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Président Juncker en Guyane: le partenariat renforcé avec les régions ultrapériphériques et l'Europe de l'espace au cœur de la visite

Deux jours après la présentation de la nouvelle [stratégie européenne pour les régions ultrapériphériques](#), le président **Juncker**, accompagné de la commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu**, sera en Guyane jeudi 26 et vendredi 27 octobre, où il assistera à la Conférence des Présidents des Régions Ultrapériphériques aux côtés du président de la République française Emmanuel Macron. Jeudi après-midi, à Cayenne, le président Juncker visitera le campus universitaire de Troubiran, qui a bénéficié de la politique de cohésion de l'UE. Vendredi, le président Juncker, aux côtés de la commissaire **Crețu**, visitera des projets financés par des fonds européens et devrait échanger avec des représentants du secteur du bois et de la pêche, secteurs clefs pour l'économie locale. Vendredi également, le président **Juncker** et le président Macron visiteront le Centre Spatial Guyanais à Kourou et rencontreront des jeunes en insertion sur le chantier du lanceur européen Ariane 6. Suivez la visite du président Juncker en Guyane sur [le portail audiovisuel](#) de la Commission européenne. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Italy receives €1.2 billion from the EU Solidarity Fund – advance payments to Greece following recent earthquakes

In the coming days, Italy will receive the €1.2 billion from the [EU Solidarity Fund](#) (EUSF) which the Commission had [proposed](#) in June, following the severe earthquakes that struck the country in 2016 and 2017. This unprecedented amount under the EUSF can be used to support reconstruction operations, help regenerate economic activity and cover the costs of emergency services, temporary accommodations, clean-up operations and protection measures for cultural heritage sites. It was accompanied by additional [EU support measures](#). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“With this disbursement we are delivering on our promise to stand side by side with Italy throughout the reconstruction process. At the request of President Juncker, we are currently also reflecting on how to step up our efforts to help all our Member States deal with increasingly frequent natural disasters. We strive to provide efficient response with emergency support and contribution to long-term reconstruction efforts.”* Also this week, Greece is set to receive a first payment worth €135 912 from the EUSF, after earthquakes hit the islands of Chios and Lesbos in June 2017. This advance was calculated on the basis of the preliminary assessment of the direct damage in the application received from the Greek authorities on 1 September, which found that the financial contribution from the EUSF was likely to amount to €1.35 million. In accordance with EUSF rules, the advance payment amounts to 10% of this sum. Once it has completed the assessment of the application, the Commission will propose a definitive amount of aid, to be approved by the European Parliament and the Council. (For more

information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

The EU steps up humanitarian support to Afghanistan

The European Commission has today released an additional €5 million in life-saving humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan as the number of displaced people and civilian casualties continues to grow. Total EU humanitarian aid for Afghanistan now amounts to €30.5 million in 2017. *“Our new EU funding will reach an estimated 75,000 people and help them meet their most urgent needs, including shelter, food, protection and health care. It will boost our ongoing aid operations in the country, both in government and non-government-held areas. The European Commission will continue to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those most in need. Security challenges for humanitarian workers to deliver aid remain a challenge, full humanitarian access is needed,”* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**. The Commission continues to provide humanitarian assistance to conflict and disaster-affected communities, including support to refugees returning from Pakistan and from Iran. Today’s allocation brings the total EU aid funding for the country in the last decade to €756 million. A factsheet on the EU’s humanitarian support in Afghanistan is available [here](#). (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

2,7 milliards d’euros attendus pour Erasmus+ en 2018

La Commission européenne a publié aujourd’hui son [appel à propositions 2018](#) pour [Erasmus+](#), le programme de l’Union européenne pour la mobilité et la coopération en matière d’éducation, de formation, de jeunesse et de sport. Avec son budget annuel qui devrait augmenter de 200 millions d’euros, Erasmus+ offrira un nombre de perspectives sans précédent pour les personnes et les organisations en Europe et au-delà. M. Tibor **Navracsics**, commissaire européen chargé de l’éducation, de la culture, de la jeunesse et du sport, a déclaré ce qui suit: *«Je suis heureux qu’en 2018 l’Union européenne s’apprête à investir 2,7 milliards d’euros dans le programme Erasmus+ afin de soutenir des projets éducatifs d’une grande importance et d’offrir aux jeunes Européens des centaines de milliers de possibilités d’études ou de formation à l’étranger. Les célébrations marquant le 30^e anniversaire d’Erasmus tout au long de 2017 ont mis en évidence l’effet positif de cette réussite de l’UE sur la vie des citoyens dans toute l’Europe. Comme le président Juncker l’a souligné en juin, chaque euro investi dans Erasmus+ est un investissement dans l’avenir d’un jeune et de l’idée européenne. Je me réjouis également du soutien de plusieurs chefs d’État et de gouvernement en faveur de l’idée selon laquelle le programme Erasmus+ devrait être bien plus ambitieux à l’avenir»*. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 2 296 70 83; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

State aid: Commission approves Hungary’s €131 million investment aid to MOL petrochemical plant

The European Commission has found Hungary's €131 million investment aid to MOL Petrolkémia Zrt plant, for its existing plant in Tiszaújváros, to be in line with EU State aid rules. Tiszaújváros is located in the Northern Hungary region, an area eligible for regional aid under the EU Treaty. The project is expected to create new direct jobs in Tiszaújváros. Thus, the Hungarian support will contribute to the development of the Northern Hungary region, whilst preserving competition in the Single Market. In particular, the investment aid granted by Hungary will support MOL's plans to invest in total €874 million to introduce in Tiszaújváros the production of polyols and propylene glycols (chemicals used in the production of for example certain foams, in food processing, personal care products and pharmaceuticals etc.). The Commission assessed the aid measure under the [Guidelines on Regional State Aid](#) for 2014-2020, which enable Member States to support economic development and employment in the EU's less developed regions and to foster regional cohesion in the Single Market. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#), [HU](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Antitrust: Commission closes car air-conditioning refrigerant investigation

The European Commission has decided to close its antitrust investigation concerning the cooperation between Honeywell and DuPont (now Chemours, a spin-off unit of DuPont) on the production of a new refrigerant for use in car air-conditioning systems (R-1234yf). On [21 October 2014](#), the Commission adopted a Statement of Objections against both companies voicing its preliminary concerns that the cooperation between Honeywell and DuPont for the production of R-1234yf may have limited the product's availability and technical development. Today's closure decision has been taken after careful assessment of all the evidence in this case, together with the various submissions of the parties and other interested third parties. Furthermore, on 12 April, 18 April and 6 July 2017 respectively, the three complainants in this case, Arkema, Mexichem and the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA), withdrew their complaints. The Commission will continue to monitor closely the chemicals market, including for the R-1234yf refrigerant. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

State aid: Commission approves sixth prolongation of Irish credit union restructuring scheme

The European Commission has found the prolongation until 30 April 2018 of an Irish scheme aimed at restructuring credit unions, to be in line with EU state aid rules, and in particular the [2013 Banking Communication](#). The objective of the scheme is to underpin the stability and long-term viability of credit unions and the credit union sector in Ireland at large. Restructuring involves merging weaker and stronger credit unions, providing, if necessary, a capital injection to make up any shortfall in the capital reserve requirements of the merged credit union. Stabilisation involves

assisting fundamentally viable credit unions that have temporarily slipped below the regulatory reserve requirements. The Commission found that the measure ensures that the beneficiaries become viable in the long-term through restructuring or merging with sound credit unions, and that they contribute to the cost of restructuring. Moreover, the impact on competition is limited because credit unions are small and do business only with members. The Commission initially [authorised the scheme in October 2014](#). It was subsequently prolonged five times, the last time in May 2017. Until now, the Irish authorities have managed to restructure credit unions without granting any aid under this scheme. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.49194. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

State aid: Commission approves public support to promote combined transport in Italy

The European Commission has found the prolongation of an Italian scheme to encourage the shift of freight from road to rail to be in line with EU state aid rules. The measure will promote an environmentally friendlier transport mode, and thus further EU environmental and transport objectives, whilst maintaining competition in the Single Market. The aid takes the form of a subsidy to railway companies performing freight services. The subsidy will offset rail infrastructure charges that road transport operations are not subject to. The original scheme [was approved in December 2016](#) and allowed public support to be granted until 31 December 2017. Today's decision endorses the prolongation of the scheme for an additional period of 2 years, from 1 January 2018 until 31 December 2019, without increasing the original budget of €200 million. The Commission concluded that the scheme is compatible with EU state aid rules under the [Railway Guidelines](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.48759. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

State aid: Commission approves €650 million Austrian public funding to promote shift of freight from road to combined transport

The European Commission has found the prolongation of two Austrian schemes to be in line with EU State aid rules: (i) the first promotes a shift of freight transport from road to other types of transport, such as rail and inland waterways; (ii) the second, supports better connections between railways and transfer terminals. Both measures will support environmentally friendlier transport modes, and thus further EU environmental and transport objectives, while maintaining competition in the Single Market. According to the evaluation of the two initial schemes, the measures have effectively contributed to transferring freight transport from road to rail during the past five years. The two prolonged schemes will cover the period 2018 to 2022 and have a total budget of €650 million. The Commission concluded that the schemes are compatible with EU State aid rules, in particular the [Commission Guidelines on State aid for railway undertakings](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case numbers SA.48390 and SA.48485. *(For more information:*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and Business Forum in preparation of the November Summit

Two events for Civil Society and Business in the [Eastern Partnership](#) will take place today until the end of the week in Tallinn, Estonia in preparation of the [5th Eastern Partnership Summit](#) (Brussels, 24 November). The [Eastern Partnership Civil Society Conference](#), starting already today, will serve as a platform for representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the EU Member States to discuss better governance, dialogue between governments and civil society, the use of technology to promote government transparency, and inclusive approaches to economic development. Ahead of the Forum, the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini**, said: *“Civil society representatives are voices against corruption and for transparency and are an essential force in our daily work on so many issues, from fighting violence against women, to improving the media environment.”* Tomorrow, on the same day the [4th Eastern Partnership Business Forum](#) will gather more than 500 business leaders, government officials and policy makers from the European Union and Eastern Partner countries to debate on the [‘Digital Economy: Innovative Platform for Transparent Borderless Business’](#). Ahead of the visit, Johannes **Hahn** Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: *“Through the [EU4Business initiative](#) the EU is providing increasing support for small businesses to grow, export, innovate and adapt to a digital economy.”* Press material summarising the outcomes of the fora will be available [here](#). Videos and photos of the visit of Commissioner Hahn attending the fora will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski +32 229 89359; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger takes the discussion on EU’s next multiannual budget to Romania and Bulgaria

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** in charge of Budget and Human Resources is visiting Romania on 26 October and Bulgaria on 27 October as part of his tour across EU Member States aimed to gather views on the future of EU finances and the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). In Romania, the Commissioner will meet with the country’s President Mr Klaus Iohannis, the Prime Minister Mr Mihai Tudose as well as with Mr Ionuț Mișa, Minister of Public Finance, Mr Victor Negrescu, Minister of European Affairs, Mr Marius Nica, Minister of EU Funds and Ms Elena Georgescu, state secretary. Mr Oettinger will visit the Romanian Parliament and speak with members of the Budget, Finance and European Affairs Committees of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Commissioner **Oettinger** will also deliver a keynote speech at the conference “10 years of EU membership: from cohesion to convergence” in the National Bank of Romania and discuss the challenges ahead of the EU budget at a [Citizens’ Dialogue](#) event in the Bucharest University of Economic Studies.

In Bulgaria, Commissioner Oettinger will meet with Prime Minister Mr Boyko Borissov, Ms Ekaterina Zaharieva, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Vladislav Goranov, Minister of Finance and Ms Lilyana Pavlova, Minister for Bulgaria's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Commissioner will also speak with Bulgaria's President Mr Rumen Radev. Commissioner **Oettinger** will visit the Bulgarian Parliament and meet with members of the Committees on Budget and Finance and on European Affairs and Oversight of the European Funds. The Commissioner will also have a discussion with students from the Sofia University. The meetings in Romania and Bulgaria are part of the Commissioner's [tour](#) aimed to gather the broadest possible views on the future of EU finances – #MFFtour27. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#), also available in [Romanian](#) and [Bulgarian](#). Stakeholder views will be taken into account when preparing the next MFF, to be presented [in May 2018](#). (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)

Commissioners Avramopoulos and Jourová represent the Commission at the Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria

On Thursday and Friday, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** and Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Věra **Jourová** will attend the annual Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum in Sofia. On Thursday Commissioner Jourová will discuss justice reform and judicial cooperation with Justice Ministers from the Western Balkans. The meeting of Justice Ministers will be concluded by a press conference at 17:45 CET (available on [EbS](#)) On Friday, Commissioner Avramopoulos will join Home Affairs Ministers to discuss current challenges related to migration, border management and security. A press conference will take place after the meeting at around 12:00 CET (available on [EbS](#)). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253)

Migration and Security: Commissioner Avramopoulos in Sofia, Bulgaria

Ahead of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in Sofia, Bulgaria, where he will meet the President of Bulgaria Rumen Radev as well as Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, Vice-President Iliana Iotova and Minister of Interior Valentin Radev. Discussions will focus on migration and security. A meeting is also scheduled with Members of the Bulgarian National Assembly. A joint press briefing with Minister of Interior Radev will take place at 09:00 CET (available on [EBS](#)). The Commissioner will also participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) to discuss migration and security in the EU. The event can be followed [live here](#) from 15:00 CET. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423)

Commissioner Navracsics to close European Youth Conference in Tallinn

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will

be in Tallinn tomorrow to address the participants of the [European Youth Conference](#) and discuss the role of young people in shaping the future of Europe as well as youth initiatives such as the European Solidarity Corps. The event, organised by the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU, has the motto "Youth in Europe: What's Next?". The participants – young people, senior civil servants and representatives of EU Member States as well as relevant stakeholders – will discuss the future of EU cooperation in the youth field after 2018, including the future Structured Dialogue. The latter enables an exchange between young people and decision-makers in order to implement the priorities of EU youth policy cooperation and to make young people's voices heard. The European Youth Conference is a headline event of each EU presidency. The Commission intends to present its proposals for the future EU Youth Strategy before summer 2018. (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 2 296 70 83; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184*)

Commissioner King in the U.S. to discuss counter-terrorism and cybersecurity

Security Union Commissioner Julian **King** is in the U.S. from today until Friday, 27 October. This afternoon Commissioner King will be in New York where he will meet Vladimir Voronokov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, and John Miller, Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Police Department. On Thursday, the Commissioner will travel to Washington D.C. where he will discuss issues relating to terrorism and cybersecurity with Gina Haspel, Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Tom Bossert, White House Homeland Security Advisor. Later in the afternoon, Commissioner King will speak at the German Marshall Fund event on "Europe's Security Union: Unifying the fight against terrorism and cyber aggression". The event will take place at 16:30 local time and will be streamed live on [Facebook](#). On Friday, Commissioner **King** will visit the Terrorist Screening Centre (TSC) where he will meet Russ Travers, Deputy Director of National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC). In the afternoon, following their meeting at the [G7 Interior Ministers'](#) he will meet Elaine Duke, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). (*For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

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