

Daily News 20 / 02 / 2019

COLLEGE MEETING: Infractions: la Commission adapte sa méthodologie de calcul pour les sanctions financières

La Commission a présenté aujourd'hui l'adaptation qu'elle compte appliquer à sa méthodologie de calcul employée pour les propositions de sanctions financières dans les cas d'infractions à la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne. Lorsque la Commission renvoie un État membre devant la Cour de justice de l'UE pour avoir enfreint le droit européen, dans certains cas, la Cour peut imposer des sanctions financières basées sur une proposition de la Commission. Un des éléments que le Commission considère en formulant ce genre de propositions est le poids institutionnel d'un État membre. Suite à un jugement récent de la Cour, la Commission n'utilisera plus les règles de vote du Conseil, mais le nombre de sièges alloués aux représentants de chaque État membre au sein du Parlement européen, afin de déterminer le poids institutionnel de cet État membre. Cette nouvelle méthode conduira à des montants qui ne créent pas de différence de traitement injustifiée entre États membres et qui resteront aussi proches que possible aux montants résultants de la méthode de calcul actuelle, les montants restant proportionnels et suffisamment dissuasifs. La Commission continuera ainsi d'appliquer le droit européen de manière forte, équilibrée et juste envers les États membres. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Alexander Winterstein – Tél.: +32 229 93265; Uldis Šalajevs – Tél.: +32 229 67560)

COLLEGE MEETING: European Commission takes stock of the progress made on Brexit “no-deal” contingency legislation

The College of Commissioners was today briefed by the Secretary-General and discussed the progress made on the Commission's contingency proposals for the undesirable but possible situation of a “no deal” Brexit. To date, the Commission has tabled 19 legislative proposals, on which good progress has been made in the European Parliament and the Council. 7 proposals have been adopted or agreed by the Parliament and the Council. 12 proposals are still to be finalised by the co-legislators, and are advancing well. In addition to this, several non-legislative acts have been adopted, including 10 delegated acts, 6 implementing acts, as well as 3 Commission decisions. All texts are available [here](#). As outlined in the Commission's previous [Brexit Preparedness Communications](#), the EU's contingency measures will not – and cannot – mitigate the overall impact of a “no-deal” scenario, nor do they in any way compensate for the lack of preparedness or replicate the full benefits of EU membership or the favourable terms of any transition period, as provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement. These proposals are temporary in nature, limited in scope and will be adopted unilaterally by the EU. They are not “mini-deals” and have not been negotiated with the UK. In addition to this legislative work, the Commission has also intensified its work on proactively informing the public about the importance of preparing for a “no-deal” Brexit. The Commission has published 88 preparedness notices, along with 3 detailed Brexit Preparedness Communications. The Commission also stepped up

its “no-deal” outreach to EU businesses this week in the area of [customs and indirect taxation](#). The Commission continues to hold technical discussions with the EU27 Member States both on general issues of preparedness and contingency work and on specific sectorial, legal and administrative preparedness issues. Between January and March 2019, the Commission’s Deputy Secretary-General, Céline Gauer, and a team of Commission officials are visiting the capitals of the 27 EU Member States to provide any necessary clarifications on the Commission’s preparedness and contingency action and to discuss national preparations and contingency plans. Today they are in Latvia. The visits so far have shown a high degree of preparation by Member States for all scenarios. All information related to the Commission’s ongoing contingency and preparedness work is available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/brexit/brexit-preparedness_en. (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 2 299 13 82; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.:+32 2 299 86500)

Budget de l’UE pour 2021-2027: la Commission salue l’accord provisoire relatif au futur Fonds européen de la défense

Les institutions européennes sont parvenues à un accord politique partiel sur le Fonds européen de la défense, sous réserve de l’adoption formelle par le Parlement européen et du Conseil, lequel contribuera au développement d’une base industrielle innovante et compétitive dans le secteur de la défense, de même qu’à l’autonomie stratégique de l’Union. Dans un monde où l’instabilité va croissant, aucun pays ne peut à lui seul faire face aux menaces transfrontières qui pèsent de plus en plus sur notre sécurité. C’est la raison pour laquelle la Commission **Juncker** déploie des efforts sans précédent pour protéger et défendre les Européens. Le Fonds européen de la défense, [proposé en juin 2018 par la Commission](#) dans le cadre du [budget à long terme de l’Union](#) pour la période 2021-2027, fait partie de ces initiatives visant à renforcer la capacité de l’Union à protéger ses citoyens. Le vice-président en charge de l’emploi, la croissance, l’investissement et de la compétitivité, Jyrki **Katainen**, a déclaré à ce propos: « *C’est un pas important vers la réalisation d’une coopération européenne en matière de défense. Le Fonds européen de la défense aidera les États membres à tirer un meilleur parti des investissements publics, favorisera le développement d’une industrie de la défense forte et innovante et renforcera l’autonomie et la prééminence technologique de l’Union dans le domaine de la défense.* » La commissaire en charge du marché intérieur, l’industrie, l’entrepreneuriat et des PME, Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, a ajouté: « *Cet accord marque une nouvelle étape importante dans les efforts déployés pour faire de l’Europe un garant plus solide de la sécurité de ses citoyens. Le Fonds favorisera l’innovation technologique et la coopération dans le secteur européen de la défense, pour que l’Europe se dote de technologies et d’équipements de défense interopérables de pointe dans des domaines novateurs tels que l’intelligence artificielle, les logiciels cryptés, la technologie des drones ou la communication par satellite.* » L’accord politique préliminaire auquel sont parvenus le Parlement européen, le Conseil et la Commission dans le cadre des négociations en « trilogue » doit à présent être approuvé de manière formelle

par le Parlement européen et le Conseil. Les aspects budgétaires et certaines dispositions horizontales connexes de la proposition relative au futur Fonds européen de la défense sont subordonnés à l'accord global sur le prochain budget à long terme de l'Union [proposé par la Commission en mai 2018](#). Le communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: + 32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tél.: +32 229 87278)

Brexit preparedness: Commission welcomes political agreement on contingency measures for basic air connectivity

Yesterday, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a provisional agreement on the European Commission's proposal to ensure basic air connectivity in the event of a "no-deal" Brexit. This is part of the Commission's Brexit contingency proposals to limit the most significant damage caused in case the United Kingdom leaves the European Union on 29 March 2019 without a Withdrawal Agreement. Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** welcomed the agreement: *"Basic air connectivity between EU and UK airports will be ensured, provided that the UK gives the same treatment to EU airlines. This means that EU passengers will still be able to travel by plane in case of a 'no-deal' Brexit. However this in no way replicates the significant advantages of the EU's single market."* Yesterday's provisional political agreement endorses the contingency measures proposed last December by the Commission to ensure basic connectivity. Cargo routes with third countries will be allowed for a limited period of five months, so that the airlines concerned can wind down operations and re-route traffic as necessary. EU airlines partly owned by UK nationals will also be given six months to do the necessary to achieve EU majority ownership and control. These contingency measures will not – and cannot – mitigate the overall impact of a "no-deal" scenario, nor do they in any way compensate for the lack of preparedness or replicate the full benefits of EU membership or the favourable terms of any transition period, as provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement. They are temporary in nature, limited in scope and will be adopted unilaterally by the EU. They are not mini-deals and have not been negotiated with the UK. Therefore, the continuation of all existing air transport services under the same terms as they are supplied today cannot be guaranteed. Next steps: the text of the Regulation will still have to be formally approved by the European Parliament and the Council. As part of the same package, the Commission has also proposed a Regulation that implements contingency measures in the area of aviation safety. It ensures in particular that EU airlines and other aircraft operators can continue to operate aircraft that contain parts made or serviced in the UK. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 2 298 65 00)

EU Visa Policy: Commission welcomes agreement to strengthen EU visa rules

Today Member States endorsed the agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission's [proposal](#) to modernise the EU's common

visa policy, adapting the rules to evolving security concerns, challenges linked to migration and new opportunities offered by technological developments. The agreed changes will make it easier for legitimate travellers to obtain a visa to come to Europe, facilitating tourism, trade and business, whilst strengthening security and reducing irregular migration risks. Welcoming the endorsement, Commissioner for Home Affairs, Migration and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *“I welcome the agreement on this important file. The new visa rules will facilitate travel for the millions of legitimate travellers who visit the EU every year to the benefit of our travel and tourism industry. At the same time, they will also improve and strengthen our security standards to detect those who pose a threat or have no right to enter the EU. The new rules will also enable us to use the leverage of our visa policy in cooperation with non-EU countries when it comes to the return and readmission of irregular migrants.”* The full [press release](#) and the [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

Commission extends dedicated post-programme framework for Greece

The Commission has adopted a decision to extend the enhanced surveillance framework for Greece by six months, as provided for under Regulation (EU) No 472/2013 (part of the so-called “two-pack”). This extension is part of the normal and expected process that serves to ensure continued support for the completion, delivery and implementation of reforms agreed under Greece’s stability support programme, in line with the commitments made by the Greek authorities. The implementation of these reforms is crucial to further strengthening Greece’s economic recovery following the successful [conclusion of the European Stability Mechanism \(ESM\) stability support programme](#) in August 2018. At the end of the programme, Greece started its normalisation process by becoming subject to [the enhanced surveillance framework](#) for an initial six month period. The [first enhanced surveillance report](#) was published in November 2018. The second report will be published on 27 February 2018. More information on the enhanced surveillance framework for Greece is available [here](#). (For more information: *Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976*)

La Commission investit 97 millions d’euros dans la rénovation de bâtiments résidentiels

L’énergie la plus propre est celle que nous n’utilisons pas, c’est pourquoi la Commission Juncker a mis l’efficacité énergétique au premier plan. L’efficacité énergétique devra jouer un rôle central dans l’atteinte d’une [Europe neutre pour le climat d’ici à 2050](#), en réduisant la consommation d’énergie de la moitié par rapport à 2005. Une grande partie de ces économies proviendront du secteur de la rénovation des bâtiments en Europe, une fois que les bâtiments représentent aujourd’hui 40% de la demande d’énergie finale dans l’UE. Les rénovations et l’utilisation accrue d’appareils intelligents et connectés permettront non seulement de réduire les émissions de gaz

polluants et à effet de serre, mais aussi de réduire les factures d'énergie, de créer des emplois locaux et d'améliorer la qualité de vie des Européens. La facilité ELENA (European Local Energy Assistance) bénéficiera d'un nouveau financement de 97 millions d'euros de la Commission européenne pour le secteur des bâtiments résidentiels. Ce budget soutiendra les investissements d'efficacité énergétique dans les logements privés et publics. L'efficacité énergétique est l'une des dispositions centrales du paquet ["Énergie propre pour tous les Européens"](#) et les États membres de l'UE ont convenu en décembre 2018 de réduire leur consommation d'énergie de 32,5% d'ici 2030 par rapport à 1990. L'accélération de la rénovation énergétique des logements est donc un pas en avant sur le chemin vers une économie prospère, moderne, compétitive et climatiquement neutre. Voir le [communiqué de presse](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

Iraq: EU announces additional €50 million in humanitarian aid and development cooperation

The EU has announced an additional €30 million in humanitarian assistance and another [€20 million in development funding](#) will contribute to the reconstruction of the country's cultural heritage, as well as the creation of jobs and opportunities for vulnerable youth. The announcement was made by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**, on the occasion of [his sixth visit to Iraq](#) today. Commissioner **Stylianides** said: "Each time I visit Iraq, I see the hope of its people despite the challenging circumstances. At this critical moment for the country, our new funding reaffirms the EU's commitment to stand in solidarity with all Iraqis and will help the most vulnerable." Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** added: "The EU is committed to the reconstruction of Iraq. With today's new support, we will help to restore the rich cultural heritage of Mosul and Basrah, and at the same time create much needed jobs and opportunities." Whilst in Iraq, Commissioner **Stylianides**, alongside Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, visited Mosul, where schools and hospitals are being supported by EU funding to help the most vulnerable get access to essential services. In Erbil, the Commissioner visited camps hosting thousands displaced by conflict. In Baghdad, the Commissioner held meetings with the Iraqi authorities. The full [press release](#) and [photos](#) of Commissioner **Stylianides'** visit to Iraq are available online. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Financial markets: European Commission and Monetary Authority of Singapore announce common approach on derivatives trading venues

The European Commission and the Monetary Authority of Singapore today announced a common approach for EU and Singapore derivatives trading venues. This will ensure that EU counterparties can continue to trade the most liquid

derivatives instruments on Singaporean platforms, in compliance with the trading obligation under the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation ([MiFIR](#)) and in line with the G20 reforms for standardised derivatives to be traded on trading platforms. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said: *"The European Union remains open for business. Our announcement confirms how global cooperation can bring tangible benefits to EU market participants. European firms will be able to continue trading interest rate and credit default derivatives on Singapore's trading platforms, and engaging with local counterparts in Asia, while Singaporean firms will be able to use EU platforms. This will facilitate trade and economic exchanges between the EU and Singapore. I want to thank Deputy Prime Minister Shanmugaratnam and his team for working with us towards this mutually beneficial outcome."* Vice-President Dombrovskis intends to propose to the Commission the adoption of an equivalence decision to recognise a list of organised markets established in Singapore, operated by an approved exchange or a recognised market operator, as platforms eligible for the execution of derivatives subject to the EU "on venue" trading obligation, provided the requirements of MiFIR are met. Before the Commission can adopt such an equivalence decision, it first has to consult Member States. At the same time, the Monetary Authority of Singapore intends to propose the adoption of regulations to exempt the EU's Multilateral Trading Facilities and Organised Trading Facilities from the requirements in Singapore. See joint statement [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

EU Customs Union: Citizens prioritise protection from security threats and action against fraudulent activity according to new survey

A new [Eurobarometer survey published today](#) sheds light on the priority areas for EU citizens when it comes to the activities of customs authorities and officials in the EU. According to the survey, customs should primarily focus on security threat protection and fighting against smuggling and fraud, while EU citizens also expect customs to enforce rules on animals, plants and public health or on product safety. Citizens most associate EU customs authorities and their activities with fighting smuggling (42%), border controls and the declaration of goods (41%), and the collection of taxes and duties (31%). Awareness of the tasks carried out by customs authorities is growing. For example, respondents are now 11 percentage points more likely to mention protecting citizens from terrorism and organised crime as a core task of customs compared to previous figures. Commenting on the results, Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Union, said: *"The European Commission works tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of our Customs Union, which protects the EU and its citizens and helps us to fight fraud. At the same time, we are adapting the Customs Union to the digital era so that it can deal with the many challenges that we face. Customs authorities and customs officials across the EU have a vital role to play in dealing with global challenges like climate change and migration. Our work to modernise the way in which EU customs operates will help us to deliver on our citizens' expectations."* While the new figures show growing awareness amongst citizens about specific aspects of the Customs Union, some misconceptions remain. For example, only 47% know that EU customs

are not responsible for controlling the movement of people or for checking passports. The survey results announced today come as Commissioner Moscovici attends the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee this afternoon at 14h30 with a [livestream available](#). The full Eurobarometer survey is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Innovation: la Commission lance la recherche de la capitale européenne de l'innovation 2019

La Commission a lancé aujourd'hui le concours [Capitale européenne de l'innovation 2019](#). Ce prix annuel récompense les villes dotées des écosystèmes d'innovation les plus dynamiques, qui trouvent des moyens inclusifs de mettre en relation les citoyens, le secteur public, le monde universitaire et les entreprises afin de créer de nouvelles solutions offrant des avantages sociaux à tous. Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire en charge de la recherche, de la science et de l'innovation, a officiellement lancé le concours de cette année à [Athènes](#), capitale qui a remporté le titre de capitale de l'innovation en 2018. Le commissaire **Moedas** a déclaré: « *Les prix de la Capitale de l'Innovation concernent autant les idées et les outils que les possibilités pour les citoyens de participer et de décider du mode de gestion de leur ville. Les anciens lauréats sont de véritables modèles qui inspirent d'autres villes du monde entier. Je suis impatient de voir de nombreuses candidatures de villes utilisant des solutions innovantes pour résoudre leurs problèmes les plus urgents et améliorer la vie de leurs habitants.* » Le prix Innovation Capital, également appelé iCapital, est financé dans le cadre du programme de recherche et d'innovation Horizon 2020 de l'UE. [Cette année](#), le concours est ouvert jusqu'au 6 juin pour les villes d'au moins 100 000 habitants situées dans les États membres de l'UE et les pays [associés](#) à Horizon 2020. Elles seront évaluées par des experts indépendants de haut niveau. La ville lauréate suivra les traces des précédents lauréats (Barcelone, Amsterdam, Paris et Athènes) et recevra un million d'euros pour renforcer et promouvoir ses actions innovantes, tandis que les finalistes recevront 100 000 euros pour renforcer leurs activités d'innovation. Plus d'informations sur le concours sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: + 32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tél.: +32 229 87278)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Amer Sports by Anta Sports Products and FountainVest China Capital GP3

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Amer Sports of Finland by Anta Sports Products of Hong Kong and FountainVest China Capital GP3 of the Cayman Islands. Amer Sports is active in manufacturing, marketing and selling sporting goods with internationally recognised brands. Anta Sports Products is active in manufacturing, marketing and selling sportswear in China. FountainVest China Capital Partners GP3 is a private equity firm investing in enterprises with high growth potential. The Commission concluded that the

proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because there is no overlap in the European Economic Area between the activities of Amer Sports, Anta Sports Products and FountainVest China Capital GP3. 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.9258](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Hahn in Montenegro for the Western Balkans Ministerial on Clean Energy Transition

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** will be in Podgorica, [Montenegro](#) on 21-22 February for the Western Balkans Ministerial on Clean Energy Transition and for an official bilateral visit. Ahead of the visit Commissioner **Hahn** said: *"I am looking forward to be in Montenegro and to participate at the Western Balkans Energy Ministerial. The EU strongly supports clean energy transition and energy efficiency growth with increased renewable energy – areas where shared work and commitment by all the Western Balkans partners are absolutely essential to bring direct and concrete benefits to the people. I will also meet with political authorities and country's representatives of civil society to stress that we are committed to support Montenegro in becoming an EU Member State. To this end, focus should be given to the rule of law, including media freedom and fight against corruption."* The Commissioner will open tomorrow together with Prime Minister of Montenegro, Duško Marković, the Ministerial Meeting on Clean Energy Transition and will announce significant additional financial support in the area of energy efficiency. Commissioner **Hahn** will meet political authorities including President Đukanović, Speaker of the Parliament Brajović, Prime Minister Marković, Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Justice Pažin as well as opposition party leaders. The Commissioner will also meet with representatives of media organisations, including Vijesti, the Ad-hoc Commission for Monitoring Violence Against Media and the Centre for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro. Photos and videos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Commissioner Arias Cañete in Spain to present the strategy for a climate neutral Europe by 2050

On 20-22 February, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel **Arias Cañete**, will be in Spain to present [the European Commission's strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy by 2050](#), presented by the Commission last November. On Wednesday 20 February, he will talk to the Mixed Committee for the European Union at the Spanish Congress of Deputies and present the Commission's vision for a climate-neutral Europe. Later that day, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will meet the Spanish business community to discuss the opportunities for European industry in the modernisation of the European economy towards making it climate neutral by 2050. On Thursday 21 February, the Commissioner will meet with

Teresa Ribera Rodriguez, Minister for Ecological Transition, to discuss climate neutrality objectives. The Commissioner will also meet representatives from the environmental organisations in Spain. This is the second visit to European capitals that Commissioner Arias Cañete is having over the coming weeks and months to highlight the EU's long-term vision for a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. (*For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959*)

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