

## Daily News 26 / 03 / 2018

### **President Juncker participates in EU-Turkey Leaders' Meeting in Varna, Bulgaria**

Today the Leaders' Meeting on EU-Turkey relations is taking place in Varna (Bulgaria). Hosted by Prime Minister Borissov, representing the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU, President **Juncker**, President Tusk and President Erdoğan will meet for a working dinner to discuss all aspects of current and future EU-Turkey relations. The main points of discussion will be cooperation in energy, security, the fight against terrorism and migration management and the EU's assistance for refugees in Turkey as the EU-Turkey Statement continues to deliver results. Earlier this month, two years on from the launch of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, the Commission proposed to mobilise the second €3 billion tranche after the first part of the Facility was fully committed and contracted by the end of 2017. The visa liberalisation process and the inextricably linked domestic political situation and security matters in Turkey will also feature high on the agenda. The meeting takes place after European Leaders condemned Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea during the European Council last week as undermining regional stability and security. Energy cooperation will also be prominent in the leaders' discussion where EU leaders will once again stress that good neighbourly relations with all EU Member States are key for an enhanced energy security. Finally, counterterrorism actions and cooperation will also be part of this evening's dialogue. Ahead of the summit, following the European Council meeting last week where Turkey featured high on the agenda, President **Juncker** said: *"The differences in views between the EU and Turkey are many. It will be a frank and open debate where we will not hide our differences but where we will seek to improve our cooperation"*. A press conference will follow this evening, timing to be confirmed. Watch live on EbS [here](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382)

### **Commission launches safeguard investigation into steel products to prevent trade diversion into the EU [Updated on 26/03/2018 at 15:30]**

The European Commission today initiated a safeguard investigation on imports of a number of steel products into the EU. The safeguard investigation is one of the three types of measures the Commission announced in response to the US restrictions on steel and aluminium. It concerns products of all origin and its opening does not prejudice its results. However, the procedure can also result in imposition of import tariffs or quotas that would shield EU producers from excessive imports, if this proves necessary. The surveillance system for imports of steel – in place since March 2016 – has provided evidence that imports of certain steel products have been increasing. This trend may be even stronger now that the access to the US market has been limited and steel products from other parts of the world previously destined

to the US may be redirected to Europe, disturbing the market and skewing prices. The investigation launched today covers 26 steel product categories. It will in principle be concluded within 9 months; should provisional measures prove necessary, they can be adopted at short notice. The Commission continues to further examine the market situation and is prepared to react as appropriate. Safeguards are one of trade defence tools recognised by the World Trade Organisation. The EU investigation procedure follows strictly multilateral rules in this respect. *(For more information: Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185)*

### **State aid: Commission concludes Dutch guarantee scheme to support fast growing medium and large-companies involves no aid**

The European Commission has found that the “Extended Growth Facility” (also known as “GO”), a Dutch guarantee scheme to support medium and large companies, does not involve State aid. The objective of the GO scheme is to improve access to finance for companies with a considerable growth potential. Under the scheme, the Dutch State guarantees 50% of new loans to companies, for up to 8 years. It will run until the end of 2023, with the maximum annual amount of loan guarantees fixed at €400 million. Loans guaranteed can range from €1.5 million to €150 million, for which a guarantee fee is paid to the Dutch State by the banks issuing the loans. The Dutch authorities expect that this scheme will encourage banks to issue these loans on a larger scale than currently. The Commission found that the guarantees give the Dutch State an appropriate remuneration level, ensuring that the scheme is self-financing, including administrative costs and the remuneration of virtual capital. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the Dutch State guarantee scheme does not constitute State aid to the banks, nor to the borrowing companies. A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [NL](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

### **Mergers: Commission approves joint venture between IBM and Maersk**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed creation of a joint venture between International Business Machines (IBM) of the US and A.P. Møller Mærsk group (Maersk) of Denmark. The joint venture will engage in the development and commercialisation of a new digitisation solution intended to provide end to end shipment visibility and document management for global trade. IBM is active in the development, production, and marketing of information technology solutions, comprising software, systems and IT services. Maersk is active in container shipping, terminal services, harbour towage, logistics and energy. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the limited overlap between the joint venture’s digitisation solution and 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.8742](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe by Platinum Equity Group**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe -a business formed by Wyndham Vacation Rentals UK of the UK, Landal GreenParks of the Netherlands and Novasol of Denmark- by Platinum Equity Group of the US. Wyndham Vacation Rentals Europe is active in the serviced holiday rentals sector. Platinum Equity Group specialises in the merger, acquisition and operation of companies that provide services and solutions to customers in a broad range of businesses, including information technology, telecommunications, logistics, metal services, manufacturing and distribution. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited impact it would have on the market. 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.8825](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Tekfor by KKR**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over Tekfor Global Holdings Ltd of the UK by KKR & Co. L.P. of the US. Tekfor manufactures and supplies components and assemblies for automotive transmissions, engines, drivelines, fasteners, and other special applications. KKR is a global investment firm which offers alternative asset management services to public and private market investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Tekfor is not active in the same product and geographic market as the markets in which KKR and its portfolio companies are engaged, or in any market that is downstream or upstream from the latter. 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.8763](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Eurostat: International trade in goods in 2017: A third of EU trade is with the United States and China. At Member State level, trade within the EU largely prevails**

In 2017, the United States (€631 billion, or 16.9% of total EU trade in goods) and China (€573 bn, or 15.3%) continued to be the two main goods trading partners of the European Union (EU), well ahead of Switzerland (€261 bn, or 7.0%), Russia (€231 bn, or 6.2%), Turkey (€154 bn, or 4.1%) and Japan (€129 bn, or 3.5%). However, the trends observed over time differ for these top trading partners of the EU. After recording a significant and almost continuous fall until 2011, the share of the United States in EU total trade in goods had increased to nearly 18% in 2015 and 2016, before decreasing

again slightly in 2017. The share of China has almost tripled since 2000, rising from 5.5% to 15.3% in 2017. The share of Russia in total EU trade had been decreasing since 2012 from nearly 10% to around 6% in 2016, and slightly picked up in 2017. The share of trade with Japan has fallen by more than a half since 2000 – from 7.5% in 2000 to 3.5% in 2017. As for Switzerland and Turkey, their respective shares in trade remained relatively unchanged over the entire period. A Eurostat press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Vice-President Andrus Ansip and Commissioner Thyssen participate in G7 Employment and Innovation Ministerial Meeting in Canada**

Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** will represent the European Union at the 2018 G7 Employment and Innovation Ministerial Meeting. The meeting, taking place in Montreal, Canada on 27 and 28 March, will be the occasion to discuss how G7 economies prepare for the jobs of the future. G7 Employment Ministers will discuss key topics such as the importance of partnerships with private sector, inclusive growth and supporting workers through transitions. Vice-President **Ansip** is co-chairing on Tuesday the session on artificial intelligence. He will give a speech on the importance of creating the right conditions for the development and use of new technologies: in Europe, this means the creation of a Digital Single Market. The Vice-President and Commissioner **Thyssen** will both speak on Wednesday in the joint session of Innovation and Employment Ministers focussing on the impact of transformative technologies on the labour market, the role of industry in supporting workers and policies and programmes for the jobs of the future. Commissioner **Thyssen** will formally present the European perspective on inclusive growth, stressing the importance of investing in people, a principle that is at the heart of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). Representatives of social partners, engagement groups (Women7 and Youth7) and heads of International Labour Organization (ILO) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will also contribute to the working sessions of the meeting. On the sidelines of the event, Vice-President **Ansip** will meet Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Masaki Ogushi and Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination Masahiko Tominaga as well as Michael Kratsios, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy U.S. Chief Technology Officer. Commissioner **Thyssen** will hold bilateral meetings with French Minister of Labour Muriel Pénicaud, German Minister of Labour Hubertus Heil and Canadian Minister for Families, Children and Social Development Jean-Yves Duclos. Vice-President **Ansip** and Commissioner **Thyssen** will in addition visit Hec Montréal business school to meet local startups on innovation, skills and youth employment. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 55040; Sara

Soumillion– Tel.: +32 229 67094)

## **Une Europe qui protège: le Commissaire King participera à un exercice de coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme**

Le Commissaire Julian **King** sera demain à Dunkerque, en France, où il assistera à un exercice de coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme organisé par les autorités françaises avec des observateurs britanniques, belges et néerlandaises. Exprimant sa solidarité avec les victimes de l'attaque de Trèbes, Julian King a dit: *"J'aimerais adresser mes condoléances aux victimes et aux familles et proches des victimes de la terrible attaque terroriste qui a à nouveau frappé la France vendredi dernier à Trèbes et Carcassonne. Et je voudrais également saluer le courage extraordinaire du gendarme qui a pris la place d'un des otages. Au niveau européen, nous continuons notre action en soutien aux Etats membres pour renforcer ensemble notre combat contre le terrorisme."* L'exercice, simulant une attaque terroriste sur un ferry touristique, vise à mieux renforcer la coopération transfrontalière dans le domaine de la lutte contre le terrorisme et à préparer les forces de l'ordre de la région à une telle éventualité. Cet exercice s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large des efforts de l'UE pour renforcer notre résilience face aux attaques terroristes. En octobre 2017, la Commission a présenté un paquet antiterroriste qui listait un ensemble de mesures à prendre au niveau de l'Union ainsi que des États membres pour renforcer la sécurité de l'UE et de ses citoyens. À la suite de l'exercice, le Commissaire King discutera de la lutte contre la radicalisation et la coopération police-douane avec les autorités locales à Lille. Un point presse aura lieu suivant l'exercice. Pour plus d'informations sur les efforts de la Commission pour construire une Europe qui protège, veuillez consulter la fiche d'information [en ligne](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 2 296 74 56; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

## **Le Commissaire Hogan participe à un dialogue citoyen en Belgique sur la future politique agricole commune**

Le Commissaire à l'agriculture et au développement rural, Phil **Hogan** participe aujourd'hui à Wuustwezel en Belgique à un [dialogue citoyen](#) sur la future politique agricole commune. Le Commissaire **Hogan** répondra aux questions des participants aux côtés de M. Joris Relaes, administrateur général de l'institut de recherche pour l'agriculture et la pêche du gouvernement flamand (ILVO), Mme Kirsten Haanraads, responsable des affaires publiques de l'association Natuurmonumenten, M. Hans Huijbers, Président de ZLTO, une organisation représentant des agriculteurs et horticulteurs, et M. Pieter Verhelst, membre du conseil d'administration du Boerenbond. Depuis la présentation des [orientations de la Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation](#) en novembre dernier, le Commissaire **Hogan** a pris part à de nombreux dialogues citoyens pour écouter les points de vue et attentes des citoyens et parties prenantes et répondre à leurs questions. Les dialogues

citoyens sont une caractéristique régulière du travail quotidien de la Commission Juncker. Depuis le début du mandat, plus de 130 dialogues ont eu lieu dans plus de 80 villes. *(Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario- Tél.: +32 229 56 172, Clémence Robin – Tél.: +32 229 52509)*

### **Commissioner Andriukaitis in Italy**

On 27 March, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and food safety will be in Italy. In Milan he will hold a meeting with the representatives of the Italian Observatory of Mediterranean Diet, attend the Inauguration Ceremony at San Raffaele University and visit the Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico to partake in a meeting with the European Reference Networks. Commissioner will then visit Turin to participate in a Citizens' Dialogue at the University of Turin that will be webstreamed [here](#). *"I am looking forward to engage in a dialogue in Turin about health and food safety, issues that are very close to citizens' hearts. Moreover open discussions are key to bring people into the heart of debates over our common future. The point of democracy is indeed to be able to get together and exchange views",* he said ahead of the visit. *(For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)*

### **Commissioner Navracsics travels to Bulgaria for cultural heritage events**

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, on Monday, 26 March, to open a conference on ["Cultural Heritage: for a more Sustainable Europe"](#), organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU and the European Commission. The Commissioner will highlight the fact that culture and cultural heritage are high on the EU agenda, as we celebrate the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#), and as discussions on a new EU Agenda for Culture and the funding of cultural initiatives in the post-2020 budgetary period are ongoing. During the conference, Commissioner **Navracsics** will also participate in the presentation of the [European Heritage Label](#) to the nine new sites recently awarded the title for celebrating or symbolising European ideals, values, history and integration. The [press release](#) on the launch of the European Year of Cultural Heritage as well as the [Eurobarometer results](#) on the cultural heritage are available online. Plovdiv will be a European [Capital of Culture](#) in 2019. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tél.: +32 229 56184)*

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