

Daily News 18 / 10 / 2019

President Juncker attends the 17-18 October 2019 European Council meeting

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** yesterday attended the European Council meeting, where EU leaders discussed Brexit, only hours after an [agreement was reached](#) at negotiator level on the Withdrawal Agreement. This agreement included a revised Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland and a revised Political Declaration on the framework of the future EU-UK relationship. President **Juncker** held a [press conference](#) with President of the European Council Donald Tusk, Ireland's Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier. President **Juncker** said: *"What we have agreed on is much more than a deal, it is a legal text, which provides legal certainty to the problems created by Brexit. The text we agreed on protects the rights of our citizens and it protects peace and stability on the island of Ireland. Fundamentally, today's deal is about people and peace."* Leaders then discussed relations with Turkey and the perspectives of EU enlargement. Conclusions can be found [here](#) and [here](#). Today, leaders discussed the EU's next long-term budget and climate change. President-elect Ursula **von der Leyen**, who had been invited to attend the European Council meeting, presented the priorities of the new Commission. President **Juncker** held today a joint press conference with President Tusk during which he said: *"It is an historical error not to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania [...] On the next EU long-term budget, I reminded leaders that they have to conclude this debate quickly. If we wait until the end of next year, we will lose two more years during which researchers will not be able to do their work and students will not be able to go on Erasmus."* The press conference can be followed [here](#). Today's conclusions can be found [here](#). (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 9138; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229-67456)

Energy Union: EU invests to upgrade Polish Liquefied Natural Gas terminal in Świnoujście

The European Commission has approved a €130 million investment from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) to expand the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal in Świnoujście, northwest Poland. The project will increase the terminal's capacity to convert LNG into its gaseous form, store it, and ensure that it is easily transported. The ERDF financing was possible notably due to an important regional dimension of the project. LNG from the terminal will be transported through the newly constructed interconnectors to other countries including the Baltic States, Slovakia, Czechia and Ukraine. Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** said: *"I applaud Poland's commitment to diversification policy that lies at the center of our Energy Union Strategy. It is yet another key step in strengthening security of supply of entire Central and South Eastern Europe, increasing competition on the regional gas market and providing industry as well as households with secure, reliable and affordable energy."* The LNG terminal's construction was supported by a €224 million ERDF grant in the previous EU budget period. The development of the terminal is part of ongoing efforts to achieve energy

independence and the [EU Climate Goals](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 2 296 70 83, Andreana Stankova – Tél .: +32 2 295 78 57)

EU approves new budget assistance to the Republic of Moldova to support the rule of law, energy and public finance reforms

Today, the European Commission has approved to mobilise €14.35 million in budget support assistance to the Republic of Moldova to support the country in delivering on its ambitious reform agenda in the fields of law enforcement, anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, public finance and energy. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations said: *“Today’s assistance package demonstrates the EU’s commitment to the Moldovan citizens, who have long demanded that such reforms are put in place. The Moldovan authorities are intensifying their work to combat corruption in an effective way and to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and prosecution services. This is vital for public trust and needs to move forward at full speed. The Moldovan people can count on the EU’s full support to accompany the process”*. This new payment follows the [budget support payments made in July 2019](#) (€14.54 million), the [recently announced first instalment of Macro-Financial Assistance](#) (€30 million), and the [EU-Moldova Association Council](#), last 30 September 2019. The full [press release](#), as well as a dedicated [factsheet](#) on EU-Moldova relations is available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

The European Union and countries worldwide join their forces to mobilise private investors for financing the green transition

The European Union is today launching the International Platform on Sustainable Finance (IPSF) together with relevant authorities from Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, India, Kenya, and Morocco. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, will introduce the newly-created platform in the presence of Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), together with IPSF members’ and observers’ representatives, at the IMF and World Bank Group Annual Meetings, in Washington D.C. This initiative is part of the international efforts to meet the Paris Agreement commitments. Vice-President **Dombrovskis** said: *“While public funding will be vital for the green transition, it cannot pay the massive investment bill alone. We also have to tap private capital, and greatly scale up green investment so that it can help address the climate emergency.”* To reach the Paris targets, trillions of investments in sustainable infrastructure will be needed over the next decades. For Europe alone, additional financing in the range of EUR 175 and 290 billion per year will be necessary. The launch of this Platform is essential to stimulate investment and redirect capital flows towards our climate objectives at the scale required for the most important economic transition of our times. It will act as a forum for facilitating exchanges and, where relevant, coordinating efforts on initiatives and approaches to

environmentally sustainable finance, while respecting national and regional contexts. It will focus on environmentally sustainable initiatives in particular in the areas of taxonomies, disclosures, standards and labels, which are fundamental for investors to identify and seize green investment opportunities worldwide. The IPSF is supported by the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the International Organisation of Securities Commissions, the Network for Greening the Financial System, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme – Finance Initiative, in their role of observers. See the [Joint Statement](#) and the [Q&A](#) (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Guillaume Mercier – Tel.: +32 229 80564).

European Vocational Skills Week 2019: almost 1,500 events across the EU promoting the benefits of vocational education

Today, the [European Vocational Skills Week 2019 taking place in Helsinki](#) comes to an end. This year, 1,407 associated events and activities have been held across Europe so far and have helped the European Vocational Skills Week campaign to reach 2.5 million people, which is the highest number ever since the first edition in 2016. *“I am incredibly impressed by the VET projects I have seen, and more convinced than ever that VET really is a ‘First Choice’, leading to rewarding and exciting careers”*, Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said. *“I am therefore very pleased that we have reached more people than ever before during this fourth edition of our Vocational Skills Week, and hope that they too will spread the word about the quality of vocational education.”* Each year, as part of the European Vocational Skills Week, the EU recognises individuals, organisations and initiatives for their efforts in promoting and offering quality vocational education and training, through the ‘Awards for VET Excellence’. The awards are designed to highlight the quality in VET, provide visibility to the winners, motivate those taking part and support the development of networks and new career opportunities. The full list of winning companies can be found in this [press release](#). Commissioner **Thyssen**’s closing remarks will be published [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

La Commission lance un observatoire du marché des fruits et légumes

Lancé officiellement aujourd’hui avec une première réunion, le nouvel [observatoire du marché des fruits et légumes](#) permettra à ce secteur clé de l’agriculture européenne de bénéficier d’analyses à court terme et d’une plus grande transparence sur les prix, la production, et les échanges commerciaux. Les fruits et légumes représentent environ 24% de la valeur de la production agricole de l’UE. L’observatoire se concentrera sur les fruits à pépins (pommes et poires), les agrumes, les fruits à noyau (pêches et nectarines) et les tomates. Un conseil d’administration composé d’experts du marché se réunira de manière régulière, sur le même modèle que les [autres observatoires déjà existants](#) pour les secteurs du lait, de la viande, des céréales, et du sucre. L’observatoire du vin aura également sa première réunion très

prochainement. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tél: +32 229 52 509)

Le rapport de la Commission sur l'administration en ligne montre un écart réduit entre les pays européens leaders et les moins performants

La Commission européenne a publié aujourd'hui son [rapport sur l'administration en ligne](#), qui évalue l'utilisation des technologies de l'information et de la communication dans les administrations publiques, ainsi que les niveaux d'interopérabilité transfrontalière et d'interaction numérique entre les administrations et les citoyens ou les entreprises dans les États membres de l'UE et dans huit pays tiers. L'étude de cette année montre des améliorations du niveau de transparence et de l'utilisation des services numériques, tels que [l'identification électronique \(eID\)](#) et les documents électroniques. Cela confirme également que l'écart entre les pays les plus performants et les moins performants s'est réduit, se situant actuellement à 42 points de pourcentage (p.p.), bien en deçà de l'écart de 50 p.p., ou plus, mesuré sur les années 2012-2015. Les pays pionniers dans les services publics numériques sont Malte, l'Estonie et l'Autriche, suivis de près par la Lettonie, la Lituanie et la Finlande. L'Europe est la plus avancée dans le domaine appelé « centrage sur l'utilisateur », ce qui indique que les administrations publiques accordent la priorité aux services destinés à satisfaire les besoins et les attentes des citoyens. Des efforts supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour renforcer la sécurité des services publics en ligne, ainsi que pour accroître la transparence, la mobilité transfrontalière et la disponibilité de l'identification électronique et des documents électroniques. Le rapport sur l'administration en ligne, publié depuis 2012, est essentiel pour informer et contribuer aux politiques de l'UE sur le terrain. La Commission s'est engagée à soutenir le développement et l'utilisation de services publics en ligne transfrontaliers, notamment par le biais de son [plan d'action pour l'administration en ligne 2016-2020](#). Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#), et les données sur chaque pays sont [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél. : +32 229 67083; Marietta Grammenou – Tél.: +32 229 83583)

Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de Exadis par Renault et Mobivia

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de Exadis par Renault et Mobivia, toutes trois basées en France. Exadis est active dans la distribution en gros de pièces détachées automobiles pour véhicules particuliers et utilitaires légers. Renault a des activités concernant la conception, la fabrication et la commercialisation de véhicules automobiles et de pièces détachées. Mobivia est active dans le secteur de l'après-vente automobile, ainsi que dans le secteur des nouvelles mobilités. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulevait pas de problème de concurrence en raison de son impact

limité sur le marché. La transaction a été examinée en vertu 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.9575](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner for Trade Malmström on the U.S. countermeasures in the Airbus dispute

Following the move by the U.S. today to apply countermeasures against imports from the EU in consequence of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Airbus dispute, Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** made the following statement: *"We regret the choice of the US to move ahead with tariffs. This step leaves us no alternative but to follow through in due course with our own tariffs in the Boeing case, where the U.S. has been found in breach of WTO rules. Imposing tariffs on each other serves nobody's long term interest. It will inflict very significant damage to the highly integrated supply chain of the aircraft sectors in the U.S. and the EU and will result in collateral damage to many other sectors already suffering under the current trade tensions. The EU and U.S. have both been found in breach of WTO rules. As the world's largest aircraft manufacturers, the EU and the U.S. have a joint responsibility to sit down and negotiate a settlement that is balanced and compliant with the WTO. The EU has, this July, shared concrete proposals with the U.S. on clearly identified existing aircraft subsidies and on future support to our respective aircraft sectors. This offer remains on the table. The Commission will monitor the impact of the announced U.S. countermeasures on the European products concerned, notably in the agricultural sector. The European Commission is committed to defending European companies, farmers and consumers."* The Statement is also available [online](#). For more information please see available material on the [WTO decision authorising countermeasures](#), the [history of the dispute](#), [the parallel WTO dispute on Boeing](#) and [potential EU countermeasures](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tél. +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tél.: +32 229 51383)

EU Anti-Trafficking Day: Commission calls for an end to impunity for human traffickers

To mark the 13th EU Anti-Trafficking Day, the European Commission is urging Member States to end the impunity of traffickers by stepping up prevention efforts and bringing perpetrators to justice. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Trafficking in human beings has no place in European societies. Despite efforts by Member States as well as Europol involvement, the level of investigations,*

prosecutions and convictions in Europe remains too low for a crime that brings astronomical profits for the perpetrators. For as long as we allow this culture of impunity to reign, we fail each and every victim we are here to help. We must step up our efforts to enhance prevention, investigation and prosecution while ensuring better protection of trafficking victims.” EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, Myria Vassiliadou, added: *“Traffickers take advantage of those most vulnerable: women and girls remain the overwhelming majority of the victims, mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation in the EU. We must address all challenges, including the demand for the services and goods provided by the victims.”* The EU has a robust legal and policy framework in place aimed at eradicating trafficking in human beings. The [EU Anti-Trafficking Directive](#), which lies at the heart of this framework, establishes robust provisions on victims’ protection, assistance and support as well as on prevention and prosecution of the crime. More information on the EU actions and work of the EU [Anti-trafficking Coordinator](#), is available in the publication [“EU anti-trafficking action 2017-2019: at a glance”](#), and on the [EU Anti-trafficking Website](#). (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Federica Mogherini travels to Tokyo, Japan, to attend the enthronement ceremony of Japanese Emperor Naruhito and for bilateral meetings

On 21 – 23 October, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will be in Tokyo, Japan. On Tuesday 22 October, she will attend the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Naruhito alongside representatives of over 190 countries and international organisations. Prior to the ceremony, on Monday, she will meet with Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Tarō Kōno to discuss the strong EU-Japan partnership, regional and international issues, as well as EU-Japan security and defence cooperation, including on cyber and maritime security and crisis management. She will also meet with Fumio Kishida, member of the National Diet of Japan and former Foreign Minister. On Wednesday, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will participate in a roundtable with representatives of academia and civil society. She will attend a dinner hosted by the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzō Abe. Japan is one of the EU’s closest and most like-minded partners. At the [EU-Japan Summit](#) in April 2019, the EU and Japan agreed to step up their cooperation under the [EU-Japan Strategic Partnership Agreement](#)—provisionally applied since 1 February 2019 – in several areas, including connectivity, data protection, and climate change. The EU and Japan are also implementing an [Economic Partnership Agreement](#), which [entered into force on 1 February 2019](#). Most recently, on 27 September, at the Europa Connectivity Forum: EU-Asia Connectivity, attended by Prime Minister Abe, the European Union and Japan signed a Partnership on [Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure](#), which paves the way for the EU and Japan to work together on all dimensions of connectivity, based on shared values and interests. On the same day, the [European Commission recommended](#) that the Council of the European Union authorize the start of negotiations for an EU-Japan Agreement to allow the transfer and use of Passenger Name Record data in order to prevent and combat terrorism and serious transnational crime. For more information on EU-

Japan relations, please consult the dedicated [factsheet](#) and visit the website of the [EU Delegation to Japan](#). Photos of her visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

Commissioner Navracsics attends #BeActive Awards Gala in Budapest

This evening, the #BeActive Awards Gala takes place in Budapest, the 2019 European Capital of Sport. The #BeActive Awards competition is a central part of the [European Week of Sport](#). Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will give an opening speech before the winners of the three awards – #BeActive Education Award, #BeActive Workplace Award and #BeActive Local Hero Award – are announced. Commissioner **Navracsics** will also hand out an award to the winners of the 2019 Social Biking Challenge run by the Commission's Joint Research Centre to encourage people to cycle with others. Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"We created the #BeActive Awards to award and celebrate outstanding commitment to sport and physical activity. They are a key part of the European Week of Sport, helping us reach out to people at the local level. I am proud of all the projects nominated – they are wonderful examples of how we can harness sport to build strong, resilient communities."* National coordinating bodies and partners of the European Week of Sport submitted 63 applications across the three categories. Nine projects, three per category, were shortlisted with the three best projects to be unveiled this evening. The names of the winners will be announced live on Twitter ([@EuSport](#)) where information on all the projects is also available. More information and the names of the winners of the Social Biking Challenge will be available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel. +32 229 56184)

Commissioner Gabriel participates in the 2019 Annual Policy Dialogue of the World Leadership Alliance and Club de Madrid

On Monday 21 October Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya **Gabriel**, will be in Madrid to participate in a panel discussion at the [2019 Annual Policy Dialogue](#) on digital technology policies, organized by the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid in partnership with the IE School of Global and Public Affairs. The event will bring together Members of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid and representatives from governments, civil society, academia and technology companies in order to discuss policy solutions that address the challenges of digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) in our societies. Commissioner **Gabriel** will participate in a panel discussion, in which she will highlight the challenges and opportunities presented by advanced AI as well as the Commission's actions on [ethical and human-centric AI development](#). She will also stress the importance of protecting our democratic processes and institutions from [disinformation](#) and the relevant EU actions. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

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

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

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