

Daily News 21 / 02 / 2018

College meeting: European Commission reinforces its senior management and President Juncker reorganises his close team – European Commission appoints new Secretary-General

After over 32 years at the service of the European Commission, the current Secretary-General Alexander **Italianer**, has decided to retire from the European Commission. As a result, and on the proposal of President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, the College has decided to appoint Martin Selmayr, the current Head of Cabinet of the President, as the new Secretary-General of the Commission. This decision will take effect on 1 March. At the same time, President Juncker has decided that his current Deputy Head of Cabinet, Clara Martinez Alberola, will become his new Head of Cabinet – the first-ever female Head of Cabinet of a Commission President. President **Juncker**'s current Diplomatic Adviser, Richard Szostak, will become his new Deputy Head of Cabinet. President **Juncker** said: *"This morning, Alexander Italianer confirmed to me his wish to retire as Secretary-General of the Commission as of 1 March. I want to express my deep gratitude to him for decades of loyal service to the European Commission and over the past three years to me as its President. I truly appreciated working with such an experienced and knowledgeable Secretary-General and I want to thank him for his skillful steer of our administration, as well as for having agreed to stay on for another month to ensure a smooth transition. I am also glad that he agreed to continue to advise me, after 1 April, as Special Adviser on strategic issues on the EU's agenda, in particular the Multiannual Financial Framework and Brexit Preparedness."* A full [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 913825)

College meeting: Five new Directors-General and five new Deputy Directors-General for the Juncker Commission

Today the European Commission decided on a number of appointments concerning its top management level. Appointing the best people to the right positions will help the Juncker Commission deliver strongly in 2018/2019 and beyond. Today's senior management decisions concern key strategic areas of the Juncker Commission's work, ranging from climate action, research, education, youth and culture via social affairs and employment to the Commission's Secretariat-General and the President's Cabinet. Today's appointments will significantly boost the number of women in the position of Directors-General and Deputy Directors-General from just 11% in November 2014 to 36% now. This is the result of [President Juncker's commitment](#) to reach a target of 40% by 31 October 2019. Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** in charge of Budget and Human Resources said: *"By appointing the best people to the right positions, we are determined to use the current window of opportunity and deliver on our political agenda. We are building on the experience of our senior managers, making sure they continue to serve the interest of this institution. I will continue to place a strong emphasis on achieving President Juncker's target*

of at least 40% of women in the Commission's management." A full [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 913825)

College meeting: Antitrust: Commission fines maritime car carriers and car parts suppliers a total of €546 million in three separate cartel settlements

In three separate decisions, the European Commission has fined today four maritime car carriers €395 million, two suppliers of spark plugs €76 million, and two suppliers of braking systems €75 million, for taking part in cartels, in breach of EU antitrust rules. In particular, the European Commission found: i) that the Chilean maritime carrier CSAV, the Japanese carriers "K" Line, MOL and NYK, and the Norwegian/Swedish carrier WWL-EUKOR participated in a cartel concerning intercontinental maritime transport of vehicles; ii) that Bosch (Germany), Denso and NGK (both Japan) participated in a cartel concerning supplies of spark plugs to car manufacturers in the European Economic Area; and iii) that TRW (USA, now ZF TRW, Germany), Bosch (Germany) and Continental (Germany) took part in a cartel concerning the supply of hydraulic braking systems and that Bosch and Continental also took part in a separate cartel concerning the supply of electronic braking systems. All companies acknowledged their involvement in the cartels and agreed to settle the cases. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy said: *"The Commission has sanctioned several companies for colluding in the maritime transport of cars and the supply of car parts. The three separate decisions taken today show that we will not tolerate anticompetitive behaviour affecting European consumers and industries. By raising component prices or transport costs for cars, the cartels ultimately hurt European consumers and adversely impacted the competitiveness of the European automotive sector, which employs around 12 million people in the EU."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

EU Industry Day – 600 participants, one credo: "modernise our industry"

After a first successful edition last year, [EU Industry Day](#) is coming back with an extended edition. On 22 and 23 February, 600 participants representing key industrial, finance, research and innovation players as well as high-level EU policymakers will gather in Brussels. They will take stock of the ambitious [strategic approach to industrial policy](#) presented by President **Juncker** last autumn and debate the future of European industry on the "Road to 2030". President **Juncker** will deliver a video message, and the Commission will be prominently represented by Vice-Presidents Maroš **Šefčovič** and Jyrki **Katainen** as well as Commissioners Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** and Carlos **Moedas**. The High-Level Industrial Roundtable 'Industry 2030', chaired by Vice-President **Katainen**, will meet for the first time, as an important advisory instrument for the implementation of the Commission's renewed industrial policy. EU leadership in the transition to clean and sustainable energy is a big priority to the Commission and this is demonstrated by the launch of the first edition of the Clean Energy Industrial Forum, centred

around three industry-led initiatives: batteries, renewables and construction. Industrial actors will present 20 priority actions as part of the new European Battery Alliance. The Commission will launch a €10 million EIC Horizon Prize for the development of a reliable, safe, low-cost battery for e-vehicles, and sign a €52.6 million InnovFin loan for the start-up Northvolt to build a gigafactory for battery cells in Europe. The role of key enabling technologies, such as micro and nanoelectronics, to modernise European industry, boost innovation and solve societal challenges will also be discussed. The Commission's High Level Strategy Group for Industrial Technologies chaired by Jürgen Rüttgers will present preliminary results on its work and propose to include artificial intelligence as well as security and connectivity as part of these key transformative technologies in the next framework programme for research and innovation. Four dedicated factsheets on the key pillars and announcements of the EU Industry Day are available: [batteries production](#), [renewable energies](#), [skills development](#) and the [construction sector](#). Speeches can be followed via [webstream](#) or [EBS](#) and will be published ([first day](#), [second day](#)) subsequently. Further information: [full agenda](#), [registration](#), and [press information](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

European Citizens' Initiative: Commission closes an infringement case against Italy

The Commission decided today to close its infringement procedure against Italy regarding the national rules on the certification of online collection systems for European Citizens' Initiatives. The previous national rules obliged organisers of the European citizens' initiatives to obtain an ex ante evaluation of their online collection systems by an external body before requesting the certification of the systems to the competent national authority in Italy ("Agenzia per l'Italia Digitale"). Such national rules run against EU law (Regulation (EU) No 211/2011). Italy has adopted new national rules for the certification of the online collection systems in conformity with EU law and the infringement procedure is, therefore, closed. The new rules ensure that organisers of initiatives in Italy can obtain the certification of their online collection systems in a more simple way and within one month. According to EU law, the national authorities in the Member States are responsible to carry out the certification of online collection systems for European Citizens' Initiatives within one month and without the need for organisers to obtain an additional ex ante evaluation by an external body other than the designated authorities. (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Uldis Šalajevs – Tel.: +32 229 67560)

La Commission européenne et l'UEFA consolident leur coopération

Tibor Navracsics, Commissaire en charge de l'Education, de la Culture, de la Jeunesse et du Sport, et Aleksander Čeferin, Président de l'Union des associations européennes de football (UEFA), signent aujourd'hui un [nouvel accord](#), engageant les deux parties à renforcer leur coopération entamée en 2014. Les priorités communes incluent, entre autres, l'intégrité du sport, la bonne gouvernance et l'égalité des genres ainsi que la plupart des défis auxquels le sport est confronté aujourd'hui, notamment la violence, le

trucage de matchs, une fiscalité équitable, le dopage et le racisme. Le premier vice-président, Frans **Timmermans**, a déclaré: “Je suis heureux que la Commission européenne et l’UEFA continuent de travailler ensemble pour promouvoir nos valeurs communes grâce à ce sport qui compte tant pour de nombreux Européens. Le football, grâce à son impact considérable, peut être un allié important dans la lutte contre le racisme et la discrimination et pour la promotion de la solidarité, de la durabilité et de l’égalité sur le terrain et dans notre vie quotidienne.” Le Commissaire **Navracsics** a, pour sa part, déclaré: “Le football est bien plus qu’un jeu, une passion ou un divertissement. Le sport en général – et le football en particulier – occupe une place centrale dans la vie de nombreux Européens et le nouvel accord de coopération avec l’UEFA nous aidera à continuer à traiter de questions clés telles que la bonne gouvernance, la durabilité et l’égalité des genres, au profit du football européen mais aussi nos sociétés en général.” Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083, Joseph Waldstein – Tél.: +32 229 56184)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Flexera by TA Associates and OTPP

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Flexera Holdings LP of the US by TA Associates L.P. of the US and Ontarios Teachers’ Pension Plan Board (“OTPP”) of Canada. Flexera provides software products and services. TA Associates is active in private equity investments through various funds in selected industries. OTPP is active in the administration of pension benefits and investment of pension plan assets on behalf of active and retired teachers in the Canadian province of Ontario. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Flexera has negligible actual and foreseen activities within the European Economic Area. 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.8798](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

10 years of the Covenant of Mayors: Local and regional leadership for clean energy and climate action

The EU Covenant of Mayors is the world’s largest movement for local climate action and energy transition, bringing together more than 9,200 local and regional authorities across the Europe, determined to take action to help meeting the EU climate and energy objectives. On 22 February the Covenant will celebrate its 10th anniversary in a [ceremony](#) at the European Parliament in Brussels. Covenant members will be joined by Commission Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** and Commissioners Miguel **Arias Cañete** (Climate Action, Energy) and Carlos **Moedas** (Research, Science and

Innovation). This will be an opportunity to reflect on the success of this movement over the past 10 years and to look ahead to the future. It is expected that mayors and cities will pledge their 2030 objectives for greenhouse gas emissions reductions and present solutions to climate change adaptation. They will showcase ways to create jobs, foster investment while improving the health and the quality of life of citizens. The event will also highlight the central role of the cities in meeting the objectives agreed in the Paris Agreement on climate change. At the ceremony, Commissioner **Moedas** will open the 2018 [European Capital of Innovation](#) contest (also known as iCapital) – a €1 million prize to reward the cities and mayors who have built the most dynamic innovation ecosystems, for the benefit of European citizens and businesses. On 21 February, the [Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum](#) and Energy Efficiency Finance Market Place will also take place in Brussels. This will be an opportunity to address the key success factors for financing [clean urban transport](#), building renovation and [energy efficiency at the operational level](#). Participants will share their experience of the development of bankable investment pipelines that could be replicated elsewhere. Stands will also showcase successful projects and [resources available to support project promoters](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182)

Commissioner Avramopoulos in New York for meetings at the United Nations

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in New York on Thursday 22 February for meetings at the United Nations to discuss issues related to migration, security and border management. He will meet with Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Miroslav Lajčák, President of the United Nations General Assembly for the 72nd session, Louise Arbour, United Nations Special Representative for International Migration and Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 299 80423)

Commissioner Crețu in Rome, discusses Cohesion policy implementation in the country and the future EU budget

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** will be in Rome, where she will meet Claudio De Vincenti, Minister for the Territorial Cohesion and the Mezzogiorno and deliver a speech at the launch event of the book 'Come Fratelli', on the integration of Romanians in the Italian society. The Commissioner said, ahead of her visit: "*Cohesion policy programmes in Italy must be implemented swiftly, so the country does not lose any EU money and so the benefits of EU investments are quickly felt by citizens. Of course my visit also focuses very much on the future of the policy, especially ahead of the Leaders' summit on Friday. The Commission set out a number of options and scenarios and now is the time for choices.*" (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

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