

Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the deadly forest fires and storms in several Member States

"Today all our thoughts are with our citizens who are suffering from the devastating forest fires in Portugal and Spain and the storms affecting Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Our condolences go to all those that have sadly lost loved ones and we commend the brave first responders working in difficult conditions to save the lives of others.

We are in constant contact with the respective authorities and all EU emergency response tools are available.

The first EU support is already on its way.

President Juncker has spoken to Prime Minister of Portugal António Costa and I have spoken to Minister Constança Urbano de Sousa to offer the EU's full solidarity and readiness to help.

Following a request for assistance from the Portuguese authorities, firefighting aircraft from Italy are being dispatched through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism. These specialised planes will operate in the most affected areas in Portugal and provide valuable support to the national emergency efforts.

We are also closely following developments regarding Hurricane Ophelia currently affecting parts of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

At this stage, the Irish authorities have requested assistance via the EU's Copernicus satellite mapping system. Highly detailed satellite imagery will help the national civil protection teams assess the extent of damage and better focus relief efforts.

Our 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre is working around the clock to channel EU support and we stand ready to mobilise any further assistance requested."

Background

The European Commission coordinates voluntary offers made by participating states through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#), and can co-finance the transport of relief items and experts to the country in question. The Civil Protection Mechanism can only be activated upon request from the national

authorities. The mobilisation of assistance is coordinated through the [Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#), which closely monitors developments and offers the possibility of transport co-financing for the offered assistance.

Assistance can consist of items for immediate relief as well as experts and supporting intervention teams. In the case of fires, support can include fire-extinguishing aircraft. The Commission cannot send planes or equipment itself via the Mechanism.

Overall, the Mechanism facilitates the cooperation in disaster response among 34 European states (28 EU Member States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

Links

[Factsheet: EU: a world leader in helping those affected by crises](#)

[Photos: European Commission's Emergency response centre](#)

[Photos: Visit of Christos Stylianides, Member of the EC, to the EU Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#)

[Video: European Commission's Emergency response centre](#)

[Vacancy notice – Traineeship – HR profile \(deadline: 06/11/2017\)](#)

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[August 2017 – Euro area international](#)

trade in goods surplus €16.1 bn – €5.1 bn deficit for EU28

The first estimate for **euro area** (EA19) exports of goods to the rest of the world in August 2017 was €171.5 billion, an increase of 6.8% compared with August 2016 (€160.6 bn). Imports from the rest of the world stood at €155.4 bn, a rise of 8.6% compared with August 2016 (€143.1 bn). As a result, the **euro area** recorded a €16.1 bn surplus in trade in goods with the rest of the world in August 2017, compared with +€17.5 bn in August 2016. **Intra-euro area** trade rose to €132.9 bn in August 2017, up by 7.6% compared with August 2016.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

Daily News 16 / 10 / 2017

Eurostat: 17 octobre: journée internationale pour l'élimination de la pauvreté – Tendance à la baisse pour la proportion de personnes menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale dans l'UE

En 2016, 117.5 millions de personnes, soit 23,4% de la population, dans l'Union européenne (UE) étaient menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale. Cela signifie que ces personnes étaient affectées par au moins une des trois conditions suivantes: en risque de pauvreté après transferts sociaux (pauvreté monétaire), en situation de privation matérielle sévère ou vivant dans des ménages à très faible intensité de travail. La Commissaire chargée de l'Emploi, des Affaires sociales, des Compétences et de la Mobilité des Travailleurs, Marianne **Thyssen**, a dit: *"Le pourcentage de personnes à risque de pauvreté et d'exclusion a baissé pour la quatrième année de suite. Cependant, aujourd'hui, près d'une personne sur 4 n'est toujours pas à l'abri de ce risque. A travers le [Fonds social européen](#), le renforcement des priorités sociales au sein du [Semestre européen de la coordination des politiques économiques](#) et le [Socle européen des droits sociaux](#), l'Union européenne est déterminée à mobiliser tous ses outils pour combattre la pauvreté et l'exclusion sociale en Europe."*Après trois années consécutives de hausses entre 2009 et 2012 où elle avait atteint 25%, la proportion de personnes menacées de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale dans l'UE a depuis continuellement baissé pour s'établir à 23,4% l'an dernier, à seulement 0,1 point de pourcentage de son niveau plancher de 2009. La réduction du nombre de personnes confrontées dans l'UE au risque de pauvreté ou d'exclusion sociale est l'un des objectifs clés de la stratégie Europe 2020. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumilion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Commission continues action against food waste and food poverty by facilitating food donation

The Commission adopted today guidelines to facilitate food donation in the EU, a key deliverable of the Circular Economy Action Plan. The aim is to clarify relevant EU legislation and help lift barriers to food donation. The EU guidelines will help donors and recipients of surplus food to make sure that they respect relevant requirements such as food hygiene and food information to consumers, thereby ensuring safe food donation practices. The guidelines also promote common interpretation of EU rules applicable to food donation, including those related to VAT. Welcoming the adoption, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"I am particularly happy that today, on the occasion of the World Food Day, we have a good news to report. In EU around 550.000 tons of food are redistributed to 6.1 million people by food banks in the EU, but that's only a fraction of the estimated volume of food which could be redistributed to prevent food waste and help fight food poverty. I am convinced that the guidelines adopted today will not only help industry and charity organisations to make their job easier and hence provide to those in greatest need but also become a reference for national authorities and operators to facilitate food donation in the EU"*. The EU guidelines were developed by the Commission in close cooperation with the members of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#) bringing together Member States, international organisations, industry, food banks and other charity organisations. The Commission notice, *EU guidelines on food donation*, is available [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Astronomie: une "découverte sans précédent" présentée aujourd'hui par des chercheurs soutenus par des fonds de l'UE

Les équipes scientifiques à l'origine de la découverte des ondes gravitationnelles, dont trois des chercheurs les plus éminents ont été récemment récompensés par [le prix Nobel de physique 2017](#), présenteront aujourd'hui une autre découverte révolutionnaire issue de leurs travaux. Les observations d'un phénomène astronomique jamais constaté auparavant seront dévoilées. Cette découverte a été rendue possible grâce à la collaboration de l'observatoire LIGO situé aux Etats-Unis, du détecteur Virgo en Italie et d'autres installations dont l'Observatoire européen austral (ESO). L'Union européenne a soutenu l'ESO avec plus de 14 millions d'euros ces dix dernières années. Le projet [GraWIToN](#) a contribué à cette nouvelle découverte. Il a bénéficié des actions du [programme Marie Skłodowska-Curie](#) à hauteur de 3,7 millions d'euros. Ces actions accompagnent des chercheurs d'excellence dans toutes les étapes de leur carrière et encouragent la mobilité transnationale, intersectorielle et interdisciplinaire. Regardez l'annonce en direct à 16 heures CET grâce au webcast sur le site de l'[ESO](#). Plus d'informations seront publiées [ici](#) et [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083; Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040;)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over NESTEA Business by Nestlé

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over NESTEA Business, in the European Economic Area except Spain, Portugal and Andorra by Nestlé of Switzerland. NESTEA branded ready-to-drink tea business is currently operated by Beverage Partners Worldwide, a full-function joint venture between Nestlé and The Coca-Cola Company. Nestlé is the ultimate parent company of a group of companies involved in the supply of consumer goods. Its activities primarily include the production, marketing and sale of milk products, ice cream, nutrition and health science products, drinks as well as confectionery and pet care products. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Nestlé already had joint control of the business and there are very limited overlaps between the activities of the companies. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the [public case register](#) under the case number M.8453. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Inver by Greenergy

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Inver Energy Limited of Ireland by Greenergy International Limited of the UK. Inver is an independent importer and distributor of a range of fuel products predominantly in Ireland, where it also operates a number of retail service stations. In the UK, Inver operates a fuel importation terminal in Cardiff, from where it supplies fuel oil, gasoil and kerosene. Greenergy is active in the importation, storage, blending and transportation of refined oil fuels to wholesale customers in the UK, and is the UK's largest supplier of road fuels. It also produces and blends biofuels. Greenergy is ultimately controlled by Brookfield Asset Management Inc. of Canada, a global asset manager. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlap 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.8601](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

First anniversary of the Economic Partnership with Southern African Development Community

On 16 and 17 October, Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** is in Johannesburg, South Africa, to celebrate the first anniversary of the [Economic Partnership Agreement](#) (EPA) between the EU and six countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Commissioner **Malmström** will

meet South African Minister of Trade Rob Davies, and also take part in a civil society forum that brings together 150 civil society organisations, including NGOs, trade associations and trade unions, to exchange first experiences from one year of the agreement being in place. The EU-South Africa Economic Partnership Agreement [applies provisionally since 10 October 2016](#). The agreement, aiming to support development and foster regional integration, has already produced positive effects for exports in sectors such as flower production and fisheries. Commissioner **Malmström's** speeches, along with photo and video material, will be published [here](#). There is also information available about the EU-SADC agreement ([factsheet](#); [website](#)), [EU-SADC trade statistics](#) and examples of EU exports to South Africa ([1](#); [2](#)) (*For more information: Daniel Rosario – +32 229 56 185; Kinga Malinowska – +32 229 51 383*)

TRADE: Commission publishes report and text proposals following fifth negotiation round with Mexico

As part of its commitment to a more transparent trade policy the Commission today published a [report](#) summarising the progress made during the [latest negotiating round](#) for the EU-Mexico trade agreement held in the end of September in Brussels, as well as three text proposals submitted to Mexico ahead of the latest round. The proposals published today concern [wine and spirits](#), [motor vehicles](#) and the usual [exceptions](#) that can be invoked to restrict trade for instance for security or health reasons. The round report includes details on all areas of the negotiations, including trade in goods, services, investment and technical barriers to trade. The talks focused on the text proposals as well as on the market access offers on goods, services and public procurement exchanged in July. While some groups advanced more than others, overall the round brought a good progress. The sixth round will take place in Mexico City from 25 November to 1 December. The objective remains to reach an agreement by the end of the year. (*For more information: Daniel Rosario – +32 229 56 185; Kinga Malinowska – +32 229 51 383*)

Eurostat: Août 2017: Excédent de 16,1 milliards d'euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro – Déficit de 5,1 mrd d'euros pour l'UE28

D'après les premières estimations pour le mois d'août 2017, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 171,5 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 6,8% par rapport à août 2016 (160,6 mrd). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 155,4 mrd d'euros, en hausse de 8,6% par rapport à août 2016 (143,1 mrd). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en août 2017 un excédent de 16,1 mrd d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +17,5 mrd en août 2016. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 132,9 mrd d'euros en août 2017, soit +7,6% par rapport à août 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (*Pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Health in the Digital Society

Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, will participate in the [Health in the Digital Society conference](#) organised by the Estonian Presidency of the EU, in Tallinn on 17 October. He will present preliminary findings of the public consultation on a digital health and care policy paper to be adopted in the coming months. Ahead of the conference Vice-President **Ansip**, in charge of the Digital Single Market, Commissioner **Andriukaitis**, in charge of Health and Food Safety, and Commissioner **Gabriel**, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, said: *"It's clear that Europeans care about the innovation and digitisation of health care. We can all see the potential of digital solutions in the prevention and management of chronic diseases as well as in maintaining healthy lifestyles – which is why the Commission is committed to overcoming the existing barriers to the free movement of patients and data. If we want to protect people's wellbeing and modernise national health systems around Europe, we first need to share our experience and evidence. By focusing more on research and investment into digital health, we can help people to manage their own health and improve quality of life."* The public consultation, which ended on 12 October, drew more than 1500 replies and showed a broad support for health related actions in the Digital Single Market. More than 90% of respondents agree that citizens should be able to manage their own data. 80% agree that sharing health data can be beneficial. Nearly 60% report not having access to digital health services. More than 80% agree that citizen feedback to healthcare providers and professionals is essential to improve services. For more information see [IP/17/2085](#) and [full Statement by Commissioner Andriukaitis](#) (available as from 09:30 on 17 October) and [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Vice-President Katainen in Washington D.C.

Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, will visit Washington D.C., USA, from 16-17 October. The focus of his meetings with the US political and business leaders will be to reinforce EU-US trade relations and the importance of the multilateral trading system. During his visit, Vice-President **Katainen** will meet Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Director of the National Economic Council Gary Cohn, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde, Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank Kristalina Georgieva and Senator John Cornyn. He will deliver a keynote address at the [event](#) "Why Multilateral Trade Matters" organised by the Atlantic Council, participate in a working lunch with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and in a working dinner with high level experts and think tanks focusing on the global trade system. (For more information contact Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

EU to take part in ministerial dialogue ahead of UN climate talks [*16/10/17, 12:31 updated link]

Ahead of the next UN climate conference (COP23), Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** and Estonian Environment Minister Siim Kiisler will represent the EU and its Member States at a ministerial dialogue known as '[pre-COP](#)' in Nadi, Fiji, [on 17-18 October](#). The meeting is the final step in the preparations for [COP23](#), which will take place in Bonn, Germany, [on 6-17 November](#). Ministers will exchange views on countries' political priorities and expectations for COP23 and discuss key issues concerning the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"Fiji knows first-hand the effects of climate change and we look forward to its leadership as Presidency of COP23. At the conference next month, the international community will need to demonstrate its continued commitment to the Paris Agreement and make substantive progress on the work programme for its implementation."* The pre-COP meeting will prepare the ground for negotiations at COP23 on the work programme for implementing the Paris Agreement, which Parties have agreed to adopt by 2018. Ministers will also discuss the Facilitative Dialogue to be held next year to take stock of Parties' collective efforts towards the Agreement's goals. The inclusive and transparent consultations held by the current Moroccan and incoming Fijian COP Presidencies have been exemplary in the run-up to the pre-COP. More information on the Commission's [website](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioners Navracsics at the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's Innovation Forum in Budapest

Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics**, responsible for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, is today attending [INNOVEIT 2017](#), a two-day forum organised annually for Europe's leading innovators associated with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in Budapest. He will participate in a panel on shaping innovation in Europe before attending the [EIT Awards](#) ceremony where he will present the EIT Innovators Award – one of three prizes to be handed out on the day that recognise successful young entrepreneurs and innovators who have graduated from an EIT-labelled Master's programme or benefitted from business support through the EIT's Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The other awards are the EIT CHANGE Award and the EIT Venture Award. In addition, the audience will this year for the first time have the opportunity to award its own prize to one of the young innovators, the EIT Audience Award. The EIT's KICs create networks of businesses, educators, and research institutes that offer innovators financial support, legal advice, training and coaching, or office space. The innovations represented at the awards include coffee waste becoming sustainable ink, a plasma patch that kills drug-resistant bacteria in chronic wounds, a new blood test for early cancer diagnosis, old wooden furniture fuelling future cars, and technology providing high-speed internet connectivity during a flight. A web stream of the nominees showcasing their work (17.00-18.00 CET) can be followed [here](#), and the names of the winners will be available [here](#) as of Tuesday morning. More information on the EIT is available in this [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt –

Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel: +32 229 56 184; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

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