

Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos following the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg

Dear all,

Today was an important Home Affairs Council – the last one before the summer and before the European Council, and also the last one under the Bulgarian Presidency.

I hereby take the occasion to thank my colleague Valentin Radev for the excellent work of their Presidency in the last six months on everything: migration, border management and security.

Mr Radev was a very good president, he steered meetings in a successful way. His moderate spirit and interventions helped all colleagues find solutions. He will be remembered as a very successful president.

There has been a lot of focus on migration and the asylum reform today so let me start with that.

Firstly, I would like to make clear that Dublin and the asylum reform cannot be disconnected from the bigger migration picture.

We are here today in Luxembourg, almost three years after we launched the first emergency measures to deal with what was then a refugee and migration crisis.

Where do we stand today?

- We have overall significantly fewer arrivals as well as important decreases in the number of asylum requests.
- Our external borders are better protected, thanks to the European Border and Coast guard, which we plan to strengthen even more in the next EU budget.
- We are making good progress in our cooperation with the third countries on return.

Does that mean our work is over? No, far from it.

The situation remains fragile because we still see migratory pressure on some of the migratory routes – although not at all comparable to the crisis period – in Greece, along the Western Balkan route, but also in the Western Mediterranean. The recent lives lost at sea over the past few days are a stark reminder that we need to step up our efforts even more.

In addition to our efforts to better protect our borders and cooperate with third countries, we must uphold our duty to offer protection to those in

need, and towards desperate people fleeing war and persecution.

To uphold this duty, we need a truly common European asylum system.

Asylum seekers cannot simply choose where they go, and we cannot allow secondary movements any longer.

Our system needs to be strict but fair – with procedures that quickly provide protection to those in need while returning those who are not entitled to stay.

This morning, we had open and frank discussions, steered by the compromise prepared by the Bulgarian Presidency.

I will continue to fully support the Presidency's efforts to reach an agreement that is acceptable and fair to all sides.

Finally, I wish to say a word about our ongoing efforts on security and counter-terrorism.

Our discussions today took place in the aftermath of the horrible attack in Liège last week, which shows that the threat against our citizens' security still exists in many ways.

But we have not been idle on this front in Europe. I am glad that yesterday we had a discussion with the ministers on victims of terrorism, and that Council Conclusions on this important matter were adopted.

We need to ensure that victims are treated with respect, dignity, in a professional, tailored and non-discriminatory manner by all actors who come into contact with them.

We also want to improve cooperation mechanisms to support victims across national borders, through the development of a Coordination Centre for European Victims of Terrorism.

At the same time, we are working hand in hand with all Ministers to enhance information exchange and operational cooperation between all relevant authorities.

In this context, I am pleased that the Crime Information Cell pilot project will be operational in the coming days. Europol and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency are fully ready to deploy their personnel aboard Operation Sophia. As we head into summer, we are reminded that this is no moment to slow down our comprehensive efforts – whether on migration, border management or security.

Thank you

Competition: Commission agrees framework for dialogue on competition policy issues with Mexico

Commissioner **Vestager**, responsible for competition policy, said: *"We can all benefit from working with other competition authorities to promote fair global competition. This new framework for dialogue will give further impetus to our excellent cooperation with Mexico's competition authority. We have now formalised the basis for this cooperation and are committed to intensifying our ties, to the benefit of consumers and companies in Mexico and the EU."*

The arrangement between the EU's and Mexico's competition authorities provides a framework for dialogue on competition policy issues and for sharing views, as well as non-confidential information on individual cases.

In particular, the arrangement provides for:

- the exchange of information on competition laws and policies, on multilateral initiatives and advocacy efforts;
- coordination of the enforcement activities of the two competition authorities when working on the same or related matters. This is increasingly important, for example in merger assessment, where a merger can be subject to review in several jurisdictions;
- the possibility for one of the two competition authorities to refer a case to the other, if it involves anti-competitive practices carried out in the latter's territory;
- cooperation on technical matters, for instance through training or exchange of officials.

The signing of this framework for a dialogue on competition policy issues reflects the ambition of enhanced cooperation on competition matters between the EU and Mexico, to the benefit of both.

Background

The European Commission has been cooperating closely with competition authorities in countries outside the EU for many years.

At [bilateral level](#), the Commission has engaged in a wide range of cooperation activities with competition authorities in a number of non-EU countries on the basis of agreements or memoranda of understanding. Moreover, in its Free Trade Agreements, the Commission also negotiates a Competition Chapter which provides rules and disciplines on antitrust, mergers and subsidies.

In addition, the Commission participates actively in the competition-related activities of a number of [multilateral organisations](#) such as the [International Competition Network](#) (ICN), the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD), [UNCTAD](#), the [World Trade](#)

[Organisation](#) (WTO).

The main objective of this bilateral and multilateral cooperation with competition authorities is to promote convergence of competition policy instruments and practices across jurisdictions, exchange views on broader policy and enforcement issues, and facilitate cooperation with competition authorities in other jurisdictions on enforcement activities.

More information is available on the Commission's Competition [website](#).

[European Development Days 2018 – empowering women and girls to shape sustainable development](#)

Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, who will open the EDDs tomorrow, said: *“There can be no sustainable development if half of the world’s population is left behind. We need equal participation and leadership of women and girls in all spheres of life – both in Europe and in the world. This is what we will focus on during these European Development Days.”*

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** emphasised: *“The EDDs gather the development community from all corners of the globe to learn from each other and to inspire new partnerships. Only if we act together, will we manage to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, and empower them to truly be at the forefront of sustainable development”.*

From the European Commission, the President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, together with High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, First-Vice President of the European Commission Frans **Timmermans**, as well as Commissioners Cecilia **Malmström**, Neven **Mimica**, Christos **Stylianides**, Phil **Hogan** and Mariya **Gabriel**, will participate at the event.

The European Development Days will furthermore be joined by many high-level speakers and participants including: Her Majesty **Mathilde**, Queen of the Belgians; Her Majesty Queen **Letizia** of Spain; Her Royal Highness **Mary**, the Crown Princess of Denmark; President of Malta Marie-Louise **Coleiro Preca**; Prime Minister of Norway Erna **Solberg**; President of the European Parliament Antonio **Tajani**; President of Rwanda Paul **Kagamé**; President of Burkina Faso Roch Marc Christian **Kaboré**; President of Niger Mahamadou **Issoufou**; President of Liberia George **Weah**; Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Amina J. **Mohammed**, and many more.

Sixteen **Young Leaders** from around the world will join high-level panels to exchange ideas and experiences with policy-makers and world leaders.

Participation and voices of young people will be additionally promoted this year by a large Youth Lounge that would facilitate youth organisations and activists' gatherings and discussions on gender equality and other development issues.

The [Lorenzo Natali Media Prize 2018](#) will be awarded to journalists for their outstanding reporting on sustainable development, with a special focus on the elimination of violence against women and girls.

Today, in the margins of the European Development Days, Commissioner **Mimica** will sign new support for Burkina Faso, together with President Kaboré. More information will be made available at 18:00 [here](#). On Wednesday, he will sign a new package of assistance for Liberia, together with Liberian President George Weah.

A full [cultural programme](#) featuring international artists, musicians and film-makers will complement the event, while the [Global Village](#), a fair composed of 92 stands, will bring together international stakeholders to share projects or reports related to the EDDs' main themes and thread.

Background

European Development Days were launched in 2006 as a way to gather the international development community and discuss the way forward to eradicate poverty.

Organised by the European Commission, the EDDs have become a kind of "Davos for development", a strong reference point for the international development community to share ideas and experiences in ways that inspire innovative solutions and new partnerships to face the world's most pressing challenges. Since 2006, 100 world leaders, 7 Nobel Prize laureates, 4500 organisations, and 42 000 participants from 154 countries have attended the EDDs.

At the EDDs, journalists will have the opportunity to speak to many participants, including political leaders, policy-makers, business leaders, key personalities of the women's rights movement, entrepreneurs, young people, as well as non-governmental organisations and academia. Specific media facilities and opportunities are offered to the international press such as TV and radio studios, press conference room, Facebook live corner (more information [here](#)).

The opening and closing sessions of the event, as well as several other highlights, will be broadcasted on the [European Development Days' website](#), as well as on [EbS](#).

For More Information

[European Development Days 2018](#)

Join us and get involved:

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Journées européennes du développement 2018 – encourager les femmes à façonner le développement durable

Les [12èmes Journées européennes du développement](#) (EDDs) se tiendront à partir de demain, rassemblant la communauté du développement européenne et internationale sous le thème “Les femmes et les jeunes filles au cœur du développement durable: protéger, autonomiser, investir”. Le président de la Commission européenne Jean-Claude **Juncker**, qui inaugurerait les EDDs demain, a déclaré: *“Il ne peut y avoir de développement durable si la moitié de la population mondiale est laissée de côté. Nous avons besoin de la participation égale et du leadership des femmes dans tous les domaines de la vie, à la fois en Europe et dans le monde. Voici ce sur quoi nous allons nous concentrer durant ces Journées européennes du développement.”* Le commissaire pour la coopération internationale et le développement Neven Mimica a souligné: *“Les EDDs rassemblent la communauté du développement de toutes les parties du monde pour apprendre des uns des autres et inspirer de nouveaux partenariats. C’est uniquement en agissant ensemble, que nous allons pouvoir éliminer toutes les formes de violences faites aux femmes, et encourager les femmes à être au cœur du développement.”* De la Commission européenne, le président Jean-Claude **Juncker**, la haute représentante/vice-présidente Federica **Mogherini**, le premier vice-président Frans **Timmermans**, ainsi que les commissaires Cecilia **Malmström**, Neven **Mimica**, Christos **Stylianides**, Phil **Hogan** et Mariya **Gabriel**, participeront à l’événement. Le [prix média Lorenzo Natali 2018](#) sera attribué à des journalistes pour leur remarquable travail de reportage sur le thème du développement durable, avec un accent particulier sur l’élimination des violences faites aux femmes. Aujourd’hui, en marge des Journées européennes du développement, le commissaire **Mimica** signera, avec le président Kaboré, un nouveau soutien pour le Burkina Faso. Plus d’informations seront disponibles [ici](#) à 18h. Mercredi, il signera une nouvelle enveloppe d’aide pour le Libéria, avec le président George Weah. Un [programme culturel](#) viendra également compléter l’événement avec des artistes internationaux, des musiciens et des réalisateurs, tandis que le [village global](#), une foire composée de 92 stands, rassemblera des parties prenantes internationales pour partager leurs projets et rapports en lien avec les thématiques principales des EDDs. Le communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tél.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tél.: +32 229 92256)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of General Electric Industrial Solutions by ABB

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of General Electric Industrial Solutions (“GEIS”) by ABB Asea Brown Boveri Ltd (“ABB”), both global suppliers of electrical products and systems. The Commission concluded that the transaction would raise no

competition concerns in the relevant markets within the European Economic Area. ABB and GEIS are active worldwide in the manufacture and sale of electrical components and systems. The Commission carried out a broad investigation on a large number of markets and concluded that: i) the respective geographic areas of the companies' activities are complementary, with ABB being stronger in Europe and GEIS in the US; ii) the merged entity will continue facing effective competition from a number of large-scale rivals and specialised or local suppliers; iii) on markets where the merging companies are active at different levels of the supply chain, the Commission found that they would not have the ability to foreclose competitors, notably because alternative suppliers will continue to operate in the market. The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns in any of the markets concerned. A full press release is available in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Trioplast Industrier by Altor Funds

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Trioplast Industrier by Altor Funds, both of Sweden. Trioplast Industrier manufactures packaging solutions based on polyethylene film. Altor Funds makes private equity investments in a variety of economic sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap and the vertical links between their activities are limited. 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.8884](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Springs by AEA and BCI

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over SIWF Holdings, Inc. ("Springs") by AEA Investors LP ("AEA") both of the US and British Columbia Investment Management Corporation ("BCI") of Canada. Springs manufactures and supplies window coverings such as blinds, shutters, curtains, draperies and retractable awnings. AEA is a private equity fund with investments in various sectors, particularly in value added industrial products, specialty chemicals, consumer and retail and services. BCI invests on behalf of public sector clients in fixed income, mortgages, public and private equity, real estate, infrastructure and renewable resources. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the lack of horizontal overlaps and vertical links between the activities of the companies. 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.8918](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: Industrial producer prices stable in euro area

In April 2018, compared with March 2018, industrial producer prices remained stable in the euro area (EA19), while they rose by 0.1% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In March 2018, prices increased by 0.1% in both zones. In April 2018, compared with April 2017, industrial producer prices rose by 2.0% in the euro area and by 2.4% in the EU28. A Eurostat press release is available [here](#).
(For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

La Commission organise une conférence sur l'information prudentielle pour l'ère numérique

La Commission européenne organise aujourd'hui une conférence sur le thème "[Préparer l'information prudentielle pour l'ère numérique](#)". L'événement rassemble des experts institutionnels, industriels et universitaires pour examiner les défis actuels et les opportunités futures liées à l'information prudentielle. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, vice-président chargé de la stabilité financière, des services financiers et de l'union des marchés des capitaux, prononcera un discours présentant la vision de la Commission sur l'information prudentielle dans l'UE. La conférence comprendra également des présentations de l'Autorité européenne des marchés financiers (AEMF ou ESMA) et de la Banque centrale européenne (BCE). Les tables-rondes se concentreront sur la meilleure manière de trouver un équilibre entre, les obligations déclaratives pesant sur les acteurs financiers, d'une part, et de l'autre, les besoins des superviseurs, et traiteront également des possibles moyens de simplifier et rationaliser les obligations d'information à l'avenir. Un streaming en direct de la conférence est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Vanessa Mock – tél.: [+ 32 229 56194](#); Letizia Lupini – tél.: [+32 229 51958](#))

Politique de Cohésion au-delà de 2020: la commissaire Crețu discute de l'avenir de la stratégie pour la région de la mer Baltique en Estonie

Une semaine après la présentation de la [proposition de la Commission pour la future politique de Cohésion](#), la commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** est à Tallinn, en Estonie, pour le forum annuel de la stratégie de l'UE pour la région de la mer Baltique. L'avenir de la macrorégion en tant que pôle numérique mondial et la protection du riche écosystème de la mer Baltique seront au cœur des discussions. La commissaire **Crețu** a déclaré: "Pour la période post 2020, nous proposons de renforcer le soutien des fonds de l'UE, en particulier dans le cadre des programmes Interreg, aux objectifs des stratégies macrorégionales, afin de stimuler la coopération sur des questions cruciales sans frontières ainsi que sur l'innovation." La commissaire **Crețu** discutera de la proposition de la Commission concernant la future politique de Cohésion avec Jüri Ratas, Premier ministre de l'Estonie, Māris Kučinskis, Premier ministre de Lettonie et Saulius Skvernelis, Premier

ministre de Lituanie. Adoptée par le Conseil européen en 2009, la stratégie pour la région de la mer Baltique aide la Suède, le Danemark, l'Estonie, la Finlande, l'Allemagne, la Lettonie, la Lituanie et la Pologne à résoudre ensemble des problèmes communs tels que protéger l'environnement, améliorer les liens de transport et créer de la croissance. (*Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169*)

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

April 2018 compared with March 2018 – Industrial producer prices stable in euro area – Up by 0.1% in the EU28

In April 2018, compared with March 2018, industrial producer prices remained stable in the **euro area** (EA19), while they rose by 0.1% in the **EU28**, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In March 2018, prices increased by 0.1% in both zones.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)