

Daily News 29 / 09 / 2017

Juncker Plan: €700 million for SMEs in Greece

The Investment Plan for Europe – the Juncker Plan – is supporting small businesses in Greece. Piraeus Bank will lend €700 million to SMEs in Greece thanks to an agreement signed today with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). This deal is backed by the Investment Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Commissioner **Moscovici**, responsible for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Today's agreement with Piraeus Bank under the Juncker Plan means €700 million in new financing is now available for Greek SMEs. This will give a huge boost to the economy and it shows the Commission's continued commitment to supporting growth and development in Greece."* As of September 2017, operations approved under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) are set to trigger €236.1 billion in total investment across the 28 Member States. The EIB estimates that by 2020 the Juncker Plan is set to increase EU GDP by 0.7% and create 700,000 jobs. (For more information about any of the projects and the latest Investment Plan results see the new [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Drones: fresh efforts by the Commission to put safety first

The European Commission is today giving a push to speed up the implementation of EU-wide rules for the use of drones in the European Union. More than [1200 safety occurrences](#) – including near-misses between drones and aircrafts – were reported in Europe in 2016, which underlines the pressing need for a modern and flexible EU regulatory framework. The Commission is therefore calling on the European Parliament and the Council to agree on its [proposal from December 2015](#) establishing an EU-wide framework for drones. Pending this adoption, the Commission's [Single European Sky Air traffic management Research Joint Undertaking \(SESAR\)](#) is today making [half a million euro available to support the demonstration of "geo-fencing" services](#). These can automatically prevent drones from flying into restricted zones, such as the vicinity of airports. Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said, *"Drones offer tremendous opportunities for new services and businesses. That is why we want Europe to be a global leader. I am confident our modern and flexible regulatory framework will give rise to new European champions in this sector. But safety always comes first. If we don't move fast enough, the near misses between drones and airplanes could one day have disastrous consequences. I am therefore calling on the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly agree on our proposal from December 2015."* More information is available in [a press release](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 [6 91 43](#))

Maîtriser la mondialisation: les régions vont bénéficier d'un nouveau soutien

de l'UE pour bâtir des économies robustes

Les régions peuvent dès maintenant [candidater](#) pour participer à [deux projets pilotes](#) présentés par la Commission en juillet 2017. Si elles sont sélectionnées, elles pourront bénéficier d'un soutien personnalisé de l'UE pour transformer leurs économies et moderniser leurs industries. Ces projets pilotes visent à aider les régions d'Europe à davantage investir dans leurs domaines d'excellence (le processus dit de «[spécialisation intelligente](#)») et à générer l'innovation, la robustesse et la croissance nécessaires [dans une économie mondialisée](#). La commissaire à la politique régionale Corina Crețu a déclaré: *“Une région qui veut se hisser au sommet de la chaîne de valeur dans une économie mondialisée doit franchir cinq étapes: miser sur l'innovation, la numérisation et la décarbonation, développer les compétences des gens et éliminer les obstacles à l'investissement. Les projets que nous lançons aujourd'hui montrent que l'UE est prête à aider ses régions, à chaque étape.”* Le premier projet concerne les régions en transition industrielle et leur propose un accompagnement personnalisé dans leur transformation économique. Le second vise à développer des projets interrégionaux profitables et susceptibles de créer des chaînes de valeur européennes dans des secteurs prioritaires tels que la bioéconomie, la mobilité connectée, la santé ou la cybersécurité. Vous trouverez plus d'informations dans [ce communiqué de presse](#) et cette [fiche](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Le régime des quotas sucriers européens prend fin

Le tout dernier régime de quotas agricoles en place pour gérer la production de sucre dans l'Union européenne sera supprimé demain, après presque 50 ans d'existence. La décision de mettre fin maintenant aux quotas de sucre avait été convenue entre le Parlement européen et les États membres dans le cadre de la réforme de 2013 de la Politique Agricole Commune (PAC), à l'issue d'un vaste processus de réforme et de restructuration lancé en 2006. M. Phil Hogan, commissaire chargé de l'agriculture et du développement rural, a déclaré: *«La fin du régime des quotas représente un tournant décisif pour le secteur sucrier européen et marque une nouvelle étape importante dans la mise en place d'une politique agricole commune davantage orientée vers le marché. Les producteurs auront désormais la possibilité de développer leurs activités commerciales sur les marchés mondiaux et, avec un soutien adéquat de la Commission européenne – tel que l'observatoire du marché du sucre, qui fournit des informations pertinentes et à jour sur ce marché – ils devraient avoir toutes les chances de réussir. Je suis convaincu que, depuis que la date de fin des quotas de sucre a été arrêtée, le secteur s'est bien positionné pour tirer parti des possibilités offertes par l'abolition de ce régime.»* La fin du régime des quotas donne aux producteurs la possibilité d'adapter leur production aux opportunités commerciales réelles, notamment en explorant de nouveaux marchés d'exportation. Par ailleurs, elle s'accompagne d'une simplification significative de la gestion de la politique et d'un allègement considérable de la charge administrative qui pèse sur les opérateurs, les producteurs et les commerçants. De nombreuses mesures de la PAC restent en place pour soutenir le secteur en cas de besoin. Un [communiqué](#)

[de presse](#) dans toutes les langues et une [Foire aux Questions](#) sont disponibles en ligne ainsi qu'une fiche visuelle d'informations en [allemand](#), [anglais](#) et [français](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56 185; Clemence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Commission proposes fresh macro-financial assistance to Georgia of up to €45 million

The European Commission today proposes new [Macro-Financial Assistance \(MFA\)](#) to Georgia, worth up to €45 million. While Georgia has made significant progress with economic reforms, its macroeconomic outlook remains vulnerable. Georgia's economy is exposed to an uncertain regional and global economic outlook, and its international reserves are not yet adequate, not least due to the country's external debt level. This context has formed the basis for the proposal for further Macro-Financial Assistance. Of the total €45 million, €10 million would be provided in the form of grants and up to €35 million in medium-term loans at favourable financing conditions, helping to reduce uncertainties surrounding the economy's short-term balance of payments and fiscal issues. If adopted by the European Parliament and the Council, this assistance would help Georgia cover part of its external financing needs. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Today's proposal for additional assistance is another sign of the EU's strong support for the Georgian people. As Georgia continues its economic transition, we are helping the country to preserve macroeconomic stability and continue the reform process, which is needed to achieve stronger and more inclusive growth."* A press release is available [here](#). For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: [+32 229 56153](#); Enda McNamara – [+32 229 64976](#))

Extension of trade support to Ukraine enters into force on 1 October

As of 1 October some Ukrainian agricultural and industrial goods will be exported to the EU market tariff-free. This set of autonomous trade measures was proposed by the Commission and supported by the European Parliament and EU member States, in view of the difficult economic situation and the economic reform efforts undertaken by Ukraine. Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** and the Trade Representative of Ukraine – Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Trade Nataliya Mykolska have today welcomed the entry into force of the autonomous trade measures of the EU for Ukraine. In a [joint statement](#) they said: *"this is good news for Ukrainian exporters. Several important agricultural and industrial goods will now get better access to the EU market, as they can be exported tariff-free. This is an important sign of the EU's continued, tangible economic and political support for the Ukrainian people, the country and its reform efforts."* The Regulation will be published tomorrow and will come into force on Sunday 1 October. The new measures will top up the quantities of agricultural products that Ukraine can export to the EU under the Association Agreement (AA) without paying customs duties. It will also accelerate the elimination of EU import tariffs

for several industrial products as foreseen in the Association Agreement. More information on [EU-Ukraine](#) trade relations is available on the website of DG Trade. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

EU and FAO join forces to take action on food waste and antimicrobial resistance

Today, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis and the Director-General of Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) José Graziano da Silva agreed to ramp up collaboration between the two organisations in tackling the problems of waste in food supply chains and antimicrobial resistance. Globally, one-third of all food produce for human consumption – 1.3 billion tonnes – is lost or wasted, each year, causing massive financial losses. The increased use – and abuse – of antimicrobial medicines in both human and animal healthcare has contributed to an increase in the number of disease-causing microbes that are resistant to antimicrobial medicines used to treat them, like antibiotics. This makes AMR a growing threat that could lead to as many as 10 million deaths a year and over €85 million in losses to the global economy by 2050. Speaking at a signing ceremony at FAO's Rome headquarters, Commissioner Andriukaitis said: *"Food loss and waste represent an unacceptable, unethical and immoral squandering of scarce resources and increase food insecurity, while AMR marks a grave societal and economic burden,"* adding: *"We are becoming more united, more efficient and more strategic in how we tackle these issues, and as such, this agreement should be celebrated."* A full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

New scientific report shows positive economic trends for EU fishing fleet

According to the latest [Annual Economic Report](#), the overall economic performance of the EU fishing fleet improved again in 2015. While marginally profitable in 2009, the EU fleet registered record-high net profits of EUR 798 million in 2015 and estimates for 2016 and 2017 point towards further increases in profitability. The report also demonstrates that economic performance stagnates where fleets depend on stocks which are still overfished or overexploited. More and more fleets that exploit stocks sustainably see clear improvements in their profitability and salaries. In 2015, the EU fleet's gross value added, i.e. the contribution of the fishing sector to the economy through wages and gross profit, amounted to €3.9 billion. This represents a 16% increase compared to 2013. Average salaries in the EU fleet have also increased while average fuel consumption has decreased. Fuel use efficiency has improved, with fuel costs amounting to 15% of the total revenue in 2015, compared to 24% in 2008. This is largely because fleets tend to operate more efficiently. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for environment, maritime affairs and fisheries, said: *"It is encouraging to see that the positive trend of the last years has resulted in higher salaries*

for fishermen, bigger profits for the fishing sector and more value added for the EU's fishing and coastal communities. This clearly shows that our joint commitment towards more sustainable fishing pays off. But more efforts are needed to allow also small scale coastal fleets, in particular in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, to fully benefit from this positive trend." The 2017 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet is based on data provided by national authorities and the result of combined work by economic experts from the [Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee of Fisheries](#) and the Commission. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Trade negotiations: Commission publishes report and text proposals following third negotiation round with Indonesia

As part of its commitment to a more transparent trade policy the Commission today published a [report](#) summarising the progress made during the latest negotiating round for the EU-Indonesia trade agreement. In addition, the Commission [published](#) eight initial text proposals the EU submitted to Indonesia ahead of the round, together with accompanying explanatory memos. The round report includes more details on all areas of the negotiations, including trade in goods, services, investment and technical barriers to trade. The negotiations continue to show good engagement from both partners. The teams have progressed onto text-based discussions on nearly all chapters, meaning that most issues can be covered in greater depth. The talks also provided an extensive to-do list that will be followed up ahead of the next round. The latest round of talks with Indonesia took place from 11-15 September 2017 in Brussels. The next round will be held in Indonesia at the beginning of 2018. The recent Commission proposals made in the course of the negotiations can also be accessed through the dedicated [transparency page](#). More information on [EU-Indonesia](#) talks is available on the website of DG Trade. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Aides d'État: la Commission autorise quatre régimes d'aide visant à produire plus de 7,5 gigawatts d'énergie à partir de sources renouvelables

La Commission européenne a autorisé, en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État, quatre régimes d'aides à la production d'électricité à partir d'installations d'éoliennes terrestres et d'installations solaires sur les bâtiments et au sol en France. Ces régimes permettront à la France de produire plus de 7 gigawatts supplémentaires d'énergie à partir de sources renouvelables et atteindre son objectif pour 2020, qui est de couvrir 23 % de ses besoins énergétiques avec des sources renouvelables. Les régimes autorisés sont les suivants: un régime en faveur de l'éolien terrestre, un régime en faveur des grandes installations photovoltaïques sur les bâtiments, un régime en faveur des grandes installations photovoltaïques au sol et un régime d'aides d'une capacité supplémentaire de 200 mégawatts pour les installations éoliennes terrestres et solaires n'excédant pas 18 mégawatts.

La Commission a apprécié les quatre régimes au regard des règles de l'UE en matière d'aides d'État, qui garantissent un recours limité aux fonds publics et l'absence de surcompensation. Margrethe **Vestager**, Commissaire pour la politique de Concurrence, a déclaré à ce propos: «*Les régimes d'aides en faveur de l'énergie solaire et éolienne terrestre à moyenne et grande échelles aideront la France à opérer sa transition vers une fourniture d'énergie durable sur le plan environnemental et à faibles émissions de carbone. Les mesures sont complétées par un appel d'offres neutre du point de vue technologique qui stimulera la concurrence entre les installations solaires et éoliennes et aidera l'UE à atteindre ses objectifs en matière d'environnement.*» Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger discusses the next Multiannual Financial Framework in Belgium today and in Sweden on Monday

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** in charge of Budget and Human Resources is visiting Belgium today and Sweden on 2 October as part of his stakeholder consultations on the future of EU finances and the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). In Belgium, the Commissioner will meet with Mr Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and with Mr Johan Van Overtveldt, Federal Minister for Finance. He will also visit the Federal Parliament and meet members of the bi-cameral Federal Advisory Committee for European Affairs and the Committee for Finances. In Sweden, Commissioner Oettinger will meet with Prime Minister Mr Stefan Löfven, Minister for EU Affairs and Trade Ms Ann Linde and Minister of Finance Ms Magdalena Andersson. He will also visit the Riksdagen (Swedish Parliament) and speak with members of the Committees of EU Affairs and of Finance. Commissioner Oettinger will also discuss the challenges ahead of the EU budget with citizens and business representatives: at a Citizens' Dialogue event and at an informal meeting chaired by Ms Eva Sjögren, Director of the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, and Ms Carola Lemne, Director-General of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, respectively. The meetings in Belgium and Sweden follow the visits of Italy, Greece and Luxembourg in July 2017. These were the first countries the Commissioner visited in the context of the discussion on the future of EU finances. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#). Following its release, Commissioner Günther H. Oettinger initiated a series of meetings with stakeholders, whose views are to feed into the next MFF. Click here for the [French](#), [Dutch](#), [German](#) and [Swedish](#) versions of the Reflection paper. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)

Commissioner Malmström in Sweden to participate in a Citizens' Dialogue on trade and protectionism

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** is in Stockholm today, where she is participating in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the EU trade policy's role in shaping globalisation, entitled "Protectionism does not protect". She will be joined onstage by several business leaders. This will feed into the ongoing debate launched by the Commission last May with the publication of the [Reflection Paper on harnessing globalisation](#), followed by the presentation of a significant trade package for a balanced and progressive trade policy. Openness and protection should go hand in hand. The EU is open for business, but there should exist a level playing field in a rules-based global trade system. At the occasion of her visit in Sweden, Commissioner Malmström will also deliver a keynote speech at the European Dairy Association Annual Convention "Global trade for global dairy". The Citizens' Dialogue is web-streamed as of 10:30 [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56 185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Commissioner Hahn in Armenia to prepare for the Eastern Partnership Summit

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will visit [Armenia](#) on 2 October in preparation of the [Eastern Partnership Summit](#) (Brussels, 24 November 2017). Commissioner **Hahn** will meet with President Serzh Sargsyan, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian, to discuss the priorities of the Eastern Partnership Summit and the deepening of EU-Armenia relations. This is reflected in the new EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and Partnership Priorities which will set the joint policy priorities for the coming years. Ahead of the mission, Commissioner **Hahn** said: *"This is a very important year for EU-Armenia relations as we broaden and deepen our cooperation based on mutual interests. The EU is ready to sign the new Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia. This, together with the agreed Partnership Priorities will shape our cooperation where we plan to invest, among other areas, in education and innovation, as skills development will be key for Armenia's future. My visit will also prepare for the next Eastern Partnership Summit by discussing our joint progress on the "20 deliverables for 2020", which aim to bring tangible benefits to the daily lives of Armenian citizens."* Accompanied by the Armenian Minister of Education, Commissioner **Hahn** will also meet young Armenian students. 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](#)

Commissioners' weekly activities

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