

## Daily News 23 / 08 / 2017

### **Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Jourová on the occasion of the Europe-Wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes**

*"Today, 23 August, we mark the Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. We remember the victims of these regimes and we restate our rejection of the ideologies they were built on. (...) Totalitarian regimes across Europe restricted people's freedoms; violated their rights and made millions of ordinary citizens victims of their ideology. We must remember past horrors to give us the knowledge and strength to reject those who seek to revive these ideologies. The European Union was built on the common values of human dignity, fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy, and on the rejection of extreme nationalism. We must never take these rights and freedoms for granted. We pledge to fight for them every day. Extremism, nationalism, xenophobia and hatred can still be heard in public speech in Europe. Keeping these memories alive is not only a tribute to the victims but also a way to ensure that these ideologies can be forcefully rejected and such atrocities never happen again. We stand firm in our defence of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, in Europe and worldwide. There is no place in the European Union for extremism, intolerance and oppression."* The full statement is available [online](#), as well as the [video](#) of First Vice-President **Timmermans** on our common values. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

### **Solidarité avec l'Italie: l'UE offre son aide suite au séisme d'Ischia et soutient toujours les populations affectées un an après le séisme du 24 août 2016**

La Commission suit de près le séisme qui a frappé l'île d'Ischia au large de Naples et [a annoncé](#) qu'elle se tenait à la disposition des autorités italiennes pour une aide d'urgence. Ce séisme est survenu juste avant le 24 août, date à laquelle l'année dernière l'Italie a été atteinte en son cœur par un tremblement de terre qui ôta la vie à près de 300 personnes dans les régions italiennes des Abruzzes, du Latium, des Marches et de l'Ombrie. Il fut suivi d'autres secousses, en octobre 2016 et en janvier 2017. Cette date reste une plaie à vif pour de nombreuses âmes endeuillées. Les Italiens n'ont pas oublié, et l'Europe n'a pas oublié les Italiens: voilà un an maintenant qu'elle apporte son aide aux populations affectées. Sitôt après la catastrophe, la Commission européenne a soutenu les autorités de protection civile italiennes, fournissant des cartes du système de satellite européen de Copernicus via le [Centre de coordination de la réaction d'urgence](#). Le Président **Juncker** avait alors [exprimé](#) son admiration pour la force et la détermination du peuple italien. Il avait annoncé que la Basilique San Benedetto de Norcia, détruite par le séisme, serait restaurée avec l'aide des fonds européens, en signe d'amitié intangible et de solidarité avec l'Italie.

En décembre, la Commission a versé une [première aide financière](#) de 30 millions d'euros au titre du Fonds de Solidarité de l'UE et [a proposé](#) en juin 2017 de le mobiliser à hauteur de 1,2 milliard d'euros – la plus importante aide jamais accordée sous ce Fonds. En parallèle, la Commission a proposé un nouveau mécanisme de soutien suite aux catastrophes naturelles, afin de financer les travaux de reconstruction à 95% avec les fonds européens. Ce mécanisme, désormais en vigueur depuis juillet 2017, est disponible pour tous les Etats membres qui seraient touchés par une catastrophe. Enfin, la semaine dernière (17 août), de jeunes volontaires du Corps européen de solidarité [sont arrivés à Norcia](#) pour aider à reconstruire et assurer des services à la population. Au total, près de 230 jeunes devraient prêter main forte aux communautés victimes des tremblements de terre en Italie jusqu'en 2020. Ils sont autant de symboles d'une Europe qui protège et s'engage pour ses citoyens. Plus d'informations sur le soutien de l'UE à l'Italie suite aux tremblements de terre sont disponibles dans [cette fiche technique](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

### **Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed acquisition of Monsanto by Bayer**

The Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed acquisition of Monsanto by Bayer under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission has preliminary concerns that the proposed acquisition could reduce competition in areas such as pesticides, seeds and traits, resulting in higher prices, lower quality, less choice and less innovation. The proposed acquisition of Monsanto by Bayer would create the world's largest integrated pesticides and seeds company. It would combine two competitors with leading portfolios in non-selective herbicides, seeds and traits, and digital agriculture. Moreover, the transaction would take place in industries that are already globally concentrated. The transaction was notified to the Commission on 30 June 2017. The Commission now has 90 working days, until 8 January 2018, to take a decision. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Seeds and pesticide products are essential for farmers and ultimately consumers. We need to ensure effective competition so that farmers can have access to innovative products, better quality and also purchase products at competitive prices. And at the same time maintain an environment where companies can innovate and invest in improved products."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

### **Capital Markets Union: Commission launches consultation on further reducing barriers to post-trade services across financial markets**

The Commission is launching today a public consultation on how to improve post-trade services used in financial transactions, including clearing, settlement and collateral management. As part of the [Capital Markets Union Action Plan](#), the Commission is currently reviewing progress made in removing barriers to post-trade market infrastructure. This consultation seeks to gather views on a range of issues including the current state of post-trade

markets, the main trends and challenges faced by post-trade services providers and users as well as the best ways to remove barriers, including through financial technology. On average, cross-border trades remain more expensive than domestic trades and a more efficient post-trading environment could reduce such costs. Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis**, responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“Efficient and integrated post-trade markets are essential for EU financial markets and for a well-functioning Capital Markets Union. We need to find the best solutions to remove all barriers to efficient and resilient post-trade services”*. As part of its review, in February 2016 the Commission created a European Post-Trade Forum (EPTF) to assess the evolution of the EU post-trade landscape and progress in removing barriers. The EPTF has today published its report which can be found [here](#). The results of today’s consultation will contribute to a Communication on post-trade planned for the end of 2017, and to future legislative reviews. The consultation questionnaire is available [here](#) and will remain open until 15 November 2017. *(For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)*

### **State aid: Commission approves €96 million Slovak support for the building of three light maintenance workshops for passenger trains**

The European Commission has approved under EU state aid rules Slovakia’s support to ZSSK, the Slovak incumbent rail operator, for the building of new light maintenance workshops for passenger trains. The workshops will be located in Nove Zamky, Zvolen and Humenne. The light maintenance covers routine work that does not require the removal of the vehicle from service, e.g. cleaning of vehicles, refilling of the water supply or other small repairs. The Commission has concluded that the aid of €96.5 million will contribute to objectives of common interest of the Union, in particular a shift in transport from road to rail, fostering environmental protection and decongestion of roads. Slovakia has offered commitments to ensure that the aid will not hinder the development of competition on the Slovak rail transport market with respect to access to light maintenance facilities. In particular, after the initial construction phase is concluded, ownership of the workshops will be transferred to a separate company to be set up by the Ministry of Transport and Construction. Moreover, while operation of the workshops will initially be carried out by ZSSK, in the future, it can be transferred to other rail transport companies, if they win new tenders for rail transport services under Public Service Contracts. In addition, whereas the workshops will serve mainly trains operated by ZSSK, an equal and non-discriminatory access for other train operators is safeguarded pursuant to EU transport rules for the railway sector. Taking into account the commitments offered by Slovakia and the contribution of the aid to objectives of common interest of the Union, the Commission found that that measure will not cause undue distortions of competition, and can be cleared. The non-confidential version of the current decision will be published under the case number [SA.42525](#) in the [State Aid Register](#) on the Commission’s [competition website](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The [State Aid Weekly e-News](#) lists new publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the EU Official Journal. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229*

80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over DeA Broadcast by DeA Editore and Viacom**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over DeA Broadcast S.r.l. (DeA Broadcast) by De Agostini Editore S.p.A. (DeA Editore), both of Italy, and Viacom International Media Networks Italia S.r.l., belonging to the Viacom group of the US. DeA Broadcast will develop a thematic channel for children and its related website. DeA Editore is active in publishing, media, communications, gaming and other services. Viacom is an international group active in the development of television programs, motion pictures, short-form content, applications, games, consumer products, social media experiences and other entertainment content. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because DeA Broadcast has negligible actual and foreseen activities within the EEA. Moreover, there are only very limited overlaps between the companies' 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.8564](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint d'InTouch SAS par les sociétés Total Outre-Mer, Worldline et InTouch Corp**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun d'InTouch SAS, par les sociétés Total Outre-Mer S.A. appartenant au groupe Total, Worldline S.A. filiale du groupe Atos, toutes les cinq basées en France, et InTouch Corp (Île Maurice). InTouch SAS est actif dans les solutions d'agrégation des moyens de paiement en Afrique et dans certains pays du Moyen-Orient. Total Outre-Mer exerce les activités de Total Marketing Services en Afrique. Le groupe Total est actif au niveau mondial dans le secteur de l'énergie. Worldline est actif dans le secteur des paiements et services transactionnels. InTouch Corp est spécialisée dans l'agrégation des moyens de paiement et services digitaux autour de plateformes mobiles en Mauritanie, au Sénégal, en Côte d'Ivoire, au Kenya et au Cameroun. 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 sur le territoire de l'Espace économique européen. 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.8568](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

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