

## **Renforcer la compétitivité du secteur européen du commerce de détail**

Aujourd'hui, la Commission publie un ensemble de bonnes pratiques destinées à soutenir l'action des États membres pour rendre le secteur du commerce de détail plus innovant et productif. Ce secteur est l'un des plus importants de l'économie européenne: près d'une personne sur dix travaille dans une des 3,6 millions d'entreprises du secteur. Il connaît une mutation rapide avec l'expansion du commerce en ligne et du modèle omnicanal combinant le commerce en ligne et dans des magasins physiques mais recèle un potentiel d'amélioration de ses performances. Le vice-président de la Commission chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, Jyrki **Katainen**, a déclaré à ce propos: *«La Commission a répertorié des bonnes pratiques qui pourront guider les États membres dans leur action en faveur de l'innovation, de la productivité et de la compétitivité dans le secteur du commerce de détail dans l'Union. Les distributeurs européens pourront ainsi renforcer leur présence sur le marché mondial et les nombreuses PME seront soutenues lorsqu'elles s'efforcent de tirer parti de l'évolution technologique. Tout cela permettra de créer des emplois et de stimuler la croissance économique»*. Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, commissaire pour le marché intérieur, l'industrie, l'entrepreneuriat et les PME, a indiqué pour sa part: *«L'avenir du secteur du commerce de détail européen – et notre économie en général – dépend de sa capacité à mettre au point des modèles innovants et à tirer le meilleur parti des nouvelles possibilités, comme le commerce électronique, par exemple. Pour ce faire, il doit pouvoir bénéficier d'un environnement des affaires favorable»*. La Commission a identifié l'établissement des commerces de détail, les restrictions au fonctionnement quotidien des magasins et les solutions pour soutenir la vitalité des centres-villes comme des domaines où les États membres peuvent agir. Vous pouvez trouver en ligne notre [communiqué de presse](#) et notre [FAQs](#) ainsi que la [Communication](#) et le [Guide](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tél. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

## **Breakthrough discovery in cancer research funded by the EU**

Researchers at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), funded by grants from the European Research Council (ERC), have taken a big leap forward in cancer research. The research team led by Professor Cédric Blanpain defined for the first time tumour growth phases during cancer progression and identified the types of tumour cells causing metastases in skin and breast cancer. Skin cancer is the most frequent cancer worldwide and breast cancer is the most frequent cancer in women. Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos **Moedas** said: *“I am extremely pleased to hear that once again ERC researchers have found a way to solve a – let me call it – research mystery. The fight against cancer is a paramount mission of the scientific community. This discovery underlines the importance of curiosity-driven research and how*

*much it contributes to our society.” Over the last ten years, Professor Blanpain received ERC grants worth €4 million directly supporting his work in cancer research and these breakthrough results. The findings, published by Nature magazine, show that researchers were able to identify at least seven different types of tumour cells and demonstrated that they are not all functionally equivalent and equally metastatic. This discovery will have major implications for the diagnosis, prognosis and therapy of cancer patients. See [press release](#) from the ULB. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)*

## **Publication of latest agri-food trade figures: positive trade balance for the EU**

The [latest monthly trade report](#) published today shows that the EU trade balance in February 2018 for agri-food products increased to a surplus of €1.7 billion, compared to a surplus of €1.3 billion in February last year. Highest increases in monthly export values were recorded for Turkey, Brazil and Singapore. By sector, the highest export growth was achieved in sugar, wine and infant food among others. When looking back at the past 12 months, EU agri-food exports reached a value of €138 billion corresponding to an increase of 4.1% in value terms. This monthly report again provides a table presenting the trade balance and its development by product category since March 2016. The largest gains in net exports were achieved in wine, while exports of wheat decreased. At the same time net imports increased most for other cereals and decreased most for cocoa beans. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509)

## **State Aid: Commission concludes Danish waste water fee system involves no aid**

The European Commission has found that the reduction in waste water charges introduced in Denmark by Law No 902/2013 does not involve State aid. Under the Danish “staircase model”, an increasing discount on waste water charges is granted to larger users based on a three steps system. Following a complaint from representatives of the meat industry, the Commission assessed whether this tariff system confers an advantage to certain companies over others. In particular, the Commission looked at whether a market economy operator subject to the same pricing constraints as the Danish waste water utilities would apply increasing discounts such as those provided by the staircase model. The Commission found that keeping the larger users – typically those benefiting from the highest discount of the staircase model – as customers of the waste water treatment plants contributes decisively to the profitability of these plants. In particular, it allows them to attract the larger users capable of treating their own waste water and who, without the higher discounts, would consider leaving the municipal waste water system. Furthermore, the charges paid by these larger users still cover the costs incurred by the waste water treatment plants for the service. More information will be made available on the Commission’s competition website, in the [State aid register](#) under the case number [SA.37433](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## **14<sup>th</sup> European country to join the eHealth cooperation for data sharing to personalise healthcare**

Bulgaria will become today the 14<sup>th</sup> country to sign the European Declaration [on linking genomic databases across borders](#) that will improve understanding and prevention of disease, allowing for more personalised treatments, in particular for rare diseases, cancer and brain related diseases. The signature will take place this afternoon in Sofia at the [Shaping Europe's Digital Future](#) conference that is dedicated to High-Performance Computing. The Declaration on linking genomic databases across borders is an agreement of cooperation between the countries that are committed to collaborate to provide secure and authorised access to national and regional banks of genetic and other health data. Enhanced cooperation between Member States will help to overcome lack of interoperability and fragmentation of initiatives across the EU, while guaranteeing highest European standards for personal data protection. This will also keep the EU at the forefront of personalised medicine globally, fostering scientific output and industrial competitiveness. The Declaration was originally launched on 10 April 2018 during the [Digital Day](#) and signed by the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Read more about European digital health initiative [here](#) and in our recent [press release](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 56172](#); Inga Höglund Tel.: [+32 229 55040](#))

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Soundwave Holdings by Spectris and Macquarie**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over the newly created joint venture Soundwave Holdings Pty Ltd by Macquarie group, both of Australia, and Spectris group of the UK. Soundwave Holdings will provide environmental monitoring services to businesses and will be a full-function joint venture operating on the market autonomously. Macquarie is active in the market of asset management and finance, banking, advisory and risk and capital solutions across debt, equity and commodities. Spectris, which is contributing part of its business to the joint venture, is active in the manufacture and supply of productivity-enhancing instrumentation and controls for technically-demanding industrial applications. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the transaction's limited impact on the market structure. 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.8807](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: [+32 229 80100](#); Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: [+32 229 13740](#))

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of NGT by StandardLifeAberdeen, Neptune and PensionDanmark**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control of NOORDGASTRANSPORT B.V (“NGT”) of the

Netherlands by StandardLifeAberdeen and Neptune, both of the UK, and PensionDanmark of Denmark. NGT owns and operates a subsea transportation system for natural gas on the Dutch continental shelf and a gas treatment station in the Netherlands. StandardLifeAberdeen is a global investment company. Neptune is an oil and gas investment vehicle. PensionDanmark is a Danish non-profit, labour-market-related, life-insurance limited company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because StandardLifeAberdeen, which is entering into the shareholding, is neither engaged in business activities in the same markets where NGT is active, nor in markets which are upstream or downstream to it. The relationships arising with the other shareholders have been assessed by the Commission in the past. 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.8817](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Eurostat: EU Member States granted protection to more than half a million asylum seekers in 2017**

The 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) granted protection status to 538 000 asylum seekers in 2017, down by almost 25% from 2016. In addition to these, the EU Member States received nearly 24 000 resettled refugees. The largest group of beneficiaries of protection status in the EU in 2017 remained citizens of Syria (175 800 persons, or 33% of the total number of persons granted protection status in the EU Member States), followed by citizens of Afghanistan (100 700 or 19%) and those of Iraq (64 300 or 12%). The number of decisions granting protection status to Syrian citizens has dropped since 2016 (when they accounted for a share of 57% of all grants) however, they remained the largest group granted protection status in eighteen Member States in 2017. Of the 175 800 Syrian citizens granted protection status in the EU, more than 70% received protection status in Germany (124 800). A Eurostat press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423)

### **STATEMENTS**

#### **Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-President Dombrovskis, Commissioner Jourovà on the adoption by the European Parliament of the 5th Anti-Money Laundering Directive**

*“We welcome the adoption by the European Parliament of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anti-Money Laundering Directive. These new rules will bring more transparency to improve the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing across the European Union. We want to thank the two co-rapporteurs, Mr Kariņš and Mrs Sargentini, and the shadow rapporteurs for their strong support and valuable expertise, which have hugely contributed to this result. With its vote, the Parliament concludes an ambitious round of negotiations initiated two years ago. In July 2016, in the aftermath of the terrible terrorist attacks that struck the EU and the vast financial dealings uncovered by the “Panama Papers”, the Commission proposed urgent counter-measures. The revised*

*directive is part of that action plan. We can be proud of the new measures, which will substantially improve the existing rules. We are today marking an important step in fighting against financial crime. Our work is not over. Fighting effectively against financial crime requires proper implementation of these rules and strong coordination amongst the different authorities. We commit to helping all Member States put them in place and to monitor their implementation. We want all EU Member States to uphold high standards in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing across the EU.”* The full statement is available [here](#). The Commission’s proposal for a 5<sup>th</sup> Anti-Money Laundering Directive was presented in July 2016 in the wake of terrorist attacks and the revelations of the Panama Papers scandal, and is part of the Commission’s [Action Plan](#) of February 2016 to strengthen the fight against terrorist financing. A factsheet summarising the main changes introduced by the Directive is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Gabriel in Bulgaria to discuss digital agriculture and skills at two high-level conferences**

Tomorrow, Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, will attend the conference [“Educate to Create: from Digital Consumers to Digital Creators”](#) and the [“High-Level Forum Together for Strong Digital Agriculture”](#) in Sofia to speak about EU’s efforts to improve [digital skills](#) for young citizens and support digital transformation of agriculture in Europe. Both events are organised in collaboration between the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Council and the European Commission. At 8:15 (GMT+3), the Commissioner **Gabriel** will deliver an opening speech at the “Educate to Create” conference. She will highlight the importance of fostering digital skills and related competences for young people to improve their employment opportunities and boost the economic growth in the digital era. At 9:00 (GMT+3), Commissioner **Gabriel** will give a short opening speech at the high-level forum “Together for Strong Digital Agriculture,” talking about the significance of digital technology in Europe’s agricultural sector. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 55040)

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