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EU Budget: A Reform Support Programme and an Investment Stabilisation Function to strengthen Europe's Economic and Monetary Union

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** have presented the Commission's proposals to create a [Reform Support Programme](#) and a [European Investment Stabilisation Function](#). Both proposals are part of the broader agenda to deepen Europe's Economic and Monetary Union and make use of the EU budget to strengthen the performance and resilience of our interdependent economies. The Reform Support Programme will support priority reforms in all EU Member States, with an overall budget of €25 billion. It comprises three elements: a Reform Delivery Tool, to provide financial support for reforms; a Technical Support Instrument, to offer and share technical expertise; and a Convergence Facility, to help Member States on their way to joining the euro. The European Investment Stabilisation Function will help stabilise public investment levels and facilitate rapid economic recovery in cases of significant economic shocks in Member States of the euro area and those participating in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM II). This Function will complement the role of existing national automatic stabilisers. Subject to strict criteria of sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies, loans of up to €30 billion can be rapidly mobilised, together with an interest rate subsidy to cover their cost. Commenting on the proposals, President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"The Economic and Monetary Union is first and foremost about improving the lives of all Europeans. As we look to our future and celebrate the 20th anniversary of our single currency, we must equip the EU and our euro area with the necessary tools to deliver even more prosperity and stability. Today's proposals are about making the Economic and Monetary Union the protecting and uniting force that it was conceived to be. The Commission is putting the EU budget at work to boost the performance, resilience and response capacity of all Member States, whether already in the euro or preparing to join. The euro is the currency of our Union – a strong and stable euro area is key to its members as well as to the EU as a whole."* A [press release](#) and [memo](#) are available online. Factsheets and the legislative proposals are available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Ericsson finances research into 5G telecom technology with backing from the Juncker Plan

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a €250 million loan agreement with Swedish telecom company Ericsson to support research, development and innovation (RDI) in the next standard in mobile telephony: 5G. The loan is guaranteed by the Investment Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Most of the RDI activities will take place in Sweden, with minor parts also being carried out in Ireland, Spain, Poland and other EU countries. Jyrki Katainen, Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"When it comes to developing 5G technology, we need to up our game in Europe. I am proud that Ericsson – a*

European company – is investing heavily in preparing for 5G with the EU's financial backing. Being a leader in telecoms is crucial to maintain our competitiveness on a global stage so sufficient investment in 5G is strategically important for Europe.” A press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

La solidarité européenne à l'œuvre: la Commission offre une aide financière à la Grèce, la Pologne, la Lituanie et la Bulgarie à la suite de catastrophes naturelles

Aujourd'hui, la Commission propose 34 millions d'euros du [Fonds de solidarité de l'UE](#) pour quatre États membres touchés par des catastrophes naturelles en 2017 – la Grèce, la Pologne, la Lituanie et la Bulgarie. Corina **Crețu**, commissaire à la politique régionale, a déclaré: *“Nous passons des mots de réconfort à des actions concrètes avec nos nouvelles propositions d'aide financière pour la Grèce, la Pologne, la Lituanie et la Bulgarie. La solidarité est l'un des principes fondateurs de notre Union, et le Fonds de solidarité de l'UE en est l'une de ses expressions les plus manifestes.”* Le Fonds de solidarité de l'UE peut soutenir les efforts de reconstruction et couvrir une partie des coûts des services d'urgence, de l'hébergement temporaire, des opérations de nettoyage et de protection du patrimoine culturel, afin d'alléger le fardeau financier pour les autorités nationales au lendemain d'une catastrophe naturelle. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Hungary: new EU-funded motorway to link Budapest to Romania

€265 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) is invested in the construction of a new section of the M4 motorway. It will allow making the trip from Budapest to the Romanian border in less than 2 hours 40 minutes. By linking the two neighbor countries, this new Cohesion Policy project will boost regional and local economies and promote tourism. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“The Hungarians and Romanians will be the first beneficiaries of this project, with a faster, safer connection from Budapest to Bucharest. But ultimately all Europeans and the European economy as a whole will benefit from better connectivity in the region and its positive spillovers for trade, tourism and growth.”* The project concerns the construction of the motorway between the towns of Berettyóújfalu and Nagykereki, the last missing section for a seamless connection to the Romanian border. Its starting point is at the junction with the M35 motorway Debrecen-Berettyóújfalu, currently under construction. The project should be completed in March 2020. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission proposes to modernise and digitalise EU civil judicial cooperation

Today, the Commission is proposing to modernise and digitalise judicial cooperation for cross-border civil and commercial cases throughout the EU. It aims to make access to civil justice cheaper, more efficient and more accessible to citizens and businesses. The proposals will make it obligatory

for courts to exchange documents electronically, and will promote the use of videoconferencing to hear witnesses based in another country. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *“Every year, there are approximately 3.4 million cross-border civil and commercial court proceedings in the EU. More and more people are living, studying and working in other EU countries, and businesses are expanding across borders. This proposal will give them access to faster and more affordable cross-border justice.”* The proposals will update the Regulations on [Service of documents](#) and on [Taking of evidence](#). The [Revised Regulation on Service of Documents](#) and the [Revised Regulation on Taking of Evidence](#) are available online, as well as a [press release](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: + 32 229 58659)

Commission proposes to make access to emergency travel documents faster and more secure for EU citizens

The European Commission is proposing today to update the rules on EU emergency travel documents and improve their security features. Since 1996, EU rules exist that allow EU citizens, whose passport or travel documents were stolen or lost while travelling abroad to obtain temporary travel documents. Lost or stolen passports make up more than 60% of the cases of consular assistance. However, the current emergency travel documents do not meet modern security standards and offer little protection against fraud and counterfeit. As a result, some third countries are reluctant to accept them and some Member States have stopped using them for their own citizens. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *“Losing your passport or getting it stolen is a distressing experience, especially if you are travelling outside of the EU. When this happens, EU citizens are entitled to getting temporary emergency documents. However, their current format does not live up to our current security standards. The new security features we proposed for emergency travel documents will prevent criminals from counterfeiting them or using them to carry out criminal activities. Thanks to these new rules, all EU citizens will feel safe and able to return home as fast as possible.”* With the new rules in place, the new EU emergency travel documents will be more secure, as they will have machine-readable features. Their user-friendly format will include a space for any necessary transit visa and they should be issued within 3 to 4 days. In addition, the new Directive will improve the consular assistance available to all EU citizens, even where their country doesn't have an embassy or a consulate. It will now be mandatory for embassies or consulates to issue EU emergency travel documents to unrepresented EU citizens. The full proposal is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: + 32 229 58659)

Commission welcomes provisional political agreement reached by European Parliament and Council on new rules to make national competition authorities even more effective enforcers

The European Commission welcomes the provisional political agreement reached yesterday by the European Parliament and the Council on the [Commission](#)

[proposal](#) of March 2017 for a Directive to make Member States' competition authorities even more effective enforcers of EU antitrust rules. The Directive intends to further empower the national competition authorities by providing them with appropriate enforcement tools, to bring about a genuine common competition enforcement area. Commissioner in charge of competition policy, Margrethe **Vestager**, said: *"EU antitrust rules make markets work better for European consumers and businesses, giving them more choice and better prices. Member States' competition authorities and the Commission work together hand in hand to enforce these rules across the EU. This Directive will give national competition authorities effective tools and make sure they have the resources necessary to detect and sanction companies that break EU competition rules. It will also ensure that they can take their decisions in full independence, based on the facts and the law. I would like to thank the European Parliament – especially the Rapporteur Andreas Schwab and the shadow rapporteurs – and the Bulgarian, Estonian and Maltese Presidencies for their commendable work on this file."* The legal text still needs to be formally approved by the European Parliament and Council, which is expected by the end of 2018. The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

The European Union mobilises additional €15 million for peace building support in Colombia

The EU is mobilising additional funds to support peace building in Colombia and the efforts to reintegrate former combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) into the Colombian society. The additional funding will help to scale up concrete actions, such as new programmes that will foster economic activity and contribute to restoring social fabric in conflict-affected areas, and was announced by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** today at a [high-level event on conflict resolution with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos](#), in Brussels. At the event, key figures that were involved in the Colombian peace negotiations debated on how the EU can continue to support a sustainable peace process in Colombia. HR/VP **Mogherini** stated: *"The European Union has been at the side of Colombia since the very beginning of the peace process. Building peace takes courage and patience – to sit down and find a common ground. But we have believed in the capacity of the Colombians to find a way out of the conflict and we will continue to be at their side in all fields, to invest in sustainable peace. We have a lot to learn from the courage of the Colombians."* Commissioner Neven **Mimica** added: *"The EU's additional assistance of €15 million will support the Colombian people in ensuring that the remarkable progress made towards lasting peace is continued. It will support the reintegration process of ex-FARC members at social, political and economic level, and allow them to transition into civilian life."* The full press release is available [online](#). (for more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Rohingya crisis: €40 million in humanitarian aid for Bangladesh and Myanmar

The European Commission has released €40 million in humanitarian aid to provide life-saving support to vulnerable Rohingya civilians and host

communities in Bangladesh and across Myanmar's Rakhine State. *"The Rohingya crisis has reached unprecedented proportions in recent months with hundreds of thousands of people in need of humanitarian assistance. The EU is committed to help those most in need, both in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Our emergency aid will deliver essential supplies such as food, clean water and healthcare as well as support for the monsoon season,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**, who visited EU aid projects in [Bangladesh](#) and [Myanmar](#) last year. A full press release is available [here](#). (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission confirms approval of acquisition of Dutch cable TV operator Ziggo by Liberty Global, subject to conditions

The European Commission has reapproved with conditions, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Ziggo by Liberty Global. The merger was first approved in 2014. Following the annulment of this approval by the General Court in 2017 for procedural reasons, the Commission has reassessed the merger. In 2014 the Commission had concerns that the merger, as initially notified, would have hindered competition by removing two close competitors and important competitive forces in the Dutch market for the wholesale of premium Pay TV film channels. In its new assessment, the Commission confirmed its concerns that the merger, as initially notified, would have increased Liberty Global's negotiating power *vis-à-vis* TV channel broadcasters, hindering innovation in the delivery of audio visual content over the internet. The renewed approval is therefore again conditional upon the implementation of a commitments package. A full press release is available in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#) and [NL](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Walki by One Equity Partners

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Walki Holding Oy of Finland by One Equity Partners VII, LP of the Cayman Islands, through its subsidiary OEP FiberPack Cayman Co Ltd. Walki Holding is the parent company of the Walki group of companies active in the production of technical laminates and protective packaging materials. One Equity Partners is a private equity firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the absence of any horizontal or vertical overlaps between the activities of the companies. 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.8914](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: Le taux de chômage à 8,5% dans la zone euro et à 7,1% dans l'UE28 en Avril 2018

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 8,5% en avril 2018, en baisse par rapport au taux

de 8,6% en mars 2018 et de 9,2% en avril 2017. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis décembre 2008. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 7,1% en avril 2018, stable par rapport à mars 2018 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 7,8% d'avril 2017. Cela demeure le taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis septembre 2008. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Eurostat estime qu'en avril 2018, 17,462 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient au chômage dans l'UE28, dont 13,880 millions dans la zone euro. Par rapport à mars 2018, le nombre de chômeurs a diminué de 53 000 dans l'UE28 et de 56 000 dans la zone euro. Comparé à avril 2017, le chômage a baissé de 1,633 million de personnes dans l'UE28 et de 1,088 million dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

STATEMENTS

Vice-President Jyrki Katainen in Stockholm to discuss investment, defence and the circular economy

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, travels to Stockholm on 1 June, to discuss the Investment Plan, deepening the European and Monetary Union (EMU), the European Defence Fund and future megatrends such as the circular economy and artificial intelligence. Vice-President **Katainen** will meet Mr Mikael Damberg, Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, to discuss technological developments and future opportunities, such as artificial intelligence and robotics, innovation, defence, the circular economy and the Multiannual Financial Framework. He will also meet Mr Ulf Kristersson, Leader of the Moderate Party, to exchange on topical issues. In addition, the Vice-President will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue as part of a seminar on circular economy. Finally, he will meet representatives of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise to discuss competitiveness of European industries and companies. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

La Commissaire Thyssen participe à la rencontre des jeunes européens au Parlement européen à Strasbourg

Demain, le 1 juin, la Commissaire responsable de l'emploi, des affaires sociales, des compétences et de la mobilité des travailleurs, Marianne **Thyssen**, participera à la [troisième édition de la Rencontre des Jeunes Européens \(European Youth Event\)](#) à Strasbourg, organisée par le Parlement européen. La Commissaire y donnera deux discours, le premier intitulé "Travailler, travailler, travailler: Quelle est la nouvelle façon de gagner sa vie?" et le deuxième "Chômage des jeunes: la course à zéro". L'événement sera une occasion pour la Commissaire Thyssen de discuter de ses sujet avec les 8000 jeunes venant de partout dans l'Union européenne. La Commissaire inaugurerà aussi l'exposition photo "MesDroitsSociaux" et remettra les prix

aux lauréats du concours photo sur la question "Comment percevez-vous les droits sociaux en Europe?". Le programme complet de l'événement est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Le commissaire Navracsics à Paris pour participer à une réunion des ministres du Sport

Aujourd'hui, le Commissaire à l'éducation, à la culture, à la jeunesse et aux sports, Tibor Navracsics, est à Paris pour participer à une réunion des ministres du sport des États membres de l'UE. Lors de la réunion de ce matin, le Commissaire a participé à une discussion sur la manière dont les Jeux [Olympiques de Paris 2024](#) peuvent contribuer à développer une identité européenne. Ils ont également discuté des mesures visant à assurer l'héritage économique, social et environnemental des grands événements sportifs. Le commissaire a aussi prononcé [le discours d'ouverture](#) de la rencontre, en compagnie de la ministre française des sports, Laura Flessel, et des représentants de la présidence bulgare du Conseil de l'UE. Une déclaration proposant des possibilités de coopérer à la préparation et au suivi des Jeux Olympiques de 2024 sera proposée à la signature aux ministres intéressés. Le document mettra l'accent sur les moyens de mieux mobiliser les volontaires européens et les bonnes pratiques sur la façon d'organiser de grands événements sportifs de manière durable et respectueuse de l'environnement. La réunion se tient au Stade de France. (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 229 67083, Joseph Waldstein – Tél .: +32 229 56184)

Commissioner Vella participates in the European Maritime Day in Bulgaria, 31 May – 1 June

Commissioner Karmenu **Vella** is in Burgas, Bulgaria welcoming more than 1000 participants from the maritime sector for the 2018 edition of the European Maritime Day. For the first time since its conception, the European Maritime Day takes place in the Black Sea region. The European Commission together with the Bulgarian EU Presidency have dedicated the conference to showcasing cross-border cooperation around the Black Sea. Ministers and representatives from Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine reaffirmed their commitment to work more closely with the endorsement of a Declaration towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea. Commissioner **Vella** said: "This year's European Maritime Day is a defining moment for the Black Sea region. For more than a decade, the Commission has been working with the region's countries to promote the sustainable use of the Black Sea's marine and maritime resources. Together, we have achieved significant breakthroughs in fisheries management, in research and blue growth. The declaration endorsed by ministers today paves the way for more structured and pragmatic cooperation on all things maritime. My own hope would be for a common maritime agenda to take shape by 2019, with coastal states launching joint action the following year." In addition, researchers of the Black Sea region set out their vision for a future common research and innovation

agenda, inspired by EU funded projects. More information [here](#). (*For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321*)

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