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COLLEGE MEETING: Commission reports on the risks of investor citizenship and residence schemes in the EU and outlines steps to address them

For the first time, the Commission has presented a comprehensive report on investor citizenship and residence schemes operated by a number of EU Member States. The report maps the existing practices and identifies certain risks such schemes imply for the EU, in particular, as regards security, money laundering, tax evasion and corruption. A lack of transparency in how the schemes are operated and a lack of cooperation among Member States further exacerbate these risks, the report finds. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *“Legally residing in the EU and in the Schengen area comes with rights and privileges that should not be abused. Member States must at all times fully respect and apply existing obligatory checks and balances – and national investor residence schemes should not be exempt from that. The work we have done together over the past years in terms of increasing security, strengthening our borders, and closing information gaps should not be jeopardised. We will monitor full compliance with EU law.”* Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, **Věra Jourová**, said: *“Becoming a citizen of one Member State also means becoming an EU citizen with all its rights, including free movement and access to the internal market. People obtaining an EU nationality must have a genuine connection to the Member State concerned. We want more transparency on how nationality is granted and more cooperation between Member States. There should be no weak link in the EU, where people could shop around for the most lenient scheme.”* A [press release](#) as well as a [Q&A](#) are available online. (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: + 32 229 58659; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

COLLEGE MEETING: European Commission adopts adequacy decision on Japan, creating the world’s largest area of safe data flows

The Commission has adopted today its adequacy decision on Japan, allowing personal data to flow freely between the two economies on the basis of strong protection guarantees. This is the last step in the procedure launched in September 2018, which included the opinion of the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) and the agreement from a committee composed of representatives of the EU Member States. Together with its equivalent decision adopted today by Japan, it will start applying as of today. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *“This adequacy decision creates the world’s largest area of safe data flows. Europeans’ data will benefit from high privacy standards when their data is transferred to Japan. Our companies will also benefit from a privileged access to a 127 million consumers’ market. Investing in privacy pays off; this arrangement will serve as an example for future partnerships in this key area and help setting global standards.”* The key elements of the adequacy decision, which complements the [EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement](#), include a set of

rules (Supplementary Rules) that will bridge several differences between the two data protection systems, assurances regarding safeguards concerning the access of Japanese public authorities for criminal law enforcement and national security purposes, and a complaint-handling mechanism for complaints from Europeans regarding access to their data by Japanese public authorities. A [press release](#), a [Q&A](#), a [statement](#) as well as a [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

COLLEGE MEETING: Brexit preparedness: European Commission adopts two contingency proposals to help mitigate impact of “no-deal” Brexit on EU fisheries

Given the continued uncertainty in the UK surrounding the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement, the Commission has today adopted two legislative proposals to help mitigate the significant impact that a “no-deal” Brexit would have on EU fisheries. This is part of the Commission’s ongoing preparedness and contingency work and will help ensure a coordinated EU-wide approach in such a scenario. The first proposal is to allow fishermen and operators from EU Members States to receive compensation under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for the temporary cessation of fishing activities. This will help off-set some of the impact of a sudden closure of UK waters to EU fishing vessels in a no-deal scenario. The second proposal amends the Regulation on the Sustainable Management of the External Fleets. The aim of this proposal is to ensure that the EU is in a position to grant UK vessels access to EU waters until the end of 2019, on the condition that EU vessels are also granted reciprocal access to UK waters. The proposal also provides for a simplified procedure to authorise UK vessels to fish in EU waters and EU vessels to fish in UK waters – should the UK grant that access. This proposal is limited to 2019 and is based on the agreement in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 17 and 18 December 2018 on the fishing opportunities for 2019. Full press release available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229-86500; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

COLLEGE MEETING: European Commission appoints new senior managers to both its human resources and home affairs departments and a new Head of the Euratom Supply Agency

The European Commission has today decided to appoint Mr Christian Roques to the position of Director for “Health and Wellbeing – Working Conditions” in its department for Human Resources and Security; Mr Michael Shotter to the position of Director for “Migration and Protection” in its Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs; and Ms Agnieszka Kazmierczak, as the New Head of the EU’s Euratom Supply Agency. Mr Roques, a French national, joined the Commission in 1995. Since then, he worked in the areas of competition policy and European public law, with a focus on human resource management. Between 2006 and 2008, he worked in the European Union’s General Court, first in the Cabinet of President Bo Vesterdorf and then in the Cabinets of two judges (Ms Ingrida Labucka and Vilenas Vadapalas). Mr Roques

first became Head of Unit in 2010 and has, since then, been Head of Unit in the Commission's department for Human resources, in charge of European Civil Service Law and Social Dialogue. Mr Shotter, a British national, has nearly 23 years of experience in the European Commission, having first joined the institution in 1996. Following more than a decade in the Commission's Legal Service, he gained valuable experience, providing legal and political advice in the private office of Commissioner and then Vice-President Viviane Reding between 2007 and 2013. Mr Shotter worked as a Head of Unit for "Civil Justice Policy" in the Commission's justice department between 2013 and 2015 before joining the Cabinet of President Juncker as a senior legal advisor in charge of migration and home affairs. Ms Kazmierczak, a Polish national, is currently a Director in the shared resource directorate of the Commission's transport and energy departments. She joined the Commission from the private sector in 2005 to work in the area of internal audit. Before that, she held several management positions in the Polish civil service. *(For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)*

Union de l'énergie: l'UE investit 800 millions d'euros supplémentaires dans des infrastructures énergétiques prioritaires

Les États membres de l'UE ont voté aujourd'hui sur une proposition de la Commission visant à investir près de 800 millions d'euros dans des projets d'infrastructures énergétiques clés en Europe présentant d'importants avantages transfrontaliers. Le financement de l'UE provient du mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe (MIE), le programme européen de soutien aux infrastructures transeuropéennes. La priorité est donnée aux projets qui accroissent la compétitivité, renforcent la sécurité d'approvisionnement énergétique de l'UE en promouvant un fonctionnement sécurisé, fiable et efficace du réseau, et en contribuant au développement durable et à la protection de l'environnement. La création d'un réseau d'énergie moderne et interconnecté représente un élément fondamental de l'Union de l'énergie, l'une des priorités politiques de la Commission Juncker. La décision d'aujourd'hui accorde une aide financière pour les études et les travaux, pour un total de 14 projets: 7 projets concernant l'électricité, 2 projets relatifs aux réseaux intelligents, 2 projets de stockage de CO2 et 3 projets relatifs au gaz. Le montant total proposé pour le financement MIE-Energie s'élève à près de 800 millions d'euros, dont 504 millions d'euros pour l'électricité et les réseaux intelligents, 9,3 millions d'euros en support des études sur le développement d'une infrastructure de transport et de stockage de CO2; et 286 million d'euros alloués à des projets d'infrastructure du gaz. Le présent appel à propositions (2018-2) a été lancé le 11 juin 2018 et clôturé le 11 octobre 2018. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). *(For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)*

Poland: Cohesion Policy invests in a modern hospital for the city of Toruń

€52.7 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is invested to upgrade the largest public hospital in the city of Toruń, in northern Poland. This EU-funded project covers the construction of a new hospital complex centralising several medical services and of a helipad. Such an integrated rescue and treatment platform will significantly increase the quality and speed of the medical services provided to patients. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“Thanks to this Cohesion Policy investment, the inhabitants of Toruń will wait less for treatment and exams. They will access quality health services in a single modern hospital complex. This is a great project that shows what Cohesion Policy is about: improving the lives of the people.”* When the project is completed, the hospital will host 59 specialist clinics and have a capacity of 1050 beds. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Les jeunes, l'esprit d'entreprise et de meilleures conditions de vie, fers de lance d'une nouvelle aide record de l'UE à la Tunisie

L'Union européenne a adopté un ensemble de mesures d'aide financière en faveur de la [Tunisie](#) se chiffrant à 305 millions d'euros, soit le montant le plus élevé jamais alloué au titre de [l'instrument européen de voisinage](#). Ce financement record traduit la forte ambition de l'UE de créer de meilleures chances pour la jeunesse tunisienne, de favoriser un environnement plus florissant et plus attrayant pour les entreprises et de renforcer les capacités des administrations locales à améliorer les conditions de vie des populations locales. Johannes **Hahn**, commissaire pour la politique européenne de voisinage et les négociations d'élargissement, a déclaré: *«Notre engagement envers la société tunisienne et notre intention de soutenir des mesures qui aideront les jeunes Tunisiens à trouver du travail et à créer leur propre entreprise sont clairs. Le soutien aux actions qui généreront de la croissance économique et élargiront les possibilités d'emploi constitue une priorité de premier plan dans le cadre de l'aide que nous avons adoptée récemment en faveur de la Tunisie et qui se chiffre à 305 millions d'euros, soit le montant le plus élevé jamais alloué pour une seule année. Les programmes adoptés faciliteront l'accès au marché du travail pour les jeunes Tunisiens, stimuleront l'innovation entrepreneuriale et permettront de faire en sorte que les communautés locales ne soient pas laissées pour compte.»* Le communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Maja Kocijančič – Tél.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tél.:+32 229 64887)

Digital Single Market: EU negotiators agree on new rules for sharing of public sector data

The European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the Commission reached yesterday a political agreement on a revised directive that will facilitate the availability and re-use of public sector data. In full compliance with the [EU General Data Protection Regulation](#), the [new Directive on Open Data and Public Sector Information \(PSI\)](#) – which can be for example anything from anonymised personal data on household energy use to general information about national education or literacy levels – updates the framework setting out the conditions under which public sector data should be made available for re-use, with a particular focus on the increasing amounts of high-value data

that is now available. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said: “Data is increasingly the lifeblood of today’s economy and unlocking the potential of public open data can bring significant economic benefits. The total direct economic value of public sector information and data from public undertakings is expected to increase from €52 billion in 2018 to €194 billion by 2030. With these new rules in place, we will ensure that we can make the most of this growth”. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said: “Public sector information has already been paid for by the taxpayer. Making it more open for re-use benefits the European data economy by enabling new innovative products and services, for example based on artificial intelligence technologies. But beyond the economy, open data from the public sector is also important for our democracy and society because it increases transparency and supports a facts-based public debate.” The European Parliament and the Council will now need to formally adopt the revised rules. For more information see our [press release](#) and updated [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083 – Marietta Grammenou Tel.: +32 229 83583)

Commission launches consultations on the global role of the euro

The Commission launches today several targeted consultations to explore how to [increase the international role of the euro](#) in specific sectors: [agricultural and food commodities](#), [metals and minerals](#), and transport sector manufacturers in the field of [aircraft](#), [maritime and railway transport](#). Consultations in the financial and energy sectors will follow. A [workshop on the international role of the euro in the energy sector](#) is planned for 14 February. These steps are a follow-up to the December 2018 [Communication “Towards a stronger international role of the euro”](#), which outlined the benefits of a strengthened international role of the euro for the EU and the international financial system and proposed initiatives to boost the euro’s role. The Euro Summit of December took note of this Communication and encouraged work to be taken forward. Today’s consultations aim to determine where more fine-tuned initiatives can be taken. They will remain open for two months until end-March 2019. In addition, the Commission will hold discussions on the increased international role of the euro in different public fora. The Commission will report on progress by the summer. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of control over the double clutch transmissions business of GFT by Magna

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of control over the double clutch transmissions business of Getrag Ford Transmissions Slovakia (“GFT”) of Slovakia by Magna Powertrain GmbH (“Magna”) of Austria. GFT is a contract manufacturer of transmission systems for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles. Magna is a subsidiary of Magna International Inc., a global automotive supplier of body, chassis, exterior, seating, powertrain, electronic, vision, closure and roof systems and modules, as well as complete vehicle engineering and contract manufacturing. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as it does not create additional horizontal or

vertical overlaps between the companies's activities. 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.9176](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control of HeyCar by Daimler and Volkswagen

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Mobility Trader Holding (“HeyCar”) by Daimler AG and Volkswagen AG, all of Germany. HeyCar provides dealers and consumers in Germany with the online platform HeyCar for the sale and purchase of high quality used cars. Daimler and Volkswagen are active in the manufacture and sale of motor vehicles worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, considering HeyCar's negligible 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.9180](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Eurostat: Le tourisme dans l'UE: Le nombre de nuitées dans l'UE a augmenté de 2% en 2018, plus forte hausses en Lettonie, en Lituanie et à Malte

En 2018, le nombre de nuitées passées dans des établissements d'hébergement touristique dans l'Union européenne (UE) devrait avoir atteint plus de 3,1 milliards, ce qui représente une progression de 2,2% par rapport à 2017. Depuis 2009, le nombre de nuitées passées dans des établissements d'hébergement touristique dans l'UE est en hausse constante; cette évolution est notamment imputable à l'augmentation des nuitées de non-résidents du pays visité. En 2018, l'Espagne (467 millions de nuitées, soit -0,9% par rapport à 2017) est restée en tête, devant la France (444 millions, +2,4%), l'Italie (429 millions, +1,9%) et l'Allemagne (419 millions, +4,3%). Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Victoria Von Hammerstein – Tél.: +32 229 55040)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Thyssen on the 25th anniversary of the EU Agency for Health and Safety at Work

2019 marks the 25th birthday of [the European Union Agency for Safety and Health at Work \(EU-OSHA\)](#) in Bilbao. Celebrating the occasion, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: “In the past twenty five years, European legislation and the relentless efforts of EU-OSHA have made our workplaces safer, healthier and more productive. Europe is a pioneer and boasts some of the highest standards on health and safety at work in the world. We are addressing the biggest killer in the workplace: occupational cancer. We have reduced the number of workers who died in an accident at work by almost 25% and the number of workers reporting health problems by 10%. The Agency has played a crucial role to

achieve this, as well as the close involvement of social partners to adapt our efforts to the reality of companies. The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) has provided support at the highest political level to make European workplaces even safer and healthier, and under my mandate I have [put concrete proposals on the table to better protect workers against cancer-causing chemicals](#). We will continue our work to make Europe a better place where all European workers come home healthy and safe every day after work.” The full statement can be found [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Crețu visits Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** will be in Ispra, Italy, to visit the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission’s science and knowledge hub. Ispra is the third biggest Commission site after Brussels and Luxembourg. Commissioner **Crețu** will discuss with JRC Director-General Vladimír Šucha policy-related issues such as Smart Specialisation, to develop competitive advantages for regions. Corina **Crețu** will also meet the community of Romanian experts in Ispra and open the ‘Romanian Semester’, an initiative promoting culture and traditions of the country currently holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU. For each Presidency, officials organise various culture-related activities, starting with an opening ceremony at the JRC site. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commissioner Gabriel in Germany to discuss EU initiatives to counter disinformation

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will be in Berlin to participate in the conference [Democracy in a Digital Society](#) and will deliver a speech on the actions of the EU to counter disinformation in Europe and beyond. In addition, Commissioner **Gabriel** will meet with Dr Katarina Barley, the Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection in order to discuss various digital files, including the [modernisation of the EU copyright rules](#) in Europe, the recently agreed [new rules on cross-border access to TV and radio programmes](#), the Commission’s proposal for a [Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications](#) as well as the [EU’s Action Plan](#) to step up efforts to counter disinformation in Europe and beyond. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083 – Marietta Grammenou Tel.: +32 229 83583)

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