

Daily News 22 / 12 / 2017

Juncker Plan launches projects worth around €730 million across Europe

This week the European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed deals worth a total of around €730 million under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the Investment Plan for Europe, the so called Juncker Plan. The signed deals include €330 million for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Austria, €200 million for water infrastructure in Italy, €150 million for five separate projects in Spain, ranging from trains to energy efficient buildings and €50 million for a construction machinery rental service in Finland. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, in charge of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"Under the Investment Plan we are helping innovative companies, large and small, advance their growth strategies. 2017 has been an excellent year for financing small businesses and creating jobs in the EU and I expect 2018 to be just as fruitful under EFSI 2.0."* (For more information about all the EFSI projects see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

Des fonds européens supplémentaires pour la croissance, l'emploi et les investissements stratégiques en Espagne

L'Espagne va recevoir 2,1 milliards d'euros supplémentaires des fonds de la politique de Cohésion, suite à [l'ajustement technique](#), la réévaluation en 2016 de tous les budgets nationaux de la politique de Cohésion pour 2014-2020, afin de prendre en compte l'impact de la crise. La Commission et l'Espagne se sont désormais accordées sur les priorités d'investissement pour cette nouvelle enveloppe et les programmes de la politique de Cohésion espagnols ont été modifiés en ce sens. Sur ces 2,1 milliards d'euros, 1,2 milliard d'euros vient du Fonds européen de développement régional ([FEDER](#)), avec plus spécifiquement: 345 millions à investir dans le développement urbain durable; 238 millions soutenant la recherche et l'innovation; 192 millions pour les petites et moyennes entreprises espagnoles, notamment à travers [l'Initiative pour les PME](#); 125 millions dans l'efficacité énergétique et les énergies renouvelables et 111 millions dans les technologies numériques. Quant aux investissements du Fonds social européen ([FSE](#)), qui représentent 40% de la nouvelle enveloppe (859 millions d'euros), ils seront consacrés à combattre la pauvreté et le chômage de longue durée. En outre, l'Espagne a reçu environ 418 millions d'euros en plus pour renforcer [l'Initiative pour l'Emploi des Jeunes](#). La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a déclaré: *"Voilà un nouvel effort d'investissement massif de l'Europe pour panser les blessures de la crise qui restent vives en Espagne. L'UE donne au pays les moyens de capitaliser sur ses atouts compétitifs, son formidable potentiel d'innovation, et surtout sur les talents des espagnols."* *"Avec ces fonds, nous accompagnons l'Espagne dans la lutte contre le chômage des jeunes,"* a ajouté la Commissaire Marianne **Thyssen**, en charge de l'Emploi, des affaires sociales, des compétences et de la mobilité des travailleurs, *"Ces investissements de l'UE doivent contribuer à créer des emplois de qualité dans tout le pays."* (Pour plus d'informations:

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Mergers: Commission approves acquisition by Lufthansa of Air Berlin subsidiary LGW, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation Lufthansa's proposed acquisition of certain Air Berlin assets, through the entity Luftfahrtgesellschaft Walter GmbH ('LGW'). The decision is conditional on Lufthansa's compliance with commitments to avoid competition distortions. The Commission decision only concerns Lufthansa's proposed acquisition of LGW. This is because Lufthansa decided to drop the rest of the initially proposed transaction, i.e. its acquisition of NIKI Luftfahrt GmbH ('NIKI'), during the course of the Commission's merger review process. Following Lufthansa's decision to drop NIKI, the Commission limited its investigation to the impact of the remaining part of the transaction (i.e. the acquisition of LGW, including additional Air Berlin aircraft, crew and slots) on competition. The Commission's investigation found that the increase in Lufthansa's slot portfolio at Düsseldorf airport, through the acquisition of LGW, was likely to adversely affect passengers in terms of fares and/or choice of services. The Commission therefore concluded that the acquisition of LGW by Lufthansa would raise competition concerns at Düsseldorf airport. To address the competition concerns identified by the Commission with regard to the acquisition of LGW, Lufthansa offered a set of commitments. Thanks to these commitments, Lufthansa's slot holding at Düsseldorf airport would only increase by 1%, compared to a scenario without the transaction. 50% of slots at Düsseldorf airport will be held by Lufthansa's competitors. This means that the effects of Lufthansa's acquisition of LGW would be limited. The final commitments address the competition concerns identified by the Commission regarding Lufthansa's acquisition of LGW. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the final commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Our job is to make sure that mergers do not make European consumers worse off. Lufthansa has put forward improved remedies that make sure the effects of its LGW acquisition on competition are limited. In particular, at Düsseldorf airport, Lufthansa's slot portfolio would only increase by 1% – half of all the slots would be held by Lufthansa's competitors. This addresses our competition concerns, so we approved the proposed acquisition today under EU merger rules."* A full press release is available online in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Commission sets up an advisory group on EU trade agreements

The Commission announced today the composition of the advisory group on EU trade agreements. The creation of the group is one of the elements aiming to

increase transparency and inclusiveness in EU trade policy to which the Commission committed in its trade strategy [“Trade for All”](#) of October 2015, and announced in President Juncker’s 2017 State of the Union address. Through this group the Commission will benefit from the perspectives and insights of a wide and balanced group of stakeholders, ranging from trade unions, employers organisations, consumer groups and other non-governmental organisations. The nomination of 28 experts has been based on a public call for applications, including a clear set of criteria. The list is now available [online](#). The first meeting of the group will take place in early February 2018. [More information](#) about the group is available online. See the factsheet to learn more about the most [recent Commission’s initiatives for transparency](#) of the EU trade negotiations. (*For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509*)

Commission welcomes ambitious agreement on key legislation to cut down greenhouse gas emissions

Yesterday, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the effort sharing regulation – a major Commission proposal for implementing the EU’s 2030 climate target. It reduces emissions in transport, buildings, waste and agriculture in line with the EU’s climate target for 2030. The agreement follows the just recently agreed new rules on accounting of emissions from land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), see [IP/17/5286](#). Taken together, these are central building blocks in EU climate policy and its drive for Europe’s transition to a low-carbon economy. Both proposals form part of the implementation of the Juncker Commission priorities for [“a resilient Energy Union and a forward-looking climate change policy”](#) and cover over 50% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the EU. They play thus a decisive role in meeting the EU’s commitment under the Paris Agreement to reduce emissions by at least 40% till 2030, compared to 1990 levels. These agreements, together with the recently endorsed revision of the EU emissions trading system (ETS) after 2020 (see [IP/17/4501](#)), mean that the legal framework of the EU’s 2030 climate policy is now in place. It shows that the work towards the completion of the Energy Union is on track and that the work initiated by the Juncker Commission is being delivered. Energy Union Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič said: *“This is one of the final significant steps towards completion of the EU’s 2030 climate policy framework, which will enable us to not only deliver on our Paris Agreement commitment but also to achieve the goals of the Energy Union.”* Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete added: *“This is proof of Europe’s intention to stay at the forefront of global climate action, by delivering at home. I thank the Parliament and Council for their work to reach this ambitious outcome. Negotiations have further strengthened our tools to deliver on our Paris commitment. The agreement on the Effort Sharing Regulation puts us firmly on track to achieve our 2030 climate target”.* The provisional agreement was reached by written procedure following the 3rd Trilogue between the Parliament, Council and Commission. Read full [STATEMENT/17/5382](#). (*For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589*)

European Defence Union: first defence research project funded from EU budget

The European Defence Fund, [announced by President Juncker in September 2016](#) and [launched in June 2017](#), is starting to deliver in practice, with the first EU-funded grant agreement for a defence research project signed yesterday. Named after the Priestess of Ancient Delphi, project PYTHIA aims to identify key trends in the fast evolving world of innovative defence technologies. The PYTHIA consortium, run by Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A, brings together partners from Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom, and will receive a €1 million EU grant. Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs said: *“Only months after the launch of the European Defence Fund, we are delivering by supporting the first concrete research defence project with EU funding. Others will follow shortly. European defence cooperation is now a tangible reality.”* Under the research strand of the European Defence Fund, €90 million will be allocated for defence research grants fully and directly funded from the EU budget (2017-2019). The technology foresight project will use big data analysis to examine large volumes of technological information, looking to identify future disruptive technologies and recommend future defence research themes. The next research grants in the areas of drones and protection and equipment for soldiers will be signed in the coming weeks. The research strand is complemented by a capability development strand, under which the EU will create incentives for Member States to cooperate on joint development of defence equipment and technology through co-financing from the EU budget (€500m for 2019 and 2020). The [industrial development programme was agreed by Member States](#) on 12 December and is now pending European Parliament approval. The Fund will also seek to [support some of the capability projects of Permanent Structured Cooperation](#) (PESCO). For more information, see also this [factsheet](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Commission authorises six genetically modified products for food/feed uses

Today the Commission authorised six Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), all for food/feed uses. These GMOs are as follows: Soybean 305423 x 40-3-2, Soybean DAS-44406-6, Soybean FG72 x A5547-127, Soybean DAS-68416-4, Oilseed rape MON88302 x Ms8 x Rf3 and the renewal of Maize 1507. The GMOs approved today have all gone through a comprehensive authorisation procedure, including a favourable scientific assessment by the [European Food Safety Authority](#) (EFSA). The authorisation decisions do not cover cultivation. These GMOs had received “no opinion” votes from the Member States both in the Standing and the Appeal Committees and the Commission therefore had to adopt the pending decisions. The authorisations are valid for 10 years, and any products produced from these GMOs will be subject to the EU’s strict labelling and traceability rules. More information is available [here](#). Follow us on Twitter: [@V_Andriukaitis](#) [@EU_Health](#) (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Supporting European culture: first cross-border guarantee agreement for cultural and creative SMEs signed

The European Investment Fund and the French *Institut pour le Financement du Cinéma et des Industries Culturelles* (IFCIC) signed today in France two guarantee agreements to support more than €130 million worth of loans for cultural and creative SMEs. The agreements are part of the EU's [Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility](#) which was launched last year under the [Creative Europe programme](#). The Guarantee Facility recently received additional funding through the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) (read more [here](#)). Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said: *“Cultural and creative sectors are the backbone of European diversity and significant contributors to its economic development. The European Union, through the Creative Europe programme, is highly committed to help companies finance their innovative projects and stimulate the European creativity and cultural initiatives. These agreements are excellent news both for companies in France and across Europe. With this first cross-border transaction under the Guarantee Facility we hope to build partnerships across Europe so that more European film producers can benefit from the backing of this financial instrument.”* The first agreement is a direct guarantee which allows IFCIC to substantially increase its loan volumes to support French SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors, reaching out to currently underserved sub-sectors including performing arts, visual effects, publishing and fashion design, to support a portfolio of more than €40 million of loans over the next two years. The second is a counter-guarantee agreement. It is the first cross-border transaction under the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility targeting film producers across the programme's participating countries aiming at supporting a portfolio of more than €90 million of loans to European film and TV production. In total, more than 300 SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors are expected to obtain access to finance as a result of this new Guarantee Facility. More details are available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Commission scientists explain how hydrozoans can save corals from predators and disease

Corals may have unexpected allies in improving their health and resilience – this is the main finding of a new study co-authored by scientists of the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre. The study shows how hydrozoans – very small aquatic animals – can save corals from predators and disease. Coral reefs are among the world's most diverse ecosystems. They not only provide habitats for many marine species, but are also crucial for coastal communities as a source of food and income as tourist attractions. At the same time, they are under pressure from stressors such as climate change, ocean acidification, diseases, overfishing, sedimentation and pollution. The researchers now found that corals living in association with dense colonies of hydrozoans are much less prone to be attacked by coral-eating fish and gastropods, such as snails. The polyps create a sort of a continuous, stinging carpet that can discourage fish and

coral eating snails from foraging. By contributing to the overall health of corals, these tiny polyps could be playing an important role in making reefs more resilient. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, responsible for the Joint Research Centre said: *“EU scientists are contributing to finding solutions to global problems. This is a good example of the scientific excellence that can help us protect our environment and support policy making.”* Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries added: *“The decline of coral reefs threatens the entire ocean ecosystem and the livelihood of coastal communities. I therefore welcome every new finding about coral resilience which is of paramount importance to keep our oceans healthy and productive, in line with the Commission’s Ocean Governance strategy.”* More details on the study are available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l’acquisition du contrôle en commun de la société Cedinsa par Comsa, Mirova et PPGM.

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition du contrôle en commun de la société Cedinsa Concessionària, S.A. (‘Cedinsa’), basée en Espagne, par les sociétés COMSA Concesiones S.L.U. (‘COMSA’), basée en Espagne, Mirova Core Infrastructure S.À.R.L (‘Mirova’), basée au Luxembourg, et Stichting Depositary PPGM Infrastructure Fund (‘PPGM’), basée en Espagne, ensemble avec d’autres sociétés qui exerçaient déjà contrôle en commun sur Cedinsa. Cedinsa est active dans le domaine des concessions d’infrastructures, en particulier des concessions d’autoroutes à péage. COMSA est une société active dans les secteurs des infrastructures et de l’ingénierie. Mirova est active dans la gestion de portefeuille visant à combiner la création de valeur et le développement durable. PPGM est un gestionnaire de fonds de pension spécialisé dans l’administration de pensions collectives et la gestion d’actifs. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, car les chevauchements entre les activités des entreprises sont très limités. L’opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d’affaire [M.8731](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission approuve l’acquisition de Zeller par Rubis terminal et Phillips 66

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition de l’entreprise française Zeller et Compagnie par l’entreprise française Rubis Terminal SA et l’entreprise américaine Phillips 66 Central Europe Inc. Les activités de Zeller se concentrent sur la vente de combustibles, de bitumes, de pétrole et d’autres produits pétroliers

en France, spécifiquement en Alsace et dans l'ensemble de la région Grand Est. Rubis Terminal est principalement présente sur les marchés du stockage de produits pétroliers, chimiques et agricoles, et d'engrais. Rubis Terminal est une filiale de Rubis Group, qui est spécialisé dans la distribution de produits pétroliers et le stockage de produits liquides. Phillips 66 est présente dans les secteurs de la transformation, du transport, du stockage et du marketing de produits gaziers et pétroliers. Phillips 66 est une filiale de Phillips 66 Group, une entreprise spécialisée dans le secteur de l'énergie, active dans la production et la logistique. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence car les chevauchements entre les activités des entreprises sont limités. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8689](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Place des Halles par Aviva Investors et ERAFP

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun du centre commercial Place des Halles situé en France par Aviva Investors Luxembourg S.A. ("Aviva Investors") dont le siège social est situé au Luxembourg, et l'Établissement de retraite additionnelle de la fonction publique ("ERAFP") situé en France. Place des Halles est un centre commercial avec une surface locative de 39,269 m², situé à Strasbourg en France. Aviva Investors est une société de gestion d'actifs appartenant au groupe Aviva qui fournit un large éventail de produits d'assurance, d'épargne et d'investissement à travers 16 pays. ERAFP est un établissement public administratif sous tutelle de l'état français et est dédié à la gestion du régime de retraite applicable à la fonction publique. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8723](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission approuve l'acquisition de EAP France par La Poste, Generali et Malakoff Médéric

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de EAP France SAS ("EAP"), basée en France, par le groupe La Poste, basé en France, le groupe Generali, basé en Italie, et le groupe Malakoff Médéric, basé en France. EAP est une société spécialisée dans les services de conciergerie d'entreprise. La Poste est un groupe articulé autour de cinq branches principales: branche Services-Courrier-Colis, branche express GeoPost, branche La Banque Postale (services bancaires et

d'assurance), branche Réseau La Poste (bureaux de poste) et branche Numérique (transformation numérique des organisations, traitement des données, e-commerce, e-santé). Generali propose des services d'assurance-vie et d'assurance non-vie au niveau global. Malakoff Médéric est actif dans le secteur de l'assurance de personnes. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8684](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Kyocera Industrial Tools, Ryobi Dalian Machinery and Ryobi Sales by Kyocera Corporation and Ryobi Limited

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the joint acquisition of Kyocera Industrial Tools Co., Ltd. (“KIT”), Ryobi Sales Co. both of Japan, and Ryobi Dalian Machinery Co., Ltd. (“RDM”) of China by the Kyocera Corporation (“Kyocera”) and Ryobi Limited both of Japan. KIT is a newly established company that will include Ryobi’s current power tool business in Japan, the power tool business of RDM, and the door closer business of RDM. Ryobi Sales sells power tool products manufactured by Ryobi in Japan. RDM is active in the power tools and door closer sectors, including related building hardware. Kyocera is a multinational manufacturer and supplier of a wide range of products for industrial users. Ryobi Limited is a supplier of die castings, printing equipment, power tools and building hardware. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the proposed transaction does not, actually or foreseeably, enhance the market positions of KIT, Ryobi Sales and RDM 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.8719](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of LS Auto by KKR and LS Mtron

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over LS Auto of South Korea by KKR of the US and LS Mtron of South Korea. LS Auto is an automotive component manufacturer, supplying human machine interfaces, body control systems and mechatronic components to the automotive industry. KKR is a global investment firm, which invests in companies in a variety of sectors. LS Mtron is active in the manufacture and sale of industrial machinery, electricity and electronics, circuit materials and auto parts. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because LS Auto has no, or negligible, actual or foreseen activities within the European Economic Area and the companies are not competing on the same markets or in any vertically related markets. 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.8655](#). (*For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740*)

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