

Daily News 16 / 11 / 2018

Space: US citizens and business to access EU Galileo satellite navigation signals

Yesterday, the US Federal Communications Commission decided to grant a licence waiver for Galileo signal reception in the United States (US). This means that citizens and businesses in the US will be able to benefit from Galileo's state of the art satellite navigation signals – be it for connected cars, smart watches, farming or plane navigation. Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** said: *"I am very pleased that this waiver was granted. It demonstrates the US government's confidence in Galileo's benefits and performance. Galileo has been providing services to more than 400 million users since December 2016. The waiver will increase Galileo's market uptake further and benefit US citizens and businesses. We will continue to complete the Galileo constellation until 2020, but already today we know that Galileo is a success and that the EU is indeed a space power."* President **Juncker** underlined in his [State of the Union speech](#) on 12 September 2018 that *"it is our Galileo programme that is today keeping Europe in the space race. [...] No single Member State could have done this alone. Galileo is a success in great part, if not entirely, thanks to Europe. No Europe, no Galileo. We should be proud."* Galileo services are based on highly accurate signals and every addition to the constellation ([currently at 26 satellites](#)) gradually improves Galileo availability and performance worldwide. To help maintain and further enhance the EU's leadership in space, the Commission proposed in June 2018 a [€16 billion EU Space Programme](#) for the period 2021-2027. The new programme will invest more in space activities, adapting to new needs and technologies, while reinforcing Europe's autonomous access to space. See also a factsheet on [EU Space Policy](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Higher Education: New guide to fees and financial support for students in Europe

Where in Europe can students study without paying fees? Which countries charge the highest fees? What kind of financial support is offered to students, and who actually receives it? The 7th annual Eurydice Network [report](#) on National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2018/19, released today, on the eve of International Students' Day, provides both an overview of the main features of national fee and support systems and more detailed information on each individual country across Europe. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"We encourage students to study abroad because they will benefit from this international experience for the rest of their lives. This new report will give them clear and comprehensive information on student fees and financial support for each country in the EU. The study should be promoted to young people, whether they plan to go abroad for their entire studies or an*

exchange.” All European countries offer at least one type of direct public financial support, grants or loans, to their higher education students. The most widespread approach to allocating grants gives priority to socially or economically disadvantaged students. The report reveals that in around a quarter of the higher education systems assessed, the most common annual fee in publicly-funded higher education is above €1,000. (For more information: *Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](tel:+3222967083); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](tel:+3222956184)*)

EU and China step up their cooperation on sustainable development

During a visit to China, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, reconfirmed the EU’s interest to work with China on sustainable development and connectivity. In a meeting between Commissioner **Mimica** and the Chairman of the newly-established China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) Wang Xiaotao, both sides agreed to seek synergies and concrete areas of cooperation to enhance EU–China development cooperation. The meeting confirmed both parties’ commitment to jointly promote sustainable development, as outlined at the [20th EU-China Summit in July 2018](#), and as reconfirmed by European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the [ASEM \(Asia-Europe Meeting\) Summit in Brussels in October 2018](#). Commissioner **Mimica** welcomed the establishment of CIDCA as an important opportunity for the EU and China to strengthen their cooperation as global development partners. Both sides highlighted their interest in cooperating on concrete initiatives to promote sustainable development and agreed to enhance bilateral exchanges on policies and best practices. In this context, Commissioner **Mimica** stressed: *“We have a shared responsibility to deliver on the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals. EU’s recent ‘Connecting Europe and Asia’ strategy has set out our vision for increased cooperation with our Asian partners in key areas of connectivity and sustainable development. I look forward to enhancing the cooperation with Chinese counterparts on concrete initiatives and to intensifying our exchanges on development policies. There is great potential to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda when working in partnerships.”*The full [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: *Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256*)

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Irish credit union resolution scheme

The European Commission has found the prolongation of an Irish scheme for the orderly winding-up of credit unions to be in line with EU state aid rules, in particular with the [2013 Banking Communication](#) (see also [MEMO](#)). The objective of the scheme is to safeguard financial stability when a credit union becomes unable to meet regulatory requirements. It allows Ireland to provide aid for transferring the assets and liabilities of a failing credit union to an acquirer through a competitive process. This will help to achieve the maximum value for the assets and liabilities, ensuring that the aid is limited to the minimum necessary for an orderly winding-up, and that no buyer gains an undue economic advantage through the acquisition of under-priced assets and liabilities. Credit Unions are small financial institutions that are not

covered by the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD). Ireland has chosen to make a special sector-funded resolution scheme available to those credit unions, which has been used only three times since its set-up. The scheme is prolonged until 31 May 2019. The Commission initially approved the scheme in December 2011. It has been prolonged thirteen times since then, the last time in [May 2018](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.52175. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State Aid: Commission approves €85 million public support for mobile communication infrastructure in unserved areas of Bavaria in Germany

The Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, €85 million of public support for the construction of the physical infrastructure required for the deployment of state-of-the-art mobile networks based at least on Long-Term Evolution (LTE) technology in Bavaria. LTE is a 4G mobile communications standard enabling high speed internet connections. The objective is to close network gaps in areas of Bavaria where no mobile services are currently available. The Bavarian municipalities with such areas will receive funds to either build the infrastructure themselves or to tender its construction to third parties as a public works concession. The use of the supported infrastructure will be open to all interested Mobile Network Operators on equal and non-discriminatory terms. The Commission concluded that the measure is in line with EU State aid rules. In this respect, the aid scheme will contribute to the EU's connectivity objectives of providing access to mobile services throughout the EU territory, in all places where people live, work, travel and gather. At the same time, the scheme will help reduce important inequalities and the digital divide in Bavaria. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.48324, once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de Foncière Vesta par ICF Novedis, CDC Habitat et Swiss Life REIM

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Foncière Vesta par ICF Novedis, CDC Habitat et Swiss Life REIM, toutes quatre basées en France. Foncière Vesta, société propriétaire d'un portefeuille immobilier, était jusqu'à présent exclusivement contrôlée par le groupe SNCF, entreprise active dans le secteur du transport de voyageurs et de marchandises. ICF Novedis est la filiale logement du groupe SNCF. CDC Habitat est la filiale immobilière d'intérêt général de la Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations présente dans le secteur du logement social et du logement intermédiaire. Swiss Life REIM est une société de gestion de portefeuille entièrement détenue et contrôlée par le groupe Swiss Life. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact limité sur la structure du marché. La transaction 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.9132](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Skoobe by Klio, Holtzbrinck, Verlagsgruppe Random House and Arvato CRM Solutions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of the whole of Skoobe GmbH by Klio GmbH, Georg von Holtzbrinck GmbH & Co. KG (“Holtzbrinck”), Verlagsgruppe Random House GmbH (“Random House”) and Arvato CRM Solutions GmbH (“Arvato”), all of Germany. Skoobe offers the temporary rental of e-books over its online platform [www.skoobe.de](#) and via its own application. Klio is active as a book retailer. Holtzbrinck is an international media company that is active in trade-book publishing, education and science, newspapers and magazines as well as electronic media and services. Random House is a publishing house of Bertelsmann SE & Co KGaA (“Bertelsmann”) active in the area of fictional and non-fictional books, books for children and adolescents, audio and e-books. Arvato is an international service company of Bertelsmann offering various technical services. Bertelsmann is an international media, services and education group. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because Skoobe has negligible actual and foreseen activities within 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.9125](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel en hausse à 2,2% dans la zone euro

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro s'est établi à 2,2% en octobre 2018, contre 2,1% en septembre 2018. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,4%. Le taux d'inflation annuel de l'Union européenne s'est également établi à 2,2% en octobre 2018, contre 2,1% en septembre. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,7%. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: + 32229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tél.: + 32 229 64976)

Eurostat: la production agricole totale a augmenté de 6,2% dans l'UE en 2017 par rapport à 2016

Les comptes économiques de l'agriculture font apparaître que la valeur totale de la production agricole dans l'Union européenne s'établissait à 432,6 milliards d'euros au prix de base en 2017, soit en hausse de 6,2% par rapport à 2016. En 2017, l'équivalent de 56% (244,1 milliards d'euros) de la valeur de la production agricole générée a été consacré à la consommation intermédiaire (intrants de biens et services), tandis que la valeur ajoutée brute (c'est-à-dire la valeur de la production moins la valeur de la consommation intermédiaire) a atteint 44% (188,5 milliards d'euros). La combinaison de la forte augmentation de la valeur de la production agricole et la croissance plus faible de la consommation intermédiaire (+1,8%) ont

entraîné une forte hausse de la valeur ajoutée brute (+12,4%) générée par l'activité agricole en 2017 par rapport à 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Federica Mogherini and Johannes Hahn in Ankara for the High Level Political Dialogue

On 22 November High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** will be in [Turkey](#) for the High Level Political Dialogue between the European Union and Turkey. The Turkish delegation will be led by Foreign Affairs Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, now also in charge of EU Affairs. At the Dialogue, they will discuss all issues of common interest and concern, among them key foreign policy issues such as developments in Syria, Iran, and Iraq. They will also discuss bilateral relations between the EU and Turkey, cooperation on migration and counter-terrorism and other important sectoral issues. A press conference will follow the meeting. Videos and photos will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.:+32 229 64887)

La commissaire Thyssen participe à la conférence belge Erasmus+ sur la formation professionnelle

Lundi, 19 novembre, la commissaire en charge de l'Emploi, des Affaires sociales, des Compétences et de la Mobilité des travailleurs, Marianne **Thyssen**, donnera un discours à l'occasion de la conférence belge sur Erasmus+ à Bruxelles, organisée par 3 agences nationales belges d'Erasmus+ (EPOS, AEF Europe et Jugendburo). L'événement se concentrera sur les politiques de formation professionnelle, les initiatives européennes dans le domaine et le rôle d'Erasmus+. Participants à la conférence incluent des représentants des services publics d'emploi, les fédérations d'employeurs, des stagiaires en formation professionnelle, des établissements scolaires, les autorités régionales belges en charge de l'éducation et des ONGs. Le but de la conférence est démontrer l'intérêt et l'importance des stages et de l'apprentissage professionnel pour les employeurs et les jeunes. Les participants discuteront également l'état des lieux de l'importance de la formation 'duale' dans les 3 communautés de la Belgique. Cette conférence rejoint les objectifs de la [Semaine européenne sur les compétences professionnelles](#), qui a eu lieu il y a seulement une semaine à travers l'Europe, et plus généralement la [Stratégie pour les compétences](#) de l'Union européenne. Le discours de la commissaire **Thyssen** sera publié [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tél.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tél.: + 32 229 67094)

Animal welfare: Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis opens the fourth meeting of the EU Platform

On Monday 19th November, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, will open the fourth meeting of the [EU Platform on Animal Welfare](#). *“I am particularly impressed by the fact that four voluntary initiatives aiming to contribute to improvement of animal welfare conditions have already been launched. It proves the deep involvement of the Platform’s members who have taken to heart the motto of the Platform: ‘Everyone is Responsible!’”* said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** ahead of the meeting. The [agenda](#) of the Platform includes a presentation of these ‘own initiatives’, as well as the results of the work of the Platform’s subgroups on animal’s transport and on pigs as well as recommendations in the field of animal welfare. The recent [European Court of Auditors’ report](#), acknowledging the EU achievements and delivery in the area of animal welfare will equally be presented at the meeting. Also, for the first time at a Platform meeting, a third country – New Zealand – will share its experience on improving the welfare of animals. Launched in June 2017, the Platform is now recognized as a pivotal forum for sharing information and good practices among Member States and various stakeholders across Europe. The meeting will be web-streamed [here](#) and on [EbS](#) at 9.30 CET. #EU4AnimalWelfare. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Hahn in Tunis on 16 – 18 November for the Euro-Mediterranean cultural partnership conference

On 16 – 18 November, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** will be in Tunis, [Tunisia](#), to participate in the high-level international conference [“Re-Thinking the Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Partnership”](#) at the [Cit  de la Culture](#). The conference will bring together participants from academia, politics, media, think tanks, art, business and youth from the Southern Mediterranean region and the EU to discuss current challenges and opportunities in the region and to embark on closer cooperation. The conference will serve as a platform for new ideas for the Euro-Mediterranean cultural partnership and cooperation, including its importance as a means for political communication and as a vector to drive economic growth, job creation and societal change. Commissioner **Hahn** will also attend the EU-organised media conference [“l res Assises Internationales du Journalisme de Tunis”](#) which aims at strengthening a network of 450 journalists from both sides of the Mediterranean and provide them with an opportunity to discuss issues related to the freedom of expression, ethics and the importance of media for citizens. In addition, on 17 November, Johannes **Hahn** will attend the “EU4YOUTH flagship event”, which will bring together about 800 students from several regions in Tunisia and will allow them to become familiar with the engagement of the European Union in Tunisia and in the region; including through a fair of EU-funded projects and a series of interactive debates and cultural performances. Photos and videos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijan i  – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

[CALENDAR](#)– Commissioner’s weekly activities

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