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Better road connections in Poland thanks to Cohesion Policy funds

The EU invests €234 million of Cohesion Policy funds in a section of the S6 express road in the Polish Pomerania region, in the North of the country. The section will link the town of Bożepole Wielkie to the tri-city area of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia, on the Trans-European Transport Network. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“The inhabitants of Pomerania will be the first beneficiaries of this project, with faster, safer connection to the tri-city area. But ultimately all Europeans and the European economy as a whole will benefit from better connectivity in the region and its positive spill overs for trade, tourism and growth.”* This EU-funded project will contribute to eliminating bottlenecks in the Polish transport network, leading to a better flow of people and freight and improved economic, social and territorial cohesion. Works involve 8 road junctions and the construction of adjacent structures such as viaducts, footbridges, underpasses, culverts and of environmental protection facilities like noise barriers, animal crossings and drainage. The project should be completed in 2021. More than €357 million of Cohesion Policy funds is earmarked for the completion of the S6 express road in the 2014-2020 EU budget period. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

La Commission promeut la liberté des médias et le pluralisme dans l’UE avec 2,2 millions d’euros

La Commission annonce aujourd’hui l’octroi d’un montant d’euros sur un budget réservé par le Parlement européen pour financer trois projets pilotes visant à promouvoir un journalisme de qualité et la coopération transfrontalière entre professionnels des médias et organismes d’autorégulation des médias. Le financement sera mis à disposition au moyen de trois appels à propositions qui s’inscrivent dans le cadre des efforts déployés par l’UE pour promouvoir et stimuler [la liberté des médias et le pluralisme en Europe](#). Le premier appel d’une valeur de 1,2 million d’euros facilitera la mobilité transfrontalière et le placement de jeunes professionnels travaillant dans le domaine des médias d’information. Le second investit 500 000 euros dans la promotion de stages dans les principaux médias européens pour les professionnels travaillant dans les langues minoritaires. Le dernier appel prévoit 500 000 euros pour mieux comprendre et favoriser la collaboration entre les organismes d’autorégulation des médias, cruciaux dans la promotion du respect des standards d’éthique professionnelle, et soutenir leur adaptation au monde en ligne. Les appels se dérouleront du 21 février au 17 avril 2019. Les trois projets sélectionnés dureront 12 mois. De plus amples informations sur les critères d’éligibilité pour chaque appel sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 229 67083 – Joseph Waldstein – Tél .: +32 229 56184)

Sustainable finance: Commission launches targeted consultation on new guidelines for company reporting on climate-related information

As part of its [Sustainable Finance Action Plan](#), the Commission launched a targeted consultation with the objective to finalise new guidelines for company reporting on climate-related information. This consultation proposes ways to assess how climate change can impact the financial performance of companies, as well as how companies can have positive and negative impacts on the climate. It builds on the [report](#) published in January by the [Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance](#), and stakeholders' responses to the call for feedback on that report. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"Company reporting of climate information has improved in recent years, and some European companies are world leaders in this field. But the scale and urgency of the climate crisis means that we rapidly need more companies to disclose more comprehensive and more comparable information. The success of the Commission's Sustainable Finance Action depends amongst other things on companies being more transparent about their impact on the climate and on the business risks and opportunities that climate change creates. I strongly encourage companies and other organisations to respond to this consultation, to help us make these guidelines as impactful as possible."* Once finalised, the new guidelines on climate reporting will supplement the existing [guidelines on non-financial reporting](#) that the Commission published in 2017. They are intended for use by companies that fall under the scope of the [Non-Financial Reporting Directive](#), which means large listed companies, banks and insurance companies, with more than 500 employees. The Commission intends to publish the final version of the guidelines by the end of June. Stakeholders are invited to respond to the consultation available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over the Sheraton Warsaw Hotel by Patron Capital and Marriott

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over the Sheraton Warsaw Hotel in Poland by Patron Capital, V L.P. (the "Patron Fund") of Jersey and Marriott International, Inc. ("Marriott") of the US. The Sheraton Warsaw Hotel is a 5-star hotel located in Warsaw, Poland. The Patron Fund invests in real estate projects across Europe. Marriott is the parent company of a diversified hospitality group of companies, which acts as a manager and franchisor of hotels and timeshare properties. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of the limited impact it would have on the market. 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.9167](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by Radeberger and

Veltins

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture by Radeberger Gruppe KG ("Radeberger"), belonging to the group Dr. August Oetker KG ("Oetker"), and Veltins Beteiligungen GmbH & Co. KG ("Veltins"), controlled by C. & A. Veltins GmbH & Co. KG, all of Germany. The joint venture will be active in the wholesale of beverages, logistic services for the beverage sector as well as sorting and trading of empty bottles. Through their subsidiaries, Oetker and Radeberger are active in the manufacturing of alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, in the wholesale of beverages as well as in logistic services for the beverage sector. Veltins is active in the manufacturing of beer and in the wholesale of beer and non-alcoholic beverages. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the overlaps between the companies' activities are limited. 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.9236](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into British Capacity Market scheme

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to determine whether the British Capacity Market scheme to safeguard security of electricity supply is in line with EU State aid rules. In [July 2014](#), the Commission found the Capacity Market scheme to be compatible with EU State aid rules. In November 2018, following an appeal of the Commission's 2014 decision by a company operating in the market, the General Court annulled the Commission's decision on procedural grounds (Case [T-793/14](#)). The General Court did not rule on the compatibility of the Capacity Market scheme with EU State aid rules. Rather, the Court considered that the Commission should have opened an in-depth investigation to gather more information on certain elements of the scheme. The Commission has appealed the General Court's judgement to the European Court of Justice. However, this appeal does not suspend the effects of the General Court's judgment, which means that the Commission has to reassess the compatibility of the Capacity Market with the internal market. The UK has expressed to the Commission its intention to maintain the Capacity Market scheme. Therefore, in order to comply with the General Court's judgment, the Commission has today opened an in-depth investigation under EU State aid rules into the scheme. The Commission's investigation will focus, in particular, on the participation of energy consumers offering to reduce their electricity consumption in times of supply disequilibrium in the electricity market. The opening of the in-depth investigation gives all interested parties the opportunity to submit their comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. The full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Eurostat: Les deux tiers de la superficie de vergers de l'UE se concentrent en Espagne, en Italie et en Pologne

En 2017, les arbres fruitiers couvraient près de 1,3 million d'hectares (ha) de terres dans l'Union européenne. Un peu plus d'un tiers de ce total était destiné aux plantations de pommiers (473 500 ha, soit 37%) et un cinquième aux plantations d'orangers (255 500 ha, soit 20%). Des plantations de pêcheurs (190 500 ha, soit 15%), des agrumiers à petits fruits (139 600 ha, soit 11%), produisant en particulier des satsumas et des clémentines, des poiriers (100 400 ha, soit 8%), des abricotiers (75 700 ha, soit 6%) et des citronniers (60 100 ha, soit 5%) couvraient le reste de la superficie. La superficie des plantations fruitières représentait environ 1% de la superficie agricole utilisée (173 millions ha en 2016). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Jourová ahead of the European Day for Victims of Crime

Ahead of the European Day for Victims of Crime, Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, issued the following statement: *"Today my thoughts go out to all those children, women and men who one day fell victim to crime. And on this day I once again pay my respect to Ján Kuciak, who was murdered one year ago. We have to protect journalists from any form of intimidation and attacks. Being a victim of crime is something that can happen to all of us. However, not all victims report that they have suffered from a crime: for 25 million criminal offences reported in the EU, we estimate that another 75 million go unreported. We have to put an end to this. Victims often do not go to the police, as they are afraid of the offender or from suffering the negative consequences of criminal proceedings. In the EU, all victims of crime benefit today from a set of clear rights, independently of where in the European Union the crime takes place. In particular, the Victims' Rights Directive, which came into application in November 2015, provides the rights to be recognised and treated in a respectful, professional and non-discriminatory manner. (...)The Commission has made the implementation of the Directive a priority and is determined to ensure that it works well in practice. I will make sure that these EU rules are applied across the Union. I will take all necessary steps, including legal actions. No matter where you live or where you come from, if you fall victim to a crime in Europe you should always receive the help and support that meet your needs."* The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Croatia

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová** will visit Zagreb today and tomorrow, where she will meet Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, the President of Croatia and Andrej Plenković, the Prime Minister of Croatia. Her visit also includes meetings with Dražen Bošnjaković, the Minister of Justice, and with the Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Darko Horvat. She will deliver a speech in front of the European Affairs and the Judiciary Committees of the Croatian Parliament. She will discuss the situation of the justice system, the upcoming European elections and ongoing legislative files with her Croatian counterparts. Commissioner **Jourová** will then exchange views with the Croatian Ombudsman, Lora Vidović, and also with businesses / industry associations on innovation, GDPR, competitiveness and economic situation in Croatia and the EU. Finally, as a part of the Citizens' Dialogue she will deliver a speech at the International Conference on EU Global Leadership in the Rule of Law (link to the [Citizens' Dialogue](#)). A joint press point will take place with Dražen Bošnjaković, Minister of Justice, at 16:45 on Thursday in the Parliament. (*For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

Commissioner Stylianides holds Citizens' Dialogue at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain

Tomorrow, Friday 22 February, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** will take part in a Citizens' Dialogue on 'Solidarity in a Europe that protects and saves lives'. The event will take place at the Auditorio of the University of Deusto in Bilbao from 11.15 until 12.45 and is open to all interested citizens. The Commissioner will discuss [rescEU](#), the reinforced European system of response to natural disasters, EU's leading role in humanitarian aid as well as the future of Europe. The Citizens' Dialogue will be live streamed [here](#). In the margins of his visit to Bilbao the Commissioner will attend a working lunch with the President of the Basque Country, Íñigo Urkullu Renteria. (*For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140*)

Commissioner Malmström meets with civil society in Romania

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** will meet this afternoon with civil society representatives in Bucharest (Romania). The meeting organised in the framework of [Citizens' Dialogues](#) organised by the European Commission will take place a day before the Council's meeting in Bucharest on Friday, 22 February, where EU Trade Ministers and Commissioner Malmström will be discussing topics such as EU-US trade relations, modernisation of the World Trade Organisation and the state of play of ongoing EU trade negotiations. The Citizens' Dialogue today with Commissioner Malmström and Minister for the Business Community, Trade and Entrepreneurship of Romania, Mr Ștefan-Radu Oprea, will allow for a useful public debate to exchange views ahead of that ministerial meeting. The Citizens' Dialogue will be [live streamed](#). For [more information](#) and registration see [here](#). (*For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383*)

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