

Daily News 25 / 07 / 2018

EU mobilises further support for devastating fires in Greece

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** arrived in Athens yesterday to coordinate the EU assistance being provided to Greece through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) following the deadly fires. The Commissioner announced that **Italy** and **Romania** have now sent 4 planes and ground forces from Cyprus started operating yesterday. Offers of assistance to Greece through the Mechanism were also made by **Spain, Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Malta** and **Montenegro**. Today Commissioner **Stylianides** will meet with Prime Minister Tsipras and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, leader of the opposition as well as visit the affected areas and coordinate the EU's support on the ground. Commissioner **Stylianides** said: *"Here in Athens I have met Minister Nikos Toskas to exchange information on developments. I reiterated that the EU will continue to do all it takes to help the Greek people and authorities in this heart-breaking situation. We are all in this together. It is a day of grief, but together, as Europeans, we are determined to decisively combat these fires. Through our EU Civil Protection Mechanism, we have helped mobilise planes, vehicles, medical personnel and firefighters. We had further offers last night and I thank all countries that have offered support. The priority must continue to be to help those affected for as long as it takes."* The [EU's Copernicus satellite](#) system has also been activated to provide the authorities with highly specialised maps. The Commission continues to help other Member States that have asked for help. In Sweden, EU support continues with 7 planes, over 300 firefighters and 60 vehicles, already operating in the affected areas. For Latvia, the [EU's Copernicus Satellite system](#) has been activated to assist the national authorities with emergency mapping of the risk areas. The Commission co-finances the transport costs of assistance through the Civil Protection Mechanism and links together all civil protection authorities in Europe. The Commission has proposed to strengthen EU civil protection response through [rescEU](#) – so that when multiple disasters hit Member States they are better prepared to confront them. The rescEU proposal is a central part of President **Juncker's** agenda for a Europe that protects. [Photos](#) and [video](#) stockshots of the Emergency Centre are available, as well as a [MEMO 'Fighting forest fires in Europe – how it works'](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey: €400 million to further support education of Syrian refugees

The European Commission has approved a new assistance package worth €400 million, for the education of Syrian refugees in Turkey. This is the first action adopted following the agreement by EU Member States to finance an additional €3 billion for the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The package of €400 million will be given in the form of a direct grant to the Turkish Ministry of National Education of Turkey. The funding will provide for the continuation of the current education project for Syrian refugees in Turkey which will expire in October 2018. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European

Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, said: *“With the endorsement of the second tranche of funding by EU Member States, we are continuing to deliver on our commitment to support Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. The approval of this new assistance package is proof of this, allowing for the smooth continuation of our support in addressing the needs of both students and teachers.”* The full [press release](#) and a dedicated [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Juncker Plan supports innovation projects in Spain and energy modernisation in Croatia worth more than €240 million in total

The European Investment Bank (EIB) Group has signed two new agreements in Spain, both of which were made possible by the Juncker Plan’s European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The first is an €80 million loan for CIE Automotive to help finance its research and innovation strategy aimed at developing innovative technologies to reduce the weight of vehicles and ensure more efficient, less polluting manufacturing processes. The second is €32.5 million in financing for industrial group Velatia to enable the firm to incorporate new digital technologies into the products that it develops for electricity networks. The EIB has also signed a €130 million loan agreement, alongside the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to support Croatia’s energy company Hrvatska Elektroprivreda make its systems more modern, efficient and environmentally-friendly. Commenting on this agreement, Jyrki **Katainen**, Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *“As the EU transitions to a cleaner and more sustainable economy, it is crucial that we replace older, polluting power plants with climate-friendly versions. This is precisely what this project will do: generate electricity for residents of Zagreb in a more sustainable way. With financing support from the European Investment Bank under the Investment Plan for Europe, as well as from the EBRD and national power company Hrvatska Elektroprivreda, this is a collective effort to modernise energy supply in Croatia and contribute towards the EU’s climate goals.”* (Full press releases can be found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

L’Union européenne s’engage à reconstruire le Quartier général de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel à Sévaré, Mali

A la suite de l’attaque meurtrière contre le Quartier Général de la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel à Sévaré au Mali, le 29 juin dernier, l’UE a décidé de financer la totalité de la reconstruction d’un nouveau Quartier Général et de poursuivre son soutien afin d’assurer la continuité de l’action de l’Etat-major de la Force sur place. Cette décision fait suite à une concertation étroite entre le Commandant de la Force avec la [mission militaire européenne “EUTM” au Mali](#), la coopération de défense française et les forces de l’opération “Barkhane”. L’UE poursuivra ce travail de concertation avec le nouveau Commandant de la Force dès qu’il sera en fonction. La Haute Représentante/Vice-Présidente Federica **Mogherini** a déclaré: *“L’Union européenne est le premier partenaire du G5 Sahel. L’attaque contre le*

quartier général de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel au Mali est aussi une attaque contre notre priorité commune de ramener la paix dans la région. Nous avons ainsi décidé de soutenir pleinement la reconstruction du quartier général de Sévaré, au Mali, confirmant notre engagement déterminé aux côtés des pays du G5, pour permettre aux institutions de contrôler pleinement leurs territoires et de lutter contre le terrorisme et les trafics d'êtres humains, d'armes et de drogue. Garantir la sécurité, le développement de la région est également un investissement dans notre propre sécurité." Le [communiqué de presse](#) ainsi qu'un [mémo](#) sur le partenariat de l'UE avec les pays du G5 Sahel sont disponible en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Antitrust: Commission fines four consumer electronics manufacturers for fixing online resale prices

The European Commission fined, in four separate decisions, consumer electronics manufacturers Asus, Denon & Marantz, Philips and Pioneer for imposing fixed or minimum resale prices on their online retailers in breach of EU competition rules. The fines totalling over €111 million were in all four cases reduced due to the companies' cooperation with the Commission. The four manufacturers engaged in so called "fixed or minimum resale price maintenance" (RPM) by restricting the ability of their online retailers to set their own retail prices for widely used consumer electronics products such as kitchen appliances, notebooks and hi-fi products. They intervened particularly with online retailers, who offered their products at low prices. If those retailers did not follow the prices requested by manufacturers, they faced threats or sanctions such as blocking of supplies. These price interventions limited effective price competition between retailers and led to higher prices with an immediate effect on consumers. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "The online commerce market is growing rapidly and is now worth over 500 billion euros in Europe every year. More than half of Europeans now shop online. As a result of the actions taken by these four companies, millions of European consumers faced higher prices for kitchen appliances, hair dryers, notebook computers, headphones and many other products. This is illegal under EU antitrust rules. Our decisions today show that EU competition rules serve to protect consumers where companies stand in the way of more price competition and better choice." A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of joint venture by Kuehne + Nagel and Temasek

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture by Kuehne + Nagel International AG ("K+N") of Switzerland and Temasek Holdings Limited of Singapore. The joint venture will identify and invest in young growing logistics technology companies. K+N is a global logistics company active in all types of freight and related services. Temasek is an investment company

with a broad range of investments in different industries including financial services, telecommunications, media, transportation, energy and others. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given that the main focus of the joint venture's activities will be outside the European Economic Area (EEA). 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.9001](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Stylianides on the end of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo

“The World Health Organisation has today declared the Ebola virus outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo to be over. These are welcome news. Today our thoughts are with the victims and the brave health workers who fought on the frontline against this dangerous virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is testament to our immediate collective action and cooperation that this outbreak did not turn into an enormous epidemic. From the very early stages of the outbreak, the European Union was at the forefront of efforts to treat those affected and to contain the virus. The European Union worked hand-in-hand with the World Health Organisation, the Congolese authorities and international aid organisations to take action. The EU mobilised all the emergency response instruments at our disposal: we supported our humanitarian partners with life-saving interventions, provided logistic support through our humanitarian air service, and deployed experts to the country. Through our Civil Protection Mechanism, we also provided medical equipment, while our satellite mapping system Copernicus produced maps of the affected areas. New vaccines, used in DRC against Ebola, were developed with the help of EU research grants. As the EU Ebola Coordinator, I am very pleased that our rapid and strong collective response helped save lives. As we reflect on the achievement to halt this outbreak, we must continue to remain vigilant and be prepared. Our experience in West Africa in 2015 and DRC this year have shown that there can be no complacency concerning health threats.” The statement is available online [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

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