

Daily News 26 / 06 / 2018

Trade barriers: EU removes record number in response to surge in protectionism

The annual [report](#) on Trade and Investment Barriers, released today, shows that the European Commission eliminated in 2017 the highest number ever of trade barriers faced by EU companies doing business abroad. European exporters reported a major increase in protectionism in 2017. Commenting on the report, Trade Commissioner Cecilia **Malmström** said: *“As the world’s largest and most accessible market, the EU is determined to ensure that foreign markets remain equally open to our firms and products. Given the recent rise in protectionism in many parts of the world, our daily work to remove trade barriers has become even more important. Ensuring that our companies have access to foreign markets is at the heart of our trade policy. Today’s report also underlines that effective solutions can be found within the international rulebook. As protectionism grows, EU enforcement of the rules must follow suit.”* Thanks to the EU’s enhanced Market Access Strategy, 45 obstacles were lifted in 2017 – more than twice as many as in 2016. The barriers removed spanned across 13 key EU export and investment sectors, including aircraft, automotive, ceramics, ICT & electronics, machinery, pharma, medical devices, textiles, leather, agri-food, steel, paper, and services. The report also shows that 67 new barriers were recorded in 2017, taking the total tally of existing obstacles to 396 worldwide. This confirms the worrying protectionist trend identified in previous years. China displayed the largest increase in new barriers in 2017, followed by Russia, South Africa, India and Turkey. The Report on Trade and Investment Barriers has been published annually since the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis. In its *“Trade for All”* strategy, the Commission has made enforcement of trade rules a top priority. For more information and specific examples see the [press release](#), the [factsheet](#) and a [case study](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

The future asylum reform: designed to address both primary and secondary movements

The reform of EU asylum rules initiated by the Commission in 2015 are designed to ensure humane and dignified treatment of asylum seekers, simplified and shortened asylum procedures, as well as stricter rules to combat abuse. The key objectives of the reforms include both stopping secondary movements and ensuring solidarity for Member States of first entry. With discussions ahead of the European Council focusing on how no Member State should be left alone or put under disproportionate pressure be it from primary or secondary movements, the European Commission has today set out in factsheet how the future reform would contribute to both objectives. Read the factsheet [here](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423)

Better drinking water in Croatia thanks to Cohesion Policy funds

€63.6 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) is invested to upgrade the water supply system in 14 towns in the Eastern suburb of Zagreb. The project includes the construction of a new water well, new transmission pipelines in the town of Kosnica and the construction or rehabilitation of almost 400 km of distribution network. As a result of this EU investment, around 30,000 inhabitants in this Zagreb county area will have new access to the water distribution network, thanks to almost 9000 new household connections. The rehabilitation of existing parts of the network will benefit over 7000 users, who will have access to better drinking water. Commissioner for regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“Safe and good drinking water is essential for people’s health and quality of life. This project, in the wider context of 30 years of EU action for safe drinking water policies, is a perfect example of a Europe that protects. A few days ahead of the Croatian EU membership’s 5-years anniversary, it is also a beautiful illustration of an EU that cares and works for the well-being of Croatian people.”* This project should be completed in December 2022. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission welcomes the adoption of new EU aviation safety rules

EU ministers today formally approved the revision of the EU aviation safety regulation. This was the last remaining step for the file to be formally adopted. The new rules will ensure safe, secure and environmentally friendly aviation for EU citizens and provide the European aviation industry with an effective and balanced legal framework. Most notably, the regulation establishes the first ever EU-wide framework for drones. Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said: *“The European ministers have just approved new EU rules to maintain the highest possible aviation safety standards. They are modern and flexible, increasing efficiency and bringing down costs. This means greater competitiveness and less administration for businesses and users alike. It will also establish, for the first time ever EU-wide rules for drones, ensuring a safe, secure and clean development for the years to come! The EU can only lead globally if it has Regulation that is fit for purpose.”* The new EU aviation safety rules are a major deliverable of the [Commission’s Aviation Strategy for Europe](#) whose core objective is to support the competitiveness of the EU’s aviation industry and reinforce its global leadership. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 [6 91 43](#))

Digital Single Market: Commission welcomes Council’s support to boost supercomputing infrastructure in Europe

The Commission welcomed the Council’s decision to support its plans to invest jointly with the Member States in building a world-class infrastructure for [supercomputing](#) in Europe. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said in

a joint statement: *“Joining forces for building European supercomputing capacity is essential for the EU’s competitiveness and independence in the data economy. [...] Supercomputing is already changing the lives of European citizens, be it through personalised medicine or energy saving, or by helping to tackle global challenges through climate change modelling, preventing and controlling epidemics, and advancing neuroscience. As no European country has the capacity to develop these resources individually, cooperation, knowledge-sharing and the pooling of resources at European level are essential.”* You can read the full statement [here](#). The cooperation initiative – [EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#)– is a legal and funding instrument under the [Digital Single Market](#) strategy that will pool EU, national and private investments to rank European supercomputers among the world’s top three by 2022-2023. The Commission envisages around €1 billion of public funding to be invested in the HPC Joint Undertaking by 2020, with the EU’s contribution of around €486 million, matched by a similar amount from Member States and associated countries. The Joint Undertaking was proposed by the Commission on 11 January 2018, and builds on the [European declaration on High-Performance Computing](#) launched in 2017. The European Parliament will vote on this proposal in July, before the Regulation is formally adopted by the Council of the EU. A [press release](#), a [Q&A](#) and a [factsheet](#) are available. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle appellation d’origine protégée pour un cidre français

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d’inscription du «Cidre Cotentin» ainsi que la dénomination simplifiée de «Cotentin» dans le registre des appellations d’origine protégées (AOP). Ce cidre est produit dans la région du Cotentin, qui recouvre la moitié nord du département de la Manche en Normandie, à partir de pommes à cidre provenant de vergers locaux. Les vergers à cidre et la production de cette boisson se développent dans la région dès le XIII^e siècle à la faveur de réglementations successives interdisant la bière puis le vin afin de réserver autant que possible les terres arables aux céréales. Des recueils mentionnent la réputation du Cidre du Cotentin dès le XVI^e siècle. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1425 appellations 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)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Avramopoulos on occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

On the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *“The illicit drugs market is getting more and more dynamic and highly adaptable. It poses new and constantly evolving challenges to our society, especially with regards to children and young people. With higher*

drug production and availability in Europe as well as the continuous presence of new psychoactive substances, such as for example fentanyl, the European Union will continue and step up its action to fight this phenomenon. It is no time to let our guard down. We will continue to raise awareness, support prevention, with a key focus on younger generation, and remain alert and responsive. Illicit drugs and drug abuse is a common global challenge and we will continue to coordinate our response with our neighbours and international partners.” The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was introduced by the UN in 1987 to raise international awareness on the major problem illicit drugs represent to modern society and to strengthen the global action to achieve the goal of a society free of drug abuse. This year’s International Day focuses on a theme “Listen First – Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe” with particular attention to support prevention of drug use. This UN initiative is fully in line with priorities of the European Union in the area of fighting against drug abuse and illicit drugs, as outlined [EU Drugs Strategy for 2013-2020](#) and the [Action Plan on Drugs for 2017-2020](#). The EU is closely monitoring the drug situation in Europe and issues annual reports providing a comprehensive analysis of recent drug trends and developments across the 28 EU Member States, Turkey and Norway. The [2018 European Drug Report](#) was presented by Commissioner Avramopoulos earlier this month, on 7 June. More information on the report is available [online](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 2 296 74 56; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko –Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Juncker and Commissioner Navracsics mark European Year of Cultural Heritage at the European Parliament

This afternoon, President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will participate in the opening session of the High Level [Conference](#) “Cultural heritage in Europe: linking past and future” organised by the European Parliament. Policy-makers, national ministers, cultural professionals, academics and renowned artists such as Maestro Daniel Barenboim and Jean-Michel Jarre will debate challenges and opportunities linked to cultural heritage in three panels: cultural heritage and ‘Europeanness’; preserving and promoting cultural heritage; and innovation and the economic potential of cultural heritage. The programme is available [here](#) and the conference can be followed live [here](#) or on [Europe by Satellite](#). The speech of Commissioner **Navracsics** will be available [here](#). (For more information: *Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Joseph Waldstein – Tel. +32 229 56184*)

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini participates in the Ukraine Reform Conference in Copenhagen – ‘A Driver for Change’

On Wednesday 27 June, High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** will participate in the second Ukraine Reform Conference, which is this year

held in Copenhagen. She will be joined by foreign ministers from EU, G7 and NATO countries, as well as high-level representatives from Ukraine and international organisations. High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will deliver a speech in the opening plenary session at 10:00, which follows the opening of the conference by the Prime Ministers of Denmark and Ukraine, and will participate in the press conference at 12:30. The event in Copenhagen will provide an opportunity for the Ukrainian authorities to highlight recent reforms and present plans to maintain the reform momentum. There will be a special focus on good governance issues, including anti-corruption, economic development and growth. Ministers will also discuss the challenge of disinformation campaigns in Ukraine and beyond. For more information on the EU's support to Ukraine's reform agenda, see the [factsheet](#), and the [website](#) of the EU Delegation. The plenary session, including the speech of the High Representative/Vice-President, will be live-streamed [here](#). Coverage of the press conference will be available via [EBS](#).
(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel: +32 229 89359)

Commissioner Thyssen on two-day trip to Sofia, Bulgaria

Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility is in Sofia today, 26 June and tomorrow, 27 June. This afternoon, the Commissioner will give a keynote speech at the [Conference for the European Alliance for Upward Wage Convergence](#), organised by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Tomorrow morning, Commissioner **Thyssen** will participate to the high-level conference [“The European Pillar of Social Rights: Working together for results”](#) at the National Palace of Culture. Organised at the end of the Bulgarian Presidency, the conference aims to take stock of all the efforts and results in implementing the Pillar at the EU and national level and continue the debate on the social dimension of Europe in the context of the EU budget discussions for the next programming period. *“When it comes to the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), I am glad to say that already now we are seeing progress. I would like to thank the Bulgarian presidency, for organising this conference and see representatives of governments, employers and employees and civil society take ownership of the Pillar”*, said Commissioner **Thyssen** ahead of her mission. The Commissioner will also meet with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and Bulgarian Minister of Labour and Social Policy Biser Petkov bilaterally to discuss advances made in the field of employment and social affairs under Bulgaria's EU Presidency and the social aspects of the next Multiannual Financial Framework. (For more information Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Melanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Stylianides visits Berlin, Germany

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is travelling to Berlin today to participate at the 14th European Congress in Disaster Management. The Commissioner will also meet with Mr Heiko Maas, German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Dr Jürgen Weise, President of Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V., which is one of the German large organisations in the area of civil protection and humanitarian aid. During the visit the Commissioner will present [rescEU](#), the European Commission's

ambitious plans to strengthen Europe's collective ability to respond to disasters, and the EU's humanitarian aid priorities. (*For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140*)

Le commissaire King en visite à Paris

Julian **King**, commissaire chargé de l'union de la sécurité, sera à Paris aujourd'hui, où il rencontrera Patrick Strzoda, le directeur du cabinet du président de la République, pour discuter des questions relatives aux défis actuels de la sécurité. Le Commissaire rencontrera aussi la secrétaire générale de la Défense et de la Sécurité nationale, Claire Landais et le Coordinateur National du renseignement, Pierre de Bosquet de Florian. Dans l'après-midi, le commissaire participera au colloque "l'Europe de la défense et de la sécurité en 2050" où il introduira la table ronde sur "l'Europe qui protège". (*For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 2 296 74 56; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko –Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

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