

Daily News 19 / 05 / 2017

EU protects citizens from toxic mercury, paves the way for global action

Yesterday at the UN headquarters in New York, the European Union has triggered the entry into force of the global treaty aimed at reducing exposure to mercury. The ratification of the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#), the new global treaty on mercury, confirms Europe's leading role to protect citizens' health and the environment around the world. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs said: *"The new global treaty on mercury will help protect millions of people all over the world from exposure to this toxic heavy metal. With ratification the EU has delivered the decisive bit and triggered its entry into force. This is a great success of EU green diplomacy. It highlights Europe's commitment to strong and concerted international action."* Upon initiative from the EU, the Minamata Convention on Mercury was negotiated and concluded in 2013. The EU has one of the most ambitious policies for protection against mercury. However, as 40 to 80 % of mercury deposited in Europe comes from mercury emissions in other parts of the world, strong international action is needed to protect the health of our citizens. The Minamata Convention, will not only tighten environmental standards worldwide, but also help create a level playing-field, as all major economies will apply environmental requirements similar to those already in force in the EU. Pregnant women, infants and children are at particular risk from mercury in the food-chain, and the Convention will bring about significant decreases to their exposure in the long term. For example, by prohibiting the use of dental amalgam for these vulnerable categories. A [press release](#) and [Q&A](#) are available. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: + 32 229 93321)

Commission launches public consultation on promoting social inclusion and shared EU values through education

How should education in Europe help young people to thrive in increasingly diverse societies faced with rising social and economic inequality, polarised debate and violent extremism? That is the central question of a [public consultation](#) launched by the European Commission today. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, said: *"Shared values such as mutual respect and freedom of expression are fundamental to the functioning of our democracies. I believe that education can play a stronger role not only in equipping young people with skills but also helping them to become engaged citizens who can live together respecting their differences and being able to distinguish facts from propaganda."* Replies to the public consultation can be submitted via the online questionnaire until 11 August and will contribute to shaping a draft Council Recommendation on the issue to be presented before the end of this year. The Recommendation was announced in the Commission's [Communication on Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism](#). Further information on tackling violent radicalisation through education and youth action can be found in this [factsheet](#). (Further information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083;

Inga Höglund – Tel. +32 229 50698)

Agriculture: the Commission approves new geographical indication from the United Kingdom

The Commission has approved today the addition of a new wine name from the United Kingdom to the quality register of Protected Designations of Origin (PDO). The “Darnibole” is a white, dry wine made from bacchus grapes variety. Darnibole is situated exactly in the centre of Cornwall. Darnibole wines have a combination of original wine grape notes. This new PDO will be added to the list of over 1 750 wine terms already protected. The full list is available in the [e-bacchus](#) database. More information can be found on the webpages on [quality products](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56 185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of MPS by Westrock

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of sole control by WestRock Company (USA) over Multi Packaging Solutions International Limited (“MPS”, Bermuda). MPS is active in the manufacture and sale of specialty packaging solutions, such as premium folding cartons, mainly for pharmaceutical goods, consumer goods and media purposes, and rigid packaging for perfumes and spirits. Westrock is a multinational provider of paper and packaging solutions for consumer and corrugated packaging markets. It provides a variety of packaging solutions such as folding cartons or, paperboard to customers in the several different sectors. The Commission in particular investigated the market for folding cartons for beverages in the UK and the markets for folding cartons for pharmaceutical products in the UK and Ireland. With regard to folding cartons for beverages, the Commission considered that the activities of the companies were focused on different market segments. In relation to folding cartons for pharmaceutical products, the transaction did not significantly change the market structure in the UK. In Ireland, the Commission found that a number of competitors remained in the market and the barriers to enter the market for these products were rather low. The transaction was examined under the normal Phase I merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8421](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of cinema advertising joint venture by UCI Italia and TSC

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture that will be active in cinema advertising between UCI Italia and The Space Cinema 1 (“TSC”), both of Italy. UCI Italia is indirectly controlled by the Dalian Wanda Group of China through AMC of the US. TSC is controlled by Vue International of the UK, jointly controlled by

two investment companies of Canada. Both UCI Italia and TSC are providers of cinema exhibition services in Italy and also sell advertising space in their cinemas. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would not raise competition concerns because a number of strong competitors will remain on the market for cinema advertising services to which competing cinemas could sell their advertising space. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8431](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: la Commission approuve la création d'une entreprise commune par EDF, CDC et Mitsubishi

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de l'entreprise commune nouvellement créée, NGM S.A.S. ("NGM") par les entreprises Électricité de France ("EDF"), Caisse des dépôts et consignations ("CDC") – toutes trois basées en France, et Mitsubishi Corporation du Japon. L'entreprise commune sera active dans le développement, le financement et la gestion de divers projets en matière de mobilité électrique. EDF est principalement active dans le secteur de l'électricité en France et à l'étranger. CDC est une institution publique active dans le financement de projets d'intérêt général, la prise de participations dans des secteurs ouverts à la concurrence et la gestion de fonds. Mitsubishi est active dans divers secteurs, y compris l'environnement et les infrastructures, l'industrie manufacturière, la finance, et l'énergie. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu du fait que l'entreprise commune ne prévoit d'exercer qu'une activité négligeable sur le territoire de l'Espace Economique Européen. La transaction a été examinée selon 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.8447](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Iona Energy by TPG and Oaktree Capital

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control by TPG and Oaktree Capital Group Holdings GP (both of the USA) over Iona Energy Company Limited (UK). Iona Energy owns and develops the Orlando and Kells oil fields in the North Sea. TPG is a global private investment firm managing various funds that invest in a variety of companies through acquisitions and corporate restructuring. Oaktree is a global investment management company specialising in credit strategies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns given the very limited overlaps between the companies' activities. 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.8443](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32

Concentrations: la Commission approuve la création d'une entreprise commune par Safran et China Eastern Airlines

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, la création d'une entreprise commune par Safran Landing Systems SAS ("SLS") de France et China Eastern Airlines Co. Ltd ("CEA") de Chine. L'entreprise commune fournira, en Chine, des services d'entretien, de réparation et de révision pour les trains d'atterrissage d'avions commerciaux à couloir unique. SLS, une filiale de Safran SA, fabrique des trains d'atterrissage et des systèmes de freinage pour aéronefs. CEA est une compagnie aérienne chinoise majeure, active sur des routes internationales, domestiques et régionales et dont les principales plateformes sont situées aux aéroports internationaux de Shanghai Pudong et Shanghai Hongqiao. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème concurrence dans la mesure où l'entreprise commune ne sera active qu'en Chine. 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.8411](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Commission adopts delegated act to amend regulation on wine labels

The Commission today adopted a delegated act specifying the conditions under which the name of the "teran" wine grape variety may appear on wine labels of the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) "Hrvatska Istra", a Croatian wine, allowing its producers to use the name "teran" in the labelling of their wines under specific labelling conditions. "Teran" is and will remain a Slovenian Protected Designation of Origin registered in the EU. This means that, under [existing EU rules](#), the wine is protected against any commercial use of this name by other wines that do not respect the rules provided for in the technical file of the PDO "Teran" of the Slovenian Karst region. Wines that do not respect these rules cannot be placed on the EU market. [Under EU rules](#), a limited exception can be established for the use of the name of a grape variety that coincides with a PDO for wines if justified by existing labelling practices, as is the case with "Teran". This decision was taken in line with the Commission's obligations and after due consultation with all Member States and the general public through the Better Regulation Portal. The document will now be transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council for the usual scrutiny period leading to its publication and entry into force. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Financial integration and stability: European Commission and European Central Bank hold annual conference

The European Commission is today hosting the yearly European Financial Integration and Stability conference with the European Central Bank (ECB) in Brussels. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, and Vítor Constâncio, Vice-President of the ECB, will deliver keynote speeches. To coincide with the event, the Commission has published its annual European Financial Stability and Integration Review (EFSIR) report, which takes stock of recent developments in financial markets and the financial sector. The report highlights a positive trend in the recovery of the European economy and identifies private consumption as the main driver for growth, supported by improved bank funding and a better regulatory and supervisory framework. The report also notes that EU banks are much more stable today than in the past: they are better capitalised and have sounder business models, although certain challenges remain. Vice-President **Dombrovskis** said: *"We need to take decisive steps towards financial integration within the EU by completing Banking Union and Capital markets Union. Only as an integrated market do we have the strength to finance our economies, the depth and liquidity for markets to function efficiently, and the scope for innovative finance to develop and scale up."* The [full report](#) and [press release](#) are available online. The programme of the conference is available [here](#) and the event is being web streamed [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

European Commission at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North African Jordan

EU High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini**, Commissioner **Stylianides** and Commissioner **Bulc** will participate in the [World Economic Forum](#) on the Middle East and North Africa in Jordan on 19-21 May. This forum will bring together over 1,000 public, business and civil society leaders from over 50 countries to discuss common responses to economic, geopolitical and humanitarian challenges in the region, focusing on public-private cooperation, innovation and business development. Focus will also be placed on providing support to countries in the region in managing the impact of the conflict in Syria and working towards regional peace and stability. The HR/VP **Mogherini** will notably participate in the sessions 'Rebuilding for Peace' and the 'Future of Europe' and will discuss relations between the EU and Middle East in a session on 'Europe and the Middle East: from Neighbourhood to Common Destiny'. Commissioner **Stylianides** will participate in a televised panel-discussion 'Protecting Refugees: From Middle East to Europe'. Commissioner **Bulc** will take part in several sessions on infrastructure and investment and meet with Mr Hussein Souob, Minister of Transport of Jordan. In the margins of the forum, the three members of the College will have a joint audience with H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan, in the presence of Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Hani Mulki and the Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Ayman Al Safadi. Other bilaterals will take place. More information and audiovisual coverage on [EBS](#). (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: + 32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322 ; Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Daniel

Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 22969143)

Council and Commission set to discuss modernisation of education systems, life-long learning, cultural diplomacy and the review of the audiovisual media services directive

On Monday 22 May, the European Commission will be represented at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council by Commissioner **Navracsics** as well as Commissioner **Thyssen** for the education points and on Tuesday by High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** and Vice-President **Ansip**, for the culture and audio-visual points. On Monday, following the Youth Council where the main point is a policy debate on building Europe's future with and for young people, Education Ministers will have a policy debate on improving and modernising education systems and how to involve learners in this process; they will discuss a progress report on [Europass](#); and are set to adopt a general approach on the [European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning](#). Commissioner **Navracsics** will update the Education Council on recent and upcoming developments in the [Erasmus 30th anniversary campaign](#). On Tuesday 23 May, Culture Ministers are expected to adopt a general approach on the revision of the [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), aimed at creating a fairer environment for all players, promoting European films, protecting children and tackling hate speech more effectively. Culture Ministers are also expected to agree on Council Conclusions on an [EU strategic approach to international cultural relations](#). Sport Ministers are set to adopt the EU Work Plan for Sport (1 July 2017 – 31 December 2020) and hold a policy debate on sports media and its role in strengthening social inclusion. Press conferences will take place on both days. *(For further information Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 2 296 70 83; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 2 296 22 53; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 2 296 70 94; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 2 295 06 98)*

20-23 May: Commissioner Andriukaitis meets representatives of Irish Government, attends Citizens' Dialogue and Litfest on his visit to Ireland

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, is on official visit to Ireland on 20-23 May. During the visit he will engage with Health Minister Simon Harris TD, Minister of State for Food, Forestry and Horticulture Andrew Doyle TD and Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children. On Sunday May 21, Commissioner will attend Litfest, A Food and Drinks Literacy Festival at Ballymaloe where he will deliver a speech "To eat is a political statement" focusing on the EU action on food waste. On Monday May 22, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** will hold a [Citizens' Dialogue in Dublin](#) at 17:45 CET, which can be followed [live](#). In addition to health and food safety topics, Commissioner invites citizens to discuss the present and the future of the EU. Citizens and media can attend the debate in person; questions can also be submitted using the Twitter hashtag #EUdialogues. The event will be livestreamed [here](#). *(For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)*

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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