

Main topics and media events 14 – 27 January 2019

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Daily News 11 / 01 / 2019

European Commission launches public consultation on EU rules guaranteeing equal pay between men and women

Today the European Commission is launching a public consultation to gather information on the impact of EU rules on equal pay. The principle of 'equal pay for equal work' is enshrined in the EU's Treaties, and EU law prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. The public consultation will gather input from citizens, public authorities, social partners, civil society and researchers to find ways to better implement and enforce the equal pay principle enshrined in the [Gender Equality Directive](#) and the [2014 Pay Transparency Recommendation](#). Commissioner Jourová, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"Women still earn on average 16.2% less than men in the EU. This is simply unfair. This inequality has not changed over the last several years. We need to work together to bring change and make sure this inequality becomes a thing of the past."* The public consultation is one of many actions of the European Commission's [Action Plan to tackle the gender pay gap](#), launched in November 2017. This action plan follows up on the [2014 Pay Transparency Recommendation](#), which raised awareness on the gender pay gap and encouraged companies to revise their pay structures. However, the [2017 Implementation Report](#) of this Recommendation showed that in a third of Member States,

transparency measures still do not exist. It also concluded that the persisting gender pay gap and this limited follow-up calls for possible further measures at EU level. Today's public consultation will feed into this assessment. The consultation on EU legislation on equal pay is available [online](#) and is open until 5 April. More information on equal pay and the gender pay gap can be found [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.:+32 229 58659)

Juncker Plan: new Venture Capital Fund to benefit Portuguese start-ups

The Investment Plan for Europe, or Juncker Plan, is backing a €25 million investment from the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group to a Venture Capital Fund launched by Portuguese firm Indico Capital Partners. The fund aims to identify and nurture the most promising early stage start-ups, particularly targeting digital technologies and artificial intelligence. The fund is also supported by InnovFin, the EU programme for innovation in small and medium businesses funded by Horizon 2020. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"I welcome this new Venture Capital Fund supported by the Investment Plan. It will give Portuguese start-ups the financing they need to turn their ideas into concrete projects, grow, and create jobs. Portugal is the third biggest beneficiary of the Investment Plan, with already almost 12,000 businesses set to have improved access to finance thanks to the European Fund for Strategic Investments."* A press release is available [here](#). As of December 2018, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), at the heart of the Juncker Plan, had already mobilised €371.2 billion of additional investments, including more than €8.8 billion in Portugal, with 856,000 small and medium businesses set to benefit from improved access to finance. More information on the latest results of the Juncker Plan is available in this [factsheet](#). (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Dairy market: 80,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder sold in biggest tender

A total of 80,424.05 tonnes of the skimmed milk powder bought into public stock by the Commission since 2015 were sold in the latest tender sale, bringing the remaining stock to around 22,000 tonnes out of the original 380,000 tonnes, stockpiled since the crisis that hit the dairy sector in 2015. In effect, almost 95 per cent of the original stock has now been disposed of through a process of prudent and responsible management. Public intervention, managed by the European Commission, helped to remove surpluses in a very imbalanced market scenario, playing a decisive role in stabilising prices between 2015 and 2017. This led to a total of 380,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder being stored in warehouses across the European Union. The Commission opened at the end of 2016 a process of monthly and later bi-monthly public tenders to gradually and cautiously put these stocks back into the market to avoid any kind of disruption or negative effect on producers. Agriculture and rural development Commissioner Phil **Hogan** said: *"The latest*

tender is further evidence that the Commission's measures, put in place since the 2015-2016 milk crisis, have been effective and are paying off. I decided on this course of action with the clear aim that we would get rid of most stocks without putting pressure on prices and that we would consolidate the recovery for European dairy farmers. Market balance has always been our priority in this process and we see now that our storage warehouses are getting empty, without weighing on the market, as many had predicted." More information is [online](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Work pensions: revamped rules on occupational pension funds will apply as of 13 January 2019

The revised Directive on occupational pension funds, known as IORP II, will become applicable as of 13 January 2019. Occupational pension funds are financial institutions that manage collective retirement schemes for employers, in order to provide benefits to employees. The new rules encourage and facilitate access to work pensions, improve and modernise the way pension funds are governed and enhance the clarity of information provided to pension funds members and beneficiaries. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: "The new rules will increase savers' trust in occupational pension funds, regardless of the EU country they are operating in. This is a positive development as these pension funds play an important role in building a genuine Capital Market Union and following through with the EU's Action Plan for Sustainable Finance." The rules, which were adopted by the EU on 14 December 2016, make it easier for pension funds to do cross-border business and to invest in sustainable and long-term assets, strengthening their role in the Capital Markets Union. The funds will also have to consider environmental, social and governments factors in their investment decisions. The Commission will carefully examine the legislation adopted by the different Member States to make sure that they fully deliver the new standards set at the EU level. The directive can be accessed [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 2 29 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

Capital Markets Union: European Supervisory Authorities report on costs and performance of retail investment products

Yesterday the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) published the results of their first comprehensive analysis of costs and performance of the main categories of investment products for savers, e.g. mutual funds, insurance, pension and structured products. Prepared at the request of the Commission, today's reports contribute to the [Capital Markets Union](#)'s efforts to unlock the capital around Europe and offer investors and savers additional opportunities to put their money to work. To fulfil this objective, savers need to be confident that potential investments offer appropriate return for the level of risk undertaken. Today's contribution by the ESAs follows up on the [CMU Mid-term review](#) published by the Commission in June 2017 and complements other actions that aim to improve the functioning of retail

investment markets, such as previous studies [on distribution systems of retail investment products across the EU](#) and [on options for online tools supporting retail investors](#). More information is available on the websites of the [European Banking Authority](#), the [European Securities and Markets Authority](#) and the [European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 2 29 58615; Letizia Lupini – Tél.: +32 229 51958)

Eurostat: Le taux d'épargne des ménages en hausse à 12,3% dans la zone euro

Au troisième trimestre 2018, le taux d'épargne des ménages a été de 12,3% dans la zone euro, contre 12,1% au deuxième trimestre 2018. Le taux d'investissement des ménages a quant à lui été de 9,1% au troisième trimestre 2018 dans la zone euro, stable par rapport au trimestre précédent. Ces informations, qui proviennent de la première diffusion de données, corrigées des variations saisonnières, sur les comptes européens trimestriels des secteurs, sont publiées par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne, et la Banque centrale européenne (BCE). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tél.: +32 229 56151; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

Eurostat: Le taux d'investissement des entreprises en hausse à 23,3% dans la zone euro

Au troisième trimestre 2018, le taux d'investissement des entreprises s'est établi à 23,3% dans la zone euro, contre 23,0% au trimestre précédent. La part des profits des entreprises s'est quant à elle située à 40,3% au troisième trimestre 2018 dans la zone euro, contre 40,6% au deuxième trimestre 2018. Ces informations, qui proviennent de la première diffusion de données, corrigées des variations saisonnières, sur les comptes européens trimestriels des secteurs, sont publiées par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne, et la Banque centrale européenne (BCE). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tél.: +32 229 56151; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Katainen in Stockholm to meet with citizens, parliamentarians and business representatives

European Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki **Katainen** will be in Stockholm, Sweden, on Monday 14 January. The Vice-President will participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on 'Circular Economy – The future growth engine for Europe'. The event will be followed by a press briefing. He will also participate in a panel discussion on 'Digitalisation – A Political Perspective' at a conference organised by industry group Combient. He will also meet with the Forum for Structural Change, an initiative of representatives from business, trade unions, academia and other organisations. Vice-President **Katainen** will also meet members of the Committee on European Union Affairs of the Swedish Parliament

and with Mr Ulf Kristersson, Leader of the Moderate Party. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commissioner Gabriel attends official launch of European Capital of Culture Plovdiv 2019 in Bulgaria

Plovdiv in Bulgaria and Matera in Italy are the two [European Capitals of Culture in 2019](#). European Capitals of Culture are one of the most recognised EU projects and fall under the responsibility of Commissioner for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya **Gabriel**, will be in Bulgaria tomorrow (12 January) to take part in the official opening ceremony for Plovdiv 2019, the first-ever European Capital of Culture in Bulgaria. A series of indoor and outdoor events will take place across the city from 11-13 January with the highlight being a music, light and dance performance on the evening of 12 January. Commissioner **Gabriel** will present a plaque and diploma to the Mayor of Plovdiv in recognition of the work invested by the city in preparing the events of 2019. Commissioner **Navracsics** will travel to Italy for the official opening of Matera 2019 on 19 January. More information on the European Capitals of Culture can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

[CALENDAR](#): Commissioner's weekly activities

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

CALENDRIER du 14 janvier au 20 janvier 2019

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 14 janvier 2019

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

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Udo Bullmann, President of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialist and Democrats (S&D) in the European Parliament.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Ms Cristina Gallach, High Commissioner for the Agenda 2030 of Spain.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Guy Verhofstadt, President of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) in the European Parliament.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** in The Hague, Netherlands: delivers a speech at the UN Peacekeeping Dinner organised by the Dutch Foreign Ministry.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives Ms Ardina M.V.A. Gerken, Member of the Senate of the Netherlands.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** in Bratislava, Slovakia: meets Mr Ivan Gašparovič, former President of Slovakia; meets Mr Peter **Pellegrini, Prime Minister of Slovakia**; and meets Mr Miroslav Lajčák, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Stockholm, Sweden: meets the Swedish Parliament's Committee on European Union Affairs; participates in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on Circular Economy as an engine for growth; meets Mr Ulf Kristersson, Leader of the Moderate Party; attends the Combient Senior Executives Conference, where he will participate in a panel discussion on "Digitalisation – A Political Perspective" and meets the Forum for Structural Change.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Mr Kris Peeters, Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** in Rome, Italy: meets with Mr Giuseppe Conte, Prime Minister of Italy and Mr Matteo Salvini, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior of Italy.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: delivers a keynote speech at the think tank Europa annual summit.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** reçoit S.E. Mgr Lebeauvin, Nonce Apostolique auprès de l'Union Européenne et Doyen du Corps Diplomatique accrédité auprès de l'UE.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Sofia, Bulgaria: meets Mr Ivailo Ivanov Zhelyazkov, Innovator and Startup entrepreneur, on the topic of transport innovation; meets with Ms Teodosia Kirilova from [WorkisrOund](#) legal research department; visits the [Puzl Coworking space](#) and meets with representatives from the [BESCO – Bulgarian Startup Association](#) and [Endeavour Bulgaria](#).

Mardi 15 janvier 2019

College Meeting

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

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** addresses the Plenary of the European Parliament on the beginning of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the

EU.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Strasbourg, in France: attends a discussion with students from the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) School of Business.

Mercredi 16 janvier 2019

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Athènes, Grèce: rencontre M. Prokopios Pavlopoulos, Président de la Grèce, M. Alexis Tsipras, Premier Ministre de la Grèce, M. Euclid Tsakalotos, Ministre des Finances de la Grèce et d'autres membres du gouvernement de la République hellénique; rencontre des représentants du secteur bancaire, du secteur privé, des groupes de réflexion, des membres du monde académique et les partenaires sociaux; et prononce un discours lors d'un dîner organisé par la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Franco-Hellénique.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Groningen, The Netherlands: attends and speaks at the [European Festival Awards 2018](#) and hands over the "Take A Stand Award".

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Groningen, The Netherlands: attends and speaks at the [Music Moves Europe Award Ceremony](#) and hands over one of the Public Choice Awards.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Mansour Gholami, Minister for Science, Research and Technology of Iran.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** à Amiens, France: participe au colloque Européen «Amiens plus Grand en Europe» avec l'intervention sur «L'Europe numérique, un enjeu stratégique pour les citoyens européens».

Jeudi 17 janvier 2019

Ms Federica **Mogherini** in Valetta, Malta (until the 18/01): participates in the 15th Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives Ms Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, Director-General of DIGITALEUROPE.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** delivers a keynote speech at Euronext New Year's Ceremony on "Capital Markets Union: Current achievements and future initiatives", in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** in Cairo, Egypt (until 18/01): on official mission to prepare the African Union presidency and to discuss regional files.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Segovia, Spain: gives a speech at the event "Renewable Energy in the new energy scenario."

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Madrid, Spain: meets Mr Miguel A. Torres, President of the Spanish Wine Federation; and meets representatives of AOGLP, a Spanish Association of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Operators.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, in Potsdam, Germany: Visits the Hasso Plattner Institut – Digital Health Center; Participates in the [Citizens Dialogue](#); and participates in the opening event of the International Green Week and GFFA 2019 (Global Forum for Food and Agriculture).

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Kevin Watkins, Chief Executive Officer of the NGO Save the Children UK.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany (until 19/01): addresses the Committee on Food and Agriculture at the German Bundestag.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Cluj–Napoca, Romania: participates in the conference on “Cohesion policy post 2020: challenges and opportunities for Romania”.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** delivers an opening speech and participates in the conference “Shaping competition policy in the era of digitisation”, in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a speech at the kick-off meeting of the European Clinical Research Alliance on Infectious Diseases (ECRAID) Plan Project on Europe’s strategy to respond to emerging Infectious Diseases, in Brussels; and receives Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Special Advisor for Mission Driven Science and Innovation to the European Commission.

M Julian **King** à Le Touquet, France: participe à la conférence “Les enjeux des élections Européennes de mai 2019” organisé par le [Mouvement Européen de Touquet](#).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** delivers keynote speech at the conference [“Shaping competition policy in the era of digitisation”](#) ; and meets with Mr Oliver Bäte, CEO of Allianz, in Brussels.

Vendredi 18 janvier 2019

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Ms Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** meets with Works Council representatives of the Dutch “Industrietafel”, in Brussels.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Steven Maijor, Chair of the European Securities and Markets Authorities (ESMA).

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** participates in a Facebook live on the 20-year anniversary of the Euro, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Helsinki, Finland: attends the Ministerial Committee on

European Union Affairs; participates in a Citizens' Dialogue on the Plastics Strategy; attends an European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) signature event, part of the Juncker Plan; meets Mr Alexander Stubb, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank; Mr Pekka Haavisto, Leader of the Green Party; and Mr Mika Anttonen, Founder and Chairman of the Finnish energy company St1; and delivers a keynote speech at the 100 year Anniversary event of the Women's organisation of the National Coalition Party.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives representatives from the Swedish Academy of Diplomats.

Mr Neven **Mimica** on official mission to prepare the African Union presidency and to discuss regional files.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Madrid, Spain: gives a speech at the Third Iberian Energy Day.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: participates in the GFFA 2019: official tour and opening of the EU stand.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: meets Ms Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany; meets Mr David Littleproud, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources of Australia; meets Mr Takamori Yoshikawa, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan; meets Mr Jari Leppä, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland; and meets Ms Barbara Otte-Kinast, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of Lower Saxony.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** meets a group of Greek students of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Greece, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany (until 19/01): attends the [International Green Week](#).

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: meets the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Sofia, Bulgaria: meets with Mr Hristian Strijlev, Member of the Board of Directors of [Fresh Media Bulgaria AD](#); meets with Atanas Dobrev, CEO of [Vivacom](#); meets students from the "cyber security" section of the Georgi Rakovski Military Academy.

Samedi 19 janvier 2019

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: participates in the Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference 2019; and meets the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey, Dr. Bekir Pakdemirli.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Berlin, Germany: attends the [International Green Week](#); attends the [11th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture \(GFFA\)](#); and meets Ms Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Matera, Italy: attends and speaks at the [Matera 2019 European Capital of Culture](#) Opening Ceremony.

Dimanche 20 janvier 2019

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: participates in the Western-Balkan Conference “Potentials of Agricultural Trade”.

Prévisions du mois de janvier :

21/01/2019 Eurogroup

21/01/2019 Foreign Affairs Council

22/01/2019 Economic and Financial Affairs Council

28/01/2019 Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Permanence DG COMM le WE du 19 au 20 janvier 2019:

Christian WIGAND: +32 (0) 460 76 47 00

Service Audiovisuel, planning studio – tél. : +32 (0)2/295 21 23

[First release for the third quarter of 2018 – Business investment rate up to 23.3% in the euro area – Business profit share down to 40.3%](#)

In the third quarter of 2018, the business investment rate was 23.3% in the **euro area**, compared with 23.0% in the previous quarter. The business profit share in the **euro area** was 40.3% in the third quarter of 2018, compared with

40.6% in the second quarter of 2018.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

First release for the third quarter of 2018 – Household saving rate up to 12.3% in the euro area – Household investment rate stable at 9.1%

The household saving rate in the **euro area** was 12.3% in the third quarter of 2018, compared with 12.1% in the second quarter of 2018. The household investment rate in the **euro area** was 9.1% in the third quarter of 2018, stable compared with the previous quarter.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)