

Presentation of letters of credentials to the President of the European Council Donald Tusk

Your request will be handled by the Press Office of the General Secretariat of the Council in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

Your data will be stored in the database until you unsubscribe from the service.

Certain data (name, e-mail address, preferred language, media name, media type) may be disclosed to the press offices of the European institutions, the Permanent Representations of the Member States and to European Union agencies, under the conditions laid down in Articles 7 and 8 of Regulation 45/2001.

If there is data which you would not like to be stored, please let us know at: press.office@consilium.europa.eu

Commission provides support for a further 32 reform projects in Greece

Today, the Commission adopted a [decision](#) approving 32 additional requests by Greece for technical support through the [Structural Reform Support Programme](#) (SRSP). The projects will be financed from Greece's voluntary transfer of €20 million from their technical assistance component under the European Structural and Investment Funds to the SRSP. The new measures will come on top of the more than 100 support projects coordinated by the Commission in Greece.

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"Nearing the end of its stability support programme, Greece is at an important juncture. It is crucial that the country continues with modernising its economy and administration and the Commission is committed to supporting these reform efforts. Reforms take time to bear fruit, but if fully implemented they can lead to robust and sustainable growth. We already see the first positive signs in Greece – economy is growing, confidence is strengthening, employment is set to increase steadily, investment started to*

recover, which ultimately means more and better quality jobs.”

The [Work Programme](#) annexed to the decision outlines the actions that will be financed by the €20 million and sets out the priorities, objectives and expected results of the reform projects. The reforms aim to help Greece face economic and social challenges, to make the country more cohesive and competitive. The wide range of projects will contribute to boosting jobs and growth and improve the daily lives of the people in tangible ways.

The technical support provided for with today's decision will help Greece continue to reform its revenue collection, modernise its public administration at national and local levels, and enhance the quality and efficiency of its judicial system. It will also support the fight against fraud, corruption and money laundering. Further support will be deployed to help the authorities improve the investment climate, promote exports, better manage natural resources, and implement Energy Union initiatives. Greece will also benefit from support for reforms of its education and social welfare systems, and measures to enhance access to finance for small-and-medium-sized enterprises. The technical support also aims to help Greece further strengthen insolvency frameworks and the management of non-performing loans. Furthermore, support will be provided for the implementation of Greece's growth strategy.

Background

The Commission created the [Structural Reform Support Service](#) in 2015 to support Member States in the preparation, design and implementation of institutional, structural and administrative reforms. The support provided by the SRSS to Greece encompasses over 100 projects. The Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) manages a dedicated support programme, the [Structural Reform Support Programme](#) (SRSP), with a budget of €142.8 million over the years 2017-2020. The Programme entered into force in May 2017 and allows for transfer of funds from the technical assistance component under the European Structural and Investment Funds to the SRSP. The support provided through the Programme is available to all EU Member States upon their request and requires no co-financing.

As part of its proposals to [deepen Europe's Economic and Monetary Union](#) put forward in December 2017, the Commission proposed to increase the SRSP budget until 2020 by €80 million.

After 2020, the Commission proposed to continue the SRSP as part of the [Reform Support Programme](#) with a budget of €25 billion. In addition to technical support, this will also include financial support for implementation of reforms through a new Reform Delivery Tool and a dedicated Convergence Facility offering financial and technical support for non-euro area Member States wishing to join the euro area.

Further information

[Structural Reform Support Service](#)

Daily News 13 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Stepping up the EU's role as a security and defence provider

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing to increase the EU's strategic autonomy, bolster the EU's ability to protect its citizens and make the EU a stronger global actor. A €13 billion European Defence Fund will provide the financial firepower for cross-border investments in state-of-the-art and fully interoperable technology and equipment in areas such as encrypted software and drone technology. In addition, the High Representative, with the support of the Commission, is proposing today a new €10.5 billion European Peace Facility, an instrument outside of the EU's long-term budget, which will help improve the EU's ability to prevent conflicts, build peace and guarantee international security. Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission, said: *"The EU has [...] taken steps in security and defence that seemed unthinkable before. We can now support research and cooperation to develop defence capabilities. We are taking measures that will facilitate the rapid movement of Member States' forces in Europe. [...] I am proposing the establishment of a European Peace Facility that will improve the financing of EU military operations and improve our support for actions by our partners."* Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President in charge of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"What we are proposing will help the EU take its destiny into its own hands. We are taking greater ownership in defending and protecting our citizens. For the first time in the history of the EU, a part of the European budget is devoted to investing collectively to develop new technologies and equipment to protect our people. [...]"* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: *"The European Defence Fund is a game changer for defence cooperation in Europe. [...] we are now scaling it up into an ambitious European instrument to support collaborative defence projects throughout their entire development cycle. The €13 billion Fund shows that this Commission is serious about building a Europe that defends and protects its citizens."* A [press release](#) and [factsheets and FAQs](#) are available online. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Budget de l'UE: 4,8 milliards d'euros de financement pour la sécurité, pour une Europe qui protège

La Commission propose d'augmenter considérablement le financement de la sécurité, de 3,5 milliards d'euros actuellement à 4,8 milliards d'euros dans le prochain cadre budgétaire à long terme de l'UE pour 2021-2027. Face à des menaces internationales de plus en plus complexes, les fonds européens peuvent aider notre Union à relever les défis futurs en matière de sécurité et à être mieux équipée pour répondre aux urgences. Les 2,5 milliards d'euros du Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure (FSI) renforcé s'ajoutent à près de 1,2 milliard d'euros pour un démantèlement plus sûr des activités nucléaires dans certains États membres, ainsi qu'à 1,1 milliard d'euros pour renforcer les agences européennes dans le domaine de la sécurité. Le premier vice-président Frans **Timmermans** a déclaré: *"Se sentir en sécurité chez soi ou dans la rue est l'un des droits de l'homme les plus élémentaires; les Européens attendent de leur gouvernement et de leur Union qu'ils garantissent cette sécurité. Un cadre de financement de la sécurité plus souple et plus adapté aux besoins des États membres assurera, comme il se doit, une meilleure protection des Européens."* Le commissaire Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, chargé de la migration, des affaires intérieures et de la citoyenneté, a déclaré: *"Pour la sécurité de nos citoyens, nous devons accroître nos efforts – et notre budget doit en faire autant. C'est pourquoi nous augmentons le budget de la sécurité d'un tiers pour les années à venir, à 4,8 milliards d'euros. Nous aidons ainsi les États membres à mieux se préparer aux futurs défis sécuritaires et aux urgences. Nous construisons une Europe plus sûre et plus robuste pour nos citoyens. Une Europe qui protège."* Le commissaire Julian **King**, chargé de l'Union de la sécurité, a déclaré: *"Nous devons préparer une réponse forte face aux terroristes, aux criminels et aux menaces sécuritaires qu'ils posent – multidimensionnelles, transfrontalières et en évolution permanente. Cette réponse ne doit pas être redondante par rapport aux efforts des États membres; elle doit plutôt les compléter et créer des ponts à l'intérieur de l'UE et au-delà de ses frontières. C'est précisément ce que nous proposons aujourd'hui avec un Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure clairement renforcé, pour une Europe plus robuste comme fondement d'une authentique et efficace Union de la sécurité."* Un [communiqué de presse](#), un [mémo](#) ainsi que des textes juridiques et des fiches d'information sur le futur financement de la sécurité sont [disponibles en ligne](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

A Europe that protects: EU works to build resilience and better counter hybrid threats

The European Commission and the High Representative propose today further steps to build on the work already carried out in response to hybrid and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, following up on the European Council's invitation to take this work forward and report on progress after the Salisbury attack. They also report on the implementation of the [Joint Framework](#) on countering hybrid threats. In addition, the Commission is taking stock of the progress made on key security files, including the CBRN Action Plan. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"In times of new challenges around the world, we are reinforcing our work within the European Union to counter hybrid threats – be it in the field of cyber, on disinformation or counter intelligence. Together*

with our Member States and partners, such as NATO, we are working to strengthen our capabilities to address these challenges and build up our resilience to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear-related risks, to effectively protect our citizens.” Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *“Security has been our priority since day one – but we need to do more to deny hostile foreign actors and terrorists the means and the space to act. Today, we are further accelerating our efforts to their access to life-threatening chemical substances – building a more resilient Europe, fully equipped to face complex and dynamic security threats.”* Commissioner for Security Union, Julian **King** said: *“The Salisbury attack was a stark reminder that the threat posed by chemical, biological radiological and nuclear risks is very real. Today, we are following up our CBRN Action Plan from last year to be better prepared for such threats as well as other hybrid threats, which can cause serious harm and spread instability. We need to be especially vigilant in view of upcoming elections.”* The Commission is also presenting today the [Security Union progress report](#), an [EU Action Plan](#) to improve the security of rail passengers and a [Report](#) of the High-Level Expert Group on Radicalisation. A [press release](#) and factsheets on [hybrid threats](#) and the [Security Union](#) are available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229-67456; Tove Ernst – +32 229-86764)

Countering the illicit arms trade: new proposal for an integrated EU approach

The High Representative and the Commission adopted today a Joint Communication proposing elements for a comprehensive EU Strategy against illicit firearms and small arms and light weapons (SALW). Illicit weapons are contributing to global terrorism and conflicts, thwarting the EU’s development, humanitarian and stabilisation efforts in parts of the EU’s neighbourhood and Africa. Within the European Union, illicit firearms are fuelling organised crime and amplifying the impact of terrorist attacks. A broad range of governmental agencies, including police, customs, border guards, armed forces, export control and judicial authorities are required to act in a more integrated manner to tackle such transnational threats. Today’s Joint Communication aims to guide collective EU action inside the EU and abroad, to prevent and curb the illicit acquisition of firearms by terrorists, criminals and other unauthorised actors, as well as to promote accountability and responsibility with regard to the legal arms trade. The elements proposed today for the new Strategy takes into account the evolving security context and relevant elements, such as the growing threat of terrorism inside the EU, technological and legislative developments. It entails a set of actions to be taken at national, regional and international level and would replace the one that was adopted by the European Council in 2005. Please see the full text of the Joint Communication [here](#). More information is available on the EEAS and [Commission](#) website. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Commission holds second negotiating round with parliament and Council on a mandatory Transparency Register

Yesterday evening, 12 June, in Strasbourg, negotiators from the three EU

institutions continued their discussions on strengthening the EU Transparency Register, and committed to make further progress towards a common interpretation of the key issue of conditionality. The three institutions discussed ways to make their interactions with interest representatives conditional on the registration of such representatives in the Transparency Register. Establishing this principle will provide citizens with more information about who seeks to influence the EU legislative process, allowing them to better scrutinise how EU decision-making works. Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“Being on the Transparency Register must be a pre-condition for lobbyists to get access to lawmakers. The Commission has applied this principle for almost four years, and it works. Now we must agree on the practicalities for extending it to other European decision-makers. Further work is needed to ensure that we can agree on how all three institutions commit to meaningful implementation of the principle ‘no registration, no meeting’”*. At the meeting the three institutions reiterated their common ambition to reach a meaningful improvement on the status quo, and their commitment to ensure the transparency of the negotiating process itself. More information is available in a press release [here](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

Commission provides support for a further 32 reform projects in Greece

Today, the Commission adopted a [decision](#) approving 32 additional requests by Greece for technical support through the [Structural Reform Support Programme](#) (SRSP). The projects will be financed from Greece’s voluntary transfer of €20 million from their technical assistance component under the European Structural and Investment Funds to the SRSP. The new measures will come on top of the more than 100 support projects coordinated by the Commission in Greece. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“Nearing the end of its stability support programme, Greece is at an important juncture. It is crucial that the country continues with modernising its economy and administration and the Commission is committed to supporting these reform efforts. Reforms take time to bear fruit, but if fully implemented they can lead to robust and sustainable growth. We already see the first positive signs in Greece – economy is growing, confidence is strengthening, employment is set to increase steadily, investment started to recover, which ultimately means more and better quality jobs.”* The [Work Programme](#) annexed to the decision outlines the actions that will be financed by the €20 million and sets out the priorities, objectives and expected results of the reform projects. The reforms aim to help Greece face economic and social challenges, to make the country more cohesive and competitive. The wide range of projects will contribute to boosting jobs and growth and improve the daily lives of the people in tangible ways. The press release is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: 32 229-5615; Enda McNamara– Tel.: +32 229-64976)

Commission announces members of the Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance

The European Commission is today publishing the [list of members](#) of the new

Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance. The Group, which will start meeting in July 2018, comprises 35 members from civil society, academia, business and the finance sector. The Technical Expert Group was announced in the Commission's [Action Plan on Sustainable Finance](#) from March 2018 and in the subsequent package of legislative measures on 24 May 2018.

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said: *"Today's launch of the Technical Expert Group is another step in our ambitious timetable to lay the foundations for a more sustainable financial system. Already as of July, this diverse and highly qualified group of experts will get to work, helping us determine which economic activities are truly green, define an EU standard for green bonds, and more. I am committed to a swift follow-up on their expert advice, in line with our Action Plan on Sustainable Finance and following our legislative proposals last month."* As well as developing an EU classification system – or so-called taxonomy – for environmentally-sustainable activities, the group will also support the Commission in the creation of an EU Green Bond Standard, in improving the disclosure of climate-related information and by helping develop a category of low-carbon indices. The Commission selected highly-qualified candidates out of 185 eligible applications on the basis of their personal expertise, their contribution to work relevant to sustainable finance and the prominence of their affiliation in this area. Several European and international institutions have been invited as members or observers, including the European Supervisory Authorities, development, the European Environment Agency and United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative. More information available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: + 32 229 56194; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

Mergers: Commission opens in-depth investigation into proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL by T-Mobile NL in the Netherlands

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess the proposed acquisition of Tele2 NL by T-Mobile NL under the EU Merger Regulation. The proposed transaction would combine Deutsche Telekom's subsidiary T-Mobile NL with Tele2's subsidiary Tele2 NL, respectively the third and fourth largest operators in the Dutch retail mobile telecommunications market. This would reduce the number of mobile network operators in the Netherlands from four to three. The Commission has concerns that the transaction would have a negative impact in two ways: through a reduction in the number of players and by limiting the merged entity's incentives to compete effectively with the remaining operators. This could lead to higher prices and less investment in mobile telecommunications networks. The Commission will also investigate further: i) the fact that the reduction in the number of mobile network operators following the merger may weaken competitive pressure and increase the likelihood that operators would coordinate their competitive behaviour, and raise prices on the retail markets; ii) its concern that prospective and existing mobile virtual network operators may face more difficulties in obtaining favourable wholesale access terms from mobile network operators. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in

charge of competition policy, said: "Access to affordable and good quality mobile telecom services has become increasingly important in modern life. We are opening this in-depth investigation to ensure, that the proposed transaction between T-Mobile NL and Tele2 NL will not lead to higher prices or less choice in mobile services for Dutch consumers". A full press release is available in [NL](#), [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over two new joint ventures by BHAP and Gestamp China

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of Gestamp Auto Components Co., Ltd, a manufacturing joint venture, and Gestamp Auto Components Sales Co., Ltd, a sales joint venture, by Beijing Hainachuan Automotive Parts Co., Ltd ("BHAP") and Gestamp (China) Holding Co., Ltd ("Gestamp China"), all of China. The manufacturing joint venture will manufacture flat steel automotive components including lightweight body parts, chassis and other components in China. The sales joint venture will sell those automotive components and provide after-sales, technical and consultation services to the automotive industry, also in China. BHAP, controlled by Beijing Automotive Group Co., Ltd of China, is active in manufacturing interior and exterior components of automobiles, automobile seats, powertrain, chassis and body systems, automotive electronics and other series, as well as in supplying automotive components in China. Gestamp China, ultimately controlled by Acek Desarrollo y Gestión Industrial, S.L of Spain, is a manufacturer and seller of automotive components, including flat steel components and mechanisms, and assemblies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the joint ventures will only be active in China. 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.8903](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Professional Fee Protection Ltd by HPS Investment Partners and Madison Dearborn Partners

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Professional Fee Protection Ltd ("PFP") of the UK by HPS Investment Partners ("HPS") and Madison Dearborn Partners ("MDP"), both of the US. PFP is a provider of risk management services and tax advisory services. HPS is an investment company focusing on acquisitions and strategic financing of recapitalisation of companies that require financial assistance. MDP is a private equity investment company, with investments in a broad range of industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minor horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the companies' activities. 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.8961](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Tax revenues as a percentage of GDP grew slightly in 2016, according to new Commission study

Tax revenues rose in 19 Member States in 2016 as a percentage of GDP in 2016, a [study published today by the European Commission](#) has found. However, the level of taxation in EU Member States differs greatly. The findings are in the 2018 edition of the Taxation Trends report, a yearly snapshot of tax systems in the EU, Iceland and Norway that provides extensive and comparable data on the different tax structures and rates of Member States. The report also shows that the share of labour taxes in total tax revenues shrank progressively from 2010 to 2016 when it accounted for 49.8% – similar to its pre-crisis level. Corporate income tax revenues, on the other hand rose to 2.7% of GDP in 2016 compared with 2.6% in 2015, continuing their gentle increase since the crisis though not yet at pre-crisis levels. The report also provides an analysis on the medium- to long-term evolution of these trends. Taxation is a top priority for the Juncker Commission and providing quality data is a must if we want to develop robust and effective tax policies for the future. This report offers a breakdown of comparative tax levels in the EU and of tax revenues raised from consumption, labour and capital. It also contains data on energy, environmental and property taxation, plus rates for personal and corporate income taxes. Download the report [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Eurostat: L'emploi en hausse de 0,4% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28

Le nombre de personnes ayant un emploi a augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro (ZE19) ainsi que dans l'UE28 au premier trimestre 2018 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon les estimations basées sur les comptes nationaux et publiées par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au quatrième trimestre 2017, l'emploi avait progressé de 0,3% dans la zone euro et de 0,2% dans l'UE28. Ces chiffres sont corrigés des variations saisonnières. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Eurostat: La production industrielle en baisse de 0,9% dans la zone euro

En avril 2018 par rapport à mars 2018, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,9% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,8% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En mars 2018, la production industrielle avait progressé de 0,6% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l'UE28. En avril 2018 par rapport à avril 2017, la production industrielle a augmenté de 1,7% tant dans la zone euro que dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Malta

Commissioner **Jourová** will be in Malta tomorrow and Friday. She will meet Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, Minister for EU Affairs and Equality, Helena Dalli, Minister for Finance, Edward Scicluna and the EU Sherpa to the Prime Minister, Jonathan Cardona, to stress the importance of the investigation into Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder, and discuss Malta's participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office, implementation of the anti-money laundering rules as well as the investor citizenship scheme. She will then exchange views on the functioning of the judiciary with Joseph Azzopardi, Chief Justice, the Association of Judges and Magistrates, and the Chamber of Advocates. Her meeting with the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit and the Malta Financial Services Authority will focus on the implementation of anti-money laundering rules in Malta. Her visit also includes a meeting with the leader of the Nationalist Party, Adrian Delia and a participation to the first Consumers' Dialogue dedicated to the *"Main points of the New Deal for Consumers Proposal: What is the European Commission doing for Consumers?"*. Finally, she will honour the late Daphne Caruana Galizia. On Thursday evening, she will give a press conference at the European Commission representation in Valletta at 17:00, which will be recorded and available on [EBS](#) at around 18:30 the same day. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Andriukaitis in Bulgaria

On 14 June, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food safety will be in Plovdiv, Bulgaria to open the 2nd FOOD 2030 High Level Event "Research and Innovation for Food and Nutrition Security: Transforming our food systems" organised by the Bulgarian Presidency. Later that day, Commissioner will hold a Citizens' Dialogue alongside Ms Daniela Daritkova-Prodanova, Member of Parliament from the 44th National Assembly and chairperson of the National Assembly's Healthcare Committee. Webstream of the Citizens' Dialogue available [here](#). *"I am looking forward to discussing the sustainable production of food for a healthier Europe, as well as future challenges linked to sustainability, and the need for cross cutting policies linked to antimicrobial resistance, animal welfare, nutritional quality of food, and food waste"*, said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** ahead of the event. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Commissioner Thyssen in Berlin

Tomorrow, 14 June, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will be in Berlin, Germany. She will meet with Ms Franziska Giffey, German Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior

Citizens, Women and Youth and Mr Hubertus Heil, Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. She will also meet Ms Andrea Nahles, President of the German Social-Democratic Party and leader of the SPD in the Bundestag; the Committees on European Affairs and Social Affairs in the Bundestag, as well as with representatives of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group. These meetings will be an opportunity to discuss ongoing files in the field of employment and social affairs. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)*

Commissioner Stylianides visits Luxembourg

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is visiting Luxembourg where he will address Members of the National Parliament. The Commissioner will inform members of the Bureau and of the Committee for foreign and European affairs, defence, cooperation and immigration on EU humanitarian aid priorities and discuss the [Commission's rescEU proposal](#) to strengthen EU civil protection response. He will then meet Ms Bettina Jakobsen, Member of the EU Court of Auditors. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Vice-President Dombrovskis in Greece

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, will be in Athens tomorrow and on Friday. On Thursday morning, he will deliver an opening keynote at the [22nd Roundtable with the Government of Greece](#) organised by The Economist. His speech will be available [online](#). He will meet Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Minister of Finance Euclid Tsakalotos and the Governor of the Bank of Greece Yannis Stournaras. The Vice-President will also meet the President of Nea Dimokratia Kyriakos Mitsotakis and have a discussion with the social partners. The joint press statements with Minister Tsakalotos will take place on Friday 12.30 and can be followed via [Europe by Satellite](#). *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)*

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

[ESMA reports on penalties and supervisory measures under EMIR](#)

The report focuses in particular on the supervisory actions undertaken by NCAs, their supervisory powers and the interaction between NCAs and market participants when monitoring the compliance of the following EMIR

requirements:

- the clearing obligation for certain OTC derivatives (Art. 4 EMIR);
- the reporting obligation of derivative transactions to TRs (Art. 9 EMIR);
- requirements for non-financial counterparties (Art. 10 EMIR); and
- Risk mitigation techniques for non-cleared OTC derivatives (Art. 11 EMIR).

ESMA has sent its report to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission today, informing them about the findings, which will also help to gradually identifying best practices and potential areas that could benefit from a higher level of harmonisation.

Daily News 11 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Commission proposes €1.26 billion to reinforce the European Solidarity Corps

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing a new programme for the European Solidarity Corps beyond 2020, with €1.26 billion to broaden the opportunities it offers. The new programme will allow at least 350,000 young Europeans to support communities in need between 2021 and 2027 through volunteering, traineeships and job placements. Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Günther H. **Oettinger**, said: *“Solidarity is one of the key values in the European Union, and the success of the European Solidarity Corps shows that there’s a high demand of young people to participate in solidarity activities. That’s why we have significantly increased the financial means for the European Solidarity Corps in the next EU budget.”* Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“With this proposal, the European Commission has confirmed its commitment to strengthening solidarity and empowering young people. We are putting everything in place to enable the European Solidarity Corps to grow into a broad community of people and organisations ready to support those in need across our continent and beyond, helping to build resilient, cohesive societies. Young people, in turn, will gain skills, new friendships, and a strong sense of what it feels like to be European.”* Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, commented: *“Building on the experience gained so far, this proposal provides for a more inclusive and flexible approach and ultimately a greater freedom of choice for participants, whether they’d like to go on a voluntary or professional placement.”* The new programme will build on the achievements of the Corps in its first years of existence and creates one single entry point for young people ready to engage in solidarity, for instance by including volunteering activities in support of humanitarian aid operations in non-EU countries, previously operating under the [EU Aid Volunteers](#). Additional

funding or dedicated activities of shorter duration or within one's own country, for example, to make it easier for disadvantaged young people to take part in the European Solidarity Corps. More information is available in a [press release](#), [memo](#) and [infographics](#) online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Commission adopts proposals amending the association agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco to grant preferences to products from Western Sahara, in line with ECJ ruling

The Commission has today adopted two proposals for Council Decisions in relation to the signature and the conclusion of an agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco on the amendment of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement (Protocols No 1 and No 4). The adoption of these proposals follows the December 2016 ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union, and aims to respect the Court's ruling and clarify the status of products from Western Sahara for preferential tariff treatment when imported into the EU. The draft Agreement proposes that "products originating from Western Sahara which are subject to the control of the Moroccan custom authorities benefit from the same commercial preferences granted by the EU to products covered by the association agreement". It also aims to contribute to the economic development of Western Sahara by ensuring that exports to the EU originating there will benefit from wide-ranging trade preferences. The proposals are available [here](#) and [here](#) and will now be sent to the Member States in the Council and to the European Parliament for the next steps in the legislative process. Inclusive consultations with a wide variety of Western Saharan local representatives, civil society and other organisations and bodies showed broad support for the socio-economic benefits that the proposed tariff preference would bring, and an accompanying [report](#) that highlights the benefits of the agreement for the local population and economy is available online. These proposals are also concluded without prejudice to the EU's position on Western Sahara, where the EU continues to support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. Morocco is a key partner in our southern neighbourhood with which the EU has developed a lasting and valuable partnership over many years and areas, and the EU remains committed to strengthening this partnership. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 2 29 80833; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

DiscoverEU: 15,000 travel passes up for grabs to explore the EU this summer

As of tomorrow (12:00 CEST) until 26 June, (12:00 CEST) young people can [apply](#) for a ticket giving them the opportunity to discover their continent from July 2018 until the end of October 2018. [DiscoverEU](#) will enable them to better understand Europe's diversity, enjoy its cultural richness, make new friends and get a sense of their European identity. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: "DiscoverEU offers an excellent opportunity to young people to explore Europe through a

personal journey in a way that no book or documentary can. I am confident that this experience will make a positive change – for the young people participating and for the communities they visit. What we are launching tomorrow is an opportunity for 15,000 unforgettable European stories, to be followed by many more later this year and beyond.” Applicants must be 18 years old on 1 July 2018, EU citizens and prepared to travel this summer. With a budget of €12 million in 2018, DiscoverEU is expected to give at least 20,000 young people the opportunity to travel around Europe this year. Every EU Member State has been allocated a number of travel passes, based on the share of its country’s population compared to the overall population of the European Union. The first application round, launched tomorrow, will allow at least 15,000 recipients to explore their continent. A second application round with at least 5,000 tickets will take place in autumn 2018. More information on the application criteria and process is available in a [press release](#) and [memo](#) online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Investment Plan supports renewable energy expansion in Austria

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending Energiepark Bruck/Leitha a total of €19.3 million to carry out two new wind farm projects with a joint capacity of 17 MW. Erste Bank is also participating in the €27.3 million financing plan. The EIB financing is guaranteed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the Investment Plan for Europe. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *“The EU is committed to supporting the clean energy transition in Europe. Financing for wind farms is a long term transaction and high risk by nature, which is where the European Fund for Strategic Investments is essential in providing the EU budget guarantee. It is very positive that the project is cofinanced by the private sector in the form of Erste Bank.”* (Full press release is found [here](#). For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

EU steps up its support to fight Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The European Commission will provide €1.8 million in humanitarian aid to support the ongoing response to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The funding brings the total EU response to Ebola so far in 2018 to € 3.43 million. *“Since the current Ebola outbreak was declared on 8 May 2018, the EU has immediately supported the efforts of the World Health Organisation and the national authorities to contain the spread of the disease. Previous outbreaks taught us a valuable lesson: we cannot be complacent with Ebola. We cannot let our guard down. This is why today I am strengthening our EU support. This funding will help our humanitarian partners and the authorities to fight and contain the further spread of Ebola,”* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management and EU Ebola Coordinator Christos **Stylianides**. The EU aid will support the coordination and logistical operations of the ongoing response, control and prevention of infections, surveillance of exit/entry points of Ebola-affected areas and safe burials.

It will also provide general support to primary health centres in the affected areas. The funding is part of overall EU support for the outbreak, which includes the activation of [EU's Civil Protection Mechanism](#), whereby an isolation system was deployed from Norway to transport quarantined patients in need of specialised treatment. The European Commission's humanitarian air service [ECHO Flight](#) is also providing a shuttle service from Kinshasa to transport personnel and medical supplies to the affected areas. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

Commission consults fishermen, industry and society for fishing opportunities in 2019

The Commission has adopted today a [Communication](#) which takes stock of the implementation of [EU's Common Fisheries Policy](#) and launches the process of consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2019. Via a [public consultation](#), the Commission will consult Member States; Advisory Councils, which include the fishing industry, non-governmental organisations, and interested citizens. Commissioner Karmenu **Vella**, responsible for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *"Restoring the health of our seas and oceans is not a choice, it's an imperative, and the EU must continue to lead by example. The laudable efforts of our fishermen over the last decade are starting to pay off: Many of our fish stocks, though far from all, are returning to sustainable levels. 2019 will be a crucial year for achieving our shared objectives. Working hand-in-hand – fishermen, industry, civil society and authorities – let us keep up the efforts and keep our ambitions high for our ocean. I look forward to working closely with all parties."* Recent years have seen significant progress in the management of fisheries resources, notably in northern and western waters, where overfishing has decreased considerably, whilst biomass has increased and in 2016 on average was nearly 39% above 2003 levels. By contrast, moving towards sustainable exploitation in the Mediterranean and the Black Seas remains a challenge. Over recent years, EU fleet has also registered significant improvement in its overall economic performance, with record net profits of €1.3 billion in 2016. More details available [here](#). *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)*

Commission brings together consumer alternative dispute resolution bodies from across the EU

Today, the Commission kicks off a two-day event in Brussels bringing together more than 350 consumer Alternative Dispute Resolution bodies, businesses, consumer representatives, and Member States authorities from across the EU. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality said: *"Alternative dispute resolution is an important tool for consumers to enforce their rights, in particular when the value of the dispute is low. I want more businesses to use it; it's in their interest as it brings consumer trust and helps them avoid costly court procedures."* Under this framework, consumers can have their disputes with traders resolved quickly, fairly and easily with the help of high-quality [alternative dispute resolution](#) bodies. When the purchase is made online, consumers can also use the European [online dispute resolution](#) (ODR) platform to ask an alternative dispute resolution body for

help. Effective alternative and online resolution of consumer disputes is a key pillar under the [New Deal for Consumers](#) proposed by the Commission in April. The Commission is currently conducting a communication campaign to increase business engagement in Alternative Dispute Resolution procedures and on the Online Dispute Resolution platform. *(For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over London Luton Airport by AMP Capital and Aena Internacional

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over London Luton Airport Operations Limited (“LLAO”) of the UK by AMP Capital Investors (UK) Limited (“AMP Capital”) of the UK and Aena Desarrollo Internacional, S.M.E., S.A. (“Aena Internacional”) of Spain. LLAO manages and operates the London Luton Airport. AMP Capital, belonging to the corporate group of AMP Limited of Australia, is active in infrastructure investment and management services, and controls Newcastle International Airport as well as Leeds Bradford Airport in the UK. Aena Internacional is majority-owned by the Spanish statutory corporation ENAIRE and is active in the management of airport infrastructure. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited impact it would have on the market. 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.8923](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of a newly created joint venture by Banco de Sabadell and Oaktree Capital Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture by Bitarte S.A., belonging to the group Banco de Sabadell, both of Spain, and Oaktree Capital Group Holdings GP LLC of the US. The joint-venture will identify, acquire, develop, and commercialise residential plots of land in Spain. Banco de Sabadell is the fourth largest banking group in Spain. Bitarte owns real estate assets under development or awaiting development. Oaktree Capital Group is a global alternative and non-traditional management company with a particular expertise in credit strategies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given 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.8875](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

STATEMENTS

Speech by Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc on military mobility at the North Atlantic Council

Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** today presented the [EU Action Plan on Military mobility](#) to the North Atlantic Council, the principal political decision-making body within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). She said, *“The Action Plan on Military Mobility was developed in the context of our President’s commitment during his State of the Union speech in September 2017, to have a full-fledged Defence Union in place by 2025 (...). It is all about a higher level of security for the EU citizens. And, since many EU countries are members of NATO, it is also about a higher level of security and effectiveness of the military personnel of all NATO allies. That is what we want to concretely achieve, by leveraging EU policies which we already address for civilians. It is a matter of importance to me that when we invest billions of Euros of public money – that we do so in full knowledge of the military requirements and do so jointly, whenever we define these dual use – military and civilian – cases.”* Her full speech is available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 69143)

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