

# Daily News 31 / 10 / 2017

## **Employment: Report confirms effectiveness of EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund**

Today the Commission has published its [report on the performance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund \(EGF\) in 2015 and 2016](#). The report reaffirms the role of the Fund as a flagship demonstration of European solidarity within the limits of its set-up and budgetary availabilities, having helped close to 19,500 workers to adjust to changing trade patterns and consequences of the economic and financial crisis in that period. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** said: *"Today's results demonstrate the added value of the Globalisation Fund in helping redundant workers who have difficulties to find a new job. The assistance worth €70 million of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund has paid off: in 2015 and 2016, 9,072 assisted workers were re-employed, despite the challenging labour market situation these people faced. This year's tenth anniversary of the Fund marks it as a proof of European solidarity to workers falling victim to mass lay-offs caused by globalisation or the crisis."* 9,072 workers, or close to half of the workers who participated in the Globalisation Adjustment Fund measures, had found new jobs or were self-employed after one year, at the end of the implementation period of the measures. An additional 645 people were at that time in education or training to increase their future employability. Member States also reported that the personal situation, employability and self-confidence of the workers concerned had visibly improved thanks to the Globalisation Adjustment Fund assistance and services. More information can be found in this [press release](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

## **Eurostat: Septembre 2017 – Le taux de chômage à 8,9% dans la zone euro – À 7,5% dans l'UE28**

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 8,9% en septembre 2017, en baisse par rapport au taux de 9,0% d'août 2017 et au taux de 9,9% de septembre 2016. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis janvier 2009. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 7,5% en septembre 2017, stable par rapport à août 2017 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 8,4% de septembre 2016. Cela demeure le taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis novembre 2008. Eurostat estime qu'en septembre 2017, 18,446 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient au chômage dans l'UE28, dont 14,513 millions dans la zone euro. Par rapport à août 2017, le nombre de chômeurs a diminué de 116 000 dans l'UE28 et de 96 000 dans la zone euro. Comparé à septembre 2016, le chômage a baissé de 2,076 millions de personnes dans l'UE28 et de 1,463 million dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

## **Eurostat: Estimation rapide – octobre 2017, le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro en baisse à 1,4%**

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro est estimé à 1,4% en octobre 2017, contre 1,5% en septembre selon une estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. S'agissant des principales composantes de l'inflation de la zone euro, l'énergie devrait connaître le taux annuel le plus élevé en octobre (3,0%, comparé à 3,9% en septembre), suivie de l'alimentation, alcool & tabac (2,4%, comparé à 1,9% en septembre), des services (1,2%, comparé à 1,5% en septembre) et des biens industriels non énergétiques (0,4%, comparé à 0,5% en septembre). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

## **Le PIB en hausse de 0,6% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28**

Au cours du troisième 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 deuxième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait progressé de 0,7% dans les deux zones. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

## **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Mongolia enters into force**

On 1 November, the [Partnership and Cooperation Agreement \(PCA\)](#) between the European Union and Mongolia enters into force. The High Representative/Vice-President, Federica Mogherini said: *"The European Union and Mongolia are consolidating their strong ties, based on shared values and interests, and a common will to work more closely together. The entry into force of our Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, combined with the establishment of a European Union Delegation in Ulaanbaatar, which will take place in the coming days, consolidates existing areas of cooperation and engagement, and deepens and diversifies relations further in areas of mutual interest, for the sake of our peoples."* Replacing the 1993 Agreement on trade and economic cooperation, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement strengthens the [existing relationship between the EU and Mongolia](#), consolidates existing areas of cooperation and engagement, and deepens and diversifies relations further in areas of mutual interest. The entry into force of the PCA coincides with the [opening of an EU Delegation in Mongolia](#), for which implementing the Agreement will be a top priority. A full press release is available [online](#). More information on EU-Mongolia relations is available on the website of the [EU Delegation to Mongolia](#) and a [factsheet](#) on the new Agreement is available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

## **EU-Cuba: new landmark agreement entering into force on 1 November 2017**

A new chapter in EU-Cuba relations will be marked tomorrow, on 1 November 2017, with the start of provisional application of the first ever agreement between the European Union and Cuba – [the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement \(PDCA\)](#). *“The EU and Cuba are truly turning a page, and the new chapter of our partnership begins now – with the provisional application of our new agreement. Today the European Union gets closer to Cuba and all Cuban citizens as the country goes through economic, political and social modernisation”*, said the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, adding: *“We Europeans are tied to Cuba, Latin America and the Caribbean by a shared history, culture, values, and aspirations for the present and the future”*. The PDCA comprises three main chapters on political dialogue, cooperation and sector policy dialogue as well as trade cooperation. A full press release is available [online](#). More information on the EU-Cuba relations is available on the website of the [EU Delegation to Cuba](#) and a [factsheet](#) on the EU-Cuba relations is available as well. (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

## **Rohingya crisis: Commissioner Stylianides visits Bangladesh and reaffirms EU humanitarian support**

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** has started a two-day visit to Bangladesh, to assess the situation on the ground and visit EU aid projects that are addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis. His visit comes a week after the EU and its Member States pledged more than 50% of the USD 344 million total funding raised at the international Conference on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis held in Geneva. *“Here in Bangladesh the scale of this emergency is painfully clear to see; this is the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world. The EU has decisively stepped up its aid to Rohingya communities. The Rohingya people are not alone in these difficult times. We commend and support the generous approach of the Bangladeshi authorities. At the same time, the European Union continues to insist on full aid access in Myanmar and is working to address the situation in Northern Rakhine State. Beyond aid, it is crucial that every refugee is registered properly and that Myanmar takes all necessary steps to allow them a voluntary and dignified return in secure conditions.”*, said Commissioner **Stylianides**. Commissioner **Stylianides** is today visiting the Kutupalong camp in the Cox’s Bazar area, where an EU funded project is helping over 100,000 people, mostly vulnerable children and women, gain access to essential services. The Commissioner will also hold meetings with government officials of Bangladesh and humanitarian partners to discuss the international community’s response to the crisis and Bangladesh’s needs moving forwards. Read the full press release [here](#). Audiovisual coverage will be available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

## **Digital contract rules: amended proposal on sales of goods across the EU**

The Commission adopted today an amended proposal to extend the scope of the proposed Directive on online and other distance sales of goods to cover sales of goods offline. The initial [proposal](#) on the online sale of goods was presented in December 2015 together with the proposal on the supply of digital content as part of the Commission's commitment to deliver on its [Digital Single Market Strategy](#). Its aim is to break down the barriers due to differences in contract law which hinder cross-border online trade. The amendments to the proposal follow calls to align the rules applicable to online and offline sales more closely and avoid fragmentation. The Commission had already committed, when adopting the initial proposal, to assess the need of coherent rules on the basis of the [analysis](#) of existing consumer legislation. These results were introduced into discussions between the co-legislators. Given the increasing importance of both online and offline sales for consumers and businesses, this amended proposal will ensure that they benefit from on a coherent legal framework across EU borders. The amended proposal will now be transmitted to Parliament and Council to continue the ongoing legislative process. The new proposal is available [here](#). *(For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Fels-Werke by CRH**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Fels-Werke of Germany by CRH of Ireland. Fels-Werke is active in mining, processing and distribution of lime and limestone products, gypsum and mortar in Germany, the Czech Republic and Russia. CRH is active in the manufacture and distribution of various building materials, including aggregates, cement, lime and concrete worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because there is limited geographic overlap between the companies' activities, so that they are only remote competitors. The operation was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8626](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **State aid: Commission approves PLN 1 billion public support for intermodal transport in Poland**

The European Commission has approved a PLN 1 billion (around €238 million) aid scheme to support the construction, modernisation and upgrade of intermodal transport infrastructure in Poland. The scheme will also support the purchase of specialised equipment (e.g. lifting and transshipment equipment, telematics and satellite systems) required for intermodal transport, as well the purchase and modernisation of specialised rolling stock. The Commission concluded that the measure is necessary to improve the competitiveness of intermodal transport services in Poland and that it is proportionate in accordance with EU State aid rules. The aid will be available to intermodal operators and rolling stock leasing companies. The Polish government will support up to 50% of the eligible costs, through

funding from the EU Cohesion Fund. The scheme will be in place until 31 December 2023. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.48093. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## STATEMENTS

### **Equal Pay Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioners Thyssen and Jourová**

Today, the average hourly pay of women in Europe is 16.3% lower than that of men. European Equal Pay Day, which falls on 3 November this year, marks the moment when women effectively stop getting paid compared to their male colleagues, with almost two months of the year remaining. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioner Marianne **Thyssen** and Commissioner Věra **Jourová** said: *“Gender equality, including equal pay for men and women, is one of the EU’s founding values. But it is still far from a reality. For the past years, the gender pay gap has basically refused to budge. This means that women work for two months a year for free in comparison to their male colleagues. This is a shocking and unacceptable injustice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe. We urgently need to make progress with this stubborn issue, which affects women and our societies on many other points: Women still tend to work in lesser-paid sectors, get fewer promotions and are underrepresented in management positions. And single-parent households with women as the sole breadwinner are more exposed to poverty, including child poverty and consequent disadvantages. Pay gap is not the only problem. Recent revelations on sexual harassment underline the sometimes hostile working environments which women also have to face, with obvious consequences for their professional development and well-being. The European Commission wants to lead the way to fight this injustice.”* Read the full statement [here](#). EU-wide and national infographics are available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera **Jourová** is in Helsinki today. She just delivered a keynote speech on *“Justice systems and rule of law in the EU: the ripe time for change”* at the Finland 100 years [event](#) dedicated to Finnish and European perspectives to the rule of law. She said: *“Rule of law is a bedrock of European democracies and one of the core values of the European Union. That’s why one of the priorities of the Commission for next year is to look at ways how to strengthen the enforcement of rule of law in the European Union. The judicial system in the EU is like a chain of Christmas lights. When one light goes off, others don’t light up and the chain is dark.”* The event was concluded by a press point with the Finnish Minister of Justice, Anti Häkkänen, and the Estonian Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu. Commissioner **Jourová** will also meet Minister Häkkänen for a bilateral meeting. In the afternoon, she will visit a vocational school, benefitting from the European Social Fund to develop the

promotion of gender equality and better bridge education and working life. She will participate in a roundtable with businesses on digital topics, including the general data protection regulation. Commissioner **Jourová** will also visit Vantaa prison and discuss how prison staff can detect radicalisation and violent extremism. Her last visit at the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland will focus on artificial intelligence. Commissioner **Jourová**'s keynote speech on rule of law is available [online](#) and on [EbS](#), where you can also find other pictures and videos from her trip. (*For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659*)

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