

## [Daily News 30 / 01 / 2018](#)

**Air Quality Ministerial Summit: Member States have until end of next week to complete their national submissions [updated on 30/01/2018 at 12:22]**

Ministers from 9 Member States convened today in Brussels upon the invite of Commissioner for Environment Karmenu **Vella**, in a final effort to find solutions to address the serious problem of air pollution in the European Union. The 9 Member States, namely the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, face infringement procedures for exceeding agreed air pollution limits. At the meeting, Commissioner Vella called on Member States to finalise their submissions by end of next week on how they intend to comply with EU law on air quality or else face legal action. Following the meeting, Commissioner **Vella** gave the following statement: *“This Commission has consistently said that it wishes to be ‘big on the big things’. And it doesn’t get bigger than the loss of life due to air pollution[...] As much as protecting our citizens is a key priority for President Juncker and the entire College of Commissioners, in Member States this need to become a key priority of the entire governments, of all Ministers concerned: be it Ministers for transport, energy, industry, agriculture or finance. Our shared credibility depends on it.”* See Commissioner Vella’s full statement [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

**Eurostat: Estimation rapide préliminaire pour le quatrième trimestre 2017: le PIB en hausse de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28, +2,7% et +2,6% respectivement par rapport au quatrième trimestre 2016**

Au cours du quatrième trimestre 2017, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l’UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l’estimation rapide préliminaire publiée par Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. Au cours du troisième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait progressé de 0,7% dans les deux zones. En comparaison avec le même trimestre de l’année précédente, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a enregistré une hausse de 2,7% dans la zone euro et de 2,6% dans l’UE28 au quatrième trimestre 2017, après +2,8% dans les deux zones au troisième trimestre 2017. Sur l’ensemble de l’année 2017, le PIB a progressé de 2,5% dans les deux zones. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

**Humanitarian aid: €37.5 million for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran**

The European Commission has announced today €37.5 million of humanitarian assistance to help people affected by conflict and natural disasters in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. *“The assistance we are announcing today will reach those affected by the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, both within the country and across the region, many of whom face of extremely dire conditions. The EU’s commitment to the Afghan people remains unwavering.*

*Incidents such as last week's attack on a humanitarian organisation take innocent lives and threaten lifesaving support to those most in need. It's fundamental that international humanitarian law is respected,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, **Christos Stylianides**. The European Commission will provide €27 million for lifesaving supplies to the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan. Afghans in Pakistan will benefit from humanitarian funding of €5.5 million. A further €5 million will support Afghan refugees in Iran. More information is available in the [press release](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

### **Investment Plan for Europe: Additional €30 million from the EU for micro-enterprises in Ireland over the next 5 years**

The [European Investment Fund \(EIF\)](#) has signed a second agreement with [Microfinance Ireland \(MFI\)](#) to support 2,100 micro-entrepreneurs under the European Commission's [EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#), after the first one signed in 2015. As a result of the EU support, the EaSI guarantee provided by the EIF will enable MFI to provide an additional €30 million in loans to micro-borrowers including migrants and entrepreneurs over the next five years. European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *"Thanks to this new financial boost of €30 million from the EU, more than 2000 micro-entrepreneurs will get financial support to start up or develop their business. Considering that Microfinance Ireland already created 4000 jobs through loans to small businesses, we can safely say that these loans are an excellent means to boost jobs and growth, whereby the most vulnerable people in the labour market are not left behind."* This new financing agreement was made possible by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). More information on the agreement can be found in this [press release](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253, Siobhan Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361, Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

### **Agriculture: the Commission approves new geographical indication from the United Kingdom**

The Commission has approved today the addition of a new product from the United Kingdom to the quality register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). ['Traditional Welsh Caerphilly', also called 'Traditional Welsh Caerffili'](#) (both terms are protected) is a white, hard cheese with a mild slightly lemony taste. It is made in Wales from pasteurised or raw milk produced on Welsh farms and is actually the only native cheese of this region. The cheese is to be eaten young from 10 days old or can be matured for up to 6 months. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century dairy schools were established throughout Wales to educate cheese producers and to pass on the specific skills and knowledge required. This new denomination will be added to the list of over 1420 products already protected. More information: webpages on

[quality products](#) and [DOOR database](#) of protected products. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56 185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Clean Energy Trading by BayWa**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Clean Energy Trading GmbH by BayWa r.e., both of Germany. Clean Energy Trading is active in the fields of direct marketing of electricity from renewable energy plants and the supply of electricity to end customers. BayWa is active in the fields of solar energy, wind energy, bioenergy and geothermal energy. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the overlaps between the companies are very limited and a number of strong players remain in the market after the merger. 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.8758](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of TMF by CVC**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of TMF Orange Holding B.V. ("TMF") of the Netherlands by CVC Capital Partners SICAV-FIS S.A. of Luxembourg. TMF provides financial, legal and HR administrative services for corporate, alternative investment as well as private clients. CVC provides advice to and management of investment funds and platforms. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because there is no horizontal overlap between the companies' activities. Moreover, despite the existence of a vertical relationship between CVC and TMF, their individual and combined market shares are well below 30%. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8715](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner King in The Hague**

Commissioner **King** is in The Hague, the Netherlands today where he will meet Ms Kajsa Ollongren, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, and Mr Ferdinand Grapperhaus, Minister of Justice and Security. Discussions will focus on issues relating to security, in particular information exchange, countering radicalisation and enhancing cybersecurity, following up on the [progress report](#) towards an effective and genuine Security Union presented by

the Commission last week. Later in the afternoon, Commissioner **King** will also visit the Netherlands Passenger Name Records platform. (*For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444*)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News) [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-18-508\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-508_en.htm)