

Daily News 17 / 10 / 2018

COLLEGE MEETING: Commission presents EU-Vietnam trade and investment agreements for signature and conclusion

The European Commission today adopted the EU-Vietnam trade and investment agreements, paving the way for their signature and conclusion. Through this adoption, the Commission is demonstrating its commitment to putting these agreements in place as soon as possible. The trade agreement will eliminate virtually all tariffs on goods traded between the two sides. The agreement also includes a strong, legally binding commitment to sustainable development, including the respect of human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and the fight against climate change, with an explicit reference to the Paris Agreement. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *“The trade and investment agreements with Vietnam are exemplary of Europe’s trade policy. They bring unprecedented advantages and benefits for European and Vietnamese companies, workers and consumers. They take fully into account the economic differences between the two sides. They promote a rules- and values-based trade policy with strong and clear commitments on sustainable development and human rights. By adopting them a few hours before welcoming the participants in the ASEM-EU Summit in Brussels, the Commission shows its commitment to open trade and engagement with Asia. I now expect the European Parliament and EU Member States to do the necessary for the agreement to enter into force as soon as possible”*. Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *“The Commission has now delivered two valuable and progressive agreements with Vietnam that I am convinced the European Parliament and EU Member States can support. Vietnam has massive potential for EU exporters and investors to do business, both now and in the future. (...)Through our agreements, we also help spread European high standards and create possibilities for in-depth discussions on human rights and the protection of citizens. (...)”* A [press release](#), a [memo](#) and specific sectoral factsheets are online with [more information](#). The press conference of Commissioner Malmström on the EU-Vietnam trade and investments agreements can be watched on EbS [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Climate Change: Commission and Bill Gates to launch €100 million clean energy fund

Today, the Commission and Breakthrough Energy, led by Bill Gates, will launch a new investment fund – Breakthrough Energy Europe – to help innovative European companies develop and bring radically new clean energy technologies to the market. Commissioner **Moedas**, responsible for Research and Innovation and Bill **Gates**, Chairman of Breakthrough Energy Ventures, will sign an official Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of Vice-President Maroš **Šefčovič** to establish the joint fund. With a capitalisation of €100 million, Breakthrough Energy Europe will give a strong signal to markets and investors that the global transition to a modern clean economy is here to stay. With

this initiative, the Commission takes action to continue leading in the fight against climate change and to deliver on the Paris Agreement. As our planet increasingly faces the unpredictable consequences of climate change and resource depletion, urgent action is needed to adapt to a more sustainable model and modernise Europe's economy and industry. The Commission is currently working on the long-term strategy for the reduction of greenhouse gases. The proposal will be published in November 2018, ahead of the COP24 in Katowice, Poland. Today's official signing ceremony and press point will take place at 14.30 CET in Brussels and will be [broadcast live by EbS](#). A press release in all EU languages with more information will also be published at the start of the ceremony [here](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 22987278)

President Juncker and several members of the European Commission meet with Bill Gates

President **Juncker** and members of the Commission will meet with Bill Gates today and tomorrow. President **Juncker** will hold a bilateral meeting with Mr Gates today at 15:15. Vice-President **Šefčovič**, Commissioner **Moedas** and Mr Gates will launch 'Breakthrough Energy', a joint investment fund to help innovative European companies develop new clean energy technologies. The signing ceremony and the press point can be followed live on [EbS](#) at 14:30. Later today, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Mr Gates will participate at a high level debate on "Europe's role in International Development" in the framework of the "Innovation in development" Conference at the European Parliament. The panel can be followed live on [EbS](#) at 16:00. In a bilateral meeting Federica **Mogherini** and Bill Gates will discuss the work of the [Global Tech Panel](#) to accelerate digital development, Joint Ventures of the EU and the Bill & Melinda Foundation and future cooperation. Commissioner for Budget and Human resources Günther H. **Oettinger** is also meeting Mr Gates to speak about the funding possibilities of the EU budget. Tomorrow 18 October 2018, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** is meeting Mr Gates to discuss and sign a significant contribution of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the EU's External Investment Plan. This collaboration will strengthen diagnostic health services in Sub-Saharan Africa. A press release will be made available tomorrow at 10:30. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570)

Data protection: EU and U.S. start discussions for the Second Annual Review of the Privacy Shield

The Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra Jourová, will meet tomorrow morning the US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and launch the discussions to review the [EU-U.S. Privacy Shield](#). Representatives of all US government departments in charge of running the Privacy Shield, including the Federal Trade Commission, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the Department of Justice and the State Department, the European Commission, and the EU's data protection authorities

will now engage in a two-day discussion. The review will focus on the commercial aspects on the first day, notably on questions related to the oversight and enforcement of the Shield. The second day will cover developments concerning the collection of personal data by U.S. authorities for purposes of law enforcement or national security. Following these two days, the European Commission will then analyse the information gathered and publish its conclusions in a report end of November. Operational since 1 August 2016, this framework protects personal data transferred from the EU to the U.S. for commercial purposes. It brings also legal clarity for businesses relying on the transmission of personal data across the Atlantic. More information on the [EU-U.S. Privacy Shield](#) and on the [first Annual Review's report](#) are available online. (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Poland: better water and energy infrastructure thanks to EU funds

Over €94 million from Cohesion Policy funds is invested in two projects for better water and energy infrastructures in Poland. First, €51 million from the European Regional Development Fund will help build a gas pipeline between the towns of Tworóg and Tworzeń, in the Śląskie region. This pipeline is part of the North-South Gas Corridor, a project of common interest for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure. Around €472 million of Cohesion Policy funds has been earmarked for different sections of the corridor during the 2014-2020 programming period. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina Crețu said: *“This gas pipeline supported by European funds is another brick in the wall of the European energy market. It will help provide Poland with more affordable, secure and sustainable energy.”* In addition, €43 million from the Cohesion Fund is invested in the modernisation and extension of water and wastewater network in the agglomeration of Radom, in the Mazowieckie region. Commissioner Crețu added: *“Once again, Cohesion Policy delivers: this project will contribute to improving the quality of life of Polish citizens by allowing them to have access to better water supply.”* Once completed in 2022, the project will connect 7000 more inhabitants to a modern water supply network and 15,000 to the upgraded wastewater collection and treatment system. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission delivers on its pledge to support Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

The European Union has been providing substantial political, development and humanitarian support in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis from the outset. It has so far made available €65 million in humanitarian assistance. With today's additional €15 million in support it [delivers on its pledge](#) to assist the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The support will deliver on the medium-term development needs of the refugees and their host communities in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh. It will focus on community development, social cohesion, mitigating risks of tensions, as well as gender equality. On this occasion, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica said: *“Over half of the Rohingya refugees under 18 years of age, and the conflict has left many women having to look after their families alone. So the priority will of this €15 million support package will be on the needs of children, young people, female-headed households and families.”*

The above-mentioned support measures will help to make these communities more resilient – an approach also recognised by the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), which is expected to be adopted before the end of 2018 and to be subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. The EU is committed to help finding a sustainable solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis – it therefore welcomes the World Bank’s [recent pledge of development support](#) and encourages other development donors to follow suit. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86571; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

EU Anti-Trafficking Day: Commission calls for more action to protect women and girls

To mark the 12th EU Anti-Trafficking Day, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will tomorrow address an event organised by Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) Committees of the European Parliament for the launch of a [report on gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions](#), prepared by the [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#) in cooperation with the European Commission. The report highlights that trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most commonly reported form of human trafficking in the EU: 95% of registered victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the EU are women or girls. Commissioner Avramopoulos said: *“Trafficking in human beings is a heinous crime and has no place in Europe or anywhere else in the world. There should be zero tolerance towards traffickers that continue to exploit and abuse vulnerable people, in particular women and girls. Europe needs to put an end to this crime, and prevent that it happens in the first place, while offering effective support to the victims. We need operational deliverables and tangible results. Today’s report is a stark reminder of how serious the problem is, and aims to ensure actual impact on the lives of many victims of trafficking. Together we will continue our efforts to fully eradicate the trafficking in human beings, building a Europe that is safe for all.”* The report is a deliverable of the new set of [priority actions](#) adopted by the Commission in December 2017. Commissioner Avramopoulos will speak in the [European Parliament](#) tomorrow at 11.30 CET, which will be streamed live on [EBS+](#). More information on the Commission’s priority actions on trafficking in human beings is available in the [factsheet](#) and on the [anti-trafficking website](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

DiscoverEU: 12,000 additional free tickets available for 18-year-olds to discover Europe

Following the success of the first round of DiscoverEU, the European Commission will launch a second competition for free tickets on 29 November 2018. All 18-year-olds in the EU will then have until 11 December 2018 to apply for a free ticket, giving them the opportunity to travel around Europe between 15 April and 31 October 2019. Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics**, responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“This summer, around 15,000 18-year-olds were able to travel across the EU. They experienced first-hand what it feels like to be European. They got the*

opportunity to discover Europe's diversity and cultural richness as well as to meet people from all over the EU. We have heard so many fantastic stories from those who took part, and I am delighted that we are able to offer this experience to more young people next year!" More information on who can apply and how are available in a [Q&A](#) online. Young participants of the first round also gave some [testimonials](#) here. A press release was released [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Praxair EEA Business by TNSC

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of the **Praxair EEA Business** by Taiyo Nippon Sanso Corporation ("TNSC") of Japan. The Praxair EEA Business consists of the majority of the industrial gas businesses in the European Economic Area (EEA) of Praxair Inc. of the US, which is being divested in the context of the [merger between Praxair and Linde](#). TNSC, controlled by Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings Corporation of Japan, is a manufacturer and supplier of industrial gases, which is primarily active in Asia and North America, with a marginal presence in the EEA. The Commission examined the effect of the transaction on the markets for the supply of specialty gases and helium and concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of its limited impact on the markets concerned. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. As regards the merger between Praxair and Linde, the Commission's August 2018 decision requires the companies to sell the Praxair EEA Business to a suitable purchaser. The decision adopted today does not prejudge the outcome of that separate assessment. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9046](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle exclusif d'Asmodee par PAI Partners

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle exclusif du Groupe Asmodee ("Asmodee") par la société PAI Partners SAS, tous deux basés en France. Asmodee est actif dans l'édition et la distribution de jeux (jeux de société, jeux de cartes et ses versions numériques), ainsi que dans le marché de licences de ces jeux. 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. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. 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.9073](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo

Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Shanghai Huaxin Juniper by Huaxin and Juniper

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over the newly created joint venture Shanghai Huaxin Juniper Networks Co., Ltd by China Huaxin Post and Telecom Technologies Co., Ltd (“Huaxin”) both of China and Juniper Networks International B.V. (“Juniper”) of the US. The joint venture will be active in the development and sale of network switches, network routers and network security products in China. Huaxin is a wholly state-owned industrial investment company that provides telecommunication solutions, optical fibre and cable and radio frequency, enterprise network and cloud computing, and system software. Juniper is active in routing, switching and security products for high-performance networks. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the joint venture will have no activities in the territory of 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.8993](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Dombrovskis in Oxford and London

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, will be in Oxford on Wednesday 17 and in London on Thursday 18 October. He will defend a motion [‘The Euro is stronger than it ever has been’](#) at the Oxford Union Debate Chamber on Wednesday evening. You can follow the debate live as of 21:00 CET [on EbS](#). On Thursday, he will meet Mr Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer; deliver a keynote speech at the [‘Pan-Baltic Capital Market’ investors conference](#) at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); take part in an industry roundtable event organised by TheCityUK; and speak at the Politico event [‘The U.K. Financial Services industry: shaping the new trajectory’](#). *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)*

Commissioner Moscovici in Rome, Italy

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, will be in Rome on 18 and 19 October. He will travel to Rome to deliver remarks at a conference hosted by the [Aspen Institute Italia](#) and the Institut Aspen France. Commissioner **Moscovici** will also hold a number of

meetings, including with Mr Giovanni Tria, Minister of Economy and Finance; and Mr Ignazio Visco, Governor of the Bank of Italy. He will also pay a courtesy visit to the President of the Italian Republic, Mr Sergio Mattarella. *(For more information: Christian Spahr – +32 229 50055; Johannes Bahrke – +32 229 58615; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)*

Commissioners Navracsics and Crețu in Bulgaria for the annual Forum of the Danube Strategy

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, and Commissioner for Regional policy, Corina **Crețu**, are attending the 7th annual forum of the [Danube macro-regional strategy](#) tomorrow in Sofia. This year's theme is tourism, and how it supports economic growth and territorial cohesion. Ministers in charge of Tourism from the Danube region will adopt a joint statement outlining their intention to enhance their cooperation in the tourism and culture sectors.

Commissioner **Navracsics**, also responsible for the [Joint Research Centre](#), said: *"The 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage puts a spotlight on the important links between cultural heritage, tourism and economic growth. More than 300,000 people are directly employed in the European cultural heritage sector, and around 7.8 million European jobs are indirectly linked to it. Yet, whilst tourism can provide jobs and boost growth, we must take steps to ensure that it is sustainable, not least in the Danube region."* Commissioner **Crețu** said: *"The tourism potential of the Danube region is huge and sometimes remains untapped. This year we will discuss how to fully seize the opportunities offered by the exceptional natural and cultural heritage of the region to create growth and jobs for its 112 million inhabitants."* In order to encourage people from all backgrounds to explore cultural heritage initiatives supported by the EU, the Joint Research Centre has developed a [Story Map](#) focused on the Danube Region. The Danube Strategy is one of the four [macro-regional strategies](#). Launched in April 2011, it gathers nine EU countries (Austria, Croatia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria) and five non-EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine). Tonight in Sofia, the 2018 European Capital of Sport, Commissioner Navracsics will hand out the [#BeActive Awards](#), which reward the best initiatives to promote sport across Europe. During the [#BeActive Awards Gala](#), part of the European Week of Sport, the winners in the following three categories will be announced: "Education, "Workplace" and "Local Hero", which rewards strong personal commitment to promoting sport and physical activity in local communities. As for Commissioner **Crețu**, in Bulgaria she will also meet with Yordanka Fandakova, the Mayor of Sofia. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)*