

Daily News 19 / 06 / 2017

Commission brings together non-confessional organisations to discuss “The Future of Europe: a values-based and effective Union”

Today, European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** hosted a high-level meeting with fourteen representatives from philosophical and non-confessional organisations from across Europe, in the presence of European Parliament Vice-President Mairead McGuinness. This eighth annual high-level meeting discussed the topic “*The Future of Europe: a values-based and effective Union*”. The meeting is part of the regular dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations foreseen by Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: “*Europe is at a pivotal moment, and for me the most fundamental thing we must do is listen to organisations that represent our citizens, whatever their faith or convictions. The Commission is seizing this unique moment to discuss the future direction of the European Union. Our common European values must remain the bedrock of our future choices, and we are consulting widely on how to effectively anchor our future policies in our shared values. Talking with religions, churches and non-confessional organisations is an important part of this process.*” More information is available in this [press release](#). (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

EU supports Portugal following deadly forest fires

The European Commission has responded swiftly to Portugal’s request for assistance in order to tackle the deadly forest fires, after the [EU’s Civil Protection Mechanism](#) was activated yesterday by the Portuguese authorities. President **Juncker** and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** immediately offered the EU’s full support to do all possible to help and expressed their condolences to all those affected. President **Juncker** wrote a [letter](#) to Prime Minister Costa. The European Commission, through its 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) (ERCC), has been in constant contact with EU Member States to channel support through the Civil Protection Mechanism. So far substantial support has been provided including; 7 firefighting aircraft from France, Italy and Spain, more than 100 firefighters from Spain, the EU’s Copernicus satellite system to provide damage assessment maps for the authorities and a liaison officer from the ERCC has arrived in the country to help coordinate offers of assistance. Vice-President **Katainen** is in Portugal today and tomorrow. A [statement](#) and [press release](#) issued yesterday are available online. (For more information: Carlos Martín Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: + 32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, High Representative/ Vice-President **Mogherini**, and Commissioners **Hahn**, **Mimica**, **Stylianides**, and **Jourová**, made the following

statement: *“Sexual violence in conflict, as well as all forms of violence and discrimination against women, girls, men and boys is a flagrant and unacceptable violation of human rights. [...] The European Union has taken concrete action to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. [...] Along with our active contributions to tackling the root causes of conflict, we will continue to address inequalities and to help build peaceful and inclusive societies. In order to eliminate sexual violence in conflict effective multilateralism and a comprehensive approach are paramount [...] Together, we have achieved a lot, but we need to stay focused to end these violations, and to strengthen our actions – until women, men, girls and boys are able to lead a life free from fear and violence anywhere in the world.”* Please find the full statement [here](#) and see the Campaign [Say No! Stop Violence against Women](#) (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229-86570 ; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 2 296 2076)

Aides d'État: la Commission autorise l'aide franco-allemande de 377 millions d'euros en vue du développement de l'hélicoptère nouvelle génération X6 d'Airbus

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État, l'aide de 377 millions d'euros accordée par les autorités françaises et allemandes pour développer l'hélicoptère lourd nouvelle génération X6 d'Airbus. Le projet apportera une contribution significative à la recherche et à l'innovation dans l'UE sans fausser indûment la concurrence dans le marché unique. La France et l'Allemagne fourniront toutes deux une aide publique pour développer le projet de l'hélicoptère X6 d'Airbus. Cette aide s'élèvera à un total de 377 millions d'euros sous la forme d'avances récupérables accordées sur une période de huit ans (330 millions par la France et 47,25 millions par l'Allemagne). La Commission a conclu que les mesures françaises et allemandes sont conformes aux règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État, car elles apportent une contribution significative à la recherche et à l'innovation dans l'UE sans fausser indûment la concurrence dans le marché unique. Margrethe **Vestager**, la commissaire chargée de la politique de concurrence, a déclaré: *«L'aide franco-allemande stimulera des investissements privés de grande ampleur dans ce projet. Elle permettra de mettre sur le marché une nouvelle génération d'hélicoptères lourds innovants, sans fausser indûment la concurrence.»*. Un communiqué de presse est disponible en [FR](#), [EN](#) et [DE](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of joint venture between Zalando and Bestseller United

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control of Fashiontrade.com B.V. of the Netherlands, by Zalando SE of Germany and Bestseller United A/S of Denmark. The joint venture will provide wholesale e-commerce services. Zalando is a European fashion ecommerce company on which consumers can purchase clothing and footwear. Bestseller United is an international fashion company with a range of different fashion brands. 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.8433](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of SB Energy by Softbank, Bharti and Hon Hai

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of joint control over SB Energy Holdings Limited (India) by SoftBank Group Corp. (Japan), Bharti Overseas Private Limited (India) and Hon Hai Precision Industry Co. (Taiwan). SB Energy develops, constructs and operates renewable energy projects. SoftBank is an internet company which provides a comprehensive range of telecommunication services and products, primarily in Japan and the USA. Bharti is a holding and investment company which invests and provides services in different sectors, such as telecommunications, hospitality, real estate development and also invests in equities, securities and instruments. Hon Hai provides third-party electronic manufacturing services to original equipment manufacturers of electronic products such as computers, mobile phones, video game consoles and televisions. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as SB Energy will operate only in India. 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.8502](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

EUROSTAT: Le taux d'emplois vacants à 1,9% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28

Le taux d'emplois vacants s'est établi à 1,9% dans la zone euro (ZE19) au premier trimestre 2017, en hausse par rapport aux taux de 1,7% enregistrés tant au trimestre précédent qu'au premier trimestre 2016, selon les chiffres publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Le taux d'emplois vacants dans l'UE28 s'est également établi à 1,9% au premier trimestre 2017, en hausse par rapport aux taux de 1,8% relevés au trimestre précédent ainsi qu'au premier trimestre 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

EUROSTAT: La production dans le secteur de la construction en hausse de 0,3% dans la zone euro

En avril 2017 par rapport à mars 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction, corrigée des variations saisonnières, a augmenté de 0,3% dans la zone euro (ZE19), tandis qu'elle est restée stable dans l'UE28, selon les premières estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En mars 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction avait reculé de 1,1% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229

56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Šefčovič in Hungary for second Energy Union Tour

On 19-20 June, Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič will travel to Hungary for the second Energy Union Tour. Vice-President Šefčovič will meet the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Mr Péter Szijjártó and Minister for Energy, András Aradszky. The focus of their discussions will be on the [Clean Energy for All Europeans](#) package published last November and in particular on the Energy Union's governance and national energy and climate plans. The need to further connect Hungary's electricity grids to the networks of neighbouring countries and ways of lowering the costs of the energy transition in Europe will also be high on the agenda. The Vice-President will witness the signature by Hungary and Croatia of a memorandum of understanding on building infrastructure to create bi-directional natural gas flow between the two countries. Vice-President Šefčovič will meet with energy stakeholders to discuss Hungary's role in the European energy transition and the benefits that a fully functioning EU internal energy market can bring to Hungarian citizens and businesses. During his visit Vice-President will also meet with NGOs to discuss Energy Union policy and projects. Ahead of the visit, Vice-President Šefčovič said: *"Hungary is doing really well reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, and it reached its 2020 target for renewable energy already in 2015. It is the right of every Member State to determine its own energy mix. At the same time cooperation at a regional level can substantially contribute to ensuring secure energy supplies and energy prices that are affordable for households and for businesses. Boosting more efficient energy use, creating competitive markets and innovation are key in this respect."* (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioner Mimica to discuss European efforts for Sustainable Development with Slovakian leaders and NGOs

Tomorrow, Commissioner for International Development and Cooperation, Neven Mimica, will travel to Slovakia to discuss the EU's renewed development policy with Slovakian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Mirsolav Lajčák, who will take on the role as the next President of the UN General Assembly in September, and with the State Secretary Lukaš Parizek. Commissioner Mimica will also meet with the Foreign Affairs Committee and European Affairs Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, as well as NGO representatives. This comes two weeks after the presentation of the new European Consensus on Development, a joint strategic vision and framework for action in development cooperation for the next 15 years, agreed by EU institutions and all EU Member States. At the core of this new strategy is an inclusive model of co-operation and building partnerships, counting on all Member States to play an active role in implementing the new Consensus across all policy areas, which impact on our development outcomes – including our humanitarian, security, migration, trade and climate actions. Commissioner Mimica commended Slovakian efforts in

supporting global development, having increased their contribution in this area in the last few years, and added: *“There is huge potential for us as Europeans to engage in more meaningful, win-win relationships with our partner countries. Whether it is supporting the transition to clean, green energy, empowering women and girls to reap the many social and economic benefits of gender equality or investing in local infrastructure and entrepreneurs to create more sustainable long-term growth.”* An exchange of views with Slovakian interlocutors on the future relations between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries is also envisaged, following the European Commission’s proposals on how to shape these relations after the Cotonou Agreement expires in 2020. *(For more information: Carlos Martín Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: + 32 229 65322, Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

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