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Joint statement by First Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-President Ansip and Commissioners Jourová and Gabriel one year after the assassination of Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia

Today marks one year since the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Today, we honour the hard work and relentlessness of Daphne, of Jan Kuciak and many other journalists who sacrifice everything they have – sometimes even their lives – to seek the truth. It is also an occasion, for Europe, to pause for a moment and think about what we hold dear: our right to speak freely. The Commission stands firm on the protection of free speech and free media. Democracy cannot survive if journalists are no longer able to report freely, if they are subject to censorship, if they are prevented from reporting criticism of the powers that be and especially if they are intimidated, harassed, threatened and sometimes even killed just for doing their job. Theirs is a job democracy relies and depends upon.(...) We don't want these murders to have a chilling effect on free media. Citizens should be able to form their own opinions based on unhampered investigation and independent reporting. That is why the persons responsible for these assassinations must be brought to justice. We want the full truth. We need to send a clear signal to all journalists: it is safe to work in Europe. If journalists are silenced, so is democracy. This will not happen in Europe. Not on our watch. The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

Code of Practice: online platforms present Commissioner Gabriel with concrete steps to fight disinformation online

Today, representatives of online platforms and the advertising industry will hand over to Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** individual roadmaps, which outline concrete steps to implement the [Code of Practice to fight online disinformation](#), agreed on 26 September. Commissioner Mariya **Gabriel** said: “I have asked the industry to put forward tangible steps to fight disinformation in the Code. The commitments therein represent a first positive outcome of the Commission's approach to tackle online disinformation. It won't be enough to have the Code only on paper, the latter needs to be effectively implemented and followed by actions. I will closely monitor the progress made and assess, by the end of the year, if sufficient headway has been made or whether further actions are required, especially in view of the upcoming European elections.” The individual roadmaps outlined in the Code contain concrete actions by the platforms to fight disinformation in all EU Member States. Online platforms will for instance make political advertising more transparent, offer some training for political groups and election authorities or intensify their cooperation with fact-checkers. The Commission will support the implementation of these roadmaps ahead of the EU elections in May 2019. Following the European Council conclusions of June

2018 and the State of the Union address, the Commission and the European External Action Service will present a joint action plan to fight disinformation, focusing on strategic communication policy, by the end of the year. Commissioner **Gabriel** will do a press point with two representatives of the multi-stakeholder forum on disinformation which can be followed live on EBS at 13:00. More information including a [factsheet](#) is available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Activation du système européen de cartographie satellite pour aider la France à réagir aux inondations

L'UE a réagi rapidement pour aider les autorités françaises à faire face aux inondations soudaines qui ont dévasté une partie du sud de la France. Le service de cartographie satellite d'urgence de l'UE, [Copernicus](#), a été activé à la demande des autorités françaises, à qui seront fournies des cartes des départements de l'Hérault et de l'Aude. Le commissaire en charge de l'aide humanitaire et de la gestion de crises, Christos **Stylianides**, a déclaré: *"Notre centre de coordination de la réaction d'urgence continue de suivre de près la situation sur place et est en contact constant avec les autorités françaises. Nos pensées vont aux victimes et à tous ceux touchés par ces événements. Nous tenons à féliciter le travail courageux des premiers secours, et l'UE se tient prête à pourvoir une assistance supplémentaire."* Des [photos](#) et une [fiche technique](#) à propos du centre de coordination, ainsi qu'une [vidéo](#) sur le programme européen Copernicus sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

A Europe that Protects: The Commission reports on progress made on travel document security

Today, the Commission is taking stock of measures implemented under the [2016 Action Plan](#) to improve security of travel documents in the EU. Today's [report](#) highlights the good progress made under the Action Plan with half of the 32 measures already completed. This includes the Commission proposal to improve the security of ID cards and residence permits for EU citizens and their non-EU family members, presented in [April 2018](#). The reinforced [Schengen Information System](#), the most widely used EU information system for migration, security and border management, will also contribute to the EU's response against document fraud as it will now include information on falsified travel documents. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency's Centre of Excellence for combatting document fraud, launched in February 2018, is yet another important deliverable under the Action Plan. The [new proposal](#) of the Commission on the European Border and Coast Guard proposes to integrate the False and Authentic Documents Online system (FADO), a system for the exchange of information on genuine and false documents which until now was based on cooperation between Member States, in the Union legal framework and to be managed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. A stronger European

response against travel document fraud is crucial in the fight against terrorism and organised crime and contributes to improving border protection and migration management, paving the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union. The Commission will continue to monitor the progress made while calling on Member States to swiftly implement the remaining measures. More information is available [online](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

Eurostat: 17 octobre: journée internationale pour l'élimination de la pauvreté, tendance à la baisse pour la proportion de personnes menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale dans l'UE – mais toujours environ 113 millions de personnes dans cette situation

En 2017, 112,9 millions de personnes, soit 22,5% de la population, dans l'Union européenne (UE) étaient menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale. Cela signifie que ces personnes étaient affectées par au moins une des trois conditions suivantes: en risque de pauvreté après transferts sociaux (pauvreté monétaire), en situation de privation matérielle sévère ou vivant dans des ménages à très faible intensité de travail. Après trois années consécutives de hausses entre 2009 et 2012 pour atteindre près de 25%, la proportion de personnes menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale dans l'UE a depuis continuellement baissé pour s'établir à 22,5% l'an dernier, 1,2 point de pourcentage au-dessous du niveau de référence de 2008 et 1 point de pourcentage au-dessous du niveau de 2016. La réduction du nombre de personnes confrontées dans l'UE au risque de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale est l'un des objectifs clés de la stratégie Europe 2020. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: *Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Promotion des produits agro-alimentaires européens: 172 millions d'euros pour financer des campagnes dans l'UE et dans le monde

La Commission européenne consacra 172,5 millions d'euros du budget agricole de l'UE pour promouvoir des produits agroalimentaires de l'UE en Europe et dans le monde. 79 campagnes de promotion, couvrant une large gamme de produits tels que les produits laitiers, les olives et l'huile d'olive, les fruits et légumes, seront déployées au cours des trois prochaines années. Le Commissaire à l'agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, a dit : "L'Europe est connue dans le monde entier pour la qualité de ses produits alimentaires et sa gastronomie. Les producteurs de l'UE peuvent compter sur le soutien de la Commission européenne pour faire connaître leurs excellents produits en Europe et au-delà. J'ai moi-même voyagé dans plusieurs pays à travers le monde, comme la Chine, le Japon, le Mexique ou la Colombie pour ouvrir de nouveaux marchés pour notre secteur agro-alimentaire. Il y a un potentiel devant nous." Ces programmes sont conçus pour aider les producteurs du secteur agro-alimentaire de l'UE à communiquer sur la qualité de leurs produits, en vue de promouvoir leurs produits dans l'UE et d'ouvrir de nouveaux marchés. Les campagnes se

concentrent sur un certain nombre de priorités telles que la mise en valeur de la qualité des aliments européens avec des indications géographiques ou les méthodes de production biologique. Un [communiqué de presse](#) est en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations : Daniel Rosario – Tél : +32 229 56 185, Clémence Robin – Tél : +32 229 52509)

Eurostat: Excédent de 11,7 milliards d'euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro, déficit de 8,4 mrd d'euros pour l'UE28 (Août 2018)

D'après les premières estimations pour le mois d'août 2018, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 181,5 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 5,6% par rapport à août 2017 (171,9 mrd). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 169,8 mrd d'euros, en hausse de 8,4% par rapport à août 2017 (156,6 mrd). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en août 2018 un excédent de 11,7 mrd d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +15,3 mrd en août 2017. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 140,7 mrd d'euros en août 2018, soit +5,1% par rapport à août 2017. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél .: +32 229 56 185; Kinga Malinowska – Tél.: +32 229 51383)

Commission welcomes agreement in Council on sustainable fishing opportunities for 2019 in the Baltic Sea

Following negotiations in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council yesterday, the parties agreed on a balanced package that will ensure sustainable fishing opportunities for 2019 in the Baltic Sea. The negotiations were based on the Commission's [proposal](#). Commissioner Karmenu Vella, responsible for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries said: "We had a very productive discussion with the Ministers of the Member States yesterday covering fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea, which were adopted unanimously. With this decision we deliver good news for our seas and for our fishermen alike. Next year, 7 out of 8 stocks for which complete scientific advice was available will be fished at sustainable levels, covering 98% of landings. At the same time, our decisions will mean nearly 1 billion euros worth of catches with an average gross profit margin of above 30." In particular, the fishing opportunities – or Total Allowable Catches (TAC) – have been increased for Western cod, plaice, sprat and Gulf of Riga herring. As demonstrated already last year, the increased fishing opportunities will have a positive impact on the profitability of the fleets, and 9 of the top 10 most profitable fleets are going to be small-scale. The same levels of catches as last year were preserved for salmon in the main basin. For the remaining stocks (Eastern cod, salmon in the Gulf of Finland, Western, Central and Eastern herring, as well as herring in the Gulf of Bothnia), a reduction in catches was necessary to ensure the stocks are kept within or brought back on track towards their safe biological limits. The Total Allowable Catches are based on scientific advice from the [International Council on the Exploration of the Seas](#) and follow the Baltic multiannual management plan adopted in 2016 by the Council and the European Parliament. More information is available [here](#). (For more

information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Puget by OMERS, BCI, AIMCo, CPPIB and PGGM

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of joint control over Puget Holdings LLC (“Puget”) of the US by OMERS Administration Corporation (“OMERS”), British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (“BCI”), Alberta Investment Management Corporation (“AIMCo”), Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (“CPPIB”), all of Canada, and PGGM Vermogensbeheer B.V. (“PGGM”) of the Netherlands. Puget conducts almost all of its operations through Puget Sound Energy, which is a regulated utility company providing electric and natural gas services in the US. OMERS is the administrator of the OMERS pension plans and manages a wide array of investments, including in the public equity, fixed income and alternative investment markets of Canada and globally. BCI is a large institutional investor, investing in fixed income, mortgages, public and private equity, real estate, infrastructure and renewable resources. AIMCo is one of Canada’s largest institutional investment fund managers. CPPIB is an investment management organisation that principally invests in public equities, private equities, real estate, infrastructure and fixed income investments. PGGM is a subsidiary of PGGM N.V., a Dutch pension administrator specialised in the administration of collective pensions. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because of the negligible actual and foreseen activities of Puget in 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.9109](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l’acquisition du contrôle exclusif de Saur par EQT

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition du contrôle exclusif de la société française Saur S.A.S. par la société luxembourgeoise EQT fund Management S.a.r.l. (“EQT”). Saur est active dans la gestion de l’eau et des eaux usées. Saur conçoit et construit également des infrastructures hydrauliques, ainsi que des systèmes de traitement de l’eau et des eaux usées pour les industries. EQT est un investisseur financier qui investit dans divers secteurs. La Commission a conclu que l’opération envisagée ne soulèverait aucun problème de concurrence étant donné que les deux entreprises ne sont pas présentes sur les mêmes marchés. L’opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du 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.9092](#). *(Pour plus d’informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of the KN Group by Advent International Corporation

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of the KN Group (“KN”) of Ireland by Advent International Corporation (“AIC”) of the US. KN is active in the provision of services to the telecommunication, media installations, transport infrastructure and power sectors in Ireland and the UK. AIC is a private equity investor which sponsors funds that invest globally. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the limited impact brought about by the transaction on the market. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.9079](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Gabriel in Poland for Citizens’ Dialogue and 8th European Congress of Small and Medium Sized

Tomorrow, Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society will be in Katowice, Poland to participate in a Citizens’ Dialogue alongside Jerzy Buzek, current Member and former President of the European Parliament, to discuss the opportunities and challenges of digitisation for both society and the economy. The Dialogue will be attended by citizens, business and social partner representatives and students. Thereafter, Commissioner **Gabriel** will give an opening speech at the [8th European Congress of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises](#), which will also be attended by Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki. In her remarks she will highlight the important role of innovation for the digital transformation of small and medium sized enterprises as well as start-ups. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Commissioner Stylianides visits the German Parliament to discuss plans for a stronger European response to disasters with Members of Parliament and experts

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** travels to Berlin to meet Members of the German Parliament at the “Zukunftsforum Öffentliche Sicherheit”. The meeting is dedicated to discuss the European Commission’s proposal on [rescEU](#) to strengthen the EU emergency response and will also be attended by experts. The meeting comes at a crucial phase of negotiations between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament at which Commissioner Stylianides offers discussions on rescEU at eye-level with State representatives, national and regional authorities and academia. The Commission’s rescEU proposal foresees to reinforce the existing [Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#) to better prevent, better prepare and

respond more effectively to natural and man-made hazards in Europe. Whenever crises overburden response capacities national authorities will be able to request, as a matter of last resort, additional support from the EU to save lives or protect properties. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Commission calls for more action against hunger on World Food Day

Marking [World Food Day](#), today Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, is attending events at the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome, where he is delivering a speech at a high-level panel session on the challenges faced in achieving zero hunger. Even though in the last decades we have seen a decline in global hunger, the latest annual report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, warns that global hunger is on the rise again, and many countries are still on the brink of famine. Ongoing conflict, climate change and instability are the main culprits behind this worrying situation. In his speech, Commissioner **Mimica** stresses the need to keep pursuing the aim in Agenda 2030 of making hunger history: *“If we don’t act now, many of our hard-won gains will be reversed. If we don’t act now, we will never reach our goal of zero hunger. So today’s World Food Day is a call for action – a call for a different future. The European Union is committed to play its part in this endeavour.”* Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety also stressed in a [statement](#) published on the occasion that: *“In a world where over 800 million people go hungry, it is unacceptable that in Europe, 88 million tonnes of food amounting to 143 billion euro are wasted every year. Food waste is an unethical misuse of valuable natural and economic resources. I have made the fight against food waste one of my priorities and put in place several initiatives to work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals aim to halve food waste by 2030 and channel the resources available to those who need them most.”* *(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256; Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)*

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