

# EU strengthens its Syria crisis response through additional funding to UNICEF

The additional EU funding was signed today by EU Commissioner Johannes Hahn and UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. This latest contribution brings the total funding from the EU Trust Fund for UNICEF's work on the Syria crisis response to nearly €200 million.

As families around the world prepare for the return to school, the European Union (EU) has renewed its commitment to get children affected by the war in Syria into education. This €90 million support is provided by the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis and will enable UNICEF to provide critical education and protection services to Syrian refugee and host community children in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, so that they can attend school and learn.

*"I cannot stress enough the importance of promoting and providing access to quality education for children and young people in all countries affected by the Syrian crisis", said Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations during the signing ceremony. "This is about creating hope, and doing what we can to ensure there is no 'lost generation'. Thanks to our EU-UNICEF cooperation children in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are able to go to school and have access to safe spaces for non-formal education, protection and psycho-social care".*

With the conflict now in its seventh year, around 2 million children from Syria live as refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, adding pressure on already stretched host communities and their administrations.

In line with commitments made in donor conferences for Syria over the past six years, most recently the Brussels Conference in April 2017, the EU and UNICEF are investing in the future of Syria and the region: their children.

## **Background**

Since its establishment in December 2014, an increasing share of the EU's resilience support to help countries neighbouring Syria is provided through the [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis](#). The Trust Fund reinforces the integrated EU aid response to the crisis. It primarily addresses longer term resilience and early recovery needs of Syrian refugees and overstretched host communities and their administrations in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. An important added value of the EU Trust Fund is its support for both refugee and host communities affected by this protracted crisis.

The current overall volume of the EU Trust Fund is €1.3 billion, with contributions from 22 Member States, the EU and Turkey. A total of €1 billion

has been allocated to concrete assistance programmes for refugees and host communities in the region. These programmes support basic education and child protection, training and higher education, better access to healthcare, improved water and waste-water infrastructure, as well as support to resilience, economic opportunities and social inclusion.

#### **For More Information**

[EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

[Factsheet: EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#)

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## **Daily News 19 / 09 / 2017**

### **State of the Union 2017: Commission scales up its response to cyber-attacks and proposes a framework for the free flow of non-personal data in the EU**

The European Commission and the High Representative are proposing today a [wide-ranging set of measures to step up the EU's cybersecurity capacity](#), including tools to ensure that Europe is better equipped to deal with cyber-attacks. As well as a proposal for a strong EU Cybersecurity Agency, the European Commission and the High Representative are proposing a new European certification scheme that will ensure that products and services in the digital world are cyber secure, as well as measures to combat fraud and the counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment. On 13 September 2017, in his annual [State of the Union Address](#), President Jean-Claude **Juncker** stated: *"In the past three years, we have made progress in keeping Europeans safe online. But Europe is still not well equipped when it comes to cyber-attacks. This is why [...] the Commission is proposing new tools, including a European Cybersecurity Agency, to help defend us against such attacks."* To unlock the full potential of the EU data economy, the Commission is additionally proposing [a new set of rules to govern the free flow of non-personal data in the EU](#). Together with the already existing rules for personal data, the new measures will enable the storage and processing of non-personal data across the Union to boost the competitiveness of European businesses and to modernise public services in an effective EU single market for data services. Details on the cybersecurity initiatives are available in the [press release](#), [questions and answers](#), an [overview factsheet](#) as well as the factsheets on [the European Union Cybersecurity Agency](#) and on [non-cash payment fraud](#). Further information on the free flow of non-personal data can be found in the [press release](#), [questions and answers](#) and [factsheet](#). Watch the press conference live on [EbS](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615)

**European Union signs €200 million assistance programme with Jordan**

Jordan will receive further [Macro-Financial Assistance \(MFA\) from the European Union](#). Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, on behalf of the EU, has signed the agreement for a second [Macro-Financial Assistance \(MFA\) programme with Jordan](#), worth €200 million. This macro-financial assistance is the second programme Jordan receives following [€180 million approved in 2013 and fully disbursed in 2015](#). It is part of the EU's comprehensive effort to help Jordan mitigate the economic and social impact from regional conflicts and the presence of a large number of Syrian refugees, as confirmed during the [Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region in April 2017](#) and the [EU-Jordan Association Council](#) in July 2017. The €200 million programme, in the form of medium-term loans at favourable financing conditions, will help Jordan cover its external financing needs in 2017 and 2018, support reform measures in the areas of public finance management and taxation, promote investments and exports, strengthen the country's social safety net, and foster job creation. Commissioner **Moscovici** said: *"Jordan's economy and public finances have been strongly affected by the war in Syria and the protracted refugee crisis. The European Union stands by Jordan in these very difficult times. The agreement signed today provides further important support for Jordan's efforts to preserve macroeconomic stability and reform its economy."* (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

### **As a joint initiative with the EU, International Alliance for Torture-Free Trade is launched**

The International Alliance for Torture-Free Trade was launched on Monday during the United Nations General Assembly ministerial week in New York. The initiative – a joint effort by the European Union, Argentina and Mongolia, with a total of 58 participating countries – aims to stop the trade in goods used to carry out the death penalty and commit torture. *"These products serve no other purpose than inflicting terrible pain and killing people. Now we are taking concrete action to shut down this despicable trade. I am thrilled that so many countries around the globe have signed up to the joint Declaration and joined this Alliance. By standing together, we demonstrate that we will not tolerate this trade any longer,"* said Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström**. More information [here](#) and at <http://torturefreetrade.org> (For more information: Daniel Rosário – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska- Tel.: +32 229 51383; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

### **EU at UN General Assembly: Full day of activities**

On the first full day of events and bilateral meetings at the 72<sup>nd</sup> UN General Assembly ministerial week on Monday in New York, First Vice-President **Timmermans** addressed the World Economic Forum Sustainable Development Impact Summit, highlighting the importance of education, as well as the [high-level launch event of the Equal Pay International Coalition](#), where he underlined the need of empowering women through education and ensuring undifferentiated treatment of girls and boys from birth. He further had an [interactive](#)

[discussion on democracy and media at Columbia University](#). High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** took part in the ministerial meeting of the like-minded group on Syria, hosted by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. She also attended a high level meeting on the G5 Sahel, organised by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, and [spoke at the Ad-hoc Liaison Committee for Palestine](#) together with Commissioner Johannes **Hahn**. She chaired an [informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers](#) who were joined by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Libya Ghassan Salamé; Commissioner Hahn also participated. Commissioner Neven **Mimica** hosted a meeting of the Scaling up Nutrition Movement Lead Group and addressed the UN Private Sector Forum 2017 on the financing of the 2030 Agenda. Commissioner Chrystos **Stylianides** delivered a [speech on Hurricane Irma](#) and spoke at an event on [Rebuilding Shattered Lives and Communities: Chibok and Yazidi Girls and Women](#), where he pointed out that women and girls are the most vulnerable people in conflicts and crises. As the leader of the global initiative on gender-based violence protection, the EU is dedicating more than €200 million per year in humanitarian aid to related healthcare. Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos** underlined the important need for a global approach on cybersecurity at a high-level event on [the role and responsibilities of private actors in strengthening the stability and international security of cyberspace](#). The EU's agenda at #UNGA on Tuesday will be dominated by further multilateral and a high number of bilateral meetings as well as the annual EU event, this year dedicated to the [Erasmus programme](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

### **Agriculture: la Commission fournit un soutien financier aux éleveurs polonais de porcs touchés par la peste porcine africaine**

La Commission européenne fournira €9,3 millions de fonds européens pour venir en aide aux éleveurs polonais de porcs qui pourraient être amenés à arrêter leur production dans le contexte de la peste porcine africaine. La [décision de la Commission](#) concerne plus précisément les agriculteurs polonais qui ont au maximum 50 porcs et/ou porcelets et qui sont situés dans des zones à haut risque pour cette maladie, qui est la plus contagieuse qui soit pour les cochons. La peste porcine africaine est présente dans la région frontalière de l'est de l'UE depuis 2014. Afin de contrôler la maladie et d'éviter l'apparition de nouveaux foyers, des restrictions sanitaires strictes ont été mises en place au niveau européen. Les autorités polonaises ont introduit des exigences supplémentaires dans les zones les plus à risques. Les éleveurs devront envoyer une demande pour l'aide européenne, qui sera versée d'ici 12 mois à partir d'aujourd'hui. Le soutien financier pour les agriculteurs polonais provient du budget de la Politique Agricole Commune (PAC) et tombe sous le champ d'application de [l'organisation commune des marchés agricoles](#). Ces règles autorisent la Commission à proposer des mesures temporaires de soutien (pour une durée maximum de 12 mois) à n'importe quel secteur agricole qui serait dans une situation à même de causer " une détérioration rapide de la production et des conditions de marché". C'est la première fois que ces dispositions sont mises en œuvre depuis l'adoption de la réforme de la PAC en 2013. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [en ligne](#). (Pour plus

*d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)*

### **State aid: Commission approves alternative to divestment commitment for Royal Bank of Scotland**

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules the alternative package proposed by the UK authorities to replace the commitment for Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) to divest Williams & Glyn. Today's decision follows the agreement in principle reached [on 26 July 2017](#) between Commissioner Vestager and the UK Government. The commitment to divest Williams & Glyn was made by the UK authorities as part of RBS's restructuring plan submitted [in 2009](#) and amended [in 2014](#), to remedy competition concerns in the concentrated UK SME banking sector, where RBS is the leading bank. During the Commission's [in-depth investigation](#), the UK authorities proposed amendments to their original package to take into account some of the comments made by interested parties on the package. The Commission's investigation concluded that the improved package is sufficient to replace the divestment commitment and will increase competition in the UK SME banking market. A full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#) and [DE](#). (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889*)

### **State aid: Commission approves Belgium's and France's plan to convert their Dexia preference shares into ordinary shares**

The European Commission has approved under EU State aid rules a plan notified by Belgium and France to convert their existing preference shares of Dexia into ordinary shares. Dexia is a bank in liquidation since 2012, and is exiting the market and not competing for new business. It is however still subject to regulatory capital requirements. The objective of this conversion is to enable Dexia to comply with the request from the European Central Bank to maintain Dexia's capital ratios above their regulatory thresholds, as the preference shares will lose their Common Equity Tier 1 status on 1 January 2018. In 2012, [Belgium and France provided significant state support](#) for the liquidation of the Dexia group, with full burden-sharing of existing ordinary shareholders to limit the amount of State aid. The preferential shares served to ensure that the two States were repaid before the existing ordinary shareholders, in case the liquidation would result in a profit. The Commission found that the conversion plan incorporates elements such as new preferential rights for Belgium and France and a dilution of ordinary shareholders. This will ensure that future wind down proceeds will still in the first place go to the two States and preserve the full burden sharing of ordinary shareholders. In particular, the conversion plan sufficiently ensures there is no undue benefit to ordinary shareholders at the expense of taxpayers. On this basis, the Commission has approved this conversion plan under EU State aid rules. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#), under the case number SA.49039. (*For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889*)

## **Mergers: Commission clears joint venture by Aunde and Bader in the automotive sector**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by AUNDE Achter & Ebels GmbH, part of the Aunde Group (“Aunde”) and Bader Holding GmbH, part of the Bader Group (“Bader”), both of Germany. Aunde designs, manufactures and supplies yarns, technical textiles, seat covers, technical springs, complete seats, foam parts, interior and composite components for original equipment manufacturers in the automotive sector under the Aunde, Isringhausen and Fehrer brands. Bader produces leather that can be used for seat covers and other interior part of a vehicle. The joint venture will manufacture and supply textile and/or leather seat covers for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles to original equipment manufacturers, primarily in the European Economic Area (EEA). The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the limited activities of the joint venture in the EEA. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8559](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition over logistic assets of Logikor by CIC**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the indirect acquisition of sole control over companies and assets comprising the Logikor business (“Logikor”) of the UK by China Investment Corporation (“CIC”). Logikor owns and operates logistics warehouse assets across the EU. CIC is a Chinese sovereign wealth fund established as a vehicle to diversify China’s foreign exchange holdings and seek maximum returns for the state within acceptable risk tolerance. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of its limited impact on the market structure. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission’s [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8554](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

## **Eurostat clarifies how to record energy performance contracts in national accounts**

Eurostat, the [Statistical Office of the European Commission](#), has published today an updated guidance note on the recording of energy performance contracts (EPCs) in government accounts. The revised guidance note clarifies the accounting rules applied to the treatment of energy performance contracts. It note follows up on the work already undertaken by Eurostat to clarify the accounting rules for various types of public investment, including the [Guide to the Statistical Treatment of Public Private Partnerships](#) published last year. Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, and responsible for

Eurostat, said: "Europe needs investments. With this guidance we show how public authorities can invest in full respect of the principles of public accounting, now also in the energy sector. Facilitating investments in energy efficiency measures has also an important social function, as public buildings such as social housing facilities will benefit from it too." Miguel **Arias Cañete**, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy said: "Energy efficiency first: from words to action. Thanks to the revised guidance published today, it will be easier for schools, hospitals, and other public buildings – which make up more than 10% of the overall EU building stock – to invest for the purpose of improving energy efficiency. Energy efficiency measures are also an important means to combat energy poverty, which this Commission aims at tackling at the roots." Energy performance contracts in the public sector offer a practical solution to make public buildings and other public infrastructures more energy efficient, as the initial investment can be covered by a private partner and repaid by guaranteed energy savings. However, frequently this type of contract simultaneously contains elements of a rental, service, lease, purchase or loan agreement, making its recording complex. At the request of Member States, Eurostat has worked with National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to reflect on the most appropriate recording of EPCs in government accounts, resulting in the guidance note published today. More information can be found in a [press release](#) and [memo](#) online. The guidance note is available to download [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

### **Eurostat: Juillet 2017 comparé à juin 2017: La production dans le secteur de la construction en hausse de 0,2% dans la zone euro, en hausse de 0,5% dans l'UE28**

En juillet 2017 par rapport à juin 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction, corrigée des variations saisonnières, a augmenté de 0,2% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,5% dans l'UE28, selon les premières estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En juin 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction avait augmenté de 0,2% dans la zone euro et de 0,3% dans l'UE28. En juillet 2017 par rapport à juillet 2016, la production dans le secteur de la construction a progressé de 3,4% dans la zone euro et de 3,6% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Vice-President Šefčovič in Estonia for Energy Union Tour visit**

From 19-21 September, Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** will be visiting Estonia for the second Energy Union Tour. During his visit, he will meet Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas, Minister for the Environment Siim Kiisler, as well as Speaker of the Parliament Eiki Nestor and others. Their discussions will centre around the work of the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU related to the Energy Union, including the progress on a number of legislative proposals, such as those under the Commission's ['Clean](#)

[Energy for All Europeans](#)’ package. In addition, Vice-President Šefčovič will chair a joint session of energy and transport ministers during their [informal meeting](#) on 20-21 September. He will also attend a high-level conference on [‘Europe’s Future Electricity Market](#)’, with the focus on the governance of the Energy Union. A meeting with energy industry leaders, an interactive discussion with students of the Tallinn University of Technology and the [Connecting Europe Conference](#) are also on the agenda of the Vice-President. Ahead of his visit, Vice-President Šefčovič said: *“I am confident that the Estonian Presidency will make a significant contribution to the progress of our legislative proposals in the area of clean energy that will enable us to deliver our Energy Union objectives. This is in line with the joint declaration by the Parliament, Council and Commission that highlighted the Energy Union and climate change policy as key priorities for 2017.”* He added: *“I also congratulate Estonia on its recent publication of Climate Policy Guidelines for 2050, in which it commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% and sets out the measures required to achieve this. Its efforts will help the EU as a whole reach its ambitious climate and energy targets”*. Upcoming dates and more information on the 2017 Energy Union tour are available [here](#). More information on the Energy Union is available [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.:+32 229 52589)

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

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## [\*\*Press release: EU must cut emissions and also adapt to climate change, warn Auditors\*\*](#)

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## [\*\*Pressemitteilung: Die Prüfer weisen darauf hin, dass die EU ihre Emissionen verringern und sich zudem an den Klimawandel anpassen muss\*\*](#)

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Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, and responsible for Eurostat, said: *“Europe needs investments. With this guidance we show how public authorities can invest in full respect of the principles of public accounting, now also in the energy sector. Facilitating investments in energy efficiency measures has also an important social function, as public buildings such as social housing facilities will benefit from it too.”*

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Energy performance contracts in the public sector offer a practical solution to make public buildings and other public infrastructures more energy efficient, as the initial investment can be covered by a private partner and repaid by guaranteed energy savings. However, frequently this type of contract simultaneously contains elements of a rental, service, lease, purchase or loan agreement, making its recording complex. At the request of Member States, Eurostat has worked with National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to reflect on the most appropriate recording of EPCs in government accounts, resulting in the guidance note published today.

The guidance note is available to download [here](#).

### **Background**

In November 2016 the European Commission put forward the [“Clean Energy for All Europeans”](#) package aiming to keep the European Union competitive as the clean energy transition is changing global energy markets. Central elements of this package were ambitious proposals on energy efficiency as our first fuel. Energy efficiency reduces energy bills and the dependency on imports, while creating local jobs. But it also requires significant upfront

investment, particularly with regards to the refurbishment of buildings. Energy performance contracts (EPCs) can help the building sector increase the necessary investments in the context of increasing private investor interest and fast developing expertise.

The Eurostat guidance note published today on the accounting treatment of EPCs significantly increases the possibilities for public bodies to use such contracts, by including and clarifying the circumstance in which these contracts can be recorded off government balance sheets. In this way, the updated guidance paper is also in line with the third pillar of the Juncker Plan, which aims at removing regulatory barriers to investment. It also paves the way for the development of a stronger market of EPC providers, involving many SMEs. According to data collected by European PPP Expertise Centre (EPEC), over the last five years 345 new public-private partnership projects concerning energy performance were signed in 16 EU Member States, for the total value of over €65 billion.

The updated guidance note will help Member States' National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to better understand the impact energy efficiency investments have on government balance sheets. The note provides guidance to statisticians regarding the interpretation of certain ESA 2010 provisions – the European System of Accounts – in the case of EPCs, more specifically those EPCs which require an initial capital expenditure to improve the energy efficiency of a facility. EPCs where the energy efficiency is obtained through energy management measures, without any investment in equipment addition or renewal, are treated as simple service or maintenance contracts. This revised guidance is applied in cases where the EPC-contractor can be considered as the economic owner of the asset.

Technical assistance facilities like the European Investment Advisory Hub set-up by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Commission will use this guidance note to assist in any potential request. The note will be backed up by a Practitioner's Guide jointly produced by Eurostat and the European PPP Expertise Centre (EPEC) of the EIB, which will be published by the end of the year.

**Eurostat** is the Directorate-General of the European Commission providing statistical information to the institutions of the European Union (EU) and promoting the harmonisation of statistical methods across its member states. The organisations in the different countries which actively cooperate with Eurostat are summarised under the concept of the European Statistical System.

#### **For more information**

[MEMO: Eurostat clarifies how to record energy performance contracts in national accounts – Questions and Answers](#)

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