

# Daily News 27 / 09 / 2017

## **State of the Union 2017: Commission presents next steps under the European Agenda on Migration and measures to preserve and strengthen Schengen**

The Commission is today reviewing progress on the 2015 European Agenda on Migration and setting out the next steps to put in place the missing elements of a stronger, fairer and more effective EU migration and asylum policy. Building on the progress achieved so far, the Commission is presenting a series of new initiatives in key areas, including on resettlement and return. The Commission is also today proposing measures to preserve and strengthen the Schengen Area. A press release on the [European Agenda on Migration](#) and a [press release](#) and [Q&A](#) on Schengen will be available at the start of the press conference with Commissioner Avramopoulos, which follows the readout of the College meeting and which will be broadcast [live on EbS](#). Factsheets on [relocation](#), [legal migration](#), the [EU return policy](#) and [Schengen](#) will also be available. (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921*)

## **Antitrust: Commission fines Scania €880 million for participating in trucks cartel**

The European Commission has found that Scania broke EU antitrust rules and imposed a fine of €880 million on the company. The Commission found that Scania colluded with five other truck manufacturers on truck pricing and on passing on the costs of new technologies to meet stricter emission rules. In [July 2016](#), the Commission reached a settlement decision concerning the trucks cartel with MAN, DAF, Daimler, Iveco and Volvo/Renault. Scania decided not to settle this cartel case with the Commission, unlike the other five participants in the trucks cartel. As a result, the Commission's investigation against Scania was carried out under the standard cartel procedure. The Commission's investigation revealed that Scania, as a producer of heavy trucks, had engaged in a cartel relating to: i) coordinating prices at "gross list" level for medium and heavy trucks in the European Economic Area, ii) the timing for the introduction of emission technologies for medium and heavy trucks to comply with the increasingly strict European emissions standards, iii) the passing on to customers of the costs for the emissions technologies required to comply with the increasingly strict European emissions standards. The infringement covered the entire European Economic Area and lasted 14 years. Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe **Vestager**, said: *"Today's decision marks the end of our investigation into a very long lasting cartel – 14 years. This cartel affected very substantial numbers of road hauliers in Europe, since Scania and the other truck manufacturers in the cartel produce more than 9 out of every 10 medium and heavy trucks sold in Europe. These trucks account for around three quarters of inland transport of goods in Europe and play a vital role in the European economy. Instead of colluding on pricing, the truck manufacturers should have been competing against each other – also on environmental improvements."* The full press

release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [SV](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Investment Plan: €100 million for Dutch start-ups and construction begins at University of Latvia**

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Netherlands Investment Agency (NIA) are launching a €100 million Dutch Growth Co-Investment Programme, supported by the Investment Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The Programme will support innovative and fast-growing SMEs and small mid-caps which have gone beyond the start-up phase and need financing to help them scale-up. The announcement was made this morning at the [Startup Fest](#) in Amsterdam. Vice-President **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The Dutch Growth Co-Investment Programme launched today is precisely the type of initiative that the Investment Plan was created to support. With this new investment tool, companies that have developed beyond the start-up stage and want to scale-up can now benefit from an extra boost in financing. I am proud that the EU is supporting innovation and small businesses in the Netherlands."* As of September 2017, the Investment Plan is expected to mobilise €236.1 billion across Europe, €6.4 billion of which is in the Netherlands. Also today the foundation stone will be laid at the University of Latvia marking the start of construction of its new campus: an EFSI project we [announced in July](#). On 13 September the European Parliament and Member States came to an [agreement in principle](#) on EFSI 2.0 – the extension and reinforcement of the European Fund for Strategic Investments. (For more information about any of the projects and the latest Investment Plan results see the new [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

### **Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed merger between Essilor and Luxottica**

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed merger between Essilor and Luxottica under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission has concerns that the merger may reduce competition for ophthalmic lenses, and will further investigate effects on eyewear. The proposed merger would combine two leaders in the optical industry. Essilor is the largest supplier of ophthalmic lenses, both worldwide and in Europe. Luxottica is the largest supplier of eyewear, both worldwide and in Europe, and has well-known brands in its portfolio such as Ray-Ban and Oakley. Both companies sell their products to opticians who then sell finished spectacles and sunglasses to consumers. The transaction was notified to the Commission on 22 August 2017. The Commission now has 90 working days to take a decision. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Half of Europeans wear glasses and almost all of us will need vision correction one day. Therefore we need to carefully assess whether the proposed merger would lead to higher prices or reduced choices for opticians and ultimately consumers"*. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [IT](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria

Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## **Commission welcomes first formal eID notification and calls for EU-wide usage of electronic identification means**

The European Commission calls for a wider use of electronic identification means across the EU, as Germany has taken the final step to enable its citizens to use the electronic Identification means (eID) to access online services in other Member States. Germany is the first Member State to complete the formal notification of an eID under the [2014 Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market](#) (eIDAS Regulation). As part of the Digital Single Market, this step is needed to ensure a mutual recognition and the use of national eIDs across all Member States. This accomplishment arrives on the eve of the Tallinn Digital Summit of 29 September, where Heads of State and government will discuss further plans for digital innovation in the years to come. Once eIDAS will be fully operational, EU citizens and companies will have the choice to use the eID to access online public services in other Member States. In addition, commercial services will be able to rely on such eID for their business offering across the EU. While the Members States are free to decide whether they notify their eIDs, they all must recognise the eIDs of other Member States that have already been notified. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Navracsics in Serbia for Western Balkans ministerial**

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Belgrade tomorrow to open the annual ministerial meeting of the [Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training](#). All Ministers of Education from the region are invited to review the state of educational reforms in their countries, learn about the latest strategies in the EU, identify priorities, agree on follow-ups to studies and reports and discuss deeper cooperation. This year, the meeting will focus on the region's research capacity and mobility opportunities. The Commissioner will also attend a panel debate on the impact of [Erasmus+](#) with alumni who have benefitted from the programme in recent years. Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"Since its launch in 2012, the Western Balkans Ministerial Platform has become a valuable tradition. It provides a unique opportunity to exchange views on the situation of education systems in the region, their main priorities and challenges. As we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Erasmus programme, I would highlight that Erasmus+ now has 33 programme countries and enables cooperation with hundreds of other countries in the world, including all those from the Western Balkans."* The longer term perspective of the Platform is to assist the Western Balkans with their reform efforts and prepare them for EU Membership responsibilities including full participation in the EU's education programmes. With research being one of this year's two priorities, the [Western Balkans Steering Platform on Research and Innovation](#) is being held in Belgrade at the same time. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)*

## **Commissioner Moscovici due to travel to Stockholm and Copenhagen**

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs is in Sweden tomorrow where he will take part in a seminar on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) at the Commission representation in Stockholm and meets with the Swedish Parliament Committees dedicated to Taxation and Finance and European Affairs. While in Stockholm, Commissioner Moscovici will also have meetings with Magdalena Andersson, Swedish Minister of Finance, Anders Kessling, State Secretary at the Ministry of Employment and the Governor of the Swedish Central Bank, Stefan Ingves. On Friday, the Commissioner travels to Copenhagen, Denmark where he will deliver the keynote speech at the [Copenhagen EU Tax Law Conference](#) and holds a working session with Danish Members of Parliament. In Copenhagen, the Commissioner will also take the opportunity to meet Karsten Lauritzen, Danish Minister for Taxation, and Per Callesen, Danish Central Bank Governor. Ahead of his visit, Commissioner **Moscovici** said: *"I am very much looking forward to visiting Sweden and Denmark at this important moment in the debate on the future of the European Union. I will be engaging with policymakers and stakeholders in both countries to discuss our ideas for making the euro more attractive to those EU countries that are currently outside the euro area, and to help those who wish to join to do so – without putting any pressure on those that are not ready to do so. I will also be setting out the Commission's taxation agenda for the rest of the year, including VAT reform, taxation of the digital sector, and the fight against tax avoidance."* (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Enda McNamara – +32 229 64976; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

## **European Commission appoints two directors to its transport department**

The European Commission has today appointed two directors in its transport department (DG MOVE): Ms Elisabeth Werner to the position of a Director "Land" and Mr Filip Cornelis as a Director "Aviation", as of 1 October. Ms Werner, an Austrian national, joined the Commission in 1996. Between 2003 and 2004 she was a Member of the Spokesperson's Service dealing with budget questions, and then joined the private office of Vice-President Siim Kallas, in charge of administration and anti-fraud, from 2004 to 2008. She became a Head of Unit in 2008 and joined DG MOVE in 2010, before moving to the private office of Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva, in charge of Budget and Human resources, where she worked from 2014 to 2016, including as Head of Cabinet. Ms Werner is currently Head of Unit in charge of planning and coordination in DG MOVE. Mr Cornelis, a Belgian national, joined the European Commission from the Centre for European Policy Studies in 1994, to work in the European Commission Delegation in Kiev, Ukraine. Between 1998 and 2006 he worked on accession negotiations and was involved in negotiating the accession treaties of the ten Member States which joined in 2004, as well as of Bulgaria and Romania. He has been working in the area of transport policy since 2006, when he became an assistant to the Director-General of DG MOVE, previously DG TREN. Mr Cornelis first became Head of Unit in 2010. Between 2010 and 2016, he has headed three different units within DG MOVE's aviation directorate. He

is currently in charge of the Aviation Policy unit, as well as acting Director for Aviation. (*For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857*)

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