

One year anniversary of Greece successfully concluding stability support programme

Today marks one year since Greece successfully concluded its European Stability Mechanism (ESM) stability support programme. The 3-year stability support programme took a coordinated approach to tackling long-standing and deep-rooted structural issues that contributed to Greece experiencing an economic crisis and losing access to financial markets. In total, Greece's European partners provided €61.9 billion in loans in return for the Greek authorities implementing a comprehensive reform package. When taken together, these reforms have laid the foundations for an economic recovery, putting in place the fundamental conditions needed for sustained growth, job creation and sound public finances. Indicators confirm that, while work remains to be done, the efforts undertaken are delivering tangible benefits. For instance, the unemployment rate fell to 17.6% in April 2019. Although this is still an unacceptably high rate, it is the first time this indicator has fallen below 18% since July 2011 and is down from a peak of 27.9% in July 2013. It remains crucial that the Greek authorities continue to focus on fully addressing the social and economic consequences of the crisis years. Greece can count on the European Commission's support in this effort. The country is now fully integrated into the European Semester and the continued delivery of agreed reforms is being monitored under the Enhanced Surveillance framework.

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *"One year ago Greece completed its ESM stability support programme to restore financial stability and promote growth and job creation. Greece's economy has benefited from reforms and the boost in confidence. The growth is steady, unemployment is going down and public finances have improved. It is important to build on these achievements by continuing on the path of responsible fiscal policies and structural reforms, including those aimed at strengthening the Greek financial sector."* Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Greece has come a long way since completing its stability support programme a year ago. Economic data is showing positive signs, indicating efforts will continue to bear fruit for a society that has seen a lot of hardship. However, challenges remain and willingness to engage, actively, in the process of reform completion – and to work closely with European partners – will be essential to supporting stability, growth, job creation, and a better social welfare system in the months and years to come. It is important that all public and private actors work together to secure and sustain a better future for the Greek people. The European Commission will remain by Greece's side and support its central role as a member of the European Union and euro area."*

More details on the stability support programme are available [here](#). A factsheet on Greece's key economic indicators is available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

State aid: Commission approves €60 million public support for broadband network project in the Carinthia region in Austria

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, €60 million of public support for the deployment and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for the roll-out of ultrafast broadband internet in remote rural areas of the Carinthia region in Austria. The beneficiary of the aid is a newly established company owned by the state of Carinthia. Third party service providers will be granted access to the broadband network on equal and non-discriminatory terms. The public support will enable internet speeds of at least 100 megabits per second (Mbps) for both download and upload in underserved rural areas in Carinthia. These networks can be upgraded to provide download speeds of one Gigabit (1000 Mbps). The Commission assessed the measure under its [2013 Broadband Guidelines](#) and concluded that the measure is in line with EU State aid rules. Indeed, the positive effects of the measure on competition in the Austrian broadband market outweigh any potential negative effects brought about by the State aid. The support measure complies with the Digital Agenda for Europe and the 2025 objectives for high speed internet connections set out in the Commission's Communication on a [Gigabit Society](#). More information will be available, once possible confidentiality issues have been resolved, on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.52224. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Eurostat: La production reste inchangée dans la construction en zone euro, et baisse de 0,3% dans l'UE28

En juin 2019 par rapport à mai 2019, la production dans la construction, corrigée des variations saisonnières, est restée stable dans la zone euro (ZE19) et a diminué de 0,3% dans l'UE28, selon les premières estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En mai 2019, la production dans la construction avait diminué de 0,5% dans la zone euro et de 0,4% dans l'UE28. En juin 2019 par rapport à juin 2018, la production dans la construction a progressé de 1,0% dans la zone euro et de 0,6% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tél.: +32 229 56182)

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[June 2019 compared with May 2019 –](#)

Production in construction unchanged in euro area – Down by 0.3% in EU28

In June 2019 compared with May 2019, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector remained unchanged in the **euro area** (EA19) and decreased by 0.3% in the **EU28**, according to first estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In May 2019, production in construction decreased by 0.5% in the **euro area** and by 0.4% in the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2019

This is a key year for International Humanitarian Law, as 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. As the risk humanitarian workers face continues to increase, the European Union pays tribute to the commitment of those who risk their lives to deliver humanitarian aid worldwide. The unequivocal respect of international law, the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their unfettered access to those in need are a major concern for the European Union.

At the occasion of the [2019 World Humanitarian Day](#), High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement:

“Violations of International Humanitarian Law continue to be one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians, as well as the protection of humanitarian and medical workers.

Violence against humanitarian workers affects civilians and prevents millions of people from receiving life-saving assistance. Saving lives should not cost lives.

Around 400 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks in 2018, making it the second worst year in history. Over one third of them were killed and the other third was kidnapped. World Humanitarian Day is an

opportunity to honour these dedicated humanitarians, and to advocate for their safety and security.

Humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality are the principles on which humanitarian aid is grounded. These should protect relief workers, enabling them to operate freely.

The EU and its Member States are the world leader in humanitarian assistance. Promoting principled humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law remains at the core of our international engagement.”

Background

Civilians in conflict zones are routinely killed or wounded in targeted or indiscriminate attacks. More than 70 million people are forcibly displaced by conflict, violence and human rights violations. Over 200 million people are relying on humanitarian assistance.

The EU contributes to the global respect and compliance with International Humanitarian Law through advocacy and political measures such as dialogue, statements and initiatives, as well as through funding to partner organisations to ensure humanitarian access.

In 2017, the EU mobilised more than €1.75 billion for humanitarian aid operations in over 80 countries around the world.

For More Information

[Factsheet – International Humanitarian Law](#)

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Italy: Cohesion Policy invests in better rail connection from Naples to Bari

The EU invests €114 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to build a new 15.5 km section of railway between Naples' Central station and the city of Cancello on the Naples-Bari line, a crucial transport link for Southern Italy's economic growth and regional development. Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said: *“Investing in better rail connections in Southern Italy means investing in the real economy of the region as it will directly benefit local businesses and tourism and improve territorial cohesion in the country. And of course, inhabitants will enjoy more comfortable travel conditions and, ultimately, better air quality in the region.”* The modernisation of the Naples-Cancello section will better link suburban and regional rail networks with the high-speed system in the Naples metropolitan area and northern regions. Works should be completed in October

2022. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique de France

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de l'«[Absinthe de Pontarlier](#)» en tant qu'indication géographique de boisson spiritueuse. L'«Absinthe de Pontarlier» est un spiritueux limpide de couleur jaune pâle tirant sur le vert. Son degré d'alcool lors de la mise en marché est supérieur ou égal à 45%. Le processus de production a lieu dans plusieurs communes – dont la commune de Pontarlier qui donne son nom à la boisson – situées dans le département du Doubs dans l'est de la France. Dès le XVIII^{ème} siècle, de nombreux textes font état de l'élixir d'Absinthe dans la région de Pontarlier. Cette activité prend ensuite de l'ampleur jusqu'à atteindre 66 000 litres journaliers en 1914. L'Absinthe de Pontarlier est alors exportée partout dans le monde et le monde artistique parisien de l'époque participe très activement à l'engouement autour de cette boisson. En 1921, la législation impose aux boissons anisées de ne pas contenir d'absinthe. Depuis 1988, année où les boissons spiritueuses à base d'absinthe furent à nouveau autorisées, on assiste dans la région de Pontarlier à une renaissance de la production de la plante et de l'élaboration de cette boisson spiritueuse. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre les 238 indications géographiques de boissons spiritueuses déjà enregistrées dont la liste est disponible dans la [base de données eAmbrosia](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). (Pour plus d'information: Christian Wigand– Tel: +32 2 29 62253; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Grupo Gallardo Balboa by KKR

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of control of Grupo Gallardo Balboa S.L.U. of Spain by KKR & Co. Inc of the US. Grupo Gallardo Balboa is the holding company of various steelmaking corporations that manufacture corrugated steel. KKR is a global investment firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minimal 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.9431](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel en baisse à 1,0% dans la zone euro

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro s'est établi à 1,0% en juillet 2019, contre 1,3% en juin. Un an auparavant, il était de 2,2%. Le taux d'inflation annuel de l'Union européenne s'est établi à 1,4% en juillet 2019, contre 1,6% en juin. Un an auparavant, il était de 2,2%. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Les taux

annuels les plus faibles ont été observés au Portugal (-0,7%), à Chypre (0,1%) et en Italie (0,3%). Les taux annuels les plus élevés ont quant à eux été enregistrés en Roumanie (4,1%), en Hongrie (3,3%), en Lettonie et en Slovaquie (3,0% chacun). Par rapport à juin, l'inflation annuelle a baissé dans quinze États membres, est restée stable dans deux et a augmenté dans onze autres. En juillet les plus fortes contributions au taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro proviennent des services (+0,53 points de pourcentage, pp), suivis de l'alimentation, alcool & tabac (+0,37 pp), des biens industriels hors énergie (+0,08 pp) et de l'énergie (+0,05 pp). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations : Vanessa Mock – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64976)

STATEMENTS

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioner Stylianides on the World Humanitarian Day 2019

On this year's [World Humanitarian Day](#), the European Union pays tribute to the commitment of those who risk their lives to deliver humanitarian aid worldwide, as the risk humanitarian workers face continues to increase. The unequivocal respect of international law, the safety and security of humanitarian workers and their unfettered access to those in need are a major concern for the EU. 2019 is also a key year for International Humanitarian Law, as we mark the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, made the following statement: *“Violations of International Humanitarian Law continue to be one of the most critical challenges for the protection of civilians, as well as the protection of humanitarian and medical workers. Violence against humanitarian workers affects civilians and prevents millions of people from receiving life-saving assistance. Saving lives should not cost lives. Around 400 humanitarian workers have been victims of major attacks in 2018, making it the second worst year in history. Over one third of them were killed and the other third was kidnapped. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity to honour these dedicated humanitarians, and to advocate for their safety and security. Humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality are the principles on which humanitarian aid is grounded. These should protect relief workers, enabling them to operate freely. The EU and its Member States are the world leader in humanitarian assistance. Promoting principled humanitarian aid and respect for International Humanitarian Law remains at the core of our international engagement.”* The statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570)

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July 2019 – Annual inflation down to 1.0% in the euro area – Down to 1.4% in the EU

The **euro area** annual inflation rate was 1.0% in July 2019, down from 1.3% in June. A year earlier, the rate was 2.2%. **European Union** annual inflation was 1.4% in July 2019, down from 1.6% in June. A year earlier, the rate was 2.2%. These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)