

Commission sets out path towards fair taxation of the Digital Economy

The European Commission launched today a new EU agenda to ensure that the digital economy is taxed in a fair and growth-friendly way. The current tax framework does not fit with modern realities. The tax rules in place today were designed for the traditional economy and cannot capture activities which are increasingly based on intangible assets and data. As a result, the effective tax rate of digital companies in the EU is estimated to be half that of traditional companies – and often much less. At the same time, patchwork unilateral measures by Member States to address the problem threaten to create new obstacles and loopholes in the Single Market. The [Communication](#) adopted by the Commission today sets out the challenges Member States currently face when it comes to acting on this pressing issue and outlines possible solutions to be explored. The aim is to ensure a coherent EU approach to taxing the digital economy that supports the Commission's key priorities of completing the Digital Single Market and ensuring the fair and effective taxation of all companies. Today's Communication paves the way for a legislative proposal on EU rules for the taxation of profits in the digital economy, as confirmed by President **Juncker** in the [2017 State of the Union](#). Those rules could be set out as early as spring 2018. Today's paper should also feed into international work in this area, notably in the G20 and the OECD. For more information, please consult the [press release](#) and [Q&A](#). (*For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel: +32 229 87183*)

Juncker Plan set to trigger €236.1 billion across the EU

The Investment Plan for Europe – the so-called Juncker Plan – is now expected to trigger €236.1 billion in investments. Following this month's meeting of the [European Investment Bank's](#) (EIB) Board of Directors, operations approved under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) now represent a total financing volume of €46.5 billion and are located in all 28 Member States. The EIB has approved 312 EFSI-backed operations, supported by €36.1 billion in EFSI financing. The European Investment Fund (EIF) has also approved 306 SME financing agreements, with total financing under the EFSI of €10.4 billion. Around 454,000 small and medium-sized businesses are expected to benefit from improved access to finance as a result of these EIF agreements. The European Commission and the EIB Group estimate that the EFSI has so far supported 300,000 jobs across the EU. By 2020 that figure should be 700,000. On 13 September, the European Parliament and Member States came to an [agreement in principle](#) on EFSI 2.0 – the extension and reinforcement of the European Fund for Strategic Investments. (*For more information about the EFSI 2.0 agreement, see our [EFSI 2.0 Q&A](#), and for more details on Investment Plan projects and results see the new and updated [website](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361*)

EU – US Privacy Shield: Commissioner Jourová wraps up the meetings with US administration on the annual review

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera **Jourová**, concluded the joint review meetings of the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield, with a phone call with US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. The aim of the two-day exercise in the US was to investigate how the US commitments are being met through exchanges on the underlying US legal framework in place and on the functioning of the oversight mechanisms. Both sides agreed that the Privacy Shield is key for the data exchanges in transatlantic relations and expressed mutual commitment to making the Privacy Shield a success. Commissioner **Jourová** said: *"The discussions over the past days were fruitful.*

I appreciate the commitment the US administration has showed to Transatlantic data transfers and to our concerns. The Privacy Shield can be a win-win for the EU and the US, if implemented correctly." The discussions with the US administration together with feedback from businesses, NGOs and other stakeholders will feed into the Commission's annual review report which will be published in the second half of October. A joint press statement by Commissioner Jourová and US Secretary of Commerce Ross is available [online](#).

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EU and China sign memorandum on water protection against pollution, wastage and climate change

Today, Commissioner for the Environment, Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu **Vella**, and Chinese Minister of Water Resources, Chen Lei, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Water Policy Dialogue between the EU and China. The signature which took place at the High Level Conference of the Water Platform in Turku, Finland, is a sign of political commitment to the co-operation on water policy, and will help implement the joint priorities between the EU and China in the water sector. Commissioner **Vella** said: *"Today's signature of a Memorandum of Understanding on establishing an EU-China Water Policy Dialogue is not just welcome, it is essential. We are demonstrating our commitment to jointly address common water challenges.*

Water is the source of life. Climate change, pollution, increasing demand and wastage have put pressures like never before. We are showing that a global problem needs global action." The Dialogue between the EU and the Ministry of Water Resources will give political steer to the [Chinese Europe Water Platform](#) and cover a number of areas such as developing and enforcing legislation to protect water, integrated water resources management, dealing with water disasters, adaptation to climate change, and improving cooperation on international water issues. Today's signature with China comes less than a year after the [EU – India Memorandum of Understanding on water cooperation](#). More information [here](#). *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)*

Cohesion Policy invests in a gas pipeline in Poland

€79 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) will cover a part of the construction costs of the 130 km-long Zdzieszowice – Wrocław pipeline in South-West Poland. The new pipeline will reinforce the existing regional gas transmission system and increase its capacity. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"This Cohesion Policy project improving gas connectivity in Eastern Europe is a concrete example of EU solidarity. We*

invest in thousands of transport, digital and energy networks throughout Europe so our Union can grow faster and ever closer.” Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *“Well-connected energy infrastructure is essential to achieving the Energy Union. This EU support will help fill existing gaps in energy infrastructure, putting us on the path to a truly connected European energy market. This is necessary to strengthen the security of energy supply and a more efficient use of the energy resources.”* The Zdzieszowice – Wrocław pipeline is part of the North-South Corridor included in the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO-G), Ten Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) 2017, as an important part of the North-South gas interconnections in Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe. It was defined as a [project of common interest](#) for trans-European energy infrastructure. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

Commission acts to prevent mis-selling of insurance products

The Commission has today adopted rules to protect consumers when they buy insurance products in the EU. New rules on product oversight and governance will for the first time oblige insurers to prioritise the interest of consumers when designing, developing and distributing all insurance products from 2018 onwards. In addition, new conduct of business rules will ensure that consumers benefit from a high level of protection when they invest their savings in insurance-based investment products, such as certain types of life-insurance policies. Sellers of insurance products will have to comply with new standards on preventing and managing conflicts of interest, and on accepting commissions and payments from third parties (so-called “inducements”). The rules also set out which information sellers must gather from their customers when providing advice and in which cases investment products might be sold with limited advice or without advice. The implementing rules adopted today, in the form of two delegated regulations, stem from the Insurance Distribution Directive (IDD). They will enter into force on 23 February 2018 along with the IDD, following scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council. They follow the adoption in August 2017 of an implementing technical standard (ITS) on the Insurance Product Information Document (IPID). More information is available [online](#). *(For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: [+32 229 56194](#); Letizia Lupini – Tel: [+32 229 51958](#))*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Civica by Partners Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Civica Group Ltd (“Civica”) of the UK, by certain investment funds advised and/or managed by Partners Group AG or its affiliates of Switzerland. Civica is a provider of software and IT related services. Partners Group is a global private markets investment management company with portfolio companies active in various businesses. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the overlaps between the activities of Civica and Partners Group’s portfolio companies, as well as their activities on related markets, 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.8616](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EU at UN General Assembly: standing in for a credible rules-based global order

The European Union on Wednesday at the 72nd UN General Assembly demonstrated a strong commitment to multilateralism and joint solutions for global challenges. President of the European Council Donald **Tusk**, [speaking on behalf of the EU at the General Assembly](#), underlined the EU's support for the United Nations. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** at a high-level ministerial event on the Role of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Economic Empowerment of Women stressed that violence against women is a challenge for every society and that fighting for the rights for women is the way forward. He as well as High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** also spoke at the Bloomberg Global Business Forum which brought together the public and private sector. High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini**, most notably, [chaired the E3/EU+3 and Iran Ministerial Meeting on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#). On top of a number of bilateral meetings, she also addressed a [high-level event on Libya under the auspices of the UN Secretary General](#), participated at a [trilateral EU-UN-African Union meeting](#) and delivered a [statement on behalf of the European Union at the ministerial meeting of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation \(CTBT\)](#), urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to make credible progress on its obligations to denuclearise. She also hosted an [informal session with Western Balkans leaders](#), where she was joined by Commissioner Johannes **Hahn**, who earlier in the day met with the Foreign Ministers of the region. Commissioners **Hahn** and Neven **Mimica** presented the European External Investment Plan as part of the EU's contribution to Global Goals at an event with UNDP, while Commissioner Christos **Stylianides** spoke at [humanitarian event on South Sudan](#). Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos** spoke at [the event marking one year of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#), at the [GCTF Ministerial Meetings](#) as well as at a [high level event Preventing Terrorist Use of the Internet](#), where he highlighted the EU action in this field. On the agenda on Thursday a meeting of the Libya Quartet and a high level event on Syria. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Additional \$293.89 million in support to Iraq pledged at the [Ministerial event on Iraq](#)

A total of \$293.89 million additional support to Iraq was pledged on Wednesday at the Ministerial-level event on Iraq, co-chaired by the EU together with the Republic of Iraq, the US, UNOCHA and Germany. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** said: *“The end of the Mosul military campaign has marked the beginning of a new phase of international support to Iraq. A new phase in which the need for humanitarian*

aid and protection continues, in order to save and protect the lives of all Iraqis affected by the conflict. In addition, it is now more important than ever to bolster complementarities between humanitarian aid, stabilisation, early recovery and development support: this is crucial to enable Iraqi families to also rebuild their lives. The additional funding announced today by the EU is for lifesaving humanitarian action to the most vulnerable Iraqis, including survivors of violence, children who have lost their parents and childhood to the war. The European Union will stand by them". Funding aims to provide lifesaving support to the affected populations in retaken areas and those affected by displacement, including in the aftermath of the Mosul military campaign. It will also provide physical rehabilitation and gender-based, psychosocial and mental health support to the survivors of violence during the conflict. More information on EU support to Iraq in our factsheet [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

EU and UN presented a new initiative worth €500 million to eliminate violence against women and girls

In order to help eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, the European Union and the United Nations have presented yesterday their new "Spotlight Initiative". At the official launch at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, High Representative/Vice President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"The European Union is committed to combatting all forms of violence against women and girls, as they undermine our core fundamental rights and values, such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality. We need first to ensure that we keep women and girls safe, in order to empower them to deploy their full potential."* Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** added: *"Violence against women and girls is one of the greatest injustices of our time, which crosses all borders, generations, nationalities and communities. It deeply touches our hearts and our minds. And it is a serious barrier to any society's full development potential. To make a real change, I invite all partners to join our Spotlight Initiative for a world in which all women and girls can truly shine!"* Over the next few years, comprehensive programmes and large-scale targeted actions will be implemented to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, such as sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; trafficking and economic (labour) exploitation; femicide; and domestic and family violence. Core areas of intervention will include strengthening legislative frameworks, policies and institutions, preventive measures, access to services and improving data gathering in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Read also our [press release](#), [Q&A \(MEMO\)](#) and [Joint Communiqué](#), and watch the interventions of High Representative/Vice President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner **Mimica** [here](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Le Vice-Président Šefčovič et la Commissaire Bulc à Tallinn

Le Vice-Président pour l'Union de l'Énergie Maroš **Šefčovič** et la Commissaire aux Transports Violeta **Bulc** sont à Tallinn pour une série de discussions sur la politique européenne d'infrastructure dans le domaine des transports. Le

dossier était à l'agenda du [Conseil informel Transport](#) organisé par la Présidence estonienne où le Vice-Président pour l'Union de l'Énergie **Sefčovič** a mené une rencontre conjointe des Ministres de transport et d'énergie (écouter [sa déclaration](#) sur EbS). Il a souligné que la modernisation de l'infrastructure et la réduction des gaz à effet de serre dans le transport vont de pair et qu'il convient d'y faire face ensemble. Quant à La Commissaire **Bulc**, elle a eu un échange de vue avec les ministres européens sur les besoins de financement pour l'après 2020 afin de mettre en œuvre le [réseau transeuropéen de transport](#). Selon les estimations de la Commission, ceux-ci sont de l'ordre de 500 milliards d'euros pour le seul réseau "central" lors de la période 2021-2030. Par ailleurs, la Commissaire **Bulc** a profité de cette réunion pour attirer l'attention des ministres sur le deuxième Journée européenne sans mort sur les routes ([projet EDWARD](#)) qui se tient aujourd'hui à travers l'Europe. A partir de cet après-midi, le Vice-Président **Šefčovič** et la Commissaire **Bulc** participeront à la conférence "[Connecting Europe](#)" organisé conjointement avec la présidence estonienne. L'objectif est de réunir décideurs et parties prenantes afin de dresser un bilan des investissements d'infrastructure réalisés jusqu'à présent et d'identifier des actions et solutions de financement pour l'après 2020. La conférence est disponible en webstreaming à [cette adresse](#). (*For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43*)

Commissioner Gabriel in Athens to talk about cybersecurity and digital priorities for Europe

Today, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** is in Athens to deliver a speech on "Digital Policy Priorities for Europe" in front of members of standing Committees on European Affairs and on Public Administration, Public Order and Justice of the Hellenic Parliament. The Commissioner's meetings include Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Nikos Pappas, Greek Minister for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, the first Vice-President of the Hellenic Parliament Anastasios Kourakis and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, President of the party Nea Dimokratia. She will also visit the site of the project "Development of e-prescription system and provision of related support services" in the e-Government Center for Social Security Services in Athens. Following the [Commission's proposals to scale up European tools to enhance cybersecurity in the EU](#), Commissioner **Gabriel** will also visit the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) Athens office on which the EU Cybersecurity Agency will be based. (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Julia Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707*)

Urban Agenda for the EU: Commissioner Crețu meets mayors of capitals in Riga

Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** attends the annual Capital Mayors meeting in Riga, Latvia, today and Friday to discuss the implementation of the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). "*I want capital cities to be strongly involved in the Urban Agenda for the EU*", said the Commissioner ahead of the meeting, "*they are on the forefront of most challenges faced by urban areas. In the current Cohesion policy framework, cities are given more autonomy to deal with the funds than ever; I'm also here to invite them to*

actively participate in the discussion on the future Cohesion Policy after 2020.” During her visit to Latvia, Commissioner **Crețu** will also meet Dana Reizniece-Ozola, the Latvian Finance minister to discuss the future EU budget and Cohesion Policy. The Commission will report on the progress made under the Urban Agenda for the EU in October. The next Cities Forum on 27-28 November in Rotterdam will be another occasion to discuss the Urban Agenda further. *(For further information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

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