CETA in your town](#), which showcases a sample of EU companies exporting to Canada. On Tuesday 17 July, EU leaders and Prime Minister Abe will sign the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement at the EU-Japan summit. The deal will now be considered and voted upon by the European Parliament and the Japanese Diet. If these two parliaments ratify it before the end of this year, the agreement could be in place by early 2019. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

State aid: Commission adopts Best Practices Code to streamline and speed up State aid control

The European Commission has adopted a new Best Practices Code for State aid control. Over recent years, the Commission has implemented a major reform package, [State Aid Modernisation](#), which allows Member States to quickly implement State aid that fosters investment, economic growth and job creation, leaving the Commission to focus its State aid control on cases most likely to distort competition in the Single Market. These efforts to focus and modernise EU State aid rules and improve the Commission's working methods are continuing – in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the Commission has proposed to simplify co-investment involving both EU funding and Member State investment, through a revision of the EU State aid Enabling Regulation. To make the most of these modernised State aid rules, the Best Practices Code for State aid control gives guidance on how the Commission, Member States and other stakeholders work together in State aid procedures. This covers, for example, how to ensure that complex State aid cases are handled most effectively and how complaints about State aid are followed up. The Best Practices Code, which has been discussed extensively with Member States and stakeholders, explains how State aid procedures are carried out, and sets out the steps the Commission is taking to increase the speed, transparency and predictability of these procedures. The text of the Best Practices Code for State aid control is available on the Commission's [website](#). Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The new Best Practices Code for State aid control will benefit Member States, businesses and stakeholders by increasing the efficiency and speed of State aid control, in particular by ensuring earlier and better cooperation between Member States and the Commission."* A [full press release](#) is available in EN, FR, DE. (Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Siemens proposed acquisition of Alstom

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed acquisition of Alstom by Siemens, under the EU Merger Regulation. Siemens and Alstom are global leaders in rail transportation. Both companies have a wide product portfolio and compete in tenders for the manufacture and supply of high speed, mainline and urban rolling stock (trains) as well as mainline and urban signalling solutions. Signalling solutions include signalling systems that provide safety controls on mainline and urban rail network. The proposed transaction would combine the two largest suppliers of rolling stock and signalling solutions in the European Economic Area (EEA) not only in terms of size of the combined operations, but also in terms of geographic footprint of their activities. At this stage, the Commission is concerned that the proposed transaction would reduce competition in the markets where the merged entity would be active and, in particular, that the proposed transaction could lead to higher prices, less choice and less innovation due to reduced competitive pressure in rolling stock and signalling tenders. This would be to the detriment of train operators, infrastructure managers and ultimately European passengers who use trains and metros on a daily basis. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of the transaction to determine whether its initial competition concerns are confirmed. Commissioner Margrethe Vestager,

in charge of competition policy, said: *“Trains and the signalling equipment that guide them are essential for transport in Europe. The Commission will investigate whether the proposed acquisition of Alstom by Siemens would deprive European rail operators of a choice of suppliers and innovative products, and lead to higher prices, which could ultimately harm the millions of Europeans who use rail transportation every day for work or leisure.”* A [full press release](#) is available in EN, FR, DE. (Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel +32 2 299 05 26)

Juncker Plan: €68 million for industrial innovation at Arctic white goods factory in Romania

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a €68 million loan supported by the Juncker Plan’s European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to white goods producer Arctic, in Romania. The loan will finance the construction of a large-scale washing machine production plant featuring advanced manufacturing technologies, including Internet of Things applications, and the latest automation processes. The new production plant will make Romania a white goods production hub for Europe, stimulating new investments. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina Crețu said: *“This project embodies Romanian excellence in terms of innovation and advanced technology. The Investment Plan for Europe is giving Arctic the financial boost it needs to expand beyond local markets and create quality, sustainable jobs in Romania. This is a concrete example of successful industrial modernisation, supported by the EU. I congratulate the EIB and Arctic on this great deal.”* (Full press release is found [here](#). For all the latest EFSI results see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Hogg Robinson Group by GBT

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Hogg Robinson Group Plc (‘HRG’) of the UK by GBT III B.V. (‘GBT’) of the Netherlands, a full-function joint venture controlled by American Express Company of the US and Qatar Holding LLC of Qatar. Both GBT and HRG are globally active in the provision of business travel agency services. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because, although GBT and HRG are both large agencies offering a broad range of services to international corporate customers, a number of strong players would continue to constrain the combined entity post-transaction, preventing it from raising its prices or worsening the quality of its services. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8862](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of DESFA by Snam

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of DESFA of Greece by Snam of Italy. DESFA operates the high-pressure pipeline grid and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Greece.

Snam is the main gas transmission system operator in Italy. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the companies are not active in the same geographic area. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8953](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Mehiläinen Holding by CVC Capital Partners

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Mehiläinen Holding AB of Sweden by CVC Capital Partners SICAV-FIS S.A. ("CVC") of Luxembourg. Mehiläinen Holding is the holding company of Mehiläinen Oy, which provides healthcare and social care services in Finland. CVC manages investment funds and platforms. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because there are no horizontal and limited vertical overlaps between the activities of the companies. 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.8975](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Partner in Pet Foods by Cinven

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Partner in Pet Foods Hungaria Kft of Hungary by funds belonging to the Cinven group of the UK. Partner in Pet Foods manufactures and supplies private label and branded industrial pet food in Europe. Cinven is a private equity firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because Cinven does not control any company that is active in the same markets, or has any vertical or conglomerate link with markets in which Partner in Pet Foods is active. 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.8936](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de M Group Services par PAI Partners

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de M Group Services, basée au Royaume Uni, par PAI Partners SAS, basée en France. M Group Services fournit différents types de services aux secteurs des services d'utilité publique, des télécommunications et des transports, tels que l'installation et la maintenance d'infrastructure de réseaux, des services de données et la construction, la maintenance et la réparation d'infrastructures routières et ferroviaires. PAI Partners est une société de capital investissement qui gère

et conseille des fonds détenant des participations dans des entreprises actives dans des domaines variés tels que les services aux entreprises, les biens de consommation, les biens industriels, la santé et la grande distribution. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, dans la mesure où les entreprises ne sont pas actives sur le même marché ou sur des marchés liés ou complémentaires. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8979](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Competitiveness Council: Croatia signs declaration on artificial intelligence, all EU Member States now working on coordinated plan

Today, in the margins of the [informal Council meeting of Competitiveness ministers](#) in Vienna, Croatia will become the last Member State to sign the [Declaration of Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence](#) (AI), thus strengthening the [European approach](#) presented by the Commission in April 2018. One objective of the Declaration is to create synergies across relevant funding schemes within Europe. The Commission and Member States are now working on a coordinated plan in line with the call by European leaders on 28 June 2018 ([European Council conclusions](#)). Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** participate in today's sessions, focusing on the role of AI in transforming European industry, the importance of digital skills and making the right investments. Commissioner **Moedas** will participate in tomorrow's discussion on the proposal to invest €100 billion over 2021-2027 in research and innovation through the funding programme [Horizon Europe](#). This discussion also builds on the European Council meeting from 28 June, where EU leaders [agreed](#) on further developing high-quality research and its transformation into new products, services and business models. The informal Competitiveness Council follows just weeks after the Commission proposed under the next long-term EU budget to invest €9.2 billion in the first ever digital programme [Digital Europe](#), including €2.5 billion to help companies across Europe to adopt AI. Press conference can be followed on [EBS](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 2 295 61 82; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

Commissioner Hahn visits Skopje and Tirana

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will visit Skopje and Tirana tomorrow 17 July. The visit follows the June Council Conclusions setting out the path towards opening of accession negotiations in June 2019 with [the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#) and with [Albania](#). In this context, Commissioner **Hahn** will

officially launch the preparatory work. In Skopje, the Commissioner will meet with key interlocutors including Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, Speaker Talat Xhaferi, representatives of political parties and will address the National Council for European Integration, which also includes civil society, business and other stakeholders. In Tirana Commissioner Hahn will meet with President Ilir Meta, Prime Minister Edi Rama and representatives of the government of Albania. Photos and video of the mission will be available on [EBS](#). (*for more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.:+32 229 64887*)

Commissioner King in Cyprus to discuss security and the fight against terrorism

Tomorrow Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** will be in Nicosia, Cyprus where he will meet the Minister of Justice and Public Order Mr Ionas Nicolaou to discuss security related issues, in particular the fight against terrorism and organised crime as well as cyber security. Commissioner King will also participate in a joint meeting with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs Mr Yiorgos Lillikas and the Deputy Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Legal Affairs Mr Demetris Dimitriou. Later, he will discuss organised crime and information exchange with the Cypriot Chief of Police Mr Zacharias Chrysostomou. Commissioner King will also visit the Cybercrime Centre. A joint press point by Commissioner **King** and Minister Nicolaou will take place at around 12.30 (CET). (*For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

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