

[Armed robbers arrested in Italy and Germany](#)

9 October 2017

Today, in the very early hours of the morning, judicial and law enforcement authorities in Italy and Germany launched a joint operation (Operation LAST DAY) against an international gang of armed robbers, of Italian and Albanian origin. They are suspected of carrying out several heavily armed robberies in Italy, mostly against cash-in-transit (CIT) armoured vehicles or banks, and were also suspected of planning a major robbery in Germany.

Eighteen individuals were arrested and more than 30 premises were searched as a result of today's joint operations. This successful joint operation was the result of close coordination between the judicial and law enforcement authorities of Italy and Germany, with the support of Eurojust.

Eurojust organised two coordination meetings, in July and September 2017, during which the involved judicial and law enforcement authorities exchanged the results of their investigative activities and agreed on a common strategy to collect evidence and, at the same time, protect the public from the dangers of a possible armed action by the criminal group.

In preparation for today's joint operations, Eurojust assisted the judicial authorities of Italy and Germany in swiftly exchanging operational information collected on the ground and drafting several European Investigation Orders, one of the newest and most effective tools to enhance judicial cooperation in the fight against transnational organised crime and terrorism.

[Armed robbers arrested in Italy and Germany](#)

9 October 2017

Today, in the very early hours of the morning, judicial and law enforcement authorities in Italy and Germany launched a joint operation (Operation LAST DAY) against an international gang of armed robbers, of Italian and Albanian origin. They are suspected of carrying out several heavily armed robberies in Italy, mostly against cash-in-transit (CIT) armoured vehicles or banks, and were also suspected of planning a major robbery in Germany.

Eighteen individuals were arrested and more than 30 premises were searched as

a result of today's joint operations. This successful joint operation was the result of close coordination between the judicial and law enforcement authorities of Italy and Germany, with the support of Eurojust.

Eurojust organised two coordination meetings, in July and September 2017, during which the involved judicial and law enforcement authorities exchanged the results of their investigative activities and agreed on a common strategy to collect evidence and, at the same time, protect the public from the dangers of a possible armed action by the criminal group.

In preparation for today's joint operations, Eurojust assisted the judicial authorities of Italy and Germany in swiftly exchanging operational information collected on the ground and drafting several European Investigation Orders, one of the newest and most effective tools to enhance judicial cooperation in the fight against transnational organised crime and terrorism.

[ESMA highlights preparations for MiFID II and Brexit as key issues at ECON hearing](#)

MiFID II

In his statement Mr. Maijoor focused on ESMA work in preparation for the implementation of MiFID II:

“MIFID II implementation highlights that the single rulebook needs to be complemented by supervisory convergence measures. Therefore, in the past 12 months ESMA issued a large number of guidelines and Q&As – often in response to demands from market participants and National Competent Authorities (NCAs) – to ensure coherent and consistent application of the rules coming into force.

“A distinctive part of this convergence work relates to ESMA's efforts to strengthen consumer protection, which was clearly one of the main aims of the entire MiFID reform. In addition, ESMA has published specific Opinions on commodity position limits and pre-trade transparency waivers – which number in the hundreds. Finally, together with the NCAs we have set up complex IT systems for trade reporting to facilitate the technical delivery of the legal requirements.”

As well as the general readiness of regulators for the start date:

“I remain optimistic about our overall readiness to operate within the new framework in less than three months from now. However, one should not

underestimate the size and complexity of this project, and thus the risk of potential glitches in the initial operational period. ESMA does acknowledge the multiple challenges for everyone involved, and will address all issues with available tools as the implementation progresses.

“That said I would also like to draw your attention to resource constraints at ESMA’s end, which require some prioritisation of tasks and projects. One example of this is our recent agreement with NCAs to go-live with the new pre-trade transparency and position limits regimes as of January 2018, with certain ESMA Opinions to come only in the months afterwards, where necessary.”

UK withdrawal from the European Union

He also spoke about ESMA’s work on preparing for the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union:

“This brings me to some Brexit-focused considerations that I would like to share with you, given they relate to all of ESMA’s main activities. Let me start with saying that the reality of certain market participants needing to re-locate from the UK to the EU-27 in order to maintain Single Market access sparked some concerns about regulatory arbitrage between the EU-27 Member States in order to attract this business. A timely response was required, and ESMA used its currently available tools to react. We issued one general Opinion in May and three sector-specific ones in July for investment firms, secondary markets and asset management, and tackled key aspects of outsourcing and delegation to third countries. We relied strictly on existing EU legislation, and aimed at providing appropriate guidance to the NCAs, which are dealing with requests from re-locating entities. Moreover, in the interest of supervisory and regulatory convergence, ESMA launched the Supervisory Cooperation Network, offering a forum for NCAs to discuss individual relocation cases on an anonymous basis.

“Obviously, Brexit may pose significant financial stability risks, in particular in the event that the UK would leave without any arrangements in place. ESMA has been looking closely at the areas where a cliff-edge effect could mean higher risks for investors and markets as a whole, and, together with other relevant authorities, is working on possible mitigating actions. In addition, as a direct supervisor of Credit Rating Agencies and Trade Repositories within the EU, with a number of entities headquartered in London, ESMA requests appropriate contingency plans from individual supervised entities. ESMA will maintain an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to reduce as much as possible the risk of disruptions under any scenario.

3rd Country related issues

“Brexit also triggered broader political discussions, including in this Committee, as to whether the current 3rd country equivalence model is fit for purpose. ESMA has also recently commenced its work on reviewing its Guidelines for Endorsement of 3rd country Credit Rating Agencies. However, it is clear that some significant legislative changes need to be considered soon, potentially in a horizontal manner. The first steps have been made by

the European Commission in relation to the EMIR Regulation, and I welcome the proposal to assign certain supervisory powers over 3rd country CCPs to ESMA, in particular in relation to CCPs having a significant impact on the stability of the EU financial market.

“Also, the recent ESAs review proposal of the European Commission would not only require ESMA to monitor the equivalence-related developments on an ongoing basis, but also become the direct supervisor of certain key 3rd country benchmarks and prospectuses. In the same vein, assigning supervisory powers for ESMA towards non-EU trading venues could be considered, as suggested in ESMA’s consultation response from earlier this year. I believe that such a step to centralise the third country supervision would bring a number of benefits for the Union as a whole, and I would be delighted to have an opportunity to discuss this with you and other elements of the ESAs review proposal in the coming weeks and months.”

[Daily News 09 / 10 / 2017](#)

Avenir des finances de l’UE: le nouveau rapport Cohésion alimente la discussion sur les fonds européens après 2020

Aujourd’hui, la Commission publie le [7e rapport Cohésion](#), qui prend le pouls des régions européennes et donne le ton pour la future politique de Cohésion. En regardant notre Union à la loupe, l’on constate que, si l’économie européenne va mieux, des disparités persistent entre et dans nos États membres. Nos régions doivent surmonter de sérieuses difficultés: un taux de chômage qui reste élevé, notamment chez les jeunes, l’exode rurale dans nos campagnes, une pression accrue dans nos villes et un niveau d’investissement public qui reste bas, trop bas pour relever les défis identifiés dans le [document de réflexion](#) sur l’avenir des finances de l’UE; la révolution numérique, la mondialisation, les changements démographiques et la cohésion sociale, la convergence économique et le changement climatique. Le rapport n’anticipe pas la proposition finale de la Commission, mais il contribue à la discussion, en suggérant une politique à l’échelle de l’UE servant trois objectifs principaux: maîtriser la mondialisation, ne laisser personne sur la touche et soutenir les réformes structurelles. La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** et le Président du Comité des Régions Karl-Heinz Lambertz ont présenté le rapport Cohésion ce matin; retrouvez leurs interventions sur [EbS](#). Plus d’informations sont disponibles dans [ce communiqué de presse](#), ce [mémo](#), cette [fiche](#) sur le rapport Cohésion et cette [fiche](#) sur les investissements de la politique de Cohésion. (*Pour plus d’informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169*)

Preparation of the Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, 9-10 October 2017

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the

European Commission at today's Eurogroup and tomorrow's ECOFIN meetings. The Eurogroup agenda includes an exchange of views on the role of the [European Stability Mechanism](#) (ESM) in the context of the ongoing broader debate on the [future of the Economic and Monetary Union](#). The Commission, the European Central Bank and the European Stability Mechanism will inform ministers of the main findings of the sixth post-programme surveillance mission to Portugal. Ministers will take stock of recent exchange rate developments ahead of the annual meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund. There will also be a discussion on how best to finance labour tax cuts to boost jobs and growth. Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. At tomorrow's ECOFIN, ministers will discuss the issue of taxation of the digital economy following the [Commission's Communication](#) on the subject in September. The Commission will present its latest proposals for [far-reaching reform of the EU VAT system](#). The Council is also expected to formally adopt the [Commission's proposal to improve dispute resolution](#) on taxation issues for businesses and citizens in the EU. Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will participate in the press conference following the ECOFIN. *(For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)*

EU announces additional emergency aid to help refugees in Serbia

The European Commission has announced an additional €4 million in humanitarian aid for Serbia to assist the thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. Some €80 million has now been provided to the country in EU migration related funding since 2015. The new contracts come as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is currently on his fourth visit to the country where he is assessing the humanitarian situation on the ground and discussing the EU's humanitarian support for refugees with government officials, including Serbian President Mr Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister Ms Ana Brnabić. *"Serbia has been a reliable partner to the European Union, and our partnership has allowed an effective response to the refugee crisis. The EU has been a leading provider of humanitarian aid to the hosting of refugees in Serbia since 2015. We have helped improve conditions in many reception centres, contributed to food provision in camps, provided education in emergencies to children and helped providing health services. The additional projects announced today will address the needs of the most vulnerable population especially during the upcoming winter season"*, said Commissioner **Stylianides**. The new projects finance food distribution in reception centres, the protection of the most vulnerable affected populations in particular during the upcoming winter and education-related activities. Since 2015, the EU has been the largest contributor of emergency aid to Serbia. The Commission's humanitarian aid now stands at €25 million, and has enabled the provision of emergency assistance (food, water, hygiene, essential items, health and protection) at transit and reception points, including borders and waiting areas. Read the full press release [here](#). *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Plan d'investissement pour l'Europe: feu vert pour 4 projets en France, un

financement de 100 millions d'euros

Le plan d'investissement pour l'Europe – le «Plan Juncker» – s'est fait remarquer la semaine dernière en France avec [quatre projets](#) ayant reçu le feu vert pour un financement global de 100 millions d'euros. Les projets concernent des secteurs très divers, des sources d'énergie renouvelables à la cybersécurité. Chaque projet a bénéficié d'un financement de la Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) et est couvert par la garantie du Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques (FEIS), qui constitue le pilier du Plan Juncker. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire pour les affaires économiques et financières, la fiscalité et les douanes a dit ceci: *«La semaine dernière, le Plan Juncker a financé quatre projets hautement innovants en France pour un total de 100 millions d'euros. Des voitures à faibles émissions aux nouveaux systèmes de cybersécurité, de plus en plus de citoyens et d'entreprises en France ressentent de façon tangible l'impact positif du Plan Juncker. Chacun de ces projets est à haut risque, c'est pourquoi un soutien du Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques et de la Banque européenne d'investissement est si important pour les aider à démarrer.»* (Pour plus d'information sur les projets et les résultats du Plan Juncker, voir le site web ou contacter Vanessa Mock – Tél.: +32 229 56194; Siobhán Millbright – Tél.: +32 229 57361)

Commission received submission of 4th successful European Citizens' Initiative [originally published on Friday 6/10]

The European Commission officially received on Friday 6 October the submission of the 4th successful European Citizens' Initiative. By supporting the ['Stop Glyphosate'](#) European Citizens' Initiative, over 1 million citizens from at least 7 Member States have called on the European Commission *“to propose to Member States a ban on glyphosate, to reform the pesticide approval procedure, and to set EU-wide mandatory reduction targets for pesticide use”*. A total of 1,070,865 statements of support have been received from 22 Member States so far, and have been checked and validated by national authorities. The European Commission will now invite the organisers within the next 3 months to present their ideas in more depth. A public hearing will be arranged in the European Parliament to allow all stakeholders to present their views, and then the Commission will decide whether to act by proposing legislation, act in some other way to achieve the goals of the Initiative, or not act at all; all three options are possible under Article 11(4) of the Treaty of the European Union. After having listened to stakeholders, the Commission will present a Communication explaining its reasoning. The [European Citizens' Initiative](#) is a valuable tool in the hands of citizens and allows them to contribute to shaping EU law and policy. The Commission recently presented a [proposal](#) to modify the Citizens' Initiative Regulation, to make the tool even more accessible to citizens and to encourage its wider use. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – +32 229 58602)

EU approves €200 million disbursement in Macro-Financial Assistance to Tunisia

The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, has today approved the

disbursement of a €200 million loan to Tunisia. This disbursement marks the launch of the second [Macro-Financial Assistance](#) (MFA-II) programme to [Tunisia](#). A total of €500 million will be disbursed in three instalments in 2017 and 2018. The second Macro-Financial Assistance programme was proposed following the terrorist attacks of 2015, which contributed to halting Tunisia's economic recovery. This had a significant impact on the country's balance of payments position and financing needs. The programme was agreed by the Council and the European Parliament on 6 July 2016. **Pierre Moscovici, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs**, said: *"Today's disbursement to Tunisia is proof of our strong commitment to support the successful economic recovery of one of our closest neighbours. With a renewed sense of urgency, Tunisia has reaffirmed its dedication to an effective partnership. The EU stands firmly with Tunisia in achieving prosperity for all of its people."* A full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Making young voices heard ahead of the African Union-European Union Summit

In the run up to the AU-EU Summit in November in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 120 young representatives from Africa and Europe will participate in the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit on 9-11 October. These young representatives have been selected out of more than 7500 applicants, to discuss a variety of relevant issues, including: education, peace & security, climate & environment, business & job creation, political inclusion and culture. They will also develop a declaration with concrete recommendations to the Heads of State and Government, who will then gather in November for the AU-EU Summit under the overarching theme "Investing in Youth". This preceding Youth Summit aims to ensure a meaningful and strengthened inclusion of young people in the run up to and at the Summit. A follow-up group of 36 youth selected for the [AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative](#) will continue the work until the AU-EU Summit in November. High Representative/Vice President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"We have a responsibility to listen to young people, but also to create new pathways for them to get involved. Because we cannot find the right answers to young people's needs without involving them. Working for them is not enough. We must work with them."* Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** added: *"Africa is the youngest continent of the world, with 60% of its population aged under 25. With "Youth" being the main focus of this year's AU-EU summit we want to inject a youth perspective in the intercontinental dialogue. Their contributions are central, when discussing about a future that belongs to them"*. More information on the 4th Africa –Europe Youth Summit [online](#). Join the conversation through: #AUEUyouth & #UAUEjeunesse (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections concerning access to bank account information by competing services

The European Commission can confirm that on 3 October 2017 its officials carried out unannounced inspections in a few Member States concerning online

access to bank account information by competing service providers. The Commission has concerns that the companies involved and/or the associations representing them may have engaged in anti-competitive practices in breach of EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices and/or abuse of dominant market positions (Articles 101 and 102 respectively of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step into suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies or their associations are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation. A statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Avramopoulos in Ljubljana

EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in Ljubljana, Slovenia, tomorrow where he will meet with Prime Minister Miro Cerar and Minister of Interior Vesna Györkös Žnidar. Discussions will focus on cooperation on migration, border management and security. A joint press conference with Minister Györkös Žnidar will take place around 11:25 CET and will be available on [EBS](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456 ; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

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

[ESMA highlights preparations for MiFID II and Brexit as key issues at ECON hearing](#)

MiFID II

In his statement Mr. Maijoor focused on ESMA work in preparation for the implementation of MiFID II:

“MIFID II implementation highlights that the single rulebook needs to be complemented by supervisory convergence measures. Therefore, in the past 12 months ESMA issued a large number of guidelines and Q&As – often in response to demands from market participants and National Competent Authorities (NCAs) – to ensure coherent and consistent application of the rules coming into force.

“A distinctive part of this convergence work relates to ESMA’s efforts to

strengthen consumer protection, which was clearly one of the main aims of the entire MiFID reform. In addition, ESMA has published specific Opinions on commodity position limits and pre-trade transparency waivers – which number in the hundreds. Finally, together with the NCAs we have set up complex IT systems for trade reporting to facilitate the technical delivery of the legal requirements.”

As well as the general readiness of regulators for the start date:

“I remain optimistic about our overall readiness to operate within the new framework in less than three months from now. However, one should not underestimate the size and complexity of this project, and thus the risk of potential glitches in the initial operational period. ESMA does acknowledge the multiple challenges for everyone involved, and will address all issues with available tools as the implementation progresses.

“That said I would also like to draw your attention to resource constraints at ESMA’s end, which require some prioritisation of tasks and projects. One example of this is our recent agreement with NCAs to go-live with the new pre-trade transparency and position limits regimes as of January 2018, with certain ESMA Opinions to come only in the months afterwards, where necessary.”

UK withdrawal from the European Union

He also spoke about ESMA’s work on preparing for the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union:

“This brings me to some Brexit-focused considerations that I would like to share with you, given they relate to all of ESMA’s main activities. Let me start with saying that the reality of certain market participants needing to re-locate from the UK to the EU-27 in order to maintain Single Market access sparked some concerns about regulatory arbitrage between the EU-27 Member States in order to attract this business. A timely response was required, and ESMA used its currently available tools to react. We issued one general Opinion in May and three sector-specific ones in July for investment firms, secondary markets and asset management, and tackled key aspects of outsourcing and delegation to third countries. We relied strictly on existing EU legislation, and aimed at providing appropriate guidance to the NCAs, which are dealing with requests from re-locating entities. Moreover, in the interest of supervisory and regulatory convergence, ESMA launched the Supervisory Cooperation Network, offering a forum for NCAs to discuss individual relocation cases on an anonymous basis.

“Obviously, Brexit may pose significant financial stability risks, in particular in the event that the UK would leave without any arrangements in place. ESMA has been looking closely at the areas where a cliff-edge effect could mean higher risks for investors and markets as a whole, and, together with other relevant authorities, is working on possible mitigating actions. In addition, as a direct supervisor of Credit Rating Agencies and Trade Repositories within the EU, with a number of entities headquartered in London, ESMA requests appropriate contingency plans from individual

supervised entities. ESMA will maintain an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to reduce as much as possible the risk of disruptions under any scenario.

3rd Country related issues

“Brexit also triggered broader political discussions, including in this Committee, as to whether the current 3rd country equivalence model is fit for purpose. ESMA has also recently commenced its work on reviewing its Guidelines for Endorsement of 3rd country Credit Rating Agencies. However, it is clear that some significant legislative changes need to be considered soon, potentially in a horizontal manner. The first steps have been made by the European Commission in relation to the EMIR Regulation, and I welcome the proposal to assign certain supervisory powers over 3rd country CCPs to ESMA, in particular in relation to CCPs having a significant impact on the stability of the EU financial market.

“Also, the recent ESAs review proposal of the European Commission would not only require ESMA to monitor the equivalence-related developments on an ongoing basis, but also become the direct supervisor of certain key 3rd country benchmarks and prospectuses. In the same vein, assigning supervisory powers for ESMA towards non-EU trading venues could be considered, as suggested in ESMA’s consultation response from earlier this year. I believe that such a step to centralise the third country supervision would bring a number of benefits for the Union as a whole, and I would be delighted to have an opportunity to discuss this with you and other elements of the ESAs review proposal in the coming weeks and months.”