

European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) gather in Athens to discuss the Future of Europe

The EGTCs, as the first European cooperation structure defined by EU law, play a key role in strengthening cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation within the European Union and beyond. They often serve as laboratories of the European Union, testing new and innovative ways of cooperating across borders and work on practical projects aimed at improving the lives of EU citizens. As such, the EGTCs that together make up the CoR's EGTC Platform, gathered in Athens on 4 May to discuss their views on Europe's common future.

The representatives of the EGTCs had an opportunity to discuss their vision of Europe with the EU Commissioner **Dimitris Avramopoulos** who underlined the importance of this cross-border cooperation and the role of the EGTCs in the future of Europe. He underlined that *"What unites European citizens, today and tomorrow, is a common vision and perspective. Local and regional authorities have a key role to play in bringing the EU closer to the citizen and EGTCs make an important contribution towards achieving this"*.

The chair of the CoR's COTER commission **Petr Osvald** underlined the fact that *"The EGTCs are unique entities, both supranational, truly European constructions, but at the same time sub-national. This uniqueness gives them a special perspective that is important to take into account when re-thinking Europe"*.

First vice chair of the COTER commission, **Spyridon Spyros** said, *"The European Union is at a key moment in its history, with decisions being taken over the coming months shaping its long-term direction. In charting this future, we must remember the remarkable achievements of our Union which can be exemplified from the broad peace our once divided continent enjoys, down to the daily, practical work of EGTCs"*.

MEPs **Eliza Voseberg** (EPP) and **Eva Kaili** (S&D), as well as CoR member **Michel Delebarre**, also gave their views on the European Union and highlighted the important role EGTCs can have in the European project. EGTCs look beyond national borders; and they rethink how we work in Europe as they are no longer bound by purely national interests, but by the interests of their cross-border regions, or even wider, by transnational interests.

The participants had the opportunity to hear about innovative approaches to this cross-border cooperation from **Pablo M. Rivera Búa**, Executive Director, EGTC Eurocity Chavez-Verin (PT-ES), **Loïc Delhuvette**, Director of EGTC Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (FR-BE), **Gyula Ockay**, Director of CESCO (HU EGTCs) and **Xavier Bernard-Sans**, Director of EGTC Eurorégion Pyrénées-Méditerranée (ES-FR). The presented projects have a high level of transferability, and through the EGTC Platform, EGTCs can find information

about tried and tested practices that have made border regions more attractive and helped them work better for their inhabitants.

During the event, three Greek EGTCs presented their work; they were represented by **Vassilis Xenos Gavrielis**, Director EGTC AMPHICTYONY, **Giorgos Pappous**, Director EGTC EFXINI POLI, and **Giannis Anastasiadis**, Director EGTC HELICAS.

The debates and viewpoints on the Future of Europe will feed into a declaration that will be shared with all the EGTCs and put forward for adoption at the next EGTC Platform meeting in October.

[Report on the risk assessment of N-\(1-Amino-3,3-dimethyl-1-oxobutan-2-yl\)-1-\(cyclohexylmethyl\)-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide \(ADB-CHMINACA\) in the framework of the Council Decision on new psychoactive substances](#)

This publication presents the data and findings of the risk assessment on N-(1-Amino-3,3-dimethyl-1-oxobutan-2-yl)-1-(cyclohexylmethyl)-1H-indazole-3-carboxamide (ADB-CHMINACA), carried out by the extended Scientific Committee of the EMCDDA on 7-8 November 2017. On the basis of the Risk Assessment Report – and on the initiative of the European Commission – on 14 May 2018, the Council decided that ADB-CHMINACA should be subject to control measures across the Member States.

[Daily News 14 / 05 / 2018](#)

L'état de l'Union: discours du président Juncker à l'Institut universitaire européen

Le président **Juncker** a prononcé vendredi un [discours](#) lors de la conférence organisée par l'Institut universitaire européen sur "L'état de l'Union" qui a eu lieu à Florence, Italie. La haute représentante/vice-présidente **Mogherini**, le vice-président **Šefčovič** et la commissaire **Crețu** ont également participé à

l'événement. Dans son discours, le président **Juncker** a souligné le rôle essentiel de la solidarité en Europe: *"L'Europe et la solidarité sont des choses qui vont ensemble. La solidarité constitue l'objectif originel, permanent de la construction européenne. La solidarité fait en fait partie du pacte fondateur de l'Union européenne."* Le Président a rappelé, entre autres, les progrès réalisés au cours de sa présidence de la Commission européenne, faisant référence au "Plan Juncker" – le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques – qui a mobilisé, dans toute l'Europe, un volume de 284 milliards d'euros; le Socle européen des droits sociaux adopté à Göteborg, Suède, en novembre dernier; les accords commerciaux; et, plus récemment, la proposition de la Commission pour le prochain budget européen à long terme, faisant d'ailleurs appel aux institutions européennes pour une adoption avant les élections européennes de l'année prochaine. *"Rien ne se fait sans patience et sans détermination, a poursuivi le président Juncker, et pour réussir l'Europe, nous avons besoin de beaucoup de patience et encore plus de détermination, de cette patience et de cette détermination dont ont besoin les grandes ambitions et longs trajets."* À la veille de la conférence, le président Juncker a également été accueilli par le maire de Florence, M. Dario Nardella, pour un déjeuner de travail. Le discours du Président **Juncker** dans son intégralité est disponible [ici](#) et la vidéo sur EbS [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Margaritis Schinas – Tél.: +32 229 60524, Natasha Bertaud – Tél.: +32 229 67456)

Commission welcomes three new members to the EIT Governing Board

The Commission has today appointed three new members of the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT): Romana Jordan from Slovenia, Agnès Paillard from France and Gioia Ghezzi from Italy. The EIT Governing Board is composed of professionals chosen for their expertise and experience in education, research and business. The [three women](#) are highly respected for their work in the fields of business, innovation and academia. Dr Jordan has extensive expertise in innovation and currently chairs the Administrative Board of the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators. Ms Paillard has outstanding experience in industry and now chairs *l'Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle*. Ms Ghezzi, currently Chair of *Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane*, brings very wide-ranging experience in industry and international business to the Board. They will join the EIT Governing Board on 1 July 2018, participating in Board meetings from September. They have been appointed for four years. The Governing Board oversees the strategic direction of the EIT and the selection of its operating partners, the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The new Board members will help guide the EIT and the KICs in contributing to Europe's innovation capacity by delivering new and cutting-edge education activities, developing innovative solutions to significant societal challenges and by extending their activities further across Europe's regions. Additional information on the EIT and its Governing Board is available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

WiFi4EU: From tomorrow municipalities can start applying for EU financing of free wireless internet hotspots in public spaces

The first call for municipality applications for free Wi-Fi hotspots will open tomorrow, Tuesday 15 May, at 13:00 (CEST). Through this call some 1,183 municipalities will receive a WiFi4EU voucher of €15,000 to finance Wi-Fi equipment and its installation in public spaces. Upon receiving the voucher, municipalities will have to offer secure Wi-Fi services, free-of-charge and without adverts, for at least 3 years. Funding will only be provided for networks that do not duplicate already existing private or public free Wi-Fi services of a similar quality in the same public spaces. To be eligible to apply, municipalities need to be registered on the WiFi4EU.eu web portal. This portal was opened on the 20 March (see the [press release](#)) and over 17,000 municipalities have already registered. The selection will be based on a 'first-come first-served' basis. To ensure a balanced geographical distribution among Member States, each country will obtain a minimum of 15 and maximum of 95 vouchers. This is the first of a total of five calls that will be published till 2020. More details are in the [Questions and Answers](#), [Factsheet](#), and [video](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Commission proposes to boost further social dialogue within large transnational companies

The European Commission has published today an [evaluation of the European Works Council Directive](#) (recast [Directive 2009/38/EC](#)), adopted in 2009, confirming its added value for workers and companies. European Works Councils are bodies of social dialogue within large transnational companies. Through them, management informs and consults workers on the progress of the business and any significant decision at European level that could affect their employment or working conditions. In light of the positive evaluation of these European Works Councils, the Commission proposes to create a practical handbook and provide €7 million funding to social partners to support the implementation of the Directive and the effectiveness of European Works Councils. Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, commented: *"We should build on good practice among companies already using European Works Councils and on the knowledge of EU social partners to stimulate more take-up of this important instrument and to make existing ones even more effective. And the Commission will put its money where its mouth is: We will dedicate a €7 million grant programme in 2019 to support the implementation of the handbook and step up our support to social dialogue in the EU."* All stakeholders, including national authorities and social partners, consider the rules under the new Directive relevant and find they offer a significant contribution to ensuring transnational social dialogue at company level. According to the report, information for workers improved in terms of quality and scope. The Commission also finds that the effectiveness of the consultation procedure can still be improved. The evaluation report will now be shared with the European Parliament and the Council. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

100 millions d'euros de fonds UE bientôt disponibles pour des projets urbains dans le numérique, l'environnement, la lutte contre la pauvreté et la sécurité

La Commission et la région française des Hauts-de-France, gestionnaire du programme, ont publié [des informations supplémentaires](#) sur le prochain appel à projets dans le cadre des [Actions Innovatrices Urbaines](#). Ces informations contiennent la description des types de projets qui seront éligibles au financement, afin que les villes puissent d'ores et déjà préparer leurs candidatures avant l'ouverture de l'appel en octobre 2018. Comme annoncé dans le [Plan d'action](#) visant à améliorer la protection des espaces publics en octobre 2017, une partie des 100 millions d'euros disponibles sera consacrée à la sécurité, y compris pour des mesures visant à protéger les espaces publics urbains. L'appel sélectionnera également des projets urbains innovants dans les technologies et services numériques, la protection de l'environnement et l'utilisation durable des terrains urbains ainsi que la lutte contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion. Corina **Crețu**, commissaire chargée de la politique régionale, a déclaré: *"La sécurité est devenue l'un des principaux défis auxquels nous devons faire face en tant qu'Union. La proposition de la Commission pour le prochain budget à long terme de l'UE comprend une augmentation significative des investissements dans la sécurité, pour faire face à des menaces telles que le terrorisme et la radicalisation. Mais la politique de cohésion et ses actions innovatrices urbaines peuvent déjà contribuer à des espaces publics plus sûrs dans la période de financement actuelle. Cet appel à projet est un nouvel exemple concret d'une Europe qui protège."* (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169)

Floods in Kenya: EU releases initial €1.5 million to help victims of dam tragedy

In response to the recent devastating floods in Kenya, the European Commission has provided €1.5 million in emergency humanitarian funding to assist the most affected families. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides**, said: *"The European Union is saddened by the loss of life in Kenya from the dam burst in Solai and from extreme flooding in different parts of the country. The EU is doing its part to assist the most affected by this tragedy. Our new funding will help deliver emergency supplies. As members of one global family and humanity, we are committed to help people in crisis, wherever in the world they may be, and to bring relief to their suffering"*. The funding will help cover basic needs such as emergency shelter and basic household essentials, food and nutrition, drinking water and repair of damaged water and sanitation facilities, as well as emergency health care and epidemics prevention. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of General Cable by Prysmian

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the

acquisition of General Cable of the US by Prysmian of Italy. Both Prysmian and General Cable are active worldwide in the development, manufacturing, and supply of cables used in the energy and telecommunications industries. The Commission's investigation focused on the companies' overlapping activities in optical fibre cables, general wiring cables, and power cables of different voltages, both for submarine and underground use. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns as a number of strong competitors will remain in the market after the transaction. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8770](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Altamira Cyprus by Cyprus Cooperative Bank and Apollo Management

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Altamira Cyprus by Cyprus Cooperative Bank ("CCB"), both of Cyprus, and Apollo Capital Management, L.P. ("Apollo") of the US. Altamira Cyprus is active in the management, enforcement and recovery of non-performing loans, currently from CCB only. It intends to expand its activities to provide its services to other banks and financial institutions in Cyprus. CCB is a bank, active in retail and corporate banking and bankassurance, exclusively in Cyprus. Apollo is a group of global investment funds. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as it would increase the number of non-performing loan management service providers in Cyprus, thus improving the competitive environment. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8888](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

STATEMENTS

Déclaration de la Commissaire Thyssen suite aux votes au Conseil et au Parlement européen en faveur de la proposition de la Commission concernant le soutien financier aux anciens travailleurs de Caterpillar

"Je suis très heureuse de voir que, [moins de deux mois après notre proposition](#) et deux semaines après que le Parlement européen l'ait soutenue, les Etats-Membres aient aujourd'hui approuvé un soutien financier de 4,6 millions d'euros du [Fonds européen d'ajustement à la mondialisation \(FEM\)](#) en faveur des travailleurs de Caterpillar ayant perdu leur emploi. Ce soutien financier sera un outil essentiel pour permettre aux 2 300 travailleurs licenciés à trouver un nouvel emploi. En mars, la Commission a proposé de fournir une aide européenne à la Belgique pour des mesures d'accompagnement à la recherche d'emploi et de réapprentissage. Ces mesures mettent l'accent sur les priorités de développement de Charleroi telles que définies dans [le plan CatCh](#). Le soutien du FEM permettra de couvrir 60% du montant nécessaire, le reste provenant du budget régional de la Wallonie. L'aide du FEM est une

démonstration très concrète de la solidarité de l'UE envers les travailleurs à Charleroi, qui font face à une perturbation économique majeure. Je suis donc très contente que dans notre [proposition de budget pour la période 2021-2027 présentée le 2 mai dernier](#), nous ayons augmenté le montant dont disposera ce Fonds, ce qui nous permettra de continuer à soutenir des travailleurs dans des moments difficiles, comme c'est le cas pour les anciens travailleurs de Caterpillar aujourd'hui." (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The EU and Cuba hold their first Joint Council meeting in Brussels

On 15 May, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will chair the first ministerial-level EU-Cuba Joint Council, as foreseen under the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) signed by both parties on 12 December 2016. The Republic of Cuba will be represented by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, and EU Member States will also participate. The meeting will provide an opportunity to advance the [implementation of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, which has been provisionally applied since 1 November 2017](#). At this occasion, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: "The EU-Cuba agreement sets the stage for a consistent and reliable partnership with Cuba and its people. We are committed to support Cuba's economic and social reforms. Jointly, we want to foster sustainable development, promote democracy and human rights, and find common solutions to global challenges, such as climate change and security related topics. I look forward to the first Joint Council under the Agreement to get it off the ground with concrete joint actions." Commissioner **Mimica** added: "The EU is actively supporting Cuba in its ambitious goal to draw a quarter of its energy mix from renewable energy by 2030. Together we will launch an EU programme to this end, which will help to share best practices, provide training to Cuban key actors and help to attract international investment in the sector." The EU and Cuba are expected to agree deepening engagement on areas such as the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development, human rights, non-proliferation as well as other areas laid out in the Agreement. A press conference by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla will take place on Tuesday at 18:00 in the Council press room and can be followed live on [EbS](#). A factsheet on EU-Cuba Relations can be found [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32229 69140; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +3222992256)

Federica Mogherini and Michel Barnier to discuss the future of EU foreign, security and defence policy

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and the European Commission's Chief Negotiator Michel **Barnier** will discuss today the future of the European Union's foreign, security and defence policy after Brexit, in a panel discussion organised by the [European Institute for Security Studies](#). The event can be followed live on [EBS](#) from 17:00 CET (*For more information: Maja Kocijancic –Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio –Tel.: +32 229 62076*)

Commissioner on official visit to Berlin

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera **Jourová**, will be in Berlin on Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 May to meet her counterparts in the new German government and deliver a speech on data protection. This morning, she delivered a keynote speech opening the [8th European Data Protection days](#). She then met Justice Minister, Katherina Barley to discuss among others the Facebook / Cambridge Analytica follow-up, data protection, [collective redress](#) and [whistleblower protection](#). In the afternoon, she will exchange views with the Minister for Family, Senior, Woman and Youth, Franziska Giffey on the [work-life balance proposal](#) and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior Helmut Teichmann on [electronic evidence](#). Finally, she will exchange views with Klaus Müller, the Managing Director of the Association of German consumer protection agencies (VZBV) on the [New Deal for Consumers](#). Tomorrow, she will participate in an extraordinary session of the Legal Affairs and Consumer Protection committee of the Bundestag. She will then meet with Dorothee Bär, Minister for Digitalisation. (*For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Dans le cadre de son tour de France des nouvelles Régions, le commissaire Moscovici fera étape à Tours demain

Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire pour les affaires économiques et financières, la fiscalité et les douanes, est en visite en Région Centre-Val de Loire demain, mardi 15 mai. Il assistera d'abord à la réunion des Présidents de Régions à l'association "Régions de France" à Paris. Puis, à l'invitation de M. François Bonneau, président de la Région-Centre Val de Loire, il se rendra à Tours et participera à un [dialogue citoyen](#) au lycée Jean Monnet sur la mobilité des jeunes. Ensuite il visitera le [Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Techniques pour l'Industrie Mécanique](#) et rencontrera les bénéficiaires de [l'Association pour le Droit à l'Initiative Economique](#). Enfin, il participera à la rencontre de 300 acteurs économiques de la région Centre-Val de Loire au Centre de création contemporaine Olivier Debré. (*Pour plus d'information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 50055*)

Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete to discuss decarbonisation agenda at European Economic Congress in Katowice

On Tuesday 15 May, Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** will attend the 10th edition of the [European Economic Congress](#) in Katowice, Poland. The event is one of the largest business occasions in Central Europe,

focusing on debates on the key economic and social issues affecting Poland and the EU. Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will take part in two panels, one on “The world for climate, or what the climate summit in Katowice will bring” and another on “EU Coal Regions in Transition”. At 13.30 he will participate in a press conference. In addition, the Commissioner will have bilateral meetings with Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Polish Minister of Energy, Jadwiga Emilewicz, Polish Minister of Entrepreneurship and Technology, Jerzy Buzek, chairman of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) of the European Parliament and Michał Kurtyka, recently appointed president of the COP 24 that will take place in Katowice in December. In his meetings, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will take stock of the latest round of formal UN climate negotiations which concluded on 10 May in Bonn, and discuss key energy issues in the region including the opportunities and challenges coal regions face in the clean energy transition. More information about the Platform for Coal Regions in Transition [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioner Navracsics in Rome for international conference on shrines and pilgrim routes in Central & Eastern Europe

Commissioner **Navracsics** will be in Rome tomorrow, 15 May, to participate in an international conference on shrines and pilgrim routes in Central & Eastern Europe, organised by the Hungarian Embassy to the Holy See.

Commissioner **Navracsics** will demonstrate how the Commission is supporting religious heritage through the 2018 [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#). One example is the “[Ringing the bells](#)” initiative by the National Coordinator for the European Year in Germany, which will see churches across Europe ring their bells to mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September. The Commissioner will invite religious authorities in the Central and Eastern European Countries to support this day. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt– Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Commissioner Stylianides takes part in the International Conference on The Victims Of Ethnic And Religious Violence in the Middle East

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is speaking at the [3rd International Conference on The Victims Of Ethnic And Religious Violence in the Middle East](#), co-hosted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, Didier Reynders, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Lebanese Republic, Gebran Bassil. The Conference aims at convening the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Middle Eastern countries as well as other countries concerned. The Conference will assess the current risks to ethnic and religious minorities in conflict areas in the Middle East and identify urgent measures to ensure a continued, safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced communities. The event will give a voice to representatives of minorities and allow them to express their needs and what they see as durable

solutions. The Commissioner's speech will be made available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

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

Ukraine: EU adds five persons involved in the organisation of Russian presidential elections in illegally annexed Crimea and Sevastopol to sanctions list

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Kenya floods: EU releases initial €1.5 million to help victims of dam tragedy

The funding will help cover basic needs such as emergency shelter and basic household essentials, food and nutrition, drinking water and repair of damaged water and sanitation facilities as well as emergency health care and epidemics prevention.

"The European Union is saddened by the loss of life in Kenya from the dam burst in Solai and from extreme flooding in different parts of the country. The EU is doing its part to assist the most affected by this tragedy. Our new funding will help deliver emergency supplies. As members of one global family and humanity, we are committed to help people in crisis, wherever in the world they may be, and to bring relief to their suffering," said Christos **Stylianides**, the Commissioner for Humanitarian aid and Crisis Management.

Background

Kenya has been facing ongoing floods, which have so far claimed the lives of over 170 people and displaced more than 300 000. On 9 May, the Patel dam in Solai area of Nakuru county, 190 km north-west of Nairobi, burst its banks after heavy rains, killing at least 40 people.

At least 40 counties have been affected by the flooding and over 8 000 hectares of farmland decimated, causing widespread damage to crops, livestock and food stocks. The current flooding is likely to continue as heavy rainfall is forecast to continue for the coming weeks in the region.