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Delivering on commitments: EU to adopt new programmes to protect migrants and support return and reintegration in Africa

The European Union is adopting today new programmes under the [European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#), directly following up on the commitments made by the Joint African Union – European Union – United Nations Task Force to address the migrant situation in Libya. The new programmes complement ongoing efforts of the European Union to protect migrants and provide them with sustainable reintegration options in Libya, along the Central Mediterranean Route and in Ethiopia. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *“The EU stands by the many African migrants and refugees in need. With these new measures we continue to save and protect lives and tackle the root causes of migration. Because we also want to support people in improving their lives in their home countries and look into the future with hope. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa allows us to swiftly address the needs of people in despair, and together with our partners, we focus on protecting and supporting return and reintegration of especially vulnerable migrants and refugees.”* Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**, affirmed: *“With today’s new programmes we are delivering on the commitments made in the framework of the joint [EU-AU-UN Task Force](#) and increase our already significant on-going support to those in need in Libya. We are actively working to save lives, protect people, as well as offering humane alternatives for people to leave the country and return back home. Equally important, we are working on new measures to support Libyan municipalities enhance the delivery of basic social services and improve local governance for both local and migrant population”.* A [press release will be made available here](#) shortly. (Pour plus d’information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076; Alceo Smerili – Tel. +32 229-64887)

EU maritime strategy in the Atlantic spurs € 6 billion of investments in environmental protection, innovation, connectivity and social inclusion

Half way through the implementation of the [EU’s action plan for a maritime strategy in the Atlantic](#), an [independent study](#) finds it has spurred over 1200 new maritime projects and nearly € 6 billion of investments so far. Most projects target environmental protection and innovation, as well as improved connectivity and social inclusion. Examples include the development of marine renewable energy in France or port facilities in Spain and Ireland, improved tourism infrastructure in Wales, as well as setting up broadband connectivity in remote areas of Scotland or remote health monitoring in Ireland. A number of projects financed by the EU’s action plan help facilitate the clean energy transition, as put forward by the Juncker Commission [‘Clean Energy for all Europeans’](#), and contributes to the creation of the [Energy Union](#). Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner responsible for environment, maritime affairs and fisheries, said: *“Identifying investment priorities with the involvement of*

regions and business can help generate sustainable growth in our coastal areas and drive forward the blue economy. With the action plan, the community of stakeholders in the Atlantic Ocean area has grown stronger and better at raising funds for marine and maritime projects". The Atlantic maritime action plan was launched in 2013 to boost the maritime economy of its five Atlantic States, (Portugal, Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Ireland), and their outermost regions and funding comes from the EU (such as from the European Regional Development Fund, Horizon2020), the European Investment Bank as well as national, regional and private sources. By mid-2017, hundreds of initiatives had cropped up and started contributing to these goals and funding. The European Commission will use the results of the independent study – and of the [public consultation](#) that was held last year – to work with Member States to further improve the plan's performance between now and 2020. More information [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 2 29-56185, Iris Petsa – Tel.: [+32 229-93321](#))

Des films soutenus par l'Union Européenne ont remporté l'Ours d'Or et deux Ours d'Argent à la Berlinale

Parmi les films primés lors de la 68ème cérémonie des Berlinale Awards samedi dernier, deux films ont été soutenus par le programme [Europe Créative MEDIA](#) de soutien au développement et à la distribution du cinéma européen. ["Touch Me Not"](#) d'Adina Pintilie a reçu l'Ours d'Or du Meilleur Film, tandis que ["Las Herederas" \(The Heiresses\)](#) de Marcelo Martinessi a remporté le Prix Alfred Bauer de l'Ours d'Argent, qui récompense un film qui ouvre de nouvelles perspectives, et l'Ours d'Argent de la Meilleure Actrice pour la paraguayenne Ana Brun. Le premier long métrage d'Adina Pintilie, ["Touch Me Not"](#), a également reçu le prix du meilleur premier long métrage de GWFF ([Société pour l'administration du droit du cinéma et de la télévision](#)). Cette coproduction entre la Roumanie, l'Allemagne, la République tchèque, la Bulgarie et la France a été soutenue par le programme MEDIA dans sa phase de développement. ["Las Herederas" \(The Heiresses\)](#) est une coproduction du Paraguay, de l'Uruguay, de l'Allemagne, du Brésil, de la Norvège et de la France et a été soutenue par MEDIA via les fonds de coproduction internationaux. Au total, 18 films projetés à la Berlinale ont été développés ou distribués avec un soutien de 895 000 euros provenant du programme [Europe Créative MEDIA](#). Le programme et la liste des intervenants au Forum européen du film sont disponibles [ici](#); plus d'informations sur le programme MEDIA sont disponibles [ici](#) et plus de détails sur les films soutenus par l'UE qui ont remporté l'Ours d'Or et deux Ours d'Argent sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

Commission organises expert workshop on how to tackle fake news and disinformation online

Tomorrow, the European Commission will receive around 100 experts coming from academia, journalism and the public sector to discuss future actions to tackle the spread of fake news and disinformation online. The discussions of this colloquium will enrich the Commission's reflection on this complex and

global issue. Since last November, the Commission has been [consulting](#) citizens, online platforms, news organisations, researchers and public authorities to gather views on how to define a European approach on this phenomenon. In January a [High Level Expert Group](#) on fake news started its work to help develop a strategy to tackle fake news and disinformation online. The results of the public consultation, the findings of High-Level Group, an upcoming Eurobarometer and the discussions of tomorrow's workshop will feed into the initiatives against fake news, which the Commission will present in spring 2018. The debates of the colloquium will be [webstreamed](#). More information on fake news and disinformation online can be found [here](#).

(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de France

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du «Thym de Provence» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Le «Thym de Provence» est, comme son nom l'indique, cultivé en Provence dans le sud-est de la France, et se caractérise par un arôme et un goût puissant et piquant comparé aux autres thyms dit «doux». Les producteurs de cette herbe ont une longue tradition de cueillette du thym sauvage, toujours pratiquée, et de procédés anciens de séchage, triage et confection de bouquets de thym. La présence du thym en Provence, et les particularités aromatiques et gustatives du «Thym de Provence» sont souvent citées dans la littérature, de Pline l'Ancien au Ier siècle jusqu'à Marcel Pagnol. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1420 produits déjà protégés, dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [DOOR](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). *(pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)*

State aid: Commission approves €70 million public support scheme for electric buses and charging infrastructure in Germany

The European Commission has found German plans to support the purchase of electric buses and related recharging infrastructure by public transport operators to be in line with EU state aid rules. The measure contributes to reducing CO₂ emissions while limiting distortions of competition. The scheme set up by Germany with a budget of €70 million will support public transport operators until the end of 2021, covering the additional costs for: i) the acquisition of **electric and plug-in-hybrid buses** rather than conventional diesel buses; and ii) the construction of the **related electric charging infrastructure** required for the operation of these buses. The Commission considers that it incentivises bus operators to invest in this type of vehicle and in the necessary charging infrastructure. The measure is also in line with the [European Strategy for low-emission mobility](#), and its support for the move towards zero-emission vehicles in cities and for creating a market for such vehicles. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *“This scheme is another positive example of how to fight global warming. In line with the EU environmental goals, it will give public transport operators an incentive to invest in low or zero emissions vehicles with the clear objective of reducing CO₂ emissions and improving air*

quality". A full press release is available in [DE](#), [EN](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

State aid: Commission publishes the non-confidential version of the final negative decision concluding that Luxembourg granted undue tax benefits worth around €250 million to Amazon

Today, the Commission has published the non-confidential version of the [final negative decision](#) adopted on 4 October 2017 concluding that Luxembourg granted undue tax benefits to Amazon of around €250 million. This is illegal under EU state aid rules, because it allowed Amazon to pay four times less tax than other local companies subject to the same national tax rules. The decision is available under the case number [SA.38944](#) on the [competition](#) website. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of a joint venture by Michelin North America and Sumitomo Corporation of Americas

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Michelin North America, Inc. ("MNAI") and Sumitomo Corporation of Americas ("SCOA"), both of the US. The joint venture will combine MNAI's and SCOA's automotive tyre distribution and installation businesses. It will mainly be active in the US and Mexico. MNAI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Michelin group, manufactures and sells tyres for a wide range of vehicles in the US, Canada and Mexico. SCOA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Corporation, is active in a wide range of industries, including the sale and retail installation of replacement automotive tyres. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of its minimal foreseen activity in 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.8803](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Malmström participates in Citizens' dialogue on global trade in Sofia, Bulgaria

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** travels today to Sofia, Bulgaria, where she will take part in a [Citizens' dialogue](#). The session entitled "Global trade – is the EU a leader?" will be for the Commissioner the first occasion this year to engage with the civil society in this format outside Brussels. She will exchange views on the EU's current role on the global trade scene, as well as the recent and upcoming EU trade agreements. The citizen's dialogue will be [broadcasted](#) by a Bulgarian TV channel. The event will be held ahead of the informal [Trade ministers' meeting](#) to be held in

Sofia tomorrow, a usual occasion for the Commissioner to consult trade ministers on most important ongoing trade initiatives led by the Commission. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Commissaires Jourová et King participent à la Conférence sur la radicalisation dans les prisons

Demain, mardi 27 février, la Commissaire en charge de la Justice, Consommateurs et Egalité des Genres de l'UE, Věra **Jourová**, ouvrira la [Conférence](#) sur la radicalisation dans les prisons, organisée par la Commission européenne et la Présidence bulgare de l'UE. La conférence rassemble les experts en matière de prison et de probation, et notamment les participants aux projets financés par la Commission dans ce domaine. La Commissaire **Jourová** a déclaré: *“Le poison de la radicalisation se répand à travers l'Europe menant à des attaques terroristes et des attaques contre les valeurs européennes. La propagation de ces idées se fait par deux voies principalement: les prisons et internet. L'action au niveau européen a clairement une valeur ajoutée; d'une part en proposant des solutions européennes contre le contenu terroriste en ligne, et d'autre part, en mobilisant les experts et finançant des projets dans les prisons”*. Julian **King**, Commissaire en charge de l'union de la sécurité, donnera le discours de clôture de la conférence. Retrouvez l'intégralité du discours en anglais de la Commissaire **Jourová** et du Commissaire **King** [ici](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Ernst Tove: +32 2 298 67 64; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

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