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Boosting Multilateralism: President Juncker and a high-level EU delegation at the 73rd United Nations General Assembly Ministerial week

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** will be in New York next week for the 73rd United Nations General Assembly, with a high-level delegation from the European Union. EU representatives will host and participate in a large number of events and meet with world leaders, underlining the European Union's steadfast commitment to a strong and effective United Nations, and building support for multilateralism and a rules-based global order. As President **Juncker** said in his 2018 [State of the Union Speech](#) on 12 September: *"Europe will never be a fortress, turning its back on the world or those suffering within it. Europe is not an island. It must and will champion multilateralism. The world we live in belongs to all and not a select few."* President **Juncker** and High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will kick-off the week on Sunday 23 September, with a bilateral meeting with UN Secretary General António Guterres, reconfirming the strategic EU-UN partnership. Together, they will also meet with African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat to discuss how to take forward the work of the innovative EU-UN-AU trilateral cooperation. On Monday 24 September, President **Juncker** will address the **Nelson Mandela Peace Summit** –a [high-level meeting](#) on global peace in honour of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela. On Tuesday 25 September President **Juncker**, First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** and HR/VP **Mogherini** will join the President of the European Council Donald **Tusk** for the opening of the 73rd General Assembly. President **Juncker** will also have a series of bilateral meetings, including with Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya; Mr Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and Chairperson of the African Union, and Mr Mamuka Bakhtadze, Prime Minister of Georgia. The EU will be hosting a number of **flagship events** in the margins of the General Assembly, and EU representatives will have a full agenda of high-level debates and side events, as well as numerous bilateral meetings. For more details on the agenda, see the full press release [here](#). Press and audio-visual material will be available on [EbS](#), [EEAS](#), [Europa](#) and [Consilium](#) websites. For more information on EU-UN relations, see the factsheet [here](#). *(For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)*

TVA: Selon de nouveaux chiffres, les États membres de l'UE continuent de perdre près de 150 milliards € de recettes

Les pays de l'UE ont perdu près de €150 milliards de recettes de TVA (taxe sur la valeur ajoutée) en 2016, selon [une nouvelle étude publiée](#) aujourd'hui par la Commission européenne. Cette perte appelée «écart de TVA» (ou "VAT Gap") correspond à la différence entre les recettes de TVA attendues et le montant effectivement perçu. Alors que les États membres ont effectué un travail considérable pour améliorer la perception de la TVA, les chiffres publiés aujourd'hui montrent que la réforme du système actuel de TVA de l'UE, alliée à une meilleure coopération au niveau de l'UE, est nécessaire pour que les États membres puissent utiliser pleinement les recettes de TVA dans leur

budget. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire pour les affaires économiques et financières, la fiscalité et les douanes, a déclaré à ce sujet: *«Les États membres ont amélioré la perception de la TVA dans l'ensemble de l'UE. Cet effort doit être reconnu et salué. Mais une perte de €150 milliards par an pour les budgets nationaux reste inacceptable, en particulier lorsque sur cette somme, €50 milliards finissent dans les poches des fraudeurs, des criminels, voire même des terroristes. Une amélioration substantielle ne sera possible qu'avec l'adoption de la réforme de la TVA que nous avons proposée il y a un an. J'invite instamment les États membres à avancer sur le système de TVA définitif avant les élections au Parlement européen en 2019.»* En termes nominaux, l'écart de TVA a diminué de €10,5 milliards pour s'établir à €147,1 milliards en 2016, soit une baisse à 12,3 % du montant total des recettes de TVA par rapport à 13,2 % l'année précédente. Le [rapport](#), un [communiqué de presse](#), un [MEMO](#) et un [factsheet](#) sont disponibles. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

EU provides €9 million for disaster preparedness in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region

The Commission has released €9 million for disaster preparedness initiatives in Madagascar, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe as well as to promote effective humanitarian action at regional level. The Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region is frequently affected by natural disasters that hit the most vulnerable populations, causing casualties and population displacement. *“Natural disasters pose a recurring threat to this region and may jeopardise the beneficial impact our assistance has had on those in need. The EU therefore invests in assisting communities to be better prepared to withstand and respond, so that they never have to start from zero after a disaster strikes.”*said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**. The EU humanitarian aid will fund partner organisations that promote resilience building and preparedness activities in the region. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Commerce: La Mauritanie signe l'Accord de Partenariat Economique régional entre l'Afrique de l'Ouest et l'Union Européenne

La Mauritanie est devenue aujourd'hui le 15ème pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest à avoir signé un accord commercial de région à région, l'Accord de Partenariat Economique (APE) avec l'UE, un accord négocié avec [16 pays](#) de la région. L'objectif de cet accord sur mesure est de promouvoir le commerce entre l'Union Européenne et les Etats Africains, contribuer au développement durable, accroître l'investissement et réduire la pauvreté. Une fois signé par le Nigéria, le 16ème et final signataire Ouest Africain, l'accord sera soumis à ratification. En attendant, la Côte d'Ivoire et le Ghana se sont déjà engagés dans des accords d'étape qui seront remplacés dans le futur par l'APE régional avec l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Les APE ont pour objectif de promouvoir les échanges commerciaux entre l'UE et les pays africains, contribuer au développement durable, à l'augmentation des investissements, à la création d'emploi et à la réduction de la pauvreté. Comme le souligne [la nouvelle alliance Afrique-Europe](#) pour des emplois et des investissements

durables lancée par le Président Juncker lors de son discours sur l'état de l'union, l'idée à long terme est de parvenir à un accord de libre-échange intercontinental global entre l'UE et l'Afrique. Les accords de partenariat économique, les accords et les autres régimes commerciaux avec l'UE devraient être exploités dans toute la mesure du possible, pour former la base de la zone continentale africaine de libre-échange. Le 26 octobre 2018, le comité ministériel conjoint au commerce UE-ACP (les Etats du groupe Afrique, Caraïbe, et Pacifique) se tiendra à Bruxelles pour discuter de l'état des lieux des sept Accords de Partenariat Economique entre l'UE et les pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique. Dans son discours sur l'Etat de l'Union, le Président Juncker a lancé une nouvelle [alliance](#) Afrique-Europe pour des investissements et des emplois durables. L'UE est déjà le plus grand partenaire commercial de l'Afrique et le plus grand investisseur en Afrique. Néanmoins une grande partie du potentiel économique et commerciale reste inexploitée à la fois entre les pays africains et entre l'Afrique et l'Union Européenne. Les Accords de Partenariat Economique et les autres accords commerciaux jouent une part importante dans ce processus. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)*

Commissioner Malmström and her counterparts from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine discuss the implementation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** met yesterday in Brussels with Stepan Kubiv, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, Iurie Leanca, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Moldova and Giorgi Kobulia, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia. The informal ministerial meeting, held as a follow-up to the Eastern Partnership Summit of November 2017, focused on the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) that the three countries have put in place under their respective Association Agreements with the EU. In a [statement](#) following the meeting, the leaders jointly noted that “*the boost in trade already evident after the first years of these agreements being in place*” and agreed that “*promoting mutual market access and aligning with EU law will lead to more benefits, and we reflected on the different challenges that remain in order to realise the full potential of the DCFTAs.*” The discussion focused specifically on areas of joint interest where positive results can be expected in the near future, as long as reforms are carried out in a timely manner. Those include public procurement, opportunities for SMEs, sanitary and phytosanitary issues as well as customs procedures and trade facilitation. The ministers talked also about the ways to increase the effectiveness of the use of EU financing instruments to promote trade and investment across the region and address existing challenges. The discussions on issues related to the implementation of the DCFTAs will continue, especially in view of the meeting of the Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers on 15 October, where participants will take stock of the progress made towards the objectives fixed under “20 Deliverables for 2020”. More on EU trade with [Georgia](#), [Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#). *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)*

17th European country to join eHealth cooperation for personalised healthcare

Croatia became today the 17th EU country to sign the European Declaration [on linking genomic databases across borders](#) that will improve understanding and prevention of diseases, allowing for more personalised treatments, in particular for rare diseases, cancer and brain related diseases. The signature took place in Brussels during the kick-off meeting to launch the implementation of the Declaration. The Declaration is an agreement of cooperation between the countries that want to provide secure and authorised cross-border access to national and regional banks of genetic and other health data, in accordance with all EU data protection rules. This eHealth initiative will also keep the EU at the forefront of personalised medicine globally, fostering scientific output and industrial competitiveness. The Declaration was originally launched on 10 April 2018 during the [Digital Day](#) and has been since then signed by Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Read more about European digital health initiative [here](#) and in our recent [press release](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Antitrust: Commission invites comments on Transgaz commitments concerning natural gas exports from Romania

The European Commission invites comments on commitments submitted by Transgaz to address competition concerns regarding the free flow of natural gas from Romania. The commitments would aim to enable natural gas exports from Romania to other Member States, in particular Hungary and Bulgaria. Following a formal investigation opened in [June 2017](#), the Commission has concerns that Transgaz, the state-controlled gas transport infrastructure operator in Romania, may have breached EU competition rules by restricting exports of natural gas from Romania. Such restrictions may have taken place by delaying construction of infrastructure required for gas exports and by making gas exports commercially unviable through increases in interconnection tariffs. Such behaviour, if established, would breach EU competition rules that prohibit the abuse of a dominant market position. To address the Commission's competition concerns, Transgaz has offered commitments that would allow commercially meaningful export capacities from Romania to be made available for the first time. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Natural gas consumers across the EU should enjoy the benefits of an integrated and competitive single European energy market. We are assessing whether the commitments proposed by Transgaz would promote the free flow of natural gas in South Eastern European markets at competitive prices, in particular by connecting Romania with its neighbours Hungary and Bulgaria. We want to hear stakeholders' views before taking any decision."* A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over ILS by Goldman Sachs and ORIX Kabushiki Kaisha

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over ILS of Japan, by Goldman Sachs of the US, and ORIX Kabushiki Kaisha (“ORIX”) of Japan. ILS is a pharmaceutical company. Goldman Sachs is a global investment banking, securities and investment management firm. ORIX is a multinational integrated financial services and investment group. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the lack of horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the companies’ activities in 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.9098](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissaire King en visite à Paris

Julian **King**, Commissaire chargé de l’union de la sécurité, sera à Paris lundi, où il rencontrera M. Laurent Nuñez, le Directeur général de la sécurité intérieure pour discuter des questions relatives à la sécurité européenne, en particulier des propositions faites par la Commission pour lutter contre le contenu terroriste en ligne. Le Commissaire participera aussi à une table ronde [aux deuxièmes assises du comité de la filière des industries de sécurité \(CoFIS\)](#), où il présentera les efforts de la Commission pour soutenir le développement de l’industrie européenne de la sécurité, y compris dans le cadre du prochain budget européen. (Pour plus d’informations: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: 32 229 63444)

Kicking off the 2018 European Week of Sport

Tibor **Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, will be in Vienna tomorrow to officially launch the fourth edition of the [European Week of Sport](#), the Commission’s #BeActive initiative to promote sport and physical activity across Europe. As in previous years, thousands of activities will be taking place in all [participating countries](#) – which this year, for the first time, also include countries from the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership regions. On 29 September, the first ever #BeActive night, a night of sport events, will happen at the same time across Europe. Ahead of the launch, Commissioner **Navracsics** said: “*Sport is fun and vital for our well-being. It also helps to bring people together and build communities. The European Week of Sport celebrates and promotes all of these aspects. I am looking forward to this year’s edition which looks set to be the biggest and best yet – and I hope we can inspire many more people to make sport a part of their daily lives in the long term.*” To coincide with the Week, new country factsheets on physical activity, developed by the Commission, the World Health Organization and EU Member States, will be published [here](#) on Monday. For more information on what the EU is doing for sport, see [Sport in the EU](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

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

[Calendar](#)

Commissioners' weekly activities