

## **Report on EU trade defence: effective protection against unfair trade**

The EU shields 320,000 direct jobs across Europe from unfair foreign competition through its trade defence measures, according to a [report](#) out today. The main highlights of the report include a major overhaul of EU trade defence legislation, continued high EU trade defence activity, resolute action to safeguard EU steel producers and strong and continuous defence of EU exporters targeted in foreign investigations. Since November 2014, the Juncker Commission put in place 95 trade defence measures. Two-thirds of all the 135 measures in place concern imports from China. Commenting on the report, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"We are open traders, but we cannot afford to be naïve. Not all of our trade partners want to play by the same rules that we do – we must not be taken advantage of and must protect the EU, its companies and its workers against unfair trading practices. Our intense work in this field in the past few years bears fruit: we have now in place tools that are better-suited for today's global economy and we will continue working to ensure our companies and workers are shielded from any unfair practices."* Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"Open economies need effective tools to enforce fair competition, especially at a time where some countries don't want to play by the rules. This report shows that our trade defence team is working harder than ever to safeguard jobs and protect the EU from unfair trade practices around the world. Thanks to our recent reforms, we are able to act quicker and our tools are more suited to the current global economic challenges."* EU trade defence measures provide welcome relief to European companies. In some cases, the duties resulted in a decrease of unfairly priced imports of up to 99%. At the same time, the duties are set at a level that is sufficient to restore competitive conditions on the EU market, without overburdening EU consumer and industries that rely on imports. For more information see the full [press release](#) and a detailed [supplement to the report](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

## **Circular Economy: Commission welcomes European Parliament adoption of new rules on single-use plastics to reduce marine litter**

The European Commission welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament yesterday afternoon of the ambitious measures it had earlier proposed to tackle marine litter coming from the 10 single-use plastic products most often found on European beaches, as well as abandoned fishing gear and oxo-degradable plastics. The rules on [Single-Use Plastics](#) items and fishing gear, addressing the ten most found items on EU beaches place the EU at the forefront of the global fight against marine litter. They are part of the [EU Plastics Strategy](#) – the most comprehensive strategy in the world adopting a material-specific lifecycle approach with the vision and objectives to have all plastic packaging placed on the EU market as reusable or recyclable by 2030. The Single-Use Plastics Directive adopted by the European Parliament is

an essential element of the Commission's [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) as it stimulates the production and use of sustainable alternatives that avoid marine litter. Following the vote, first Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: "Today we have taken an important step to reduce littering and plastic pollution in our oceans and seas. We got this, we can do this. Europe is setting new and ambitious standards, paving the way for the rest of the world." Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** added: "Once implemented, the new rules will not only prevent plastic pollution, but also make the European Union the world leader in a more sustainable plastic policy." Commissioner Karmenu **Vella** concluded: "After the favourable vote by the Parliament today, our main task will be to ensure that these ambitious measures are quickly implemented in practice, which will be common work for public authorities, producers and consumers alike." More information is available in the statement [online](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

### **The European Commission and the European Investment Bank join forces to support investments for road safety and clean transport**

Violeta **Bulc**, Commissioner for Transport and the European Investment Bank (EIB) Vice-President Vazil Hudák are joining forces to support investment for road safety and sustainable transport. At the occasion of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Conference in Bucharest, they launched simultaneously a '[Safer Transport Platform](#)' and a new '[CEF Transport Blending Facility](#)' (CEF BF). The Platform aims at promoting safety as a key element for transport investment and to provide easy access to technical and financial advice, in particular for road safety. The Blending Facility is an innovative financial instrument to support projects contributing to the environmental sustainability and efficiency of the transport sector in Europe. With an initial budget of EUR 200 million, the Facility will simplify access to EU grants or financial instruments and attract market-based financing, focusing on the deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) to improve rail safety and capacity and Alternative Fuels. Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said: "I am very pleased that our good cooperation with the EIB shows concrete results to the benefit of European citizens. On the one hand, by focusing on clean mobility including the deployment of alternative fuel and the use of ERTMS, the CEF Transport Blending Facility will encourage and facilitate investments in two of our key policy objectives: the decarbonisation and digitalisation of EU transport. On the other hand, we are joining forces to further support road safety. To save lives on European roads, we need targeted investment in the right measures. The 'Safer Transport Platform' will help making sure that projects receive the necessary technical and financial advice, and eventually contribute to the reduction of road fatalities on our roads." (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917)

### **Commission welcomes European Parliament's vote on new rules facilitating access to online TV and radio content across borders**

Following the European Parliament's approval of [modernised copyright rules](#) earlier this week, today the Parliament endorsed another crucial piece of legislation to make the copyright rules fit for the digital age. The Commission welcomes the positive vote for the Directive that will simplify cross-border distribution and retransmission of television and radio programmes. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said in a joint statement: *"We welcome the approval of the Directive on television and radio programmes by the European Parliament. With today's vote, we are completing the modernisation of the EU copyright rules launched in 2015 and we are getting another step closer to a fully functioning Digital Single Market. Radio and TV programmes are an essential source of information, culture and entertainment for European citizens. The new rules will offer better access to such programmes across the Union, for the benefit of cultural diversity. They will make it easier for European broadcasters to make large parts of their TV and radio programmes available online in all EU countries, while ensuring that creators, authors and rights holders are adequately paid for the use of their content. The new rules will be particularly relevant for the 41% of Europeans who watch TV online but also for the linguistic minorities as well as the 20 million EU citizens who are living abroad in another EU country."* The full statement is available [here](#). Further details are outlined in the [Q&A](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

### **Clean mobility: Commission welcomes European Parliament adoption of new CO2 emission standards for cars and vans to reduce pollution and improve air quality**

The European Parliament yesterday agreed on CO2 emission standards for new cars and vans in the EU for the period after 2020 – a significant step towards decarbonising and modernising the European mobility sector and put the EU on track to become climate neutral. Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias **Cañete** said: *"This vote sends a very clear message: mobility and the transport sector has a crucial role to play in Europe's transition towards a climate-neutral economy. The new targets and incentives will help EU industry embrace innovation towards zero-emission mobility and further strengthen its global leadership in clean vehicles. At the same time, the gradual transition will allow sufficient time for reskilling and upskilling of workers, so that no-one is left behind in this transition. Consumers will save money at the pump, and cleaner cars also mean less pollution and cleaner air for all Europeans."* As a result of the new rules, in 2030, emissions from new cars will have to be 37.5% lower and emissions from new vans 31% lower, compared to 2021. The new CO2 standards are part of the clean mobility package and a stepping stone towards a modernised, and more competitive European transport sector, and the road towards a climate-neutral economy in line with the EU's commitments under the Paris Agreement. The new rules contribute to implementing the Juncker Commission priority of a resilient Energy Union and a forward-looking climate change policy. A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.:

+32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

## **Commission welcomes Parliament's votes on the future Cohesion Policy 2021-2027**

The Commission welcomes yesterday's votes in the European Parliament, establishing its first reading positions on the [Commission's proposal](#) for Cohesion Policy in the next long-term EU budget. This is a major step toward the adoption of the new framework, for a modernised Cohesion Policy with simpler rules and a focus on innovation, support to small and medium businesses, climate-related actions, employment and social inclusion. *"I want to thank the Parliament for its work on this file and I welcome its positions, which endorse the architecture and key elements of our proposal,"* said Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** after the vote. *"We will resume the trilogue discussions with the Parliament and the Council in the autumn, but in the meantime, we are making good progress in our discussions with the Member States on the future Cohesion Policy programmes and their priorities. This is of paramount importance so that investments can start on the ground as early as possible and in an efficient, targeted way."* On 27 February, as part of the European Semester process of economic policy coordination, the Commission launched a discussion on investment needs and challenges in the Member States and set out first ideas as to how EU funds, in particular Cohesion Policy funds, can help to achieve investment priorities in the EU budget period 2021-2027 (see press release [here](#)). The Commission is now in contact with all Member States to discuss and define the future programming of the funds at national and regional levels. *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)*

## **Research: Commission invests €540 million to advance work of top scientists**

Today, the Commission is announcing 222 new funding grants worth on average €2.5 million each, to help scientists advance their most daring research ideas. The grants, which are awarded by the European Research Council, will allow these top-class scientists to further their research into issues like improving the generation and storage of renewable energy, helping our biological clocks cope with our 24/7 modern lives and exploring the role of women in the fight for social and gender justice in Eastern Europe. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"The ERC Advanced Grants back outstanding researchers throughout Europe. Their pioneering work has the potential to make a difference in people's everyday life and deliver solutions to some of our most urgent challenges. The ERC gives these bright minds the possibility to follow their most creative ideas and to play a decisive role in the advancement of all domains of knowledge."* Advanced grants support well-established and independent top researchers. The full press release and list of successful researchers is available [here](#). *(For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278)*

## **A Europe that protects: framework contracts for pandemic influenza vaccines signed today**

15 Member States and the European Commission today sign framework contracts with the pharmaceutical company Seqirus for the production and supply of pandemic influenza vaccines under the "[EU Joint Procurement Agreement to procure medical countermeasures](#)". Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis Andriukaitis, said: *"Today's signature signals a new era in the access of EU citizens to pandemic influenza vaccines. Member States signing the contracts can rest assured that their citizens will have access to vaccines in case of an influenza pandemic at the best price available. This is one additional example where acting together we get stronger and achieve more."* In the event of an influenza pandemic, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain representing around half of the EU population, and the European Commission will receive influenza vaccines thanks to the contracts concluded today under the Joint Procurement Agreement. This mechanism aims at improving Member States' preparedness to mitigate serious cross-border threats to health, ensuring equitable access to all participating Member States and guaranteeing more balanced prices for the Member States in their joint negotiations with pharmaceutical companies on specific medical countermeasures. Negotiations with another pharmaceutical company are ongoing in view of signing a second round of contracts, which will maximize the vaccine coverage according to the specific needs of the participating Member States and will further improve their preparedness for the next pandemic. For more details please see [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

## **Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de Parex par Sika**

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle exclusif de la Financière Dry Mix Solutions SAS (« Parex »), basée en France, par Sika AG, basée en Suisse. Parex est principalement active dans la production et la commercialisation de mortiers utilisés dans l'industrie de la construction. Sika est un développeur et producteur de produits utilisés dans le secteur du bâtiment et des industries manufacturières. Les activités des entreprises se chevauchent dans plusieurs domaines, notamment en ce qui concerne le mortier pré-mélangé, les produits chimiques pour la construction, les produits chimiques et les mastics en France, ainsi qu'en Espagne en ce qui concerne les systèmes composites d'isolation thermique extérieure. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, principalement parce que les parts de marché cumulées des entreprises sont modérées et qu'un grand nombre de concurrents resteront actifs sur tous les marchés concernés par l'opération, après la concentration. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public des affaires](#) de concurrence de l'affaire [M.9276](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tél.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tél.: +32 229 90526)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **La commissaire Crețu en Allemagne pour discuter de la future politique de Cohésion**

La commissaire chargée de la politique régionale, Corina **Crețu**, se trouve aujourd'hui et demain à Berlin et à Potsdam, en Allemagne. Elle rencontrera cet après-midi Peter Altmaier, ministre fédéral des Affaires économiques, pour discuter de la politique de Cohésion et de ses priorités en matière d'investissement dans le prochain budget à long terme de l'UE pour 2021-2027. À Berlin, la commissaire **Crețu** a participé ce matin à un événement organisé par la présidence roumaine du Conseil de l'UE, au cours duquel elle a présenté l'architecture de la politique de Cohésion post-2020 aux ambassadeurs des États membres de l'UE et des pays voisins. Vendredi, elle rencontrera Dietmar Woidke, ministre-président du Brandebourg, à Potsdam. Ils discuteront des opportunités de la future politique de Cohésion pour le Brandebourg. La commissaire **Crețu** et le ministre-président Woidke visiteront ensuite le parc scientifique de Potsdam-Golm, un site cofinancé par l'UE où la recherche internationale allant de la biotechnologie à la physique gravitationnelle est combinée à la formation de jeunes chercheurs. *(Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)*

### **Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Czechia**

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** will be visiting Czechia until Monday. Her visit includes a meeting at the Canadian embassy with ambassadors from Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, amongst others, to exchange views on the upcoming European Parliament elections, the rule of law, Brexit and the role of the EU in the international context. Commissioner **Jourová** will then meet M. Snasel, the rector of the Ostrava University, with whom she will discuss Horizon 2020 amongst other topics. She will deliver a speech on Friday at the event, where the Data Protection Association awards the best Data Protection Officer of 2018. On Monday, she will participate to the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the [ISSS](#) annual conference on the Internet in State Administration and Self-government, where she will deliver a speech on digitalisation. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

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