

[Plant health newsletter: what's on the horizon?](#)



EFSA's monthly round-up of plant health coverage in the media is now available on the EFSA Journal platform. The [newsletter](#) gathers together published articles and updates on plant pests that have been identified as potential threats to crops, forests and parks in the European Union.

The newsletter is primarily intended to help risk managers and risk assessors in the field of plant health and to alert the European Commission and EU countries to emerging or growing threats. Now EFSA is also making it available to stakeholders, journalists, academics and anyone who has an interest in the area.

The newsletter is produced in cooperation with the European Commission's [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#) and EU Member States.

Giuseppe Stancanelli, leader of EFSA's plant health team, said: "Media monitoring is an essential part of EFSA's horizon-scanning activities. By regularly screening media and scientific publications we can identify new, emerging or recurring pests – insects, bacteria, viruses and other organisms – that might be of concern to the EU territory.

"This information helps risk assessors and risk managers to prepare for and prevent possible outbreaks of new plant pests and diseases."

The newsletter has been piloted with risk managers at the European Commission for the past two years and is now publicly available via the [EFSA Journal](#). All the [back issues](#) are also available.

[Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama](#)

Good afternoon. Let me thank you, Prime Minister Rama, dear friend, dear Edi, for your warm welcome. I am always happy to return here. Let me also thank you for the great honour of receiving the *Benemerenti* medal. You told me I deserve this medal for my support for the European integration process of Albania. I am very proud to receive this distinction, but the greatest award for me would be the opening of accession negotiations with Albania.

When I visited Tirana April last year, I spoke of my dream for your country and the entire region to follow the same path as my country, Poland, towards the EU. Today, one year on, I can say that, thanks to your efforts, we have come closer to that goal. No one should have the slightest doubt about this. Here in Tirana as well as in all EU capitals.

In June, the European Union's Heads of State or Government committed to deliver a "clear and substantive" decision on whether to open accession talks with you and your neighbour, North Macedonia, in October this year.

We are coming closer to this moment. I have always thought that the EU should open accession talks with both Albania and North Macedonia, in line with the positive recommendations from the Commission. I have not changed my mind. Your country must be treated with equal respect and on its own merits, just like all other countries in the region that share your goal of becoming EU members one day.

In our meeting today, we also discussed the importance of your country maintaining a solid track record as regards the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organised crime. The EU's obsession with the rule of law – and I would add with "reconciliation" and good neighbourly relations – is part of our DNA and will not go away when you become members. Otherwise, the European project would stand on shaky grounds.

But equally important is that Albania's and the region's accession to the EU is in the best interest of the whole of Europe. Because there will be no stable and safe Europe without the integration of all the Balkans in the EU. What is at stake is our common future. And no one is doing anyone any favours here. Thank you.

[Daily News 17 / 09 / 2019](#)

Croatia: EU invests in world-class health research centre for children

The EU is investing more than €48 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) to extend the Children's Hospital in Srebrnjak, on the outskirts of Zagreb, Croatia. The project involves the construction of a 15,000-m² facility and the purchase of research and medical equipment, in order to transform the hospital into a clinical research centre where new medicines can be developed and used. Once completed in February 2022, the hospital will focus on treating common and chronic diseases in children and adolescents. Commissioner for Health & Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** said: *"The EU Cohesion Policy is about improving peoples' lives, and in this case, about saving lives. Thanks to this project, children in Croatia will benefit from the latest medical research and Croatian researchers will enjoy world-class facilities near Zagreb to conduct their work."* The aim of the project is also to retain talented medical researchers and practitioners in Croatia,

with an expected increase in hospital staff by 67%. The centre's work will cover medical fields such as asthma, allergies, rheumatology, cardiology, paediatric surgery, sports medicine, rehabilitation and clinical trials. Finally, the new facility will have an eco-friendly design, with reduced waste and water consumption. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

Plan Juncker: La Banque européenne d'investissement investit 80 millions d'euros dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel

La Banque Européenne d'Investissement (BEI) investit 80 millions d'euros dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel, soutenu par le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques (EFIS) ou Plan Juncker. Eiffel Essentiel est dédié aux transitions qui affectent ces secteurs clefs : l'énergie, l'agriculture et la santé. Le fonds ambitionne de financer une vingtaine d'entreprises pour des montants d'investissement de 10 à 50 millions d'euros par entreprise, en une ou plusieurs fois. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire européen pour les affaires économiques et financières, la fiscalité et les douanes, a déclaré : « *L'UE s'est engagée à soutenir des projets d'investissement durable tels que celui qui est présenté aujourd'hui. En garantissant l'investissement de 80 millions d'euros de la Banque européenne d'investissement dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel, le plan Juncker aide les entreprises du secteur des énergies propres et de l'agriculture durable, en leur permettant d'accéder à des financements indispensables à leur développement.* » L'engagement cible du fonds, qui restera ouvert à souscription jusqu'à fin 2020, est de 400 millions d'euros. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). En juillet 2019, le plan Juncker a mobilisé 424 milliards d'euros d'investissements supplémentaires dans toute l'UE, dont 70,4 milliards en France. Le plan soutient actuellement 967 000 petites et moyennes entreprises en Europe. *(Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229-56153; Siobhan Millbright – Tél.: +32 229 57361)*

Commission announces the winners of the EU Contest for Young Scientists

The winners of the [EU Contest for Young Scientists](#) were announced today during the [31st edition of the competition](#) that is being held in Sofia, Bulgaria. This year the top prizes were awarded to Adam Kelly from Ireland for the project "Optimised Simulation of General Quantum Circuits", Magnus Quaade Oddershede from Denmark for "The wingtip's influence on the efficiency of airplane wings", Alex Korocencev and Felix Christian Sewing from Germany for "Hoverboard – a Magnetically Levitated Vehicle", and Leo Li Takemaru and Poojan Pandya from the USA for "Investigating the Role of the Novel ESCRT-III Recruiter CCDC11 in HIV Budding: Identifying a Potential Target for Antiviral Therapy". The winners will receive €7000 for each of the four outstanding projects. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"I warmly congratulate the winners of this year's contest on their outstanding achievement. I am convinced that we will see many of the 154 participants hitting the headlines in the coming years with breakthrough discoveries and innovations. We need all the bright minds in Europe to make positive and impactful change!"* The EU Contest for Young Scientists, which

was set up by the European Commission in 1989, aims at giving students the opportunity to compete with the best of their contemporaries at European level, meet others with similar abilities and interests and get guidance from some of the most prominent scientists in Europe. It also complements and supports national efforts to attract young people to study science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and to eventually pursue careers in science and research. The number of participating young scientists has risen from 53 in the first competition in 1989 to an average of 150 a year. More information about the prize itself and the other winners is available [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

EU invests €210 million to help bring innovative projects to market

The European Commission will invest a total of €210 million to 108 innovative projects helping them to reach the market faster. The funding is provided through the pilot phase of the [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC), which supports innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally. Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos **Moedas**, said: “Each of the companies receiving funding through the European Innovation Council is offering a solution to a problem that affects the daily lives of Europeans, be it in the area of health, environment, energy and more. I am delighted to see that the European Innovation Council is already delivering on its promise of supporting innovators with the vision and ability of bringing about positive change in the world”. The selected projects include a hybrid simulation platform for neurosurgery, a technology replicating the rain process to supply sustainable drinking water, an anti-metastatic cancer vaccine, a technology to map air quality with high-spatial resolution and many more. They will receive funding under two strands (the EIC Accelerator and the Fast Track to Innovation) of the €3 billion pilot of the European Innovation Council, which runs from 2018 to 2020, under the EU research and innovation programme [Horizon 2020](#). From now on, the EIC Accelerator will allow for optional equity investment in addition to a grant. Innovative companies can apply only for a grant or for up to €17.5 million in combined grant and equity financing to scale up quickly and effectively. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel. +32 229 83583)

Mergers: Commission clears E.ON’s acquisition of Innogy, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition by E.ON of Innogy’s distribution and consumer solutions business as well as certain of its electricity generation assets. The approval is conditional on full compliance with a commitments package offered by E.ON. E.ON and RWE, which controls Innogy, are both energy companies based in Germany. They are active across the energy supply chain, from generation and

wholesale to distribution and retail supply of electricity and gas. They are each active in several Member States but their activities mostly overlap in Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and the UK. Today's decision follows an [in-depth investigation](#) of E.ON's proposed acquisition of Innogy's distribution and consumer solutions business as well as certain electricity generation assets of Innogy. During its in-depth investigation the Commission had concerns that the transaction, as initially notified, would have significantly reduced competition in the following markets: (a) German market for the supply of electricity for heating purposes, (b) German market for the supply of electric vehicle charging stations on motorways; (c) Czech market for the retail supply of gas (to all customers) and electricity (to households and small businesses); (d) Hungarian market for the retail supply of electricity to unregulated businesses. To address the Commission's competition concerns, E.ON offered the following commitments: (i) To divest most of E.ON's customers supplied with heating electricity in Germany and, at the option of the purchaser, all assets that may be needed to operate effectively in the market; (ii) To discontinue the operation of 34 electric charging stations located on German motorways.; (iii) To divest E.ON's business in the retail supply of electricity to unregulated customers in Hungary, including all assets and staff; (iv) To divest Innogy's entire business in the retail supply of electricity and gas in Czechia, including all assets and staff. The Commission concluded that the transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. This decision is conditional upon the full compliance with the commitments. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"It is important that all Europeans and businesses can buy electricity and gas at competitive prices. Today, we can approve the acquisition of Innogy by E.ON because the commitments offered by E.ON will ensure that the merger will not lead to less choice and higher prices in the countries where these companies operate."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de SFR FTTH par les groupes Allianz, OMERS et Altice

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de SFR FTTH, entreprise basée en France, par AGF Benelux S.à.r.l., une filiale exclusive de Allianz SE, toutes deux basées en Allemagne, OMERS Infrastructure European Holdings B.V. ("OMERS Infrastructure"), basée aux Pays-Bas, et Altice S.A. basée en France. SFR FTTH comprend l'activité liée au réseau fibre de SFR S.A., société exclusivement contrôlée par Altice, dans les zones du territoire français se trouvant en dehors des zones très denses définies par l'Autorité de régulation des communications électroniques et des postes. Allianz est un groupe de services financiers globaux, active dans l'assurance et la gestion d'actifs. OMERS Infrastructures est la branche infrastructures de l'administrateur de fonds de pension canadien OMERS Administration Corporation. Altice est active dans la fourniture de services de

communications électroniques et les médias. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où Allianz et SFR FTTH ne sont pas actives sur le même marché ou sur des marchés liés. En outre, SFR FTTH étant déjà sous le contrôle conjoint des groupes OMERS et Altice, il n'y aura aucun changement en termes de chevauchement des activités de SFR FTTH et, respectivement, d'OMERS et d'Altice. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet](#) concurrence de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.9464](#). (Pour plus d'information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the merger between Global Payments and Total System Services

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the merger between Global Payments Inc. and Total System Services Inc. ("TSYS"), both of the US. Global Payments is a global provider of payment solutions, which offers services including enterprise and payment management solutions, payment card processing, online payment portal solutions, and merchant acquiring. TSYS is a global provider of payment solutions, which offers services including payment card processing, merchant acquiring services, and products, such as software for payment card processing. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given, on the one hand, the limited horizontal overlap between the companies' activities and, on the other hand, the absence of anti-competitive vertical effects resulting from the combination of the activities of TSYS and Global Payments. 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.9452](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Phoenix Wind Repower, LLC by UBS AG and Ares Management Corporation

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of Phoenix Wind Repower, LLC ("Phoenix") of the US by UBS AG of Switzerland and Ares Management Corporation ("Ares") of the US. Phoenix owns interests in wind farms in Texas. UBS provides financial services to private, corporate and institutional clients. Ares is an asset manager. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because Phoenix is not active outside the US. 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.9530](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Food safety: the Commission publishes its annual report on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The 2018 report (hyperlink to be added) on the use of the [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed](#) published today shows that a total of 3699 notifications of food or feed risks were reported by the Member States to the European Commission last year. Of these, 1118 were classified as 'alert', indicating a serious health risk for which swift action was required by food operators or authorities. Aflatoxins in nuts and mercury in swordfish were the two most frequently reported issues in food checked at the EU border and on the EU market. As in previous years, only a small percentage of the notifications in 2018 related to feed (9%) and food contact materials (4%). Also in 2018, a significant number of notifications related to a multi-country foodborne outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* linked to frozen corn. The RASFF was instrumental for tracing and removing the affected products from the market. Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, in charge of Health and Food Safety said: *"2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the RASFF which is recognised across the board, within, and outside the EU, as a crucial tool to ensure that food placed on the market in the EU is safe. Traceability of food and, if need be, a swift removal of goods from the market are commitments we have towards consumers. The increased activity of the RASFF network as shown by this year's report is a confirmation of the enhanced cooperation by food operators and Member States' authorities, which constitutes a positive message for consumers".* (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

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

[EIOPA calls for a sound cyber resilience framework](#)

The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published today [the report](#) on "Cyber Risk for Insurers – Challenges and Opportunities".

The increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber attacks, the fast digital transformation and the increased use of big data and cloud computing make insurers increasingly susceptible to cyber threats, in particular considering the amount of confidential policyholder information insurers are possessing. This calls for a sound cyber resilience framework for insurers.

On the other hand, the digital economy and the advance of technology offer opportunities to cyber underwriters. Appropriate cyber insurance coverages can make a valuable contribution to manage cyber risk faced by businesses and organisations. A well-developed cyber insurance market can play a key role in enabling the transformation to the digital economy.

Insurers play a key role in this transformation: not only are insurers

susceptible to cyber threats directly themselves, but they also offer coverage for cyber risk through their underwriting activities. This report analysed cyber risk from both angles based on responses from 41 large (re)insurance groups across 12 European countries with the aim to further enhance the level of understanding of cyber risk for the European insurance sector.

The findings confirm the need for a sound cyber resilience framework for insurers and identified the key challenges faced by the cyber underwriters. In particular, clear, comprehensive and common requirements on the governance of cybersecurity as part of operational resilience would help ensure the safe provision of insurance services. This would include a consistent set of definitions and terminology on cyber risks to enable a more structured and focused dialogue between the industry, supervisors and policymakers, which could further enhance the cyber resilience of the insurance sector. Ultimately, further actions to strengthen the resilience of the insurance sector against cyber vulnerabilities are essential, in particular considering the dynamic nature of cyber threats.

Regarding the cyber insurance market, the report finds that, although still small in size, the European cyber insurance industry is growing rapidly, with an increase of 72% in 2018 in terms of gross written premium for the insurers surveyed in the report, amounting to EUR 295 million in 2018 compared to EUR 172 million in 2017. However, non-affirmative cyber exposures (where cyber risk is neither explicitly included nor excluded within an insurance policy) remain a source of concern. While common efforts to assess and address non-affirmative cyber risks are under way, some insurers have adopted a 'wait-and-see' approach to address non-affirmative cyber risk, where the implementation of actions plans to address non-affirmative exposure depends on the materialization of future events. Therefore, further effort is needed to tackle properly non-affirmative cyber exposures to address the issue of potential accumulation risk and provide clarity to policyholders.

Finally, enhanced data collection on cyber incidents and losses should allow insurers to manage and price their affirmative cyber risk exposures more effectively. Having common and harmonized standards for both cyber risk measurement and cyber incident reporting purposes could greatly facilitate this. To this end, creating a European-wide cyber incident-reporting database, based on a common taxonomy, could be considered.

Background

This report is based on the responses of 41 large (re)insurance groups across 12 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The sample under consideration is very similar to the one of the EIOPA 2018

Insurance Stress Test, representing a market coverage of around 75% of total consolidated assets.

The only difference is the non-participation of one group included in the sample for the Stress Test 2018 exercise.

[EIOPA establishes Consultative Expert Group on Digital Ethics in Insurance](#)

□The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) established today its Consultative Expert Group on Digital Ethics in Insurance.

As a follow-up of its recent thematic review on the use of [Big Data Analytics \(BDA\) in motor and health insurance](#), EIOPA established a Consultative Expert Group to assist the Authority in the development of digital responsibility principles in insurance.

The thematic review concluded that there are many opportunities arising from BDA and digitalisation more broadly, but also some risks that need to be further addressed. For this reason, the digital responsibility principles will address the use of new business models, technologies and data sources in insurance from the perspective of fairness and taking into account ethical considerations. While they are expected to cover different areas of the insurance value chain, specific focus will be given to pricing and underwriting, given their specific importance in the insurance sector.

The Consultative Expert Group may also act as a sounding board for EIOPA in other related policy initiatives in the area of InsurTech, for instance by supporting EIOPA in promoting a sound governance framework around the use of BDA tools such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

EIOPA's [call for expression of interest of July 2019](#) resulted in an extraordinary group of high-level experts with a diverse set of experiences and expertise.

EIOPA is pleased to confirm the composition of its Consultative Expert Group on Digital Ethics in Insurance. For further details, please refer to the table below.

The group will meet for the first time on Tuesday, 8 October.

Andreas Hufenstuhl
Antti Talonen

PricewaterhouseCoopers
Tampere University

Chris Holland	Loughborough University
Chris K. Madsen	Aegon
Christian Hugo Hoffmann	Syntherion
Cristina Bellido Andujar	CaixaBank
Daniel John	HUK-COBURG
David Wassong	Generali
Desislav Danov	FinTech Guardian
Edoardo Carlucci	Better Finance
Esko Kivisaari	Actuarial Association of Europe
Fernando Acevedo Frías	Independent consultant
Florian Pons	Institute des Actuaire
Gemma Garriga	Allianz
Gert Meyers	KU Leuven
Jasper De Meyer	BEUC
Jaya Handa	Liberty
Jens-Daniel Florian	Marsh
João Torres Barreiro	Willis Towers Watson
Lars Gatschke	Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband e.V.
Liisa Halme	If P & C Insurance
Liz McFall	University of Edinburgh
Lutz Wilhelmy	Swiss Re
Malika Labi	Europ Assistance
Marcello Zacchetti	Cattolica Assicurazioni
Marcin Detyniecki	AXA
Martin Mullins	University of Limerick
Mirko Kraft	Coburg University of Applied Sciences and Arts
Olivier Jérusalmy	Finance Watch
Owen Morris	Aviva
Paolo Stefano Giudici	University of Pavia
Pedro Écija Serrano	Grant Thornton
Petra Žárská	Spoločnosť Ochrany Spotrebiteľov S.O.S
Philippe Cotelle	Airbus
Piotr Czublun	CZUBLUN TRĘBICKI Law Office
Raymon Badloe	Achmea
Reza Khorshidi	AIG
Rui Ferreira	Zurich Insurance Group
Thomas Brenøe	Insurance & Pension Denmark
Virginia Antonini	Reale Mutua Assicurazioni