

Promoting Europe's agricultural products: Commission increases funding

The European Commission has today launched the calls for proposals for programmes to promote European agricultural products throughout the world and within the EU. A total of €169 million is available to co-finance the programmes, up from €142 million in 2017. Programmes can cover a wide range of issues from general campaigns on healthy eating to specific market sectors.

Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development said: *"The EU is the world's largest trader of agri-food products and the best address in the world for high-quality food. I had the occasion to witness first-hand the interest consumers and businesses have worldwide for EU agri-food products on my several business missions conducted abroad. I welcome these new promotion programmes which have in the past successfully opened the doors to new applicants and increased our visibility across the world. Last year, bids for agri-food promotion programmes exceeded the available budget by close to ten times. So if you are an eligible organisation, it is time to apply now."*

Two thirds of the available funding is earmarked for promoting EU food products in non-EU countries, in particular those with which there is a large potential for increasing EU agri-food exports such as Canada, Japan, China, Mexico and Colombia. For programmes within the EU, the focus should be on informing consumers about the various EU quality schemes and labels such as [geographical indications](#) or [organic products](#). Sectorial funding will go towards programmes that promote sustainable breeding including for sheep and goats. Funding has also been set aside for campaigns designed to promote healthy eating and the consumption of fruits and vegetables. A full list of the Commission's priorities and funding available can be found [here](#).

Who can apply?

A wide range of organisations, such as trade organisations, producer organisations and agri-food bodies responsible for promotion activities are eligible to apply for funding through the call for proposals launched today. So called 'simple' programmes can be submitted by one or more organisations from the same EU country; the 'multi' programmes can be submitted by at least two national organisations from at least two member states, or by one or more European organisations. The ensuing campaigns usually roll over three years.

Proposals should be submitted by 12 April 2018 [via the dedicated portal](#). The Commission will assess the proposals and announce the beneficiaries in the autumn.

[CHAFEA](#), the EU's Consumer, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency, provides a number of tools to help applicants to successfully submit their proposals. More information will be available during a series of 'info days' that will take part across the EU. The first [info day](#) will be held in

Brussels on 31 January, open to all potential beneficiaries, advertising agencies, and national authorities.

For More Information

More on [EU policy on the promotion of agricultural products](#)

Promotion policy [annual work programme 2018](#)

[Results of the 2017 call for proposals](#) (simple programmes)

Payment services: Consumers to benefit from cheaper, safer and more innovative electronic payments

The revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2), which will apply as of 13 January 2018, aims to modernise Europe's payment services to the benefit of both consumers and businesses, so as to keep pace with this rapidly evolving market.

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said. *"This legislation is another step towards a digital single market in the EU. It will promote the development of innovative online and mobile payments, which will benefit the economy and growth. With PSD2 becoming applicable, we are banning surcharges for consumer debit and credit card payments. This could save more than €550 million per year for EU consumers. Consumers will also be better protected when they make payments."*

The new rules will:

- Prohibit surcharging, which are additional charges for payments with consumer credit or debit cards, both in shops or online;
- Open the EU payment market to companies offering payment services, based on them gaining access to information about the payment account;
- Introduce strict security requirements for electronic payments and for the protection of consumers' financial data;
- Enhance consumers' rights in numerous areas. These include reducing the liability for non-authorised payments and introducing an unconditional

(“no questions asked”) refund right for direct debits in euro.

These rules will be applicable as of 13 January 2018 through provisions that Member States have introduced in their national laws in compliance with the EU legislation. The Commission calls on Member States who have not yet transposed the Directive, to do so as a matter of urgency.

Background

The revised [Payment Services Directive \(PSD2, Directive 2015/2366/EU\)](#), proposed by the European Commission in July 2013 and agreed by co-legislators in 2015, is the latest in a series of laws adopted by the EU in order to provide for modern, efficient and cheap payment services and to enhance protection for European consumers and businesses.

It incorporates and repeals Directive 2007/64/EC (Payment Services Directive, or PSD1), which provided the legal basis for the creation of an EU-wide single market for payment services. The revised Directive adapts the rules to cater for emerging and innovative payment services, including internet and mobile payments, while at the same time ensuring a more secure environment for consumers.

For more information

[More information on PSD 2](#)

[Frequently asked questions on PSD 2](#)

[Frequently asked questions on the RTS](#)

[Bulgarian Presidency begins with €100 million Juncker Plan loan for agri-pharma business Huvepharma](#)

As the College of Commissioners visit Sofia to mark the beginning of the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed a €100 million loan with Bulgarian agri-pharma business Biovet to finance a boost in production levels and research and development (R&D) in the area of animal health. The loan is guaranteed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe, the Juncker Plan. As a result of this financing, 210 jobs will be created in rural parts of Bulgaria.

Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and the Prime Minister of Bulgaria Boyko Borissov witnessed the signing of today’s deal by Commission Vice-

President Jyrki Katainen, Agriculture Minister of Bulgaria Rumen Porodzanov, EIB Vice-President Andrew McDowell and Kiril Domuschiev, Chief Executive Officer of Biovet's parent company Huvepharma.

Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"It is a great pleasure to be here to sign the biggest EFSI transaction in Bulgaria so far: €100 million to Biovet. Thanks to the EU budget guarantee, the EIB was able to offer the company this loan and as a result we will see more R&D activity in rural areas in Bulgaria, leading to growth in the economy and new jobs created. I wish every success to Biovet, and to the Bulgarian Presidency for the next six months."*

Commissioner Phil **Hogan**, responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development, said: *"The agriculture sector in Europe supports 44 million jobs and is a growth sector with enormous potential for growth. Investment is essential if that potential is to be fully realised. The EIB has a crucial role to play and I warmly welcome their support for agri companies such as Biovet as a clear indication of their firm commitment to the agri food sector, which will continue to provide jobs in rural areas and boost the economy."*

Bulgarian Agriculture Minister Rumen Porodzanov said: *"I am delighted that the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union starts with such an important message to the Bulgarian agricultural sector. The financing of this project embodies the European Investment Bank's credibility towards the Bulgarian government and the Bulgarian business. The possibility of implementing such an extremely important and effective project in the field of veterinary medicine and animal health care is indicative of the perspectives of Bulgarian agriculture. We are proud that BIOVET project is part of the Juncker Plan."*

EIB Vice-President Andrew McDowell said: *"This operation supported by the EIB and the Investment Plan for Europe will strengthen the competitiveness of a leading company in the veterinary sector in Bulgaria, reinforcing Europe's leading position in the animal health market. This is important as animal health is a key element of the EU farming industry and an area of concern for all European citizens."*

Huvepharma CEO Kiril Domuschiev said: *"Huvepharma is determined to continue its growth strategy as an EU-based animal health company operating on global markets. Support of the EIB allows us to accelerate our investments in Bulgarian production and R&D facilities, thereby reinforcing our strategy to build a fully-integrated animal health company with production facilities in the EU and selling on global markets."*

The project includes the design, construction and management of two new facilities: a fermentation facility in Peshtera in southern Bulgaria which will manufacture active substances, nutritional supplements, enzymes, probiotics and ready medicinal formulations for animal and human health; as well as a new plant in Razgrad in north-east Bulgaria for the manufacturing of animal vaccines. The project will also enable the

company to carry out R&D in the fields of microbiology and new product

development, such as vaccines, enzymes, as well as process improvement and formulation.

Background

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is the European Union's bank. It is the long-term lending institution of the EU and is the only bank owned by and representing the interests of the European Union Member States. It makes long-term finance available for sound investments in order to contribute towards EU policy goals. The EIB works closely with other EU institutions to implement EU policy.

As the largest multilateral borrower and lender by volume, the EIB provides finance and expertise for sound and sustainable investment projects which contribute to furthering EU policy objectives. More than 90% of EIB activity is focused on Europe but it also supports the EU's external and development policies.

The Investment Plan for Europe, the Juncker Plan, is one of the European Commission's top priorities. It focuses on boosting investments to create jobs and growth by making smarter use of new and existing financial resources, removing obstacles to investment and providing visibility and technical assistance to investment projects.

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is the central pillar of the Juncker Plan. It provides a first loss guarantee, allowing the EIB to invest in more, often riskier, projects. The EFSI is already showing concrete results. The projects and agreements approved for financing under the EFSI so far are expected to mobilise some EUR 256bn in investments and support up to 540 000 SMEs across all 28 Member States. The European Parliament and Member States [agreed in December 2017](#) to extend EFSI's duration and increase its financial capacity.

Huvepharma is a privately-owned, global animal health company with headquarters in Sofia, Bulgaria, that brands a broad portfolio of products used in swine, poultry and cattle production. The company is committed to develop and produce world-class products with an emphasis on providing value-enhanced solutions for animal-producing customers. Huvepharma is selling in more than 90 countries with subsidiaries in all major farm animal-producing regions globally, including manufacturing sites in Europe and the USA.

More information

[Investment Plan website](#): latest news and results from the EFSI

[Memo](#): Extension of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – Frequently Asked Questions

[EIB EFSI website](#): full list of EFSI projects and how to apply for financing

[Advisory Hub](#): technical assistance for project promoters and small businesses

[Project Portal](#): free service, matching investment opportunities with

CALENDRIER du 15 au 21 janvier 2018

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 15 janvier 2018

15-18/01 European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Joseph Daul, President of the European People's Party (EPP) and Mr Manfred Weber, Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Hans-Olaf Henkel, Member of the European Parliament.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Nasr al-Hariri, Head of the Syrian Negotiation Commission.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Adel al-Jubeir, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives Mr Ronan Kelly, President of Fibre to the Home Council Europe (FTTH).

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Jean Bizet, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the French Senate, and a delegation from the Committee.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Henrik Vuornos, Chairman of the Youth of the National Coalition Party of Finland, and a delegation from the Youth of the National Coalition Party.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives a delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the French Senate.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France (jusqu'à 17/01): rencontre M. Mounir Mahjoubi, Secrétaire d'Etat auprès du Premier ministre français chargé du Numérique.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Fahad Al Sulaiti, CEO of the "Education Above All" foundation.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Adel Al-Jubeir, Minister for Foreign

Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives a delegation from the European Affairs Committee of the French Senate.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** au Luxembourg: rencontre M. François Bausch, Ministre du Développement durable et des Infrastructures du Luxembourg; visite le terminal intermodal Bettembourg-Dudelange et la gare de Pfaffenthal-Kirchberg; rencontre M. Xavier Bettel, Premier Ministre du Luxembourg; participe à un [Dialogue citoyen](#); et rencontre les membres des commissions des Affaires étrangères et européennes, de l'Economie, du Développement durable de la Chambre des Députés.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** receives Mr Zhang Ming, Head of the Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Petteri Taalas, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** holds a High-Level Expert Group meeting on Fake News, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** holds the Western Balkans roundtable of operators, in Brussels.

Mardi 16 janvier 2018

College meeting

European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** addresses the plenary of the European Parliament on the conclusions of the European Council of December and the conclusion of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France: rencontre le Bureau national du Parti Socialiste.

Mercredi 17 janvier 2018

European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** addresses the plenary of the European Parliament on the beginning of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** delivers a keynote speech at the 531st Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on "The climate finance pact".

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France: est auditionné par la Commission des affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale; et rencontre Mme Nicole Belloubet, Garde des Sceaux, ministre de la Justice.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Wiesbaden, Germany: meets Mr Peter Beuth, Minister for the Interior and Sports of the Land of Hessen.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** delivers a speech at the "Future of Europe 2018: Fair competition as a growth engine for the future of Europe" conference, in Brussels

Mr Carlos **Moedas** participates in a working lunch with the members of the High-Level Group on Key Enabling Technologies.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Ljubljana, Slovenia (until 18/01): meets Mr Boris Koprivnikar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Administration of Slovenia; and Mr Marko Grobelnik, Digital Champion of Slovenia.

Jeudi 18 janvier 2018

European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** hosts the European Commission's New Year's reception

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Ms Isabelle Kocher, CEO of Engie.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** meets Mr Jukka Mäkelä, Mayor of Espoo, and the city board of Espoo, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany (until 20/01): visits "*The Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin*" research and healthcare centre and participates in a presentation of European Reference Networks; participates in the opening event of the [10th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture "Shaping the Future of Livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently"](#), organised by the German Ministry for Food and Agriculture in the framework of the [International Green Week 2018](#).

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit Mme Isabelle Kocher, PDG du groupe Engie.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Vienna, Austria: meets Mr Gerald Schöpfer, President of the Austrian Red Cross; and representatives of the Austrian National Council and Federal Council.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany (until 20/01): participates in the official opening of the [International Green Week 2018](#).

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** in Venice, Italy (until 19/01): delivers a welcoming speech at the [2018 EU-China Tourism Year Gala Event](#).

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** reçoit M. Francois Germinet, Président de l'Université de

Cergy-Pontoise et Président de la Conférence des Universités d'Île-de-France.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Bratislava, Slovakia: participates in a working lunch with Mr Peter Pellegrini, Deputy Prime Minister for Investments of Slovakia and Mr Radko Kuruc, State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Belgrade, Serbia (until 19/01): meets Mr Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia.

M. Julian **King** à Paris, France: est auditionné par la Commission des affaires européennes et la Commission de lois du Sénat français.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Ljubljana, Slovenia: speaks in front of the parliamentary committees for EU affairs, for the Interior, public administration and local self-government in the National Assembly; participates in a [Citizen's dialogue](#); attends a working lunch with stakeholders; a presentation of Digital Economy and Society practices; and a meeting with women in tech at BTC Company.

Vendredi 19 janvier 2018

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives representatives of Orgalime, the European Engineering Industries Association.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** delivers a keynote speech on "[The Future of European Defence](#)" as part of the Future of Europe Event Series, organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Ms Minna Arve, Mayor of Turku.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** participates in the EU-Korea Trade Committee meeting, in Brussels.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Mr Kim Hyun-chong, Minister for Trade of Korea.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** delivers a speech at the High-Level Arctic Stakeholders Forum – presentation of the "Summary report of the Arctic Stakeholder Forum consultation", in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: delivers a speech at the [10th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture High-Level Panel "Animal Health and Welfare: Two cornerstones for the future of globally diversified livestock production"](#); and, together with Mr Phil **Hogan**, participates in a joint [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on sustainable food production and consumption in the framework of the [International Green Week 2018](#).

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France: rencontre M. Alexis Kohler, Secrétaire Général de la présidence de la République française.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Berlin, Germany: meets Mr Thomas de Maizière, Federal Minister for the Interior of Germany; and Mr Karl-Heinz Schröter, Minister for the Interior and Local Issues of the Land of Brandenburg.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany: participates in the [10th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture High-Level Panel “Shaping the Future of Livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently”](#), organised by the German Ministry for Food and Agriculture in the framework of the [International Green Week 2018](#).

Ms Violeta **Bulc** in Hamburg, Germany: meets Mr Olaf Scholz, First Mayor of Hamburg; visits the Port of Hamburg together with Mr Jens Meier, CEO of the Hamburg Port Authority; and the Fleet Support Centre of Hapag Lloyd.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** in Venice, Italy: delivers a keynote speech at the opening of the [2018 EU-China Tourism Year](#); and opens the [1st EU-China Tourism Business Summit](#); and meets Ms Nikolina Angelkova, Minister for Tourism of Bulgaria.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives Mr Carl Dolan, Director of the Transparency International EU Office.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Budapest, Hungary: delivers a speech at the kick-off meeting of the Erasmus+ supported project “European Union Physical Activity and Sport Monitoring System”.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Belgrade, Serbia: meets Ms Ana Brnabić, Prime Minister of Serbia; and Ms Jadranka Joksimović, Minister for European Integration.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Dublin, Ireland: receives the Gold Medal from the Historical Society of Trinity College Dublin; and participates in a [Citizens’ Dialogue](#) at the Trinity College.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** reçoit M. Pierre Gurdjian, Président du Conseil d’Administration de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), et M. Yvon Englert, recteur de l’ULB.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Sofia, Bulgaria: delivers a speech on “Digital and Organisational Transformation: The New Status Quo” at [“The Economist World in 2018 Gala Dinner”](#).

Samedi 20 janvier 2018

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Nijmegen, The Netherlands: delivers a speech at the [2018 European Green Capital handover and opening ceremony](#).

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** and Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany: participate in the [10th Berlin Agriculture Ministers’ conference “Agriculture and Water – Key to Feeding the World”](#), hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Valletta, Malta: participates in and delivers a speech at the [opening ceremony of the European Capital of Culture](#); meets representatives of the National Youth Council of Malta; and representatives of the European Democrat Students’ organisation.

Prévisions du mois de janvier:

22/01 – Foreign Affairs Council, in Brussels.

22/01 – Eurogroup, in Brussels.

23/01 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council, in Brussels.

25-26/01 – Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers, in Sofia, Bulgaria.

29/01 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council, in Brussels.

31/01 – 02/02 – Informal meeting of competitiveness ministers, in Sofia, Bulgaria.

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[Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the ceremony marking the beginning of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#)

Добър вечер (*good evening*)!

For my good friend Donald: that means good evening.

Mister President of the Republic,

Prime Minister,

Presidents from here and there,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies, that is for all of you,

It is indeed a great pleasure to be here in this splendid national theatre for the launch of the first ever Bulgarian Presidency. We have all been waiting for it: I am sure all Bulgarians here remember the clocks hanging all over Sofia and counting down the days to the country's EU accession.

Eleven years ago – in 2007 – Bulgaria joined the European family. But the process, of course, began well before that date. And personally, I feel to be a small part of Bulgaria's remarkable EU journey ever since the day I signed the Accession Treaty in April 2005 – when I was Prime Minister of Luxembourg and holding the Presidency of the European Union.

You have to know, had I refused to sign, you would not be a member – so be grateful – I was in a good mood, in an optimistic mood, in a future-oriented mood, because for years as a Prime Minister and as a Finance Minister of Luxembourg I did admire the performances of the Bulgarian society, mainly of the modest part of the Bulgarian society. How many efforts, how many sacrifices have been delivered by all those who strongly believed in the European future of Bulgaria? So it is for us and to us to say thank you to Bulgaria.

I remember another moment from that day: it was in a Luxembourgish abbey when I heard for the first time the cosmic "Mystery of Bulgarian voices". These voices have literally travelled to space when a recording of these unique voices was placed on the US voyager in 1977. This is quite an achievement already. However, we do not actually know if there was someone in space to listen to them! The Bulgarians were absent from space. But now, tonight, there is a potential audience of 500 million people. In that sense: the Bulgarian voice will be heard loudly and prominently in Europe – tonight and in the next six months and beyond that.

Bulgaria is a country I have a special affection for: for its people, for its culture, for the *шопска* (shopska salad) and the *луканка* (lukanka, Bulgarian salami) – mainly for those.

Your Presidency is taking place at a crucial moment when the European Union must deliver on a number of initiatives for our citizens and shape our Union's future.

I can think of nobody better than my friend Boyko to carry Europe forward and act as a bridge builder in our Union and beyond. I know he will do this with force; he is doing everything with force – *сила* – because he is a strong and committed European.

You can count on us – on Donald, on the Parliament, on the Commission. Because your place is in Europe. And your place is in Schengen. And your place is in the euro. We will work for that. The Commission will be by Bulgaria's side: united we stand strong and united we will stand.

Good luck; best wishes.

Благодаря! For Donald: that means "thank you".