

## Daily News 28 / 11 / 2018

### **COLLEGE MEETING: Commission reports on progress in risk reduction in the Banking Union and calls for faster progress on Capital Markets Union ahead of EU Leaders' meetings**

Today, the Commission takes stock of the latest developments as regards risk reduction in the banking sector and progress towards an even more integrated and stable EU financial system, ahead of the December European Council and Euro Summit, where decisions on deepening Europe's Economic and Monetary Union should be taken. In its [third progress report](#) on the reduction of non-performing loans (NPLs) the Commission highlights that NPLs in the European banking sector have declined further, now standing at an EU average of 3.4%. While efforts need to continue to address legacy issues still weighing on the sector since the financial crisis, this development is very encouraging. In a [separate Communication](#), the Commission also calls for renewed political engagement and efforts to complete key building blocks of the Capital Markets Union (CMU) ahead of the European elections next May. Together with the completion of the Banking Union, this is essential for the development of Economic and Monetary Union and strengthening the international role of the euro. *"Working out the high stocks of non-performing loans is part of efforts to reduce risks in the European banking sector. We are also expecting swift agreements on the Banking and NPL packages. On the basis of the progress achieved on the risk-reduction side, I invite EU Finance Ministers and leaders to agree on concrete risk-sharing measures in December. Stronger Economic and Monetary Union is in the interest of each and every one"*, said Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union. Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: *"Capital Markets Union is about broadening access to finance for small and medium size companies, and to increase investment opportunities in Europe. We want businesses and citizens to fully benefit from the potential of the Single Markets for banking and financial services. This is why we count on the support of the European Parliament and the Council to agree swiftly on the outstanding measures we proposed under the Banking Union and Capital Markets Union agenda."* Further information is available in a [press release](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 85615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

### **RÉUNION DU COLLÈGE: La Commission appelle de ses vœux une Europe neutre pour le climat d'ici à 2050**

La Commission européenne a adopté aujourd'hui une vision stratégique à long terme pour une économie prospère, moderne, compétitive et neutre pour le climat d'ici à 2050 – Une planète propre pour tous. La stratégie montre comment l'Europe peut ouvrir la voie pour atteindre la neutralité climatique en investissant dans des solutions technologiques réalistes, en responsabilisant les citoyens et en adaptant les actions sur des domaines

clés tels que la politique industrielle, la finance ou encore la recherche, tout en garantissant l'équité sociale pour une transition juste. À la suite de l'invitation du Conseil européen de mars 2018, la vision de la Commission pour un avenir neutre pour le climat couvre la quasi-totalité des politiques de l'UE et est conforme à l'objectif de l'accord de Paris de maintenir la hausse de la température bien en dessous de 2 °C et de poursuivre les efforts visant à maintenir la hausse de température à 1,5 °C. Pour que l'Union européenne puisse mener le monde vers la neutralité climatique, il faut y parvenir d'ici à 2050. Le [communiqué de presse](#) complet ainsi que les [questions et réponses](#) sont disponible en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tél.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tél.: +32 229 74959)

### **COLLEGE MEETING: European Citizens' Initiative: European Commission declares as inadmissible request for EU referendum on the United Kingdom remaining or leaving**

The European Commission has today decided not to register a European Citizens' Initiative entitled '*EU wide referendum whether the European Citizens want the United Kingdom to remain or to leave!*'. The Commission found that that the conditions for registration of this initiative were not met as the matter falls outside of the EU's field of competence. The initiative states that: "*All European Citizens should have the possibility to express their political opinion, whether they wish the United Kingdom to stay in the European Union.*" The organisers call on the European Commission to "*support this public opinion poll giving all European Citizens in all 28 member states, the possibility to express their wish whether the Brexit should happen or not.*" Article 50(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) explicitly allows any Member State to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. While the European Commission regrets the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, it respects the outcome of the referendum. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

### **COLLEGE MEETING: Commission proposes to change composition of the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee** [updated on 28/11/2018 at 12:43]

The European Commission has today made two proposals to change the composition of the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. The European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee currently each have 350 seats and their term of office will come to an end on 25 January 2020 and 20 September 2020, respectively. It is, therefore, necessary that the Council adopts a decision on the composition of the two Committees, also as the UK's withdrawal will result in 24 vacant seats, as of 30 March 2019. The Commission proposes to give Cyprus, Estonia, and Luxembourg an extra seat in

both Committees, as these three Member States lost a seat after the previous decision in 2015 on the composition of the Committees, due to Croatia's accession. The remaining seats would be left vacant, as a reserve for possible future enlargements. This would mean that for the period 2020-2025, both Committees would be composed of 329 members each. It is now for the Council, acting unanimously, to adopt this proposal. The texts of the proposals will be available [here](#) shortly. (For more information: *Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500*)

### **New €474 million co-operation package for Afghanistan**

The European Commission has announced a financial package worth €474 million to support state building and public sector reforms, health, justice, and elections, as well as to address migration and displacement challenges in Afghanistan. This announcement was made by Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** at yesterday's [Geneva Conference on Afghanistan](#). Through a State and Resilience Building Contract, the EU will support the Government of Afghanistan in pursuing its reform agenda with an allocation of €311 million. Further €31 million will facilitate justice reform by supporting the Attorney General's office to become more effective and Afghan civil society to ensure that the Afghan justice system is accountable to citizens. With a new €80 million support package, the EU will work in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan to improve the health and nutrition of the population, in line with the national plans and strategies until 2020. €15.5 million will support the presidential and provincial council elections in 2019. Furthermore, the European Union and the Government of Afghanistan signed a new commitment worth €37 million, which reinforces EU assistance to Afghanistan in addressing migration and forced displacement challenges, in particular the reintegration of people on the move and returnees in Afghanistan. Read the full press release [here](#). (For more information: *Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256*)

### **Commission launches Knowledge Centre to fight malnutrition**

Today, the European Commission will launch a new Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security. This Knowledge Centre, led by the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre, will act as a reference point for scientific data supporting the EU's global commitment to end hunger in third countries. Commissioner for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics** said: "To end hunger and fight malnutrition, we need to do more together, using the very best knowledge at our disposal within the Commission and beyond. In most cases, we are not short of data or information – rather, the challenge is making sense of the unprecedented volume of knowledge we have. The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security will help identify where crucial information and knowledge gaps exist, and indicate how to fill them." The new centre will be launched in

Brussels in the presence of Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management and Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. The Joint Research Centre coordinates knowledge and competence centres, processing science-based evidence to inform policy-makers and providing tools and services for all EU policy areas. The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security is the sixth to be launched under the leadership of the Joint Research Centre after those on the [Bioeconomy](#), [Territorial Policies](#), [Migration and Demography](#), [Disaster Risk Management](#) and [Food Fraud and Quality](#). A full [press release](#) and [factsheet](#) is available online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

### **Commission welcomes provisional political agreement on a multi-annual fisheries management plan for the Western Waters**

The European Commission welcomes the provisional political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council on a multi-annual plan for fisheries in the Western Waters. The plan covers fisheries from the North and West of Scotland over the Gulf of Cadiz down to Madeira in the South. The agreement is based on the [Commission's proposal](#) from March 2018 and will help restore and maintain stocks at sustainable levels, while ensuring social and economic viability for the fishermen operating in the region. Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** stated: *"I am very pleased with today's political agreement as it signals the EU's determination to protect the future of our fisheries in the Western Waters on the long term. We have already seen an increasing number of stocks being fished sustainably in this sea basin. This has translated into higher income for the fishing industry and the local communities. With this multi-annual plan, we continue towards our goal to reach sustainable fisheries for all stocks, with solutions that are adapted to the specific needs of the fishermen in the Western Waters."* The plan concerns the fleets of Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the UK in this part of the Atlantic Ocean and its adjacent waters. Thanks to joint EU efforts over recent years, many of the fish stocks in Western Waters are already being fished sustainably. For these stocks, the multi-annual plan will enable Member State groups to recommend measures tailored to their particular fisheries. This will ensure both economic growth and continued sustainability. For other stocks, the plan will support recovery efforts to ensure that they are fished sustainably in the coming years. More information is [online](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

### **Eurostat: La fiscalité en 2017: Le ratio recettes fiscales/PIB dans l'UE atteint 40,2% – Un rapport de 1 à 2 entre États membres**

Le ratio global recettes fiscales/PIB, autrement dit la somme des impôts et des cotisations sociales nettes en pourcentage du produit intérieur brut, s'est élevé à 40,2% dans l'Union européenne (UE) en 2017, en hausse par rapport à 2016 (39,9%). Dans la zone euro, les recettes fiscales représentaient 41,4% du PIB en 2017, soit légèrement au-dessus du taux de

41,2% de 2016. Les indicateurs fiscaux sont compilés dans un cadre harmonisé sur la base du système européen des comptes (SEC 2010), permettant une comparaison précise des systèmes fiscaux et politiques fiscales entre États membres de l'UE. Un communiqué de presse est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 229 85615; Patrick McCullough – Tél.: +32 229 87183)

### **€444 million to be reimbursed to European farmers**

The European Commission will [reimburse €444 million to European farmers](#) originally deducted from direct payments for 2018 under the common agricultural policy (CAP) to create this year's so-called agricultural crisis reserve. The amounts concerned will be reimbursed to farmers as of 1 December 2018. Even though the agricultural sector faced critical situations this year, such as extreme weather during the summer, it has not been necessary to unblock the crisis reserve in 2018 to provide adequate support to European farmers. Additional support measures taken to deal with the difficult market situation for certain sectors financed from the available CAP budget. The damages caused by adverse weather conditions during this spring and summer have been addressed by other measures available to help farmers overcome the consequences. This includes derogations from certain conditions related to greening payments and higher advanced payments for 2019. More information is [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

### **Commission welcomes agreement on new rules for spirit drinks**

The negotiators of the Council and the European Parliament with the presence of the European Commission reached yesterday a political agreement on the new rules for the production and labelling of spirit drinks and for the registration and protection of spirit drinks registered as geographical indications (GI). Attending the conclusive negotiation meeting, Commissioner for Agriculture, Phil **Hogan** said: *"We welcome the successful conclusion to today's trilogue and the agreement reached on the new Spirit Drinks Regulation. I am confident that the new Spirit Drink Regulation, resulting from today's negotiations, will provide for a legislative framework that meets the needs of the sector and will continue to support its continuing and substantial growth. The modernised rules will also ensure that consumers are accurately informed on the methods used to produce spirit drinks."* Today's agreement means that a clearer labelling of spirit drinks will be guaranteed across the EU and that their composition will be harmonised at EU level. The creation of a register of Member States' control authorities will also facilitate the work of the national enforcement forces to make sure that consumers get the genuine products. Terms of [spirit drinks registered as GIs](#) such as Cognac, Irish Cream, Genever or Ouzo will also be better protected against misuse as ingredients and against the registration of similar trademarks. More information is [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

## **European Commission publishes guidance for Member States on Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia**

Today marks the 10-year anniversary of the [EU Framework on combating racism and xenophobia](#). The European Commission is publishing guidance for national authorities to help them improve how EU rules on fighting hate crime and hate speech are implemented on the ground. The guidance gives advice on how to address common issues when it comes to the practical application of these rules, and how to ensure effective investigation, prosecution and sentencing of hate crime and hate speech. The EU's [Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia](#) obliges all EU countries to put in place legislation to penalise the most serious manifestations of racism and xenophobia, and in particular the public incitement to racist violence or hatred as well as racist and xenophobic hate crime. The European Commission supports Member States through the [EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance](#), which regularly brings together experts from Member States, civil society and community-based organisations, EU agencies in particular the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, as well as international organisations including the United Nations, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. The Commission has also been working closely with IT companies for them to quickly remove [illegal hate speech online](#). For more information and the guidance published today see [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Maja Kocijancic– Tel.: +32 229 86570; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 5865)

## **La Commission approuve deux nouvelles indications géographiques protégées d'Allemagne et de Bulgarie**

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du [«Bayrisch Blockmalz»](#) (les termes «Bayrischer Blockmalz»/«Echt Bayrisch Blockmalz»/«Aecht Bayrischer Blockmalz» sont également protégés) et du «Гроздова ракия от Търговище»/«Grozdova rakya ot Targovishte» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Fabriqué en Bavière dans le sud de l'Allemagne, le «Bayrisch Blockmalz» est un caramel dur à base de sucre, sirop de sucre caramélisé et extrait de malt. Ce bonbon a été fait pour la première fois par un pharmacien à Nuremberg en 1899. Encore largement vendu en pharmacie et parapharmacie, le «Bayrisch Blockmalz» a reçu un label de qualité de l'association allemande des médecins homéopathes. Produit dans la province de Targovishte dans le nord-est de la Bulgarie, le «Гроздова ракия от Търговище»/«Grozdova rakya ot Targovishte» est une eau-de-vie avec un degré d'alcool d'au moins 40%. De couleur jaune pâle, cette eau-de-vie a une saveur douce avec un arôme de vanille, dû entre autres à l'eau minérale utilisée pour la diluer. Ces nouvelles appellations vont rejoindre plus de 1440 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'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tél.: +32 229 52509)

## **Mergers: Commission clears T-Mobile NL's acquisition of Tele2 NL**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL by T-Mobile NL. The Commission concluded that the merger would raise no competition concerns in the European Economic Area (EEA) or any substantial part of it. Today's decision follows an [in-depth investigation of T-Mobile NL's proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL](#). First, the investigation found that the proposed merger was unlikely to lead to significant price increases because of the limited combined market position (around 25% market share) and the relatively small increment brought by Tele2 NL (around 5%). Furthermore, there are uncertainties concerning Tele2 NL's role as an important competitive force in the Dutch market. Second, the Commission concluded that the transaction would not increase the likelihood of coordinated behaviour between mobile network operators. Third, the investigation showed that any potential change in conditions for virtual mobile network operators due to the proposed merger would not have a serious impact on the level of competition in the Dutch mobile telecoms market. Taking into account these findings, the Commission's investigation concluded that the transaction would not raise competition concerns in the EEA or any substantial part of it and cleared the case unconditionally. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Access to affordable and good quality mobile telecom services is essential in a modern society. After thoroughly analysing the specific role of T-Mobile NL and the smaller Tele2 NL in the Dutch retail mobile market, our investigation found that the proposed acquisition would not significantly change the prices or quality of mobile services for Dutch consumers"*. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [NL](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

#### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of MBT by Rehau**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over MB Barter & Trading Holding AG ("MBT") by REHAU Verwaltungszentrale AG ("Rehau"), both of Switzerland. MBT is active in the production and supply of standard polymers, PET and other petrochemical products such as rubber. Rehau is a system and service provider for polymer-based solutions for construction, automotive and industrial applications. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the limited vertical overlaps between the companies' activities. 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.9137](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

#### **Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over Simba Holdings by IFM and Trafigura**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Simba Holding S.à r.l of Luxembourg by IFM Investors Pty Ltd. ("IFM") of Australia and Trafigura Group Pte Ltd ("Trafigura") of Singapore. Simba Holdings owns and operates marine terminal facilities for dry bulk cargo and provides transport services for liquid bulk cargo, as well as global freight forwarding and logistics services. Simba

Holdings is currently solely controlled by Trafigura. IFM is a global provider of investment services across infrastructure, debt investments, listed equities and private equity. Trafigura is an independent commodity trading and logistics group. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of the limited impact it would have on 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.9151](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **La commissaire Jourova participe aux Assises des Consommateurs**

Aujourd'hui, Věra **Jourová**, la commissaire européenne chargée de la justice, des consommateurs et de l'égalité des genres, participe aux Assises des Consommateurs qui concluront une série de 27 dialogues citoyens dédiés aux consommateurs. De mai à novembre, ceux-ci ont rassemblé plus de 2500 participants issus des autorités nationales de protection des consommateurs ainsi que des organisations professionnelles pour discuter de la "[nouvelle donne pour les consommateurs](#)", présentée par la Commission européenne en avril dernier. La commissaire Věra **Jourová** a déclaré: "*Les dialogues citoyens ont permis d'entendre les demandes nationales en matière de protection des consommateurs. Ils ont confirmé que la nouvelle donne pour les citoyens est la bonne réponse aux défis auxquels font face les consommateurs aujourd'hui. Nous souhaitons que les discussions législatives sur cette proposition soient conclues au plus vite, avant les élections européennes de 2019.*" Les Assises des consommateurs, co-organisées par le Comité économique et social européen, rassemble plus de 200 personnes de tous les pays européens pour discuter des défis actuels en terme de protection des consommateurs: 1/ adaptation des droits des consommateurs au monde digital; 2/ amélioration des possibilités de recours individuels ou collectifs; 3/ futures priorités pour la protection des consommateurs en Europe. L'évènement peut être suivi [en ligne](#). Tous les documents sur la proposition de la Commission sur la "nouvelle donne pour les consommateurs" sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

### **Commissioner Andriukaitis and Commissioner Bulc discuss health, food, transport and the future of Europe in Ljubljana**

On 29 November 2018, in the context of a visit to Slovenia, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** and Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** will attend the 11<sup>th</sup> European Public Health Conference in Ljubljana. They will give a joint presentation during the opening ceremony of the conference, as well as contributing to a roundtable debate. Whilst in Ljubljana, they will also host a "University" Citizens' Dialogue, organised



by three different natural science faculties of Ljubljana. The Commissioners will discuss the issues of health, safe food, transport and more, with a particular focus on how these will affect the quality of life in Europe. *“I look forward to a highly constructive dialogue alongside my colleague Commissioner Bulc on the important topics of health, food safety and the environment, which are intrinsically linked in defining the quality of life of our populations. It is only through this type of constant collaboration and exchange of ideas that we will be able to strengthen our efforts and make tangible changes in the future of the EU”* said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** ahead of the event. Commissioner **Bulc** said: *“Transport has a strong impact on food, health and environment, on the one hand through negative externalities such as air pollution, noise pollution and road accidents. However, it is also a positive story in a sustainable manner, with green logistics, clean mobility and inclusive connectivity. This dialogue is a great opportunity for a wider debate, to talk to young people and get engaged in an important debate about the ‘Future of Europe’”*. The event will be web-streamed via facebook from 10:00 CET [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624, Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172, Stephan Meder – Tel.: +32 229 13917 )

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