[Digital Assembly 2019: new actions on quantum, EU-Africa taskforce report and digital start-ups [Updated on 13/06/2019 at 18:00 CEST]](#)

Today and tomorrow, the 8th edition of the [Digital Assembly](#) is taking place in Bucharest, Romania. The event, co-organised by the Commission and the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, will bring together representatives of EU Member States with stakeholders from industry, academia and civil society. Discussions will focus on what is needed to accelerate the digital transformation and ensure that the EU remains globally competitive. Three key initiatives will be featured: first, a joint declaration by several Member States to work together to build a quantum communication infrastructure (QCI); second, the adoption of the final report by the European Union – African Union [Digital Economy Task Force](#) with policy recommendations and concrete actions to strengthen cooperation on digital issues between the two continents; and, third, a new investment facility to scale up digital start-ups in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"Digitalisation is a key driver of progress not only in Europe, but also in Africa. That is why, as part of the Africa-Europe Alliance, we are working with partners across both continents to develop policies that will best enable us to harness the power of technology to boost investment, create jobs and contribute to sustainable development. Today we are recommending concrete policies and actions to enhance the future digital cooperation of Africa and Europe."*

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel**, added: *"Over the past few years we have worked tirelessly to advance the Digital Single Market which brings tangible achievements for Europe's citizens and businesses. We have demonstrated that opting for an EU approach is the only way to face, together, evolving challenges and succeed the digital transformation. The Digital Assembly is our key event where we will discuss future digital opportunities and political priorities and renew our commitments based on our common values."*

More specifically, the following key initiatives will be highlighted during the Digital Assembly 2019:

- **A new ultra-secure quantum communication network**: several EU countries will declare their commitment to work together in order to build a quantum communication infrastructure (QCI) that will enable information and data to be transmitted and stored in a fully secure manner as well as integrate quantum technologies and systems into conventional communication infrastructures. As a result it will boost Europe's capabilities in [cybersecurity](#), [quantum](#) technologies and industrial

competitiveness, keeping pace with its global competitors. For more information about the Declaration see [here](#) at 17:45 CEST today.

- **Adoption of the report on the digital economy partnership for Africa-Europe**: the European Union – African Union [Digital Economy Task Force](#) (DETF) will adopt its report with policy recommendations and concrete actions to strengthen cooperation on digital issues between the two continents. The DETF is one of the task forces established as part of the [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)launched by President **Juncker** in his [2018 State of the Union Address](#). For more information about the report see [here](#) at 14:00 CEST today.
- **New investment facility to scale up digital start-ups in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe**:the European Commission together with the European Investment Bank, the European Investment Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank and the International Financial Corporation will launch the Digital Innovation and Scale-up Initiative (DISI). This will be the first regional investment facility that specifically targets digital innovations and the scale-up of digital start-ups in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. For more information about the Digital Innovation and Scale-up Initiative see [here](#) at 09:00 CEST tomorrow.

Background

In 2015 the European Commission adopted the [Digital Single Market strategy](#) to make the most of digital opportunities in Europe. Just four years later citizens and businesses can [benefit](#) from 35 new digital rights and freedoms, includingthe abolition of roaming charges when traveling abroad, enhanced cybersecurity, and more opportunities for online shopping across borders.

The [Digital Assembly](#) offers the opportunity to look ahead, in the light of the Commission's proposal for a [Digital Europe programme](#) for 2021-2027. The latter aims to reinforce Europe's strategic digital capacities, with a particular focus on supercomputing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills, and ensuring a wide use of digital capacity across the economy and society.

During [last year's edition](#) of the Digital Assembly the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans was launched with the aim of supporting the transition of the region into a digital economy and helping to generate faster economic growth, more jobs, and better services.

For more information

[Livestream of Digital Assembly 2019](#)

[Factsheet: A Digital Single Market for the benefit of all Europeans](#)

[Timeline: Digital Single Market – Commission actions since 2015](#)

[Achievements of the Digital Single Market](#)

[2019 Digital Economy and Society Index](#)

April 2019 compared with March 2019 – Industrial production down by 0.5% in euro area – Down by 0.7% in EU28

In April 2019 compared with March 2019, seasonally adjusted industrial production fell by 0.5% in the **euro area** (EA19) and by 0.7% in the **EU28**, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In March 2019, industrial production fell by 0.4% in the **euro area** and by 0.2% in the **EU28**.

Full text available on EUROSTAT website

EIOPA, ECB and national authorities agree on common minimum standards for supervisory and statistical reporting by (re)insurance undertakings

Today, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) and the European Central Bank (ECB) published **Common Minimum Standards for Data Revisions** agreed between the ECB, EIOPA, the National Central Banks (NCBs) and the National Competent Authorities (NCAs).

Given the integrated reporting approach followed for supervisory and statistical reporting to EIOPA and the ECB, a common understanding of the minimum level of data quality is required as well as of when a revision of data is considered necessary.

While information reported should be of good quality at the time of its first submission, at a later stage revisions may be needed upon request by the European or national authorities or upon financial institutions' own

initiative.

By agreeing on common minimum standards, all authorities have aligned their expectations for the minimum acceptable level of data quality for the purposes of the different uses of data to be considered for the reporting reference dates after its date of publication. However, these common minimum standards should not prevent stricter practices from being applied at national level. The NCAs and NCBs have the responsibility and the power to request financial institutions to revise data when necessary.

The common minimum standards specify:

1. **The request for revisions** — when NCAs or NCBs should request financial institutions to revise the data previously submitted
2. **The synchronisation** —the same data has to be available at all levels (i.e. financial institutions, NCAs/NCBs, EIOPA, ECB) at all times
3. **The timeliness** — the time when the revisions should be sent by NCAs and NCBs to EIOPA and the ECB respectively
4. **The need for historical revisions** — when an issue is identified which would lead to significant revisions and which also affects back-data and how to provide the revisions

The Common Minimum Standards can be obtained via the following link to the website of [EIOPA](#) and the [ECB](#).

Background

Data quality is crucial in any data management process. Data reported under the EU Solvency II framework for insurance and reinsurance undertakings are used by national competent authorities (NCAs) in the supervisory review process and by most national central banks (NCBs) as input in the compilation of insurance corporation statistics. NCAs also submit the supervisory information to the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA), and NCBs submit the derived statistical information to the European Central Bank (ECB).

Afghanistan — Security situation

Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled '[Afghanistan — Security situation](#)'. The report is a fifth update of the version first published in February 2015[1] and provides a comprehensive overview of the security situation in Afghanistan.

In 2018, Afghanistan ranked second in the top countries of origin in EU+ countries,[2] with 45 300 asylum applicants. Overall, some 32 735 cases were pending at first-instance for Afghan applicants at the end of March 2019.

The 'Afghanistan – Security situation' report provides a **general description of the security situation in Afghanistan**, covering the following topics: a brief context of the situation; actors in the conflict; security trends and armed confrontations; impact of the violence on the civilian population; and the geographical overview of the security situation.

The report also provides a **description of the security situation in each of the 34 provinces and Kabul City.** In these chapters, a general overview of the province is given, followed by a background on the conflict and actors in the province, and recent security trends including data on violent incidents and civilian casualties. Finally, a brief overview of conflict-induced displacement is provided.

The report was co-drafted by COI researchers from the national asylum authorities of Austria, Belgium, France and EASO in accordance with the [EASO COI Report Methodology](#). The report was reviewed by COI researchers from Norway and Slovakia and EASO. In addition, a review of the report was carried out by the Austrian Red Cross/ACCORD and Asylum Research Centre (ARC).

The terms of reference of this report were defined by EASO based information needs identified by asylum policy experts in EU+ countries and UNHCR. The report presents information until 28 February 2019.

It is EASO's intention to continue to produce such reports on important countries of origin and to update them regularly in order to raise and harmonise COI standards in the EU and to further support the practical implementation of the Common European Asylum System.

Photo: © US Air Force

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[1] All reports are available via EASO's website: https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/country-origin-information/country-reports
[2] EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland

[Data Protection Regulation one year on: 73% of Europeans have heard of at least one of their rights](#)

Today, at the occasion of a stock-taking [event to mark the first year of application of the EU General Data Protection Regulation](#), the European Commission is publishing the results of a special Eurobarometer survey on

data protection. The results show that Europeans are relatively well aware of the new data protection rules, their rights and the existence of national data protection authorities, to whom they can turn for help when their rights are violated.

Andrus **Ansip,** Vice-President for the Digital Single Market said: "*European citizens have become more aware of their digital rights and this is encouraging news. However, only three in ten Europeans have heard of all their new data rights. For companies, their customers' trust is hard currency and this trust starts with the customers' understanding of, and confidence in, privacy settings. Being aware is a precondition to being able to exercise your rights. Both sides can only win from clearer and simpler application of data protection rules.*"

Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality added: "*Helping Europeans regain control over their personal data is one of our biggest priorities. But, of the 60% Europeans who read their privacy statements, only 13% read them fully. This is because the statements are too long or too difficult to understand. I once again urge all online companies to provide privacy statements that are concise, transparent and easily understandable by all users. I also encourage all Europeans to use their data protection rights and to optimise their privacy settings*".

Based on the views of 27,000 Europeans, the Eurobarometer results show that 73% of respondents have heard of at least one of the six tested rights guaranteed by the General Data Protection Regulation. The highest levels of awareness among citizens are recorded for the right to access their own data (65%), the right to correct the data if they are wrong (61%), the right to object to receiving direct marketing (59%) and the right to have their own data deleted (57%).

In addition, 67% of respondents know about the General Data Protection Regulation and 57% of respondents know about their national data protection authorities. The results also show that data protection is a concern, as 62% of respondents are concerned that they do not have complete control over the personal data provided online.

Also today, the European Commission organises [an event bringing together national and EU authorities and businesses to mark the first year of implementation of the EU General Data Protection Regulation](#), in the presence of Commissioner **Jourová**.

Next steps

The Commission is launching today an awareness raising campaign to encourage citizens to read [privacy statements](#) and to optimise their [privacy settings](#) so that they only share the data they are willing to share.

The Commission will also report on the application of General Data Protection Regulation in 2020.

Background

The [General Data Protection Regulation](#) is a single set of rules with a common EU approach to the protection of personal data, directly applicable in the Member States. It reinforces trust by putting individuals back in control of their personal data and at the same time guarantees the free flow of personal data between EU Member States. The protection of personal data is a [fundamental right in the European Union](#).

[The GDPR has been applicable since 25 May 2018](#). Since then, nearly all Member States have adapted their national laws in the light of GDPR. The national Data Protection Authorities are in charge of enforcing the new rules and are better coordinating their actions thanks to the new cooperation mechanisms and the European Data Protection Board. They are issuing guidelines on key aspects of the GDPR to support the implementation of the new rules.

Today's stock-taking event will consist of three panel discussions:

- Panel 1 – How effective is enforcement?
- Panel 2 – Data protection as a business opportunity
- Panel 3 – How do individuals use their new rights?

For more information