

International data flows: Commission launches the adoption of its adequacy decision on Japan

Commissioner **Jourová** today briefed the College on the next steps and the Commission is publishing the draft adequacy decision and the related documents. This includes the additional safeguards that Japan will apply to EU personal data transferred to Japan, as well as commitments regarding access to personal data by Japanese public authorities for law enforcement and national security purposes, guaranteeing that their level of data protection is adequate to that of the EU's. Japan is also going through a similar process to recognise the EU's data protection framework.

Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"We are creating the world's largest area of safe data flows. Personal data will be able to travel safely between the EU and Japan to the benefit of both our citizens and our economies. Our partnership will promote global standards for data protection and set an example for future partnerships in this key area."*

Each side is now going through its internal procedures towards the final adoption of its reciprocal adequacy finding. For the EU, this involves obtaining an opinion from the [European Data Protection Board \(EDPB\)](#) and the green light from a committee composed of representatives of the EU Member States. Once this procedure will have been completed, the Commission will adopt the adequacy decision on Japan.

The key elements of the adequacy decision

To guarantee a level essentially equivalent to European standards, Japan has committed to implementing the following additional safeguards to protect personal data transferred to Japan, before the Commission formally adopts its adequacy decision:

- A set of rules providing individuals in the EU whose personal data are transferred to Japan, with additional safeguards that will bridge several differences between the two data protection systems. These additional safeguards will strengthen, for example, the protection of sensitive data, the conditions under which EU data can be further transferred from Japan to another third country, the exercise of individual rights to access and rectification. These rules will be binding on Japanese companies importing data from the EU and enforceable by the Japanese independent data protection authority (PPC) and courts.
- The Japanese government also gave assurances to the Commission regarding safeguards concerning the access of Japanese public authorities for criminal law enforcement and national security purposes, ensuring that any such use of personal data would be limited to what is necessary and proportionate and subject to independent oversight and effective redress

mechanisms.

- A complaint-handling mechanism to investigate and resolve complaints from Europeans regarding access to their data by Japanese public authorities. This new mechanism will be administered and supervised by the Japanese independent data protection authority.

Europeans will benefit from strong protection of their personal data in line with EU privacy standards when their data is transferred to Japan. This arrangement will also [complement the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement](#) as European companies will benefit from free data flows with this key commercial partner, as well as from privileged access to the 127 million Japanese consumers. The EU and Japan affirm that, in the digital era, promoting high privacy and personal data protection standards and facilitating international trade must and can go hand in hand.

Next steps

The draft adequacy decision will now go through the following procedure:

- Opinion from the European Data Protection Board (EDPB)
- Consultation of a committee composed of representatives of the Member States (comitology procedure)
- Update of the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- Adoption of the adequacy decision by the College of Commissioners.

Background

As announced in January 2017 in its Communication on [Exchanging and Protecting personal data in a globalised world](#), the Commission launched a dialogue with the aim of reaching an adequacy decision with Japan.

On [17 July](#) 2018, the EU and Japan successfully concluded their talks on reciprocal adequacy. They agreed to recognise each other's data protection systems as adequate, which will allow personal data to be transferred safely between the EU and Japan.

The processing of personal in the EU is based on the [General Data Protection Regulation](#), which provides for different tools to transfer personal data to third countries, including adequacy decisions.

For More Information

[Factsheet](#)

[Press release](#) on the conclusions of the adequacy talks (17 July 2018)

[Questions & Answers](#) on the Japan adequacy decision

[Link to draft adequacy decision and related documents](#)

European Citizens' Initiative: Commission registers 'End the Cage Age' initiative

The stated objectives of the proposed Citizens' Initiative are to end "*inhumane treatment of farm animals*" kept in cages. The organisers are asking the Commission to propose legislation to prohibit the use of: cages for laying hens, rabbits, pullets, broiler breeders, layer breeders, quail, ducks and geese; farrowing crates for sows; sow stalls and individual calf pens, where not already prohibited.

The Commission's decision to register the Initiative concerns only the legal admissibility of the proposal. The Commission has not analysed the substance at this stage.

The registration of this Initiative will take place on 11 September 2018, starting a one-year process of collection of signatures of support by its organisers. Should the initiative receive one million statements of support within one year, from at least seven different Member States, the Commission will have to react within three months. The Commission can decide either to follow the request or not, and in both instances would be required to explain its reasoning.

Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions.

Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

For more information

[Full text of the proposed 'End the cage Age' European Citizens Initiative](#)
(active as of 11 September)

[Other European Citizens' Initiatives currently collecting signatures](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative website](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative Regulation](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative Forum](#)

[EU releases €138 million in humanitarian and development funding for Africa's Lake Chad region](#)

The humanitarian crisis in the Africa's Lake Chad basin, affecting parts of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon, continues to worsen due to prolonged violence, insecurity and environmental degradation. To help the most vulnerable communities, the Commission has today announced new funding of €138 million combining humanitarian and development assistance. This is part of an overall EU aid package for the region worth €232 million.

Speaking today at the High Level Conference on the Lake Chad Region in Berlin, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management **Christos Stylianides** said:

"The disastrous effects of armed conflict and violence in the Lake Chad basin have had a serious impact in an area already plagued by poverty and the extreme effects of climate change. The EU is committed to continue to help the most vulnerable. Today we are stepping up our humanitarian and development assistance. What is crucial is for all parties to the conflict to ensure full access throughout the region so our aid can reach those in need."

"As the humanitarian situation remains pressing, we also need to help prepare the region to move from conflict to peace – and from fragility to resilience. Our new funding will invest in social services and tackle poverty, environmental degradation and the effects of climate change. We will also boost some of our existing programmes in North East Nigeria by strengthening girls' education and reintegration efforts, as well as health and nutrition services," said Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development **Neven Mimica**.

Today's package is part of the EU's strategy to better link its humanitarian and development support, with Nigeria and Chad being both pilot countries in this effort. Between 2014 and 2017, the EU provided close to €700 million in humanitarian aid and development assistance to the region.

Background

Breakdown of new aid package:

The humanitarian assistance announced today will go to four countries in the region: **Nigeria** (€47 million), **Niger** (€15 million), **Chad** (€11.8 million), and **Cameroon** (€15.1 million). Out of this funding, €58.75 million was [announced in July 2018](#) as part of humanitarian assistance provided by the EU to the Sahel countries. Humanitarian assistance will cover the acute food and nutrition needs as well as supporting protection activities, access to basic health care and shelter. The EU will also support livelihoods, helping people rebuild their lives.

The development assistance announced today will also go to the four countries in the region: **Nigeria** (€74.5 million), **Niger** (€32.2 million), **Chad** (€33.2 million), and **Cameroon** (€2.7 million), for a combined amount of €143 million, out of which €34.7 was announced earlier this year. The humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad basin is extremely fragile. Over 2.4 million people have been forcibly displaced (including 1.2 million children), while violence and insecurity have also had a negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of more than 17 million people. Around 3.6 million people are in need of emergency food assistance and 440, 000 severely malnourished children across the region need life-saving assistance. The resulting humanitarian crisis is among the largest in the world.

EU development support in the region includes the creation of appropriate security conditions for the return and sustainable reintegration of internally displaced people and refugees; supporting the redeployment of the state for the provision of basic services (healthcare, food security and education); supporting economic recovery and job creation, notably for the youth.

For More Information

[Nigeria](#)

[Niger](#)

[Chad](#)

[Cameroon](#)

[EU-US Trade: European Commission recommends settling longstanding WTO dispute](#)

The Commission decided today to ask the Council for a mandate to discuss with

the United States the review of the functioning of an existing quota to import hormone-free beef into the European Union.

The European Commission is committed to deliver on the letter and the spirit of the [Joint Statement agreed on 25 July](#) by Presidents **Juncker** and Trump to launch a new phase in the trade relationship between the European Union and the United States. Besides implementing the specific elements identified in the Joint Statement, the two sides should also endeavour to work on outstanding trade issues.

Commissioner for Agriculture Phil **Hogan** said: “By requesting this mandate to the Council the Commission is delivering on an engagement taken earlier this year to try to address some concerns raised by the United States on the functioning of the quota in a mutually satisfactory solution that is fully in line with WTO rules. By taking this step, we are also contributing to ease tensions across the Atlantic, in line with the agreement reached by President **Juncker** in July. As we send this proposal to the Council I want to reassure European producers that the already existing beef quota under the Memorandum of Understanding will remain at exactly the same level. And I want also to reassure our consumers that the said quota will continue to cover only products complying with Europe’s high food safety and health standards, in this case only non-hormone treated beef.”

In its proposal to the Council, the Commission suggests to allocate to the United States a part of the existing quota that is also available to exporters from other countries.

In its proposal to the Council, the Commission suggests to identify a WTO-consistent and mutually agreed possible way forward, based on the country-allocation of the existing quota.

In 2009, the European Union and the United States concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), revised in 2014, which provided for an interim solution to a longstanding WTO dispute regarding the use of certain growth-promoting hormones in beef production. Under the agreement, a 45,000 tonnes quota of non-hormone produced beef is open by the EU to qualifying suppliers, which include the United States.

The review of the MoU was requested by the previous US Administration in 2016 and the two sides have since then discussed the US concerns on the implementation of the MoU on a regular basis. The negotiation mandate intends to address these concerns and to find a mutually satisfactory solution in line with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Background

In their [Joint Statement of 25 July](#), President **Juncker** and President Trump agreed to “launch a new phase in the relationship between the United States and the European Union” also through a specific set of measures. The European Commission has been actively following-up and delivering on the different elements of that statement, notably on the [increase of trade in soybeans](#) and [Liquefied Natural Gas \(LNG\)](#).

For More Information

[Recommendation for a Council decision authorising the opening of negotiations on an agreement with the United States regarding the importation of high quality beef from animals not treated with certain growth-promoting hormones](#)

[Back to school: Schoolchildren to receive milk, fruits and vegetables at school thanks to EU programme](#)

Aimed at promoting healthy eating habits among children, the EU school scheme includes the distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk products, as well as dedicated educational programmes to teach pupils about the importance of good nutrition and to explain how food is produced.

With the number of participating schools increasing, the healthy eating initiative reached over 30 million children across the European Union in the [2017/2018 school year](#).

European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil **Hogan**, said: *“It is important to know where our food comes from and the hard work that comes with it. With the EU school schemes, not only do the children learn about farming and food production but they also taste quality produce and benefit from their nutritional values. It is never too early to enjoy good food!”*

Under the scheme, €150 million is set aside each school year for fruit and vegetables and €100 million for milk and other dairy products. Although participation is voluntary, [all EU Member states](#) opted to get involved, either for all or part of the scheme. National allocations for all 28 Member States taking part in the scheme for the 2018-19 school year were approved and adopted by the European Commission in [March 2018](#). Member States also have the option to top up EU aid with national aid to finance the scheme.

The choice of products distributed is based on health and environmental considerations, seasonality, variety and availability. Member States may encourage local or regional purchasing, organic products, short supply chains, environmental benefits, agricultural quality schemes.

The distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk started is accompanied by a variety of educational activities for school children. Almost all countries established committees with the participation of authorities and stakeholders in the agriculture, health and education sector, several of which met in the course of the school year to supervise the activities.

For more information

[The EU school fruits, vegetables and milk scheme](#)

[Educational pack for children on food and farming in Europe](#)