

[Daily News 27 / 10 / 2017](#)

Commission to invest €30 billion in new solutions for societal challenges and breakthrough innovation

The Commission today announced how it will spend €30 billion of the EU research and innovation funding programme [Horizon 2020](#) during 2018-2020. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *“Artificial Intelligence, genetics, blockchain: science is at the core of today’s most promising breakthrough innovations. Europe is a world leader in science and technology and will play a major role in driving innovation. The Commission is making a concerted effort – including with the European Innovation Council which takes its first steps today – to give Europe’s many innovators a springboard to become world leading companies.”* Over the next 3 years, the Commission will seek greater impact of its research funding by focusing on fewer, but critical topics such as migration, security, climate, clean energy and the digital economy. Horizon 2020 will also be more geared towards boosting breakthrough, market-creating innovation. The Commission is launching the first phase of the European Innovation Council, mobilising €2.7 billion from Horizon 2020 to support high-risk, high-gain innovation to create the markets of the future. The initiative complements wider efforts made by the Juncker Commission since the beginning of its mandate to give Europe’s many [innovative entrepreneurs](#) every opportunity to thrive. The Commissioner gives a press conference today at 12:00, which you can follow live [here](#) (12:00). A [press release](#) in all languages, a [MEMO](#) and [country factsheets](#) are available online. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Investment Plan: €50 million to finance the construction of a new gas pipeline in Romania

The Juncker Plan has backed a €50 million [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) loan to [Transgaz](#) to finance the construction of a new pipeline in Romania. The 478-kilometre pipeline will run between Podișor and Recaș. This agreement was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the European Commission’s Investment Plan for Europe. The project demonstrates how the Investment Plan supports wider strategic objectives, beyond the promotion of jobs and growth. The project is of critical importance for the promotion of European energy market integration and the security of energy supplies in Romania and the wider region. European Commission Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis**, responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“Thanks to support from the Juncker Plan, the European Investment Bank is providing € 50 million to Transgaz to build a new 478-kilometre gas pipeline from Bulgaria to Austria via Romania and Hungary. This important cross-border project will increase competition, which is good for the consumer. It will also bring thousands of jobs to the region, which is the fundamental objective of the Juncker Plan. Combining EFSI financing with funds from the Connecting Europe Facility helped the project get off the ground. I would*

encourage other project promoters to look into the possibility of combining different sources of financing for their investment projects.” As of October 2017, the Investment Plan is expected to mobilise €240.9 billion across Europe, and just under €1 billion in Romania. Some 21% of these investments are in the energy sector. (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; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Commission gathers views on how to tax the digital economy fairly and effectively

The European Commission has launched a [public consultation](#) on how the EU can ensure that the digital economy is taxed in a fair and growth-friendly way. Taxing the digital economy has become an issue of pressing importance – politically and economically. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *“Nobody can deny it: our tax framework does not fit anymore with the development of the digital economy or with new business models. Member States want to tax the huge profits generated by digital economic activity in their country. We need a solution at EU level, one which will deliver robust solutions for businesses and investors in the Single Market.”* The Commission is particularly interested in gathering views on the main problems related to taxing the digital economy, for Member States and business. It also asks for feedback on possible solutions to these problems – both targeted, temporary measures and comprehensive long-term solutions. This [public consultation](#) will feed into the work underway on the digital taxation proposals for next year and runs until 3 January 2018. A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87186)

Digital visionaries to win €150,000 in 2017 European Social Innovation Competition

Yesterday evening, the Commission awarded three projects with the Equality Rebooted prize. This year’s edition of the 2017 European Social Innovation Competition asked candidates to present digital innovation projects addressing inequality in Europe. The winners will receive each €50,000 for having successfully and impressively proven how digital technologies can improve people’s lives. Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, said: *“Digitisation is changing how our societies and labour market function. It is important that we indeed reboot equality and ensure technology is used to make everyone in Europe benefit from the opportunities created by technological change. I therefore congratulate the three winners, which show creative potential to push for a truly inclusive economy and society.”* The innovations awarded are a collaborative platform to build more sustainable homes and neighbourhoods (Buildx from United Kingdom), a multimedia tool for blind and visually-impaired people (Feelif from Slovenia) and peer-to-peer learning network (Saga from Netherlands). [Digital inclusion](#) is anchored also in the Digital Single Market strategy, through which the Commission supports accessible ICT solutions, assistive technologies, development of digital skills as well as

increasing participation of disadvantaged people in the digital society. This is part of the Commission's broader aim to enhance social inclusion of disabled persons, via initiatives such as our [proposal to make products and services more accessible for them](#). The European Social Innovation Competition is organised since 2012 in memory of the Portuguese politician and social innovator Diogo Vasconcelos to convert the most innovative ideas into sustainable and transformative projects. Read more about the winners and the [competition](#) in this [news item](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de Belgique

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du «[Saucisson d'Ardenne](#)»/«[Collier d'Ardenne](#)»/«[Pipe d'Ardenne](#)» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Ces trois termes désignent le même produit, un saucisson fumé et séché fait avec de la viande porc ou avec un mélange de viande de porc et de bœuf. Le saucisson et la pipe sont tous deux droits et allongés tandis que le collier se présenter en arc de cercle. La totalité de la fabrication, de la préparation de la mée au séchage, se déroule dans les Ardennes belges qui comprend la province de Luxembourg et celles autour de Liège et de Namur. Le caractère fumé du Saucisson d'Ardenne constitue sa principale spécificité. À la fin du XIXe siècle, le développement d'un élevage bovin mixte a incité les charcutiers à incorporer de la viande bovine dans le Saucisson d'Ardenne. Le type de viande reste en revanche imperceptible pour les consommateurs. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1410 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)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over ASCN by Bosch and HASCO

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Bosch Automobile Steering (Nanjing) Co. Ltd. ("ASCN") of China by Robert Bosch GmbH ("Bosch") of Germany and Huayu Automotive Systems Company Ltd. ("HASCO") of China. ASCN is a Bosch-subsidary active in the production of power assisted steering gears, predominantly in China. Bosch is a supplier of technology and services for the automotive industry, as well as for the industrial technology, consumer goods, energy and building technology industries. HASCO is active in the development, production and sale of automotive components for a variety of car manufacturers and is controlled through SAIC Motor Corporation by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the Shanghai Municipal Government. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the companies' activities do not overlap in the EEA. 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.8651](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria

Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by Evonik and DSM

The European Commission has approved the creation of a joint venture by Evonik Industries AG of Germany and Koninklijke DSM N.V. of the Netherlands. The joint venture will manufacture and sale an algae-based product intended to provide an alternative for other sources of Omega-3 fatty acids for the production of animal feed. Both Evonik and DSM are specialty chemical companies active -amongst others- in animal nutrition. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the expected activities and turnover of the joint venture in the EEA are limited. 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.8514](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Eurostat: Deuxième trimestre 2017: Le revenu réel des ménages par habitant en hausse dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28, consommation réelle par habitant en hausse dans les deux zones

Dans la zone euro, en termes réels, le revenu des ménages par habitant a augmenté de 0,7% au deuxième trimestre 2017, après une hausse de 0,1% au trimestre précédent. La consommation réelle des ménages par habitant a progressé de 0,6% au deuxième trimestre 2017, après une hausse de 0,2% au premier trimestre 2017. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Vice-President Timmermans delivers a speech at the Vatican

This afternoon, European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** will deliver an opening speech at the event "[Christian contributions to the future of the European project](#)", organised by the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community ([COMECE](#)). The First Vice-President will discuss the important bridge building roles played by His Holiness the Pope and by the European Union, and will reflect on the Pope's work to raise awareness of important global challenges such as migration and climate change. The First Vice-President – who leads the dialogue between the European Commission and churches and religious associations or communities – will say in his speech: *"In Europe, our religions, our nations and our people all share common values...But despite our continent being united, our values are being challenged once again, by globalisation, by the 4th industrial revolution, by climate change and by migration. These great upheavals are testing our bonds and the values we sometimes take for granted."* As part of the event, the First Vice-President will also participate in a number of panel discussions, and will be granted a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis. The First Vice-President's speech will be made available online this afternoon. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456;*

Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

First Vice-President Timmermans visits Athens on Monday and Tuesday

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** has been invited to Athens, Greece on Monday and Tuesday by the Greek authorities. On Monday evening, the First Vice-President will deliver a keynote lecture entitled “Unity in Diversity: what Hellenic Europe teaches us” at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where he will be awarded the title of *Doctor honoris causa*. First Vice-President **Timmermans** is also invited on Monday to receive the Grand Cross of the Phoenix from the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos for his contribution to European and international politics, international relations and fundamental rights. On Tuesday, First Vice-President **Timmermans** is invited to receive the Medal of the City of Athens from the Mayor of Athens Mr Georgios Kaminis. The award ceremonies and the First Vice-President’s lecture will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

Commissioner Stylianides to visit Italy and discuss strengthening EU Civil Protection response

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** will visit Italy during 26-28 October. Yesterday in Rome he met with Mr Angelo Borrelli, the Head of Italy’s Civil Protection department and discussed how the EU can boost crisis response collaboration with Member States faced with natural disasters. The visit comes as President **Juncker** has tasked Commissioner **Stylianides** to put forward [proposals this year](#) to boost the EU’s [Civil Protection Mechanism](#), following the many devastating natural disasters across Europe this past year. Commissioner **Stylianides** said: “Italy plays a strong and constructive role in crisis response at European level. It is a country that knows all too well the impact of natural disasters. We all have a common interest in strengthening EU Civil Protection response for the benefit of our citizens and therefore I am glad to be here to discuss and consult on this with the Italian authorities.” On 27 November the Commissioner is meeting with Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Angelino Alfano and Interior Minister Mr Marco Minniti. He will then speak at and take part in the two day international conference on “[The Protection of Civilian Population in Warfare – The Role of Humanitarian Organisations and Civil Society](#)” which will assess the role that humanitarian organizations play in protecting civilians during armed conflicts and in safeguarding international humanitarian law. (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Commissioner Hahn to visit Egypt

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement

Negotiations, will visit [Egypt](#) from the 29 to the 31 October. Following the adoption of the [EU – Egypt Partnership Priorities](#) of July 2017, Commissioner **Hahn** is travelling to Cairo to discuss on how to implement these priorities, with a particular focus on the EU's many activities supporting Egypt's economic stabilisation. Ahead of the visit Commissioner **Hahn** said: *"The European Union and Egypt are key partners facing many common challenges and sharing similar objectives. During my visit I will discuss concrete ways we can work together to implement the Partnership Priorities for the period 2017-2020, focussing our cooperation on shared interests. I will sign a range of EU funded projects supporting our shared priorities, to underline the EU's commitment to invest in inclusive and sustainable growth and job creation to the benefit of the Egyptian people"*. Commissioner **Hahn** is expected to meet with key interlocutors including President of the Republic Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry and Sahr Nasr Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, as well as representatives of civil society organisation and representatives of the business community. Videos and photos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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