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African Union – European Union Summit to start in Côte d’Ivoire

President **Juncker** will lead the European Commission delegation at the 5th [African Union – European Union Summit](#) starting on 29 November in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. The President will be joined by High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission **Federica Mogherini** and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development **Neven Mimica**. The EU is Africa’s main partner, and the summit will be an opportunity for both sides to scale up their partnership. The African Union (AU) and the EU need to tackle the common challenges of today, from fostering sustainable development and strengthening peace and security to boosting investment in the African continent and better managing migration. Under President **Juncker’s** leadership, the Commission has added new innovative tools on top of its traditional cooperation instruments, bringing EU cooperation with Africa to a new level. On this occasion, President **Juncker** said: *“What happens in Africa matters for Europe, and what happens in Europe matters for Africa. Our partnership is an investment in our shared future. It is a partnership of equals in which we support each other, help each other to prosper and make the world a safer, more stable and more sustainable place to live.”* The summit will be held under the overarching theme of “Youth”, and young people have played a vital role on the run up to the AU-EU Summit, notably through the Youth Summit, which took place in Abidjan on 9-11 October. The participants have developed a Youth Declaration, with concrete recommendations for European and African leaders. A selected group of young fellows have continued to work on these in the EU-funded intercontinental [AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative](#). Tomorrow, on 28 November 2017, ministers of Foreign Affairs from Europe and Africa will gather in Abidjan for a Ministerial meeting. During the AU-EU Summit itself, 29-30 November, leaders will discuss many areas that shape our common agenda: Peace and Security; Migration and Mobility; Connectivity and Job creation. A [factsheet](#) is available on the EU’s key partnership with Africa. *(for more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

Europe and Africa are in business! Investing in opportunities at 6th business forum

Business leaders, investors, innovative startups, young and female entrepreneurs from Africa and Europe are coming together for the 6th EU-Africa Business Forum. Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President responsible for the EU’s Digital Single Market, delivered this morning a [keynote speech](#) at the opening ceremony of the Business Forum, which takes place in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, ahead of the African Union – European Union Summit (29-30 November). Vice-President **Ansip** said: *“This Business Forum will look at areas where the situation could be improved. Not only how to create the best conditions for*

long-term private investment, but also how to support jobs for young people – especially women.” At this occasion, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** added: *“Improving the conditions for investment in Africa is essential to create jobs for Africa’s youth and promote sustainable development. This is a key focus of the AU-EU Summit, where the EU will present its new External Investment Plan. This innovative plan will help to unlock €44 billion of investment for decent jobs and sustainable growth.”* High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will give closing remarks at the Business Forum, which will be available on [EbS](#). Vice-President **Ansip**’s keynote address is available [here](#) as well as via [@Ansip_EU](#). This year Forum is dedicated to “Investing in job creation for Youth” and is centered around youth and women, sustainable investment in Africa, agriculture, sustainable energy and digital economy. The EU-Africa Business Forum contributes to the AU-EU Summit through high level discussions and concrete project proposals with a focus on developing solutions for youth employment and entrepreneurship, innovative financing instruments, public-private dialogue and digital policy development. For example, the Forum hosts a Startup Fair, a pitching session, a high level roundtable on the digital economy, investment workshops and many other activities designed to reinforce the digital links between the EU and Africa. Participants will furthermore develop a declaration with concrete recommendations to leaders on how to improve the business and investment climate. The Forum provides a unique platform for young European and African entrepreneurs and startups to express their vision for the future, to exchange views with mature companies and to interact with government representatives. More information on the 6th EU-Africa Business Forum can be found online at www.euafrica-businessforum.com. Join the debate on Twitter [#EABF2017](#). (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083)

Payment services: Consumers to benefit from safer and more innovative electronic payments

The Commission has today adopted rules that will make electronic payments in shops and online safer. This will also allow consumers to access more convenient, cost-effective and innovative solutions offered by payment providers. These rules implement the EU’s recently-revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2) which aims to modernise Europe’s payment services so as to keep pace with this rapidly evolving market and allow the European e-commerce market to blossom. Today’s rules allow consumers to use innovative services offered by third party providers, also known as FinTech companies, while maintaining rigorous data protection and security for EU consumers and businesses. These include payment solutions and tools for managing one’s personal finances by aggregating information from various accounts. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said: *“We have struck the delicate balance between security and convenience. Thanks to these new rules, there will be exciting new opportunities for all market players, old and new, to offer better consumer services. At the same time, the new rules will make*

electronic payments safer.” A key objective of PSD2 is to increase the level of security and confidence of electronic payment. In particular, PSD2 requires payment service providers to develop strong customer authentication (SCA). Today’s rules therefore have stringent, built-in security provisions to significantly reduce payment fraud levels and to protect the confidentiality of users’ financial data, especially relevant for online payments. A full [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) can be found online. (for more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

Une compétitivité économique accrue en Pologne grâce à de meilleures connexions de transport financées par l’UE

66,3 millions d’euros du [Fonds de Cohésion](#) sont investis dans l’amélioration du réseau ferroviaire au sud de la Silésie, près de la République tchèque, entre les communes de Chybie, Żory et Rybnik et entre Nędza et Turze. Dans cette région polonaise industrielle, notamment autour de la ville de Rybnik, de meilleures connexions permettront de réduire les temps de trajet, tant pour le transport de fret que pour les passagers. La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a commenté: *“Ce projet, qui promeut une mobilité propre en Silésie, contribuera directement à la croissance locale, en facilitant le transport des biens. Investir dans de meilleures connexions ferroviaires, c’est investir directement dans l’économie régionale.”* Certaines sections du réseau régional font partie du réseau global de transport transeuropéen ([RTE-T](#)). L’UE finance la rénovation des voies sur sept sections différentes ainsi que la construction de 30 ponts et viaducs. Le projet devrait être opérationnel d’ici l’été 2019. (Pour plus d’informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission launches public consultation on a European Labour Authority, as well as a European Social Security Number

Today the European Commission has launched a public consultation to gather views of the broader public on setting up a European Labour Authority and the introduction of a European Social Security Number. Both initiatives were announced by President **Juncker** in his [2017 State of the Union address](#). The European Labour Authority should ensure that EU rules on labour mobility are enforced in a fair, simple and effective way. Concretely, building on existing structures, the Authority would support national administrations, businesses, and mobile workers by strengthening cooperation at EU level on matters such as cross-border mobility and social security coordination. It would also improve access to information for public authorities and mobile workers and enhance transparency regarding their rights and obligations. The European Social Security Number (ESSN) aims at simplifying and modernising citizens’ interaction with administrations in a range of policy areas. An EU Social Security Number would facilitate the identification of persons across borders for the purposes of social security coordination and allow the quick and accurate verification of their social security insurance status. It would facilitate administrative procedures for citizens by optimising the use of

digital tools. Legislative proposals for both initiatives are announced in the European Commission's Work Programme for 2018 and planned to be tabled by spring 2018. Find more information on the European Labour Authority in this [factsheet](#) and [online](#). The public consultation can be found [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Publication of latest agri-food trade figures: EU agri-food trade balance has an increasing surplus

The [latest monthly trade report](#) published today by the European Commission, shows that the value of EU agri-food exports in September 2017 kept its very high level, now at €11.7 billion. The trade balance further improved to a surplus of €2.8 billion, with agri-food imports to the EU going down to a monthly value of €8.8 billion. Over the past 12 months, wine and milk powders exports have been performing very well, while exports of wheat and other cereals decreased. Agri-food imports from third countries increased by 4% compared to the same period one year ago. Imports from Indonesia increased most significantly. The full report is [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52509)

State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Spain's support for coal power plants

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether Spain's "environmental incentive" for coal power plants is in line with EU State aid rules. At this stage, the Commission has concerns that the support has been used to implement mandatory environmental EU standards as regards sulphur oxide emissions, which applied to coal power plants at the time. If confirmed, this means that the scheme did not actually have any environmental incentive effect. Furthermore, the financial support may breach an established principle of EU State aid rules, namely that Member States may not grant State aid to companies to meet mandatory environmental EU standards. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"If you pollute, you pay – this is a long-standing principle in EU environmental law. EU State aid rules do not allow Member States to relieve companies of this responsibility using taxpayer money. We currently believe that this Spanish scheme did not incentivise coal power plants to reduce harmful sulphur oxide emissions – they were already under an obligation to do so under EU environmental law. Therefore, we are concerned that the support gave these coal power plants an unfair competitive advantage. We will now investigate this issue further."* The opening of an in-depth investigation gives Spain and interested third parties an opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [ES](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of EXIM Holding by DER Touristik Deutschland

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over EXIM Holding A.S. of the Czech Republic by

DER Touristik Deutschland GmbH of Germany. EXIM is a Czech company with four subsidiaries active in the tourism sector in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. DER Touristik forms part of the Travel & Tourism Division of REWE Group of Germany, which operates in the tourism sector as well as in the food and non-food retail sector via a separate branch. DER Touristik was already jointly controlling EXIM before the transaction. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited changes it brings to 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.8668](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears a joint-venture between Deutsche Alternative Asset Management and M&G Alternatives Investment Management

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Belmond JV by Deutsche Alternative Asset Management (Global) Limited (“DAAM”) and M&G Alternatives Investment Management Limited (“MAGAIM”), all three of the UK. Belmond JV will be established as a full-function joint venture and will be active in the operational leasing of rolling stock to the West Midlands rail franchise in the UK and, potentially, in associated ancillary capital investments. DAAM is an affiliate of the Deutsche Bank Group of Germany and provides investment management and fund management services. MAGAIM is the investment management division of Prudential Group of the UK in Europe. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited changes it brings to 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.8667](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Study on digital public services points out room for development in using eIDs and eDocuments

The new [2017 eGovernment Benchmarking report](#) shows that European countries are providing better [digital public services](#), but they still need to improve on their use of supporting technology to boost cross-border accessibility and transparency. The study found that public administrations across 34 countries in Europe score highly (80%) in the provision of readily available, mobile and user friendly online public services. The study also reveals that there is progress in cross-border availability of digital services but suggests that these services could further benefit from increased use of key enablers like [eIDs](#) or eDocuments. The report is based on the findings from EU Member States but also from Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey. The study implies that more needs to be done to inform users about issues such as the duration of administrative processes or when personal data is used to complete an administrative task. To address these areas, the

development of the proposed [Single Digital Gateway](#) regulation will give EU Member States centralised access to people and businesses to information on cross-border rights and procedures. This study confirms once again the need for more action – a point which Member States agreed to tackle in the recently adopted [Tallinn declaration on eGovernment](#) which will help to improve better digital public services in the EU. Furthermore, the [annex to the Tallinn declaration](#) contains user-centricity principles agreed on by the Member States, which puts citizens and businesses at the centre of digital public services. Further details on the report are available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Andriukaitis to award NGOs for initiatives that promote vaccination

Today Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, will present the EU Health Award 2017 for NGOs promoting vaccination, at the Health Policy Platform annual meeting in Brussels. To see the results as they happen, tune-in [live](#). In the run-up to the award ceremony, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said: *“Immunising people against diseases caused by viruses or bacteria is one of the most cost-effective public health measures available today. Yet, worryingly, misconceptions and scepticism about the need to vaccinate is growing. The public-facing role of Non-Governmental Organisations is crucial in the effort to ensure high vaccination coverage. Picking the top three initiatives was a challenging task for the jury, and while I will be proud to announce the overall winners, all 10 NGOs on the [shortlist](#) should be proud of their contribution to better public health through vaccination.”* For more information: [EU Health award for NGOs 2017](#), [EU action on vaccination](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Andriukaitis on official visit to Veghel, the Netherlands

On 28 November, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis** is in Veghel, the Netherlands. He will visit Agrifirm, member of the Dutch association of former foodstuff processors. Later on Tuesday, he will visit Three Sixty, Ecosystem for circular economy in action, together with Ms Carola Schouten, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands. The Commissioner will also meet with the Dutch Taskforce Circular Economy in Food. For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Avramopoulos in Lisbon to discuss security on land, at sea and on the internet

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris

Avramopoulos will be in Lisbon on 28 November to meet the directors of the nine EU agencies working on justice and home affairs – Europol, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), eu-LISA, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Police College (CEPOL), Eurojust, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). They will discuss their collaboration on migration and security issues with a focus on border management and the fight against organised crime. The meeting is being hosted by the EMCDDA and is part of the ongoing close cooperation between the agencies, formally established in a network since 2006. Commissioner Avramopoulos will also meet the newly-appointed Portuguese Minister of Internal Affairs, Eduardo Cabrita, and the Director of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre, Michael O’Sullivan. In a press conference at 11:45 CET Commissioner **Avramopoulos** will present a report on drugs and the darknet co-authored by Europol and the EMCDDA, together with the directors of the two agencies, Rob Wainwright and Alexis Goosdeel respectively. The press conference will be available on [EBS](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 2 296 74 56, Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Thomas Kramer – Tel.: +32 229 58602*)

Commissioner Bulc hosts the EU-Turkey High Level Transport Dialogue

Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** today received Mr Ahmet Arslan, Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication of Turkey, for the EU-Turkey High Level Transport Dialogue. Together, they discussed a number of issues of mutual interest, including the infrastructure connections between the EU and Turkey, road safety and aviation cooperation. They also agreed on a concrete roadmap to pursue and deepen the High-Level dialogue in the future. Commissioner **Bulc** said, “*Transport clearly is an area of common interest for the EU and Turkey. The High-Level dialogue can create a new momentum in our cooperation, and I look forward to continue building on this positive agenda.*” Press statements by Commissioner **Bulc** and Minister Arslan will shortly be available on [EBS](#). (For more information: *Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43*)

Commissioner Bulc and EESC President Dassis launch platform for equal opportunities in the transport sector

Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** and Georges Dassis, President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) will be joined by Kadri Simson, Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of Estonia and Karima Delli, Chair of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament, for the launch of the [EU Platform for Change](#) later today in Brussels. This initiative aims to increase female employment and equal opportunities in the transport sector. The Platform was developed in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee to give transport companies and organisations the possibility to highlight their initiatives for gender equality and to exchange good practices. To show their commitment, organisations dedicated to equal opportunities in transport will sign an official Declaration at the event. The Declaration will also be opened for [signature online](#). Commissioner **Bulc** said: “*Only 22% of transport workers are women. There is a huge potential for the sector to improve equal opportunities and I am excited that*

companies and organisations agree on this and are committing themselves to the increase of female employment. By engaging women and men together towards gender equality we will ensure that our societies will flourish at all levels.” More information [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 [6 91 43](#))

Commissioner Jourová participates in the European Platform for Roma Inclusion on the transition from Education to Employment

Tomorrow and Wednesday, the European Commission is organising the 11th European Platform for Roma Inclusion. On Tuesday morning, Commissioner **Jourová** will open his edition dedicated to the topic of the transition of young Roma from education to employment, as Roma are still the most underrepresented group on the labour market. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said ahead of the Platform: “*Europe cannot afford to let young Roma fail to fulfil their potential. The growing proportion of young Roma not in education, employment or training is worrying. Policy-makers need to look carefully at the causes and address them. Poverty, low levels of education, discrimination in both education and employment constitute serious barriers for Roma to obtain stable jobs.*” Over these two days, government representatives, local and regional authorities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and European institutions representatives participants will engage in debates related to the transition of young Roma from education to employment. The outcomes of the discussions will be presented to decision makers, representatives of education, employers, businesses and other stakeholders. More information about the event can be found [here](#). You can follow the event live online [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner King to speak at meeting of National Parliaments

Tomorrow Commissioner **King** will be in Tallinn, Estonia, where he will take part in a meeting of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the EU ([COSAC](#)), hosted by the Estonian Council Presidency. Commissioner King will deliver a keynote speech on “State of play – building an effective and sustainable Security Union” during the fourth session of the conference. More information is available on the COSAC website [here](#). (For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

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