

EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a s

The EU has played a leading role in the process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. It is now determined to take the lead in its implementation.

The conclusions adopted by the Council today reiterate the strong commitment of the EU and its member states to implement in full the 2030 Agenda and accomplish the 17 SDGs. The conclusions set out the EU's response to the 2030 Agenda and its approach to how it is implemented at EU level. They cover next steps, the means and resources required, how multilateral stakeholders can be involved, and measures on future monitoring and review.

The conclusions underline the importance of achieving sustainable development across the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), in a balanced and integrated way. It is vital that sustainable development is mainstreamed into all policy areas, and that the EU is ambitious in the policies it uses to address global challenges.

The Council calls on the Commission to set out by mid-2018 an implementation strategy with timelines, objectives and concrete measures to implement the 2030 Agenda in all EU policies. The Commission should also identify by mid-2018 gaps where the EU needs to do more by 2030 in the areas of policy, legislation, governance structures for horizontal coherence and implementation.

The EU calls on other UN member states and all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

More needs to be done to promote the 2030 Agenda. In its conclusions the Council emphasises the lack of public engagement and calls for action to raise awareness among EU citizens.

Background

The conclusions are based on the recent Commission communication on the 'next steps for a sustainable European future' presented in November 2016, which links the sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda to the EU policy framework and the Commission's priorities. It provides an insight into where the EU stands on addressing the sustainable development goals and identifies the most relevant sustainability gaps and concerns.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 'Transforming our World' was

adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit (New York, 25-27 September 2015). It includes a set of global sustainable development goals that replaced the millennium development goals as from 1 January 2016.

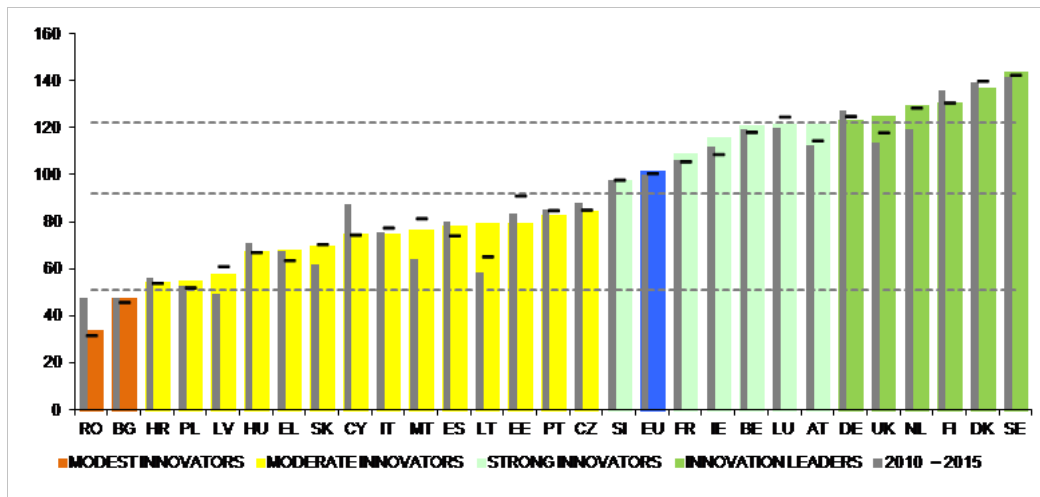
The 2030 Agenda responds to global challenges by addressing poverty eradication and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a comprehensive way. The 17 new sustainable development goals and the 169 associated targets cover key areas such as poverty, human rights, food security, health, sustainable consumption and production, growth, employment, infrastructure, sustainable management of natural resources, oceans, climate change and gender equality.

EU innovation: some improvements but more even progress is needed

This is one of the main findings of the latest Innovation Scoreboard published today by the European Commission. Overall, innovation performance has improved in 15 countries, though large differences exist between these Member States. Sweden remains the innovation leader while Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and UK are the fastest growing innovators. In a global perspective, the EU is catching up with Canada and the US, but South Korea and Japan are pulling ahead. China shows the fastest progress among international competitors.

Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *“EU industry continues to innovate, but we are still lagging behind global innovation leaders. In times of globalisation and rapid technology changes, innovation remains essential for the prosperity of our citizens and the wider European economy. The Commission’s Start-up and Scale-up Initiative and New Skills Agenda aim to further improve an ecosystem for innovation to thrive.”*

Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *“The Scoreboard shows that still more can be done to improve research and innovation performance. That’s why we’re gearing up support to breakthrough innovators through the pilot European Innovation Council under the EU’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation framework programme.”*



European Innovation Scoreboard 2017 country ranking

Axis Y: innovation performance in 2016 (coloured columns), 2015 (horizontal hypthens) and 2010 (grey columns) relative to EU average in 2010 – aggregate of 27 indicators

Axis X: EU countries

The 2017 EU Innovation Scoreboard, which is accompanied also by the Regional Innovation Scoreboard shows that:

- **Sweden** is once more the EU **innovation leader**, followed by Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom –for the first time an innovation leader- and Germany.
- In selected areas of innovation, the EU leaders are: **Denmark** – human resources and innovation-friendly environment; **Luxembourg** – attractive research systems and intellectual assets; **Finland** – finance and support; **Germany** – firm investments; **Ireland** – innovation in SMEs and employment impacts; **Belgium** – innovation linkages and collaboration; **United Kingdom** – sales effects.
- **Regional innovative hubs** exist also in moderate innovator countries, as shown by the Regional Innovation Scoreboard: *Prague in the Czech Republic, Bratislava in Slovakia, and the Basque Country in Spain.*
- Innovation **performance has improved most** in the area of international co-publications, broadband penetration, the number of university graduates and doctorates, and ICT training.
- Venture capital investments and the share of SMEs introducing innovations have been in **strong decline**.
- Over the next two years, innovation performance is **expected to increase** by 2%.

The 2017 edition of the Scoreboard uses a refined methodology, which better captures investments in skills, digital readiness, entrepreneurship, and public-private innovation partnerships. To allow performance to be tracked over time, the new methodology has also been applied to data from previous years (see comparison in graph above). The Scoreboard also includes guidance to improve the analyses and comparisons of structural differences between countries and regions.

Background

The annual European Innovation Scoreboard provides a comparative assessment of the research and innovation performance of the EU countries and selected third countries. An [interactive online tool](#) allows for custom comparisons of performance scores.

The Regional Innovation Scoreboard assesses the innovation performance of European regions. It replicates the methodology of the European Innovation Scoreboard to the extent possible in terms of data availability.

More information

[Daily News 20 / 06 / 2017](#)

Integration: New Skills Profile tool to help non-EU nationals enter the labour market

On the occasion of the [World Refugee Day](#), the European Commission is today releasing the [‘EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals’](#). It is an off – and online web editor that will make it possible for non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications, and experiences in a way that is well understood by employers, education and training providers and organisations working with migrants across the whole European Union. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: *“In today’s world of work we need everyone to be able to fully use their skills in our labour markets. The talents of non-EU nationals cannot be wasted. Our ‘Skills Profile Tool’ will facilitate their pathway towards work. It will also allow national administrations to have a clear understanding of their skills and qualifications. This is a win-win for all.”* Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, said: *“Migrants come with their own experience, talents and skills that can be real assets for our economies and societies. Successful integration is key if we want to turn migration into an opportunity for everyone involved. Our ‘Skills Profile’ will shorten the journey for newly arrived non-EU nationals to employment by making their individual skills sets visible.”* The Skills Profile Tool will be a first instrument for reception centres, integration services, public employment services and other organisations offering services to non-EU nationals to make sure their skills and education are recognised, and to further guide them to training, education or employment. In addition to giving an overview of a non-EU national’s skills profile – comparable with a CV – the tool helps migration organisations to identify individuals’ specific needs for integration into the labour market. Ultimately this will simplify the process of matching jobseekers to vacancies. The Skills Profile Tool is part of one of the ten actions defined under the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#). Commissioners **Thyssen** and **Avramopoulos** will give a press statement to present the tool around 12:30 today, which can be followed live on [EBS](#). More information can be found in

the [press release](#) and [memo](#) online. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Juncker Plan: More than EUR 200 billion in investments set to be triggered; changes enhance accessibility of European Investment Project Portal

Following last week's meeting of the European Investment Bank's (EIB) Board of Directors, the [Juncker Plan](#) is now expected to trigger EUR 209 billion in investments across all 28 Member States. This represents two-thirds of the original EUR 315 billion target of total investments to be mobilised by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The operations approved under the EFSI now represent a total financing volume of just under EUR 39 billion. Vice-President **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"These latest numbers clearly demonstrate that the European Fund for Strategic Investments continues to deliver an important boost to investment, jobs and growth across Europe. With EUR 209 billion in investments now set to mobilised, we have reached an important milestone of two-thirds of our original EUR 315 billion target. I look forward to continuing to work with the European Parliament and Member States to ensure swift adoption of the EFSI 2.0 proposal in order to ensure that we can guarantee the EFSI's continued success.* Given its continued success, President **Juncker** has made it clear that the [proposal to extend and reinforce the EFSI](#) (the so-called "EFSI 2.0") is among the Commission's top legislative priorities. The Juncker Plan also aims to enhance the visibility of investment projects. To this end, the [European Investment Project Portal](#) (EIPP) acts as a match-making platform to connect project promoters with investors. In order to make it even easier for project promoters to highlight investment opportunities, the EIPP has now reduced the threshold for eligible projects from EUR 5 million to EUR 1 million and withdrawn the registration fee required to upload projects. (For more information: Annika Bredthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

The EU Cohesion Policy invests in the industrial modernisation of the Portuguese region of Alentejo

€23.5 million from [the European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) is invested in the upgrade of the production facilities of aviation manufacturer Embraer Portugal, established in the city of Évora, in the region of Alentejo. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, is currently in Portugal. Commenting on this project, he said: *"This project is an excellent demonstration of how EU-supported investments can promote economic and social cohesion across Europe. I am delighted to be present in Portugal to see first-hand the positive impact of investments which support jobs and growth where they are most needed."* This investment will boost the company's innovation capacity, allowing it to produce metallic components for the next generation of Embraer jets, more resource efficient. 100% of the site's production will be exported. *"Each EU region has competitive assets, including [low-income and low-growth](#) regions. The EU helps them unlock their innovation potential and enter global value chains with Cohesion Policy investments and tailored support – this is [smart specialisation](#) in action,"* said Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina

Crețu. The project will indeed contribute to the development of an emerging aerospace cluster in the region and create 200 direct jobs in the first years of its implementation. More information on the European Structural and Investment Fund in Portugal can be found [here](#) and on the [Cohesion Open Data Platform](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

EU Syria Trust Fund: new assistance package to support Syrian refugees and host communities crosses €1 billion mark

The [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#) adopted new projects worth €275 million that will support refugees and their overstretched host communities in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, the Western Balkans, and Armenia. Projects will focus on education, health care, support of local community, social inclusion, gender equality. The newly adopted assistance package brings the current overall volume of the EU Trust Fund up to over €1 billion which was the goal set by President Juncker on 23 September 2015 at the Informal meeting of the European Council on migration and in the Communication on Managing the Refugee Crisis. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini said: “We are giving a lifeline to millions of Syrians inside the country and across the region, helping create a future for Syrian refugees and host communities. By enabling girls and boys to access quality education, we are helping to prevent a lost generation of children whose lives have been devastated by the Syrian conflict [...]”. EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn commented: “Thanks to the EU Trust Fund, 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. [...] The EU will continue to respond to the needs arising from the Syria conflict, as testified by the fact that more than €1 billion is being channelled to improve lives via this Trust Fund”. The full press release is available [online](#) as well as the dedicated [factsheet](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887).

Innovation: Europe is on right track but significant differences still exist among Member States

The EU is catching up with Canada and the US in terms of innovation performance, while the situation within Europe presents a more mixed picture, with innovation improving in 15 out of 28 Member States last year. These are some of the findings of the 2017 annual Innovation Scoreboard, which pit Sweden, followed by Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, the UK and Germany as the leaders in innovation in Europe. The fastest growing innovators last year were Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK.

Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: “EU industry continues to innovate, but we are still lagging behind global innovation leaders. In times of globalisation and rapid technology changes, innovation remains essential for the prosperity of our citizens and the wider European economy. The Commission’s Start-up and Scale-up Initiative and New Skills Agenda aim to further improve an ecosystem for innovation to thrive.” Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science

and Innovation, added: *"The Scoreboard shows that still more can be done to improve research and innovation performance. That's why we're gearing up support to breakthrough innovators through the pilot European Innovation Council under the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation framework programme."* The 2017 Scoreboard also confirms that countries that perform well overall also tend to do well in specific areas of innovation, showing that a balanced innovation system – with sufficient investments, developed human resources and a supportive research and innovation environment – is the key to perform well across all dimensions. The Scoreboard also includes a regional innovation analysis, which shows that new regional innovative hubs are also on the rise in places like Prague, Bratislava or the Basque Country.

A [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available online. (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over RatePAY by Advent and Bain Capital

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over RatePAY GmbH of Germany by Advent International Corporation and Bain Capital Investors L.L.C., both of the US. RatePAY provides online payment services to merchants, primarily in Germany. Advent and Bain Capital are private equity investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' combined market shares remain very limited on the markets concerned. 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.8479](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture by NIPIgaspererabotka, TechnipFMC and Linde

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by NIPIgaspererabotka JSC of the Russian Federation, TechnipFMC plc of the UK and Linde AG of Germany. The joint venture will be active in the provision of front-end engineering and design, project documentation and capital expenditures estimates, as well as engineering and services for procurement, construction, installation and commissioning of liquid natural gas plants on concrete gravity-based structures. NIPIgaspererabotka, controlled by SIBUR group, provides services for the oil and gas chain, petrochemicals and other industries on the Russian market. TechnipFMC offers services related to the oil and gas industry. Linde is active globally in industrial and medical gases, equipment, engineering and services sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as the joint venture will only operate in Russia. 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.8497](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission Européenne autorise l'acquisition de Kerneos par Imerys

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de Kerneos SA par Imerys SA, toutes deux des entreprises françaises. Kerneos est un producteur et fournisseur au niveau mondial de ciments spéciaux. Imerys est une entreprise multinationale active dans l'industrie minière et la transformation de minerais. La transaction créera un lien vertical entre les activités de Kerneos dans le domaine des ciments d'aluminate de calcium et celles d'Imerys dans le domaine des réfractaires monolithiques acides. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée n'entraînerait pas de problèmes de concurrence, car (i) elle ne donnera pas à Imerys la capacité ou des incitations suffisantes à s'engager dans des stratégies de verrouillage dans les marchés de ciment d'aluminate de calcium ou de réfractaires monolithiques acides; et (ii) elle ne créera pas d'effets congloméraux dans les minerais industriels pour les produits réfractaires ou les applications de chimie du bâtiment. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale d'examen des concentrations. Des plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet](#) concurrence de la Commission, dans le [registre](#) public des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8360](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: Structure de la dette publique en 2016 – Dette principalement détenue par les non-résidents dans la moitié des États membres de l'UE

Des différences importantes peuvent être observées dans l'Union européenne (UE) s'agissant du secteur détenteur de la dette publique. Parmi les États membres pour lesquels des données sont disponibles, la proportion la plus élevée de la dette publique détenue par les non-résidents en 2016 a été enregistrées à Chypre (79%), suivie par la Lettonie (72%), l'Autriche (71%), la Finlande (70%) et la Lituanie (69%). À l'inverse, la plus grande part de la dette détenue par le secteur (résident) des sociétés financières a été enregistrée au Danemark (67%), devant la Suède (64%), le Luxembourg (63%), la Croatie, l'Italie et Malte (62% chacun). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914; Enda Mc Namara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

STATEMENTS

Joint Statement on World Refugee Day

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, First Vice President **Timmermans**, High Representative/ Vice-President **Mogherini** and Commissioners **Hahn**, **Mimica**, **Avramopoulos** and **Stylianides**, made the following statement: "As we mark 60 years of European unity, let us not forget that only a few generations ago many of us in Europe were refugees too. [...] Today around the world more than

65 million people are forced to leave their homes due to conflicts and violence, natural disasters or the very real consequences of climate change. [...] As the leading global aid donor, the EU is providing humanitarian assistance and long-term support to refugees and internally displaced people. [...] The European Union has mobilised almost €10 billion to support people who have fled the war in Syria. [...] Along the migratory routes, we are working with urgency to save people's lives, fighting the smuggling networks, and conducting search and rescue operations at sea. [...] Many have fled conflict and terror; others were born in displacement and know only the life of being a refugee. The most vulnerable of all are children – and the European Union provides millions of them with education, healthcare and protection. In 2016, EU Member States have granted protection to more than 700,000 asylum seekers. [...] While improving the living conditions of refugees in Europe, we are working together with our Member States on establishing more legal and safe pathways in order to replace dangerous and irregular smuggling routes. More than 16,400 people in need of international protection have already been resettled to the European Union since July 2015. [...] Global action by the international community is needed. Only by sharing this responsibility can we uphold the safety, dignity and human rights of refugees, and give not only a shelter but a chance for a future to those who need it most. It is a moral duty, and the best investment we can make in our own security and stability." Please see the entire statement [here](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 2298 6570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 2296 2076)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Sustainable Energy Week 2017 for more clean energy for all Europeans

The European Sustainable Energy Week 2017 is coming back to Brussels for its 12th edition, with a Policy Conference taking place from 20-22 June. The event is organised annually by the European Commission and the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to discuss clean, secure and efficient energy. Commissioner **Arias Cañete** [opened the event this morning](#) and discussed the latest developments regarding the Clean Energy for All Europeans package, as well as how Europe will shape a sustainable, energy-secure and climate-resilient growth. In the evening of Tuesday 20 June (18:00-19:30 CET), a ceremony will take place to reward the best European success stories in clean, secure and efficient energy in the categories of businesses, the public sector, consumers, and the new category of energy islands. A prize voted on by European citizens will also be awarded. On Thursday (9:00-10:30 CET) Vice-President in charge of Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** will discuss financing energy efficiency investments. The EU Sustainable Energy Awards competition recognises projects helping to achieve EU energy goals, while hundreds of Energy Days events are also taking place across Europe throughout May and June to engage citizens and energy stakeholders. These public events involve exhibitions, workshops, educational events and more. The High Level Policy Conference opening session with Commissioner **Arias Cañete** takes place in the Charlemagne Building and is open to media. Please see the full agenda of the European Sustainable Energy Week on the [EUSEW](#) website. Follow on twitter via #EUSEW17. (For more information:

Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

European Fiscal Board publishes first report on euro area fiscal stance

Today, the [European Fiscal Board](#) (EFB) publishes its [assessment of the prospective fiscal stance appropriate for the euro area in 2018](#). This report was prepared in line with [the Commission decision \(EU\) 2015/1937 establishing an independent advisory European Fiscal Board](#) which requires the [Board to advise the Commission](#) on the euro area fiscal stance, among other tasks. Following the [Five Presidents' Report](#) on completing the Economic and Monetary Union, the Commission decided in October 2015 to set up the European Fiscal Board as an independent advisory body for fiscal matters. The board's role is to evaluate the implementation of EU fiscal rules, to advise the Commission on the fiscal stance appropriate for the euro area and to cooperate with Member States' national fiscal councils. Upon request, the board may provide ad-hoc advice on fiscal policy matters to the Commission. The European Fiscal Board consists of a Chair and four Members, and is supported by a secretariat. (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

Commissioner Andriukaitis visits the United States on 20-23 June

On June 20-23 EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** will be in Washington DC for meetings which will cover the cooperation between the European Union and the United States in trade and Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary related issues, antimicrobial resistance, food waste, food safety and global health challenges, among others. On the first day, Commissioner Andriukaitis will visit the [World Resource Institute](#) to present and discuss the EU actions in the field of Food Waste and the progress towards the [Sustainable Development goal 12.3](#). He will meet with representatives of several U.S. animal welfare organizations, with U.S. consumer groups, U.S. food industry representatives and U.S. importers. On June 21, Commissioner Andriukaitis will meet the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, as well as other U.S. Food and Drug Administration officials. On June 22, he will present the EU actions in combatting antimicrobial resistance at the event organized by the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#) (CSIS). On the same day Commissioner Andriukaitis will meet with Thomas E. Price, Secretary of Health and Human Services, to discuss global health challenges and the future cooperation between the EU and the U.S. A meeting with the World Bank Group will also take place. Ahead of the visit Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said: *"Today we are facing many challenges that cannot be tackled by countries or parts of the world alone. Antimicrobial resistance, health threats, pandemics are examples of these challenges and I am looking forward to discussing with my US counterparts how we can deal with them together as partners."* (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

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

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