

Commission offers further support to European farmers dealing with droughts

Farmers will be able to receive their direct and rural development payments in advance and will be granted more flexibility to use land that would normally not be used for production, in order to feed their animals.

The ongoing and prolonged drought situation in several EU countries is having a significant impact on the production of arable crops, as well as animal feed which could also have an impact on animal welfare. In addition, the reduction in the level of animal feed is having a particular impact on the income of livestock farmers, as this will increase their input costs if there is a shortage of fodder later in the year.

Commissioner for Agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, said: *“I am very concerned about these prolonged climatic developments. I have been in contact with a number of ministers from affected countries to discuss the situation and get up-to-date assessments of its impact. The Commission, as always, is ready to support farmers affected by drought using a number of instruments, including higher advance payments, derogations from greening requirements and state aid. The Common Agricultural Policy already provides a safety net for farmers who have to deal with unpredictable events. I am encouraging all Member States to look into all possible actions and measures provided for in our legislation.”*

Two specific decisions have been taken to help farmers deal with droughts, in addition to support under the existing Common Agricultural Policy legislation:

- **Higher advanced payments:** farmers will be able to receive up to 70% of their direct payment and 85% of payments under rural development already as of mid-October 2018 instead of waiting until December to improve their cash flow situation;
- **Derogations from specific greening requirements**, namely crop diversification and ecological focus area rules on land lying fallow, to allow such land to be used for the production of animal feed. Consideration is also being given to the adoption of further derogations to greening to allow farmers more flexibility to produce fodder. These measures will be of particular benefit to livestock farmers.

Existing support under the CAP

Under existing **agricultural state aid rules**, aid of up to 80% of the damage caused by drought (or up to 90% in [Areas of Natural Constraint](#)) can be provided, subject to certain specific conditions. **The purchase of fodder can qualify for aid as either material damage or income loss.**

Compensation for damage can also be granted without the need to notify the Commission (the so-called **“de minimis aid”**). Member States may grant aid of

up to €15 000 per farmer over three years.

With regards to **Rural Development**, a range of possibilities is provided for in the current CAP legislation:

- Where a Member State recognises the drought situation as a 'natural disaster', they may provide support of up to 100% for the restoration of agricultural production potential damaged by the drought. The money can be used for investments such as the re-seeding of pastures for example. This measure can be activated retroactively;
- Farmers can notify their respective national authorities about cases of exceptional circumstances, and may be released by their Member State from their commitments under various schemes. For example, farmers will be allowed to use buffer strips for fodder;
- Member States can support farmers through **risk management instruments**. For example, they can financially contribute to mutual funds to pay financial compensation to affected farmers. Also, farmers who experience an income loss beyond 30% of their average annual income will receive a financial compensation.

Member States have the possibility to modify their rural development programme once a year to include one of the measures set out above.

In addition to these measures and the [continuous monitoring of the drought situation](#) and its impact with European satellites, the **Commission is in contact with all Member States to receive updated information of the impact of the spring and summer drought on their farmers**. The information, which is requested by 31 August, will be used to assess the adequacy and appropriateness of the Commission's response and to inform any decisions about the modification of the measures already taken or in relation to any additional measures which may be considered appropriate.

For more information

[Monitoring Agricultural Resources \(MARS\) Bulletins](#)

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Commission offers further support to European farmers dealing with droughts

The European Commission is standing by Europe's farmers this summer, as they grapple with the difficulties of extreme droughts. Farmers will be able to receive their direct and rural development payments in advance and will be granted more flexibility to use land that would normally not be used for production, in order to feed their animals. Commissioner for agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, said: *"I am very concerned about these prolonged climatic developments. I have been in contact with a number of ministers from affected*

countries to discuss the situation and get up-to-date assessments of its impact. The Commission, as always, is ready to support farmers affected by drought using a number of instruments, including higher advance payments, derogations from greening requirements and state aid. The Common Agricultural Policy already provides a safety net for farmers who have to deal with unpredictable events. I am encouraging all Member States to look into all possible actions and measures provided for in our legislation.” The ongoing and prolonged drought situation in several EU countries is having a significant impact on the production of arable crops, as well as animal feed which could also have an impact on animal welfare. In addition, the reduction in the level of animal feed is having a particular impact on the income of livestock farmers, as this will increase their input costs if there is a shortage of fodder later in the year. In addition to higher advance payments and derogations from specific greening requirements, existing support under the CAP can be used, including state aid, de minimis, rural development investments and risk management instruments. The Commission is in contact with all Member States to receive by 31 August updated information of the impact of the spring and summer drought on their farmers. A press release is [online](#) with further information. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Clémence Robin –Tel.: +32 229 52509)

“Prix Nobel de mathématiques”: la Commission félicite Alessio Figalli, lauréat de la médaille Fields 2018 soutenu par l’Union européenne

Alessio Figalli, bénéficiaire d’une bourse du Conseil européen de la recherche ([ERC](#)) et basé à l’École polytechnique fédérale (EHT) de Zurich (Suisse), a reçu hier une des quatre médailles Fields, qui récompensent les mathématiciens âgés de moins de quarante ans les plus méritants. Cette médaille prestigieuse lui a été décernée pour ses travaux sur les équations différentielles partielles et le calcul des variations. L’un des problèmes sur lequel ce chercheur travaille est la théorie du transport optimal – une étude sur la répartition idéale des ressources dans le transport quotidien, un sujet qui intéresse les mathématiciens depuis l’époque de Napoléon. Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire en charge de la recherche, de la science et de l’innovation, a félicité le chercheur et a commenté: “Ce prix confirme que le Conseil européen de la recherche, qui promeut l’excellence scientifique grâce au soutien offert par Horizon 2020, attire irrésistiblement les grands talents scientifiques”. Alessio Figalli a reçu une [bourse “Consolidator” de l’ERC](#), conçue pour les chercheurs déjà expérimentés, en 2017. Outre ce mathématicien italien, un chercheur britannique, d’origine iranienne, Caucher Birkar, et l’Allemand Peter Scholze ont également reçu chacun une médaille Fields pour leurs travaux. Un communiqué de presse de l’ERC est disponible [ici](#) et une interview du lauréat italien [ici](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tél.: +32 229 80100; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229 80379)

Water for Gaza: EU switches on the biggest solar energy field to improve dire drinking water conditions in Gaza

The EU has completed the biggest photovoltaic solar field in Gaza. It will provide 0.5 Megawatts of electricity per day to fuel the EU-funded [Southern](#)

[Gaza Desalination Plant](#), which currently provides drinking water to 75,000 inhabitants in the Khan Younis and Rafah governorates. With the new energy field and new investments foreseen the Desalination Plant will eventually reach 250,000 people in Southern Gaza by 2020. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, commented: *“Limited energy supplies in Gaza are one of the main challenges when improving access to safe and drinkable water to the local population. The photovoltaic solar field is essential to respond to the urgent water needs in Gaza and create dignified living conditions for its people, thus mitigating tensions in a highly conflict sensitive area.”* The full [press release](#) is available online. (for more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.:+32 229 64887)

The EU mobilises €6 million for disaster preparedness in South and Southeast Asia

As Southeast Asia is faced with the yearly monsoon season and its potentially devastating effects, the European Commission has released €6 million for disaster preparedness initiatives in the region. This funding comes on top of the €7 million announced in May to support Bangladesh scale up preparedness measures for the rainy season. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** said: *“From cyclones to floods, from landslides to droughts and earthquakes: natural hazards pose a recurring threat to the Southeast Asian countries, and the current monsoon rains battering the region are a sobering reminder. The EU believes in empowering communities to be better prepared in the face of natural disasters, and especially the most vulnerable, who are often the ones bearing the hardest brunt. Today’s assistance will strengthen the disaster preparedness initiatives already in place across the region, while improving the livelihoods and resilience of those most affected.”* From the funding announced today, €2 million will support **Myanmar** to build up its response system against earthquakes and tsunamis; **Nepal** will be assisted with an additional €2 million targeting the most vulnerable communities in earthquake-affected areas; €1 million will support the implementation of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building initiatives in the **Philippines**, and €1 million will focus on multi-country initiatives to strengthen response capacities at the regional level across Southeast Asia, including in **Laos, Cambodia** and **Vietnam**. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Eurostat: Les prix à la production industrielle en hausse de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28

En juin 2018 par rapport à mai 2018, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l’UE28, selon les estimations d’Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. En mai 2018, les prix avaient augmenté de 0,8% dans la zone euro et de 1,1% dans l’UE28. En juin 2018 par rapport à juin 2017, les prix à la production industrielle ont augmenté de 3,6% dans la zone euro et de 4,4% dans l’UE28.

Un communiqué de presse peut être trouvé [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tél.: +32 229 80100; Maud Noyon – Tél.: +32 229 80379)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and Schwermetall

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and of Schwermetall under the EU Merger Regulation. Wieland and Aurubis Rolled Products both produce rolled copper products and copper alloys. Rolled copper products are used as an input in the manufacturing of many products, including transformers, semiconductors, heat exchangers and roofing materials. In addition, Aurubis Rolled Products produces billets, an input in the manufacturing of copper tubes. Schwermetall produces pre-rolled strip made of copper, and copper alloys. Pre-rolled strip is used as an input in the manufacturing of rolled copper products. Schwermetall sells pre-rolled strip to both Wieland and Aurubis Rolled Products, as well as to other copper manufacturers. The Commission's initial market investigation identified preliminary competition concerns in relation to (i) rolled copper products, notably some specific copper alloys and some specific end-applications, (ii) pre-rolled strips and (iii) billets. The Commission will now carry out an in-depth investigation into the effects of this transaction and determine whether its initial competition concerns are confirmed. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Copper is used not only in many industries but also in our homes, in electrical equipment or piping. The proposed transaction would bring together the top two suppliers of copper rolled products in an industry that is already highly concentrated and where, just a few days ago, we opened another in-depth investigation. Therefore, the Commission will closely analyse the impact on competition of Wieland's proposed acquisition of Aurubis Rolled Products and Schwermetall, to ensure their customers and final consumers are not harmed."* A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Bonaldi by Eurocar

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Bonaldi Motori S.p.A. and Bonaldi Tech S.p.A. (together "Bonaldi") of Italy by Eurocar Italia S.r.l. ("Eurocar") of Italy. Eurocar is ultimately controlled by the Volkswagen Group ("VW"). Both Bonaldi and Eurocar are active in Italy in (i) the retail distribution of new and used passenger cars and light commercial vehicles of the VW brands (ii) related repair activities and (iii) the sale of original equipment manufacturer (OEM) spare parts. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns due to the limited overlaps between the companies' activities in the different Italian provinces and the lack of incentive for the combined entity to shut out downstream competitors from the market. The case 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.8963](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel: +32 229 55344).

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

[MiFID II: ESMA publishes data for the systematic internaliser calculations for equity, equity-like instruments and bonds](#)

More specifically, ESMA has published the total number of trades and total volume over the period January-June 2018 for the purpose of the systematic internaliser (SI) calculations for 9,173 equity and equity-like instruments and for 73,828 bonds.

The results are published only for instruments for which trading venues submitted data for at least 95% of all trading days over the 6-month observation period. The data publications also incorporate OTC trading to the extent it has been reported to ESMA.

The publication of the data for the SI calculations for derivatives and other instruments will start on 1 February 2019 as set out in the [plan](#) announced by ESMA on 12 July 2018.

Background

According to Article 4(1)(20) of Directive 2014/65/EU (MiFID II) investment firms dealing on own account when executing client orders over the counter (OTC) on an organised, frequent systematic and substantial basis are subject to the mandatory SI regime.

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2017/565 specifies thresholds determining what constitutes frequent, systematic and substantial OTC trading. In particular, investment firms are required to assess whether they are SIs in a specific instrument (for equity and equity-like instruments, bonds, ETCs and ETNs and SFPs) or for a (sub-)class of instruments (for derivatives, securitised derivatives and emission allowances) on a quarterly basis based on data from the previous six months. For each specific instrument/sub-class, an investment firm is required to compare the trading it undertakes on its own account compared to the total volume and number of transactions executed in the European Union (EU). If the investment firm

exceeds the relative thresholds it will be deemed an SI and will have to fulfil the SI-specific obligations. ESMA, upon request of market participants, decided to compute the total volume and number of transactions executed in the EU in order to help market participants in the performance of the test since that data is essential for the operation of the SI regime and is not otherwise easily available.

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Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers in Jalalabad, Afghanistan

I am appalled by the cowardly attacks in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, which claimed the lives of 15 civilians, including three humanitarian workers from some of our partners. We stand united with the people of Afghanistan and with the whole humanitarian community.

My thoughts are with the families of the victims and all those who were severely wounded as they tried to escape from the building under attack.

The senseless, pervasive violence in Afghanistan continues to pose a threat to the lives of innocent civilians and of those whose mission is to save the lives and relieve the suffering of vulnerable people.

All parties to this conflict must abide by the principles of International Humanitarian Law, and respect and protect civilians and those who are assisting them.