

EU Budget: Commission takes further action to ensure the United Kingdom makes customs duties fallen due, available to the EU budget

Based on a proposal by the Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Günther H. Oettinger, today the European Commission has decided to send a Reasoned Opinion to the United Kingdom because of its failure to make customs duties available to the EU budget, as required by EU law.

This is the second step the Commission is taking in the formal infringement procedure for this case in order to protect the financial interests of the EU. In March 2018, the Commission opened the infringement procedure following a 2017 report by the EU's anti-fraud body OLAF, which found that importers in the United Kingdom evaded a large amount of customs duties by using fictitious and false invoices and incorrect customs value declarations at importation. Further Commission inspections confirmed the very large scale of this undervaluation fraud scheme operating through British ports between 2011 and 2017. Despite having been informed of the risks of fraud relating to the imports of textiles and footwear originating from the People's Republic of China since 2007, and despite having been asked to take appropriate risk control measures, the United Kingdom failed to take effective action to prevent the fraud.

The Commission calculates that the infringement of EU legislation by the United Kingdom resulted in losses to the EU budget amounting to €2.7 billion (plus interest and minus collection costs) during the period between November 2011 and October 2017. In addition, the United Kingdom also infringed EU Value Added Tax legislation, leading to additional potential losses to the EU budget.

All Member States are liable for the financial consequences of their infringements of EU law.

The United Kingdom now has two months to act; otherwise the Commission may refer the case to the Court of Justice of the EU.

For More Information

On the March 2018 infringement cycle, see [MEMO/18/1444](#)

On the general infringements procedure, see [MEMO/12/12](#)

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EU@UNGA73 TODAY

In the margins of 73rd UN General Assembly, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will today chair the Ministerial Meeting of E3/EU+2 and Iran on the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Iran nuclear deal (press point around 21:30 local time, 03:30 CET). She will also chair an informal meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers, with the focus on Syria and Libya, as well as the ministerial meeting with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Troika. In addition, she will speak at the launch of UNICEF's Generation Unlimited, a new partnership to get every young person into quality education, training or employment by 2030. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** will take part in a discussion with students and professors at Columbia University's World Leaders' Forum (13:00 local time, 19:00 CET) entitled "Can the EU stay true to its values?"; follow it live [here](#). Trade Commissioner Cecilia **Malmström** is co-chairing the first Ministerial meeting of the [Alliance for Torture-Free Trade](#), bringing of together almost 60 countries, to take stock of progress to ban the trade in goods used for torture and the death penalty (15:00 local time, 21:00 CET). Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will speak at a high-level event on the Global Compact on Refugees: A Model for Greater Solidarity and Cooperation, while Commissioner Christos **Stylianides** will address events on Scaling Innovation in Emergency Education and on Protecting the Health and Rights of Women and Girls Affected by Conflict, with focus on Yemen and South Sudan. Audio-visual coverage of all these engagements as well as the press events and the bilateral meetings the EU high-level representatives will hold will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

"Multilateralism is not dead" – President Juncker and High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini relaunch cooperation with the United Nations and the African Union

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** met, together with High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, with UN Secretary General António Guterres on Sunday in New York in the margins of the 73rd UN General Assembly to relaunch the strong EU – UN cooperation. President **Juncker** said: *"We are here to say that the multilateral approach is not dead, it has to be maintained – it is the only chance we have to shape the future of the globe, in a way acceptable for all stakeholders."* See the [full remarks](#) and the [joint press statement](#). The meeting was followed by a trilateral meeting with the African Union (AU), represented by the Chairman of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat, where they agreed to take further action towards reinforcing synergies and coordination to tackle global challenges together. Today, President **Juncker** will address the [Nelson Mandela Peace Summit](#), which will gather numerous world leaders who will discuss global peace in honour of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela; you can follow President **Juncker**'s speech live on [EbS](#) (around 13:00 local time, 19:00

CET). The President will also have bilateral meetings with Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, and Mr Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and Chairperson of the African Union. In the evening, he will attend a reception hosted by the President of the United States, Mr Donald Trump. Audiovisual coverage will be available on [EBS](#). (for more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524, Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Rule of Law: European Commission refers Poland to the European Court of Justice to protect the independence of the Polish Supreme Court

Today, the European Commission decided to refer Poland to the Court of Justice of the EU due to the violations of the principle of judicial independence created by the new Polish Law on the Supreme Court, and to ask the Court of Justice to order interim measures until it has issued a judgment on the case. The new Polish law on the Supreme Court lowers the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 70 to 65, putting 27 out of 72 sitting Supreme Court judges at risk of being forced to retire. This measure also applies to the First President of the Supreme Court, whose 6-year mandate, set out in the Polish Constitution, would be prematurely terminated. The European Commission maintains that the Polish law on the Supreme Court is incompatible with EU law as it undermines the principle of judicial independence, including the irremovability of judges, and thereby Poland fails to fulfil its obligations under Article 19(1) of the Treaty on European Union read in connection with Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The Commission has therefore moved to the next stage of the infringement procedure, deciding to refer the case to the Court of Justice of the EU. With its referral, the Commission has also decided to ask the Court of Justice to order interim measures, restoring Poland's Supreme Court to its situation before 3 April 2018, when the contested new laws were adopted. Finally, the Commission has decided to request an expedited procedure at the Court of Justice, to obtain a final judgment as soon as possible. The full press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: 32 229 63444)

Bilan de l'emploi et des développements sociaux: l'emploi dans l'UE à son plus haut niveau historique

La dernière [révision trimestrielle sur l'emploi et les développements sociaux en Europe \(ESDE\)](#) publiée aujourd'hui, confirme que les chiffres du marché du travail européen continuent de battre des records: il y a maintenant 239 millions de personnes au travail dans l'UE, dont 158 millions dans la zone euro. Les deux chiffres sont sans précédent, et l'emploi n' pas cessé d'augmenter pendant plus de 5 années consécutives. Depuis le début du mandat actuel de la Commission, près de 12 millions d'emploi ont été créés. Les taux de chômage mensuels dans l'UE et dans la zone euro ont poursuivi leur déclin, tombant respectivement à 6,9% et 8,2% en juillet 2018. La baisse a été particulièrement importante pour le chômage des jeunes, qui se trouve au niveau le plus bas en 20 ans. Par rapport à l'an dernier, le taux de chômage a diminué dans tous les Etats-Membres. La situation financière des ménages a continué de s'améliorer, malgré les disparités. Marianne **Thyssen**, commissaire chargée de l'emploi, des affaires sociales, des compétences et de la mobilité

des travailleurs, a déclaré: "L'emploi n'a jamais été aussi élevé dans l'UE et dans la zone euro, et près de 12 millions d'emploi ont été créés depuis le début de cette Commission. Nos efforts pour investir dans les compétences des gens ont porté leurs fruits, mais ces investissements doivent rester une priorité absolue pour préparer les gens au marché du travail de demain. Nous nous concentrons maintenant sur la réalisation de nos propositions, en veillant à ce que les propositions que nous avons mises sur la table soient adoptées par le Parlement européen et le Conseil. C'est la seule manière de faire de nos propositions, qui visent à créer une Union européenne plus sociale et prospère – comme celles faites dans le cadre du Socle européen des droits sociaux – une réalité sur le terrain, au bénéfice des citoyens et des entreprises." (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

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Commission proposes actions to help 14 Member States meet waste recycling targets

Waste management affects everybody. Recent [estimates by the World Bank](#) point to an increase of annual waste generation from 2.01 billion tonnes in 2016 to 3.40 billion tonnes in 2050. Whilst in Europe waste management and recycling have been improving, one thing is clear: status quo is not an option and more needs to be done. Today the Commission has published the latest review of how European waste management and recycling rules are applied across Europe. Despite continuous progress in Member States, the Commission identifies serious gaps that must be addressed swiftly so that Europeans are able to reap the environmental and economic benefits of the circular economy. For municipal waste, 14 Member States have been identified as at risk of missing the 2020 target of 50% recycling (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain). These countries need to do more so that their populations and

their economies can benefit from the circular economy. That is why the Commission presents blueprints for action to ensure that those countries act to comply with EU waste legislation. The waste legislation forms the core of Europe's transition to the [Circular Economy strategy](#) proposed by the Juncker Commission, and is an opportunity for growth, jobs and improving resource efficiency. Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **Karmenu Vella**, said: *“With the EU waste rules recently adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council of Ministers, Europe can become the global front-runner for modern waste management and further develop its circular economy. There are still differences across Europe, but progress is necessary and possible if the respective national and local authorities implement the actions identified in this report. The Commission is there to help by offering technical assistance, structural fund support and support in the exchange of best practices.”* In a follow-up to this report, the Commission will undertake visits to the Member States at risk of not meeting the 2020 municipal waste targets, to discuss the opportunities and challenges with the national, regional and local authorities and the relevant stakeholders. The report is available [here](#). More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio Tel.: +32 229 56172; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

Les prix européens 2018 pour les compétences numériques mettront en lumière des projets locaux visant à réduire la fracture numérique

La Commission européenne lance aujourd'hui la troisième édition des "[European Digital Skills Awards](#)", qui mettra en lumière des initiatives locales réussies ayant contribué à réduire la fracture numérique. Les communautés locales et les organisations associées aux projets à travers l'UE sont dès aujourd'hui invitées à proposer des projets qui répondent aux attentes du concours. Actuellement, 43% des Européens ne possèdent pas de compétences numériques de base. [L'an dernier](#), les lauréats des "Digital Skills Awards", sélectionnés parmi 243 projets venant de toute l'UE, comprenaient, par exemple, un programme de mentorat destiné aux lycéens des régions les plus pauvres de Roumanie, une initiative polonaise visant à aider les étudiantes en technologies de l'information et de la communication (ICT) à trouver leur premier emploi, ou encore un projet d'inclusion sociale numérique touchant 20 000 citoyens dans la ville belge de Gand. La date limite de soumission des projets pour les prix 2018 est le 21 octobre 2018. Les prix seront présentés par la commissaire **Gabriel**, en charge de l'économie et de la société numériques, le 6 décembre 2018 lors de la conférence "[ICT 2018](#)" à Vienne. Un jury indépendant sélectionnera les meilleurs projets dans cinq catégories: les initiatives ciblant les écoles, la main-d'œuvre, les spécialistes des ICT, les filles et les femmes, et la société en général. Contribuer à améliorer les compétences numériques des Européens est l'une des priorités de la stratégie pour un [marché unique numérique](#) et de la [nouvelle stratégie en matière de compétences pour l'Europe](#). De plus amples détails sur les Digital Skills Awards sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund Tél.: +32 229 50698)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by STEAG and Siemens

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by STEAG Beteiligungsgesellschaft mbH, belonging to the STEAG group ("STEAG"), and Siemens Project Ventures GmbH, belonging to the Siemens group ("Siemens"), all of Germany. STEAG is an international energy supplier, which is active in the generation and supply of electricity and district heating, as well as the project development, construction and operation of power plants and relating technical services. Siemens is a global technology group focused on electrification, automation and digitization in particular concerning power generation and transmission, medical, infrastructure and industrial applications. The joint venture will build and operate a gas and steam turbine power plant in Herne, of Germany, and market the generated electricity and heat. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the limited overlaps between the companies' activities. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8952](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Commission clears acquisition of a joint venture by Deutsche Asphalt and Bunte

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture by Deutsche Asphalt GmbH of Germany, controlled by Strabag SE of Austria, and Johann Bunte Bauunternehmung GmbH & Co. KG ('Bunte') of Germany. The joint-venture will produce asphalt mixes. Deutsche Asphalt produces different kinds of asphalt. Strabag is active in construction services and materials. Bunte is active in the production and marketing of asphalt mixes and road construction. Deutsche Asphalt and Bunte will each bring into the joint venture a number of existing asphalt plants. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the total value of assets transferred to the joint venture and its expected activities and turnover in the European Economic Area are limited. 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.9006](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Commission clears acquisition of joint control over RSV by Vossloh and Rhomberg Sersa

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Rhomberg Sersa Vossloh GmbH ("RSV") of Germany by Vossloh AG, ("Vossloh") of Germany and Rhomberg Sersa Rail Holding

GmbH (“Rhomberg Sersa”) of Austria. RSV is a newly created joint venture that will focus on inspection and maintenance services for switches for industrial railways and local transport. Vossloh is a manufacturer of rail infrastructure and rail technology including the provision of related services. Rhomberg Sersa is a full-service provider in the field of railway technology, railway construction, equipment and related services. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the activities and turnover of RSV are limited in the European Economic Area. 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.8236](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Azelis by EQT Fund Management

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Antelope Topco S.C.A. (“Azelis”) by EQT Fund Management S.à.r.l, both of Luxembourg. Azelis is a global distributor of specialty chemicals and food ingredients. EQT Fund Management is a private equity fund that makes investments primarily in northern Europe. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of the absence of horizontal overlaps or vertical links between 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.9034](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Arias Cañete at Global Wind Summit in Hamburg

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** will give the opening speech at the Global Wind Summit in Hamburg on 25 September. It is one of the largest meetings of the wind power industry worldwide, bringing together stakeholders from business, politics and civil society. Discussions will focus on the future of the global wind energy industry. Wind energy, as one of the main sources of clean and renewable energy, is an essential element for the modernisation of the European economy making it cleaner and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. With costs coming down in recent years, there has been a steady increase in the production of clean and renewable energy, and wind power constitutes a large part of this growth. Just recently, as part of the Clean Energy for All Europeans package of measures, the EU has agreed on new ambitious targets for 2030 for [renewable energy](#) and [energy efficiency](#), paving the way for an ever-growing role for wind energy, an energy source which is indispensable for the EU to achieve global leadership in renewable energies. Continued close dialogue between all stakeholders is needed to maintain support from European citizens for the energy transition. (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Vienna

Commissioner Jourová will be in Vienna tomorrow, where she will meet her counterparts in the Austrian government: Josef Moser, Federal Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Reforms, Deregulation and Justice, Beate Hartinger-Klein, Federal Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and Juliane Bogner-Strauß, Federal Minister within the Federal Chancellery for Women, Families and Youth. She will also deliver the keynote speech on “*Values in times of rising nationalism*” opening the [Fundamental Rights Forum](#), organised by the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency. On the margins of this event, she will take part in a Citizen’s dialogue on “*The importance of belonging in building inclusive societies*” ([live](#) at 17:00). She will also participate in a Consumers’ dialogue with Minister Hartinger-Klein on “*What the Commission is doing for consumers?*” ([live](#) at 14:00). Commissioner Jourová speech at the Fundamental Rights Forum will be [livestreamed](#) at 9:30 and available [here](#) after delivery. (For more information Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Gabriel in Vienna to discuss digital transformation at Citizens’ Dialogue and CIO meeting

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** is travelling to Vienna, Austria tomorrow to hold a [Citizens’ Dialogue](#) on digital transformation in Europe and deliver a keynote speech at the [Chief Information Officers’ \(CIO\) meeting](#) organised by the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Citizens’ Dialogue can be followed live [here](#) at 10:00-11:30 (CEST). In the afternoon the Commissioner will meet Austrian Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology Norbert Hofer to discuss e-Privacy and the EU’s next long-term budget to support broadband infrastructure, including 5G deployment. At the following CIO meeting, that is dedicated to the topic “Challenges by mobile”, she will deliver a keynote speech after the opening remarks of Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs Margarete Schramböck. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 50698)

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

[EU-OSHA joins the fight against occupational cancer at Austrian EU Presidency conference](#)

We believe that by informing and educating workers and employers – and offering practical solutions – we can reduce and even eliminate exposure to carcinogens at work, thereby preventing needless suffering and deaths from cancer.

The conference provides an overview of current challenges, presents latest developments and ongoing initiatives. Aspects addressed range from the European perspective to simple measures and practical solutions suitable for implementation within companies. In workshops, participants will have the opportunity to discuss risk-based approaches, workplace risk management and health monitoring, and campaigning activities.'

At the conference EU-OSHA presents the [2018-19 Healthy Workplaces Campaign](#) and chairs a session that looks at good practice, policy and awareness raising initiatives such as the [EU Roadmap on Carcinogens](#). This action scheme informs about the risks from exposure to carcinogens and how to tackle them by finding practical solutions and sharing good practices. Started in 2016 under the Netherlands EU Presidency, the roadmap's next destination is Helsinki, with the forthcoming Finnish EU Presidency announcing to support the scheme in 2019.

Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility states that *"the Roadmap is a very welcome initiative to ensure that our ambitious agenda launched to update the protection against exposure to carcinogens is applied on the work floor throughout the EU"*.

"Protection against carcinogenic substances is also of particular concern to Austria. Our mutual goal is to reduce the number of victims now and in the future. Therefore a joint and strong approach to this problem at European level is required," says Beate Hartinger-Klein, Austrian Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection.

"At the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), we are working to highlight the scale of the problem and the importance of preventing exposure to carcinogens at work as part of our current campaign, [Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances](#)", says Director Christa Sedlatschek. *"We believe that by informing and educating workers and employers – and offering practical solutions – we can reduce and even eliminate exposure to carcinogens at work, thereby preventing needless suffering and deaths from cancer."*

EU-OSHA's work in the field includes a report and summary on the [Exposure to carcinogens and work-related cancer: a review of assessment methods](#). Events within the roadmap scheme are summarised in the [Fighting cancer at the workplace seminar – EU roadmap on carcinogens](#) and the [Workshop 'Carcinogens and Work-Related Cancer'](#).

[Find out more about the conference](#)

[Explore the issue of workplace carcinogens](#)

[Visit the EU Roadmap on Carcinogens website](#)

Joint EU – UN Press Statement

The United Nations Secretary-General, the President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission, met in New York for their annual meeting in the margins of the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Today, they expressed their determination to further strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union. At a time of unprecedented and pressing global challenges, the United Nations and the European Union continue to engage together as positive forces for change to promote and renew full commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based global order, in line with their respective mandates, and to work closely for stability and prosperity to promote a safer and better world for all.

The 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the two organisations to stand up for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all across the world. It is also the 70th anniversary of United Nations Peacekeeping, an institution that for seven decades has helped protect the vulnerable and promote peace and security across the globe.

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the implementation of the reform of the United Nations system is crucial. The European Union is committed to strengthen and further promote the multilateral system, with a reformed UN at its core.

Partnerships with regional organisations are central to the United Nations' preventive action, and the European Union is an indispensable partner of the United Nations, contributing to regional and global peace and security, as well as to sustainable development and human rights. The United Nations and the European Union will also continue to cooperate with other regional organisations such as the African Union, and with sub-regional organisations, including through the United Nations regional offices, cognizant that a closer cooperation among regions is an important pillar of a stronger multilateral architecture.

The Leaders further reiterated their determination to seek innovative and forward-looking solutions to global challenges which require collective action, drawing on all parts of society to maintain the global efforts to tackle climate change, including the Paris agreement, and mobilising private sector investments for sustainable development, with women and youth at the centre of all action. Together, the United Nations and the European Union will continue to reinforce efforts to prevent conflict. Not least, the United Nations and the European Union will also continue to leverage their respective strengths to support the implementation of the landmark 2030 Agenda and its ambitious goals.

The strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the European

Union will continue, notably in areas including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, addressing global challenges, in conflict prevention and in the promotion of peace and security.

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