



## Daily News 18 / 04 / 2018

Brussels, 18 April 2018

### **TRADE: European Commission proposes signature and conclusion of Japan and Singapore agreements**

The Commission today presented the outcome of negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan and the trade and investment agreements with Singapore to the Council. This is the first step towards the signature and conclusion of these agreements. President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"Today we take a step forwards towards concluding agreements with two of our closest Asian partners, Japan and Singapore. The impact of these agreements will go far beyond our respective shores - it sends a clear and unambiguous message that we stand together against protectionism and in defence of multilateralism. This is more important than ever."* Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: *"We now hope for a swift and smooth conclusion of these agreements, which will allow EU firms, workers, farmers and consumers to reap the benefits of these deals as soon as possible."* Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *"These win-win agreements will create major opportunities for European businesses and citizens. Both Japan and Singapore are important partners for us in defending multilateralism and ensuring strong international organisations."* Once approved by the Council, the agreements will be sent to the European Parliament, aiming for the entry into force of the trade agreements with Japan and Singapore before the end of the current mandate of the European Commission in 2019; the investment protection agreement with Singapore will follow its ratification procedure also at Member State level. For more information see the [press release](#), recording of the [press conference](#), memos on [Japan](#) and [Singapore](#) agreements and the dedicated webpages ([Japan](#), [Singapore](#)) containing further material, as well as the full legal texts of the agreements. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

### **Intégration des migrants: la Commission et l'OCDE publient une check-list pour aider les autorités locales, régionales et nationales**

Aujourd'hui, la Commission européenne et l'OCDE publient [un rapport](#) qui identifie les principaux défis à l'intégration des migrants et formule en réponse des recommandations concrètes. Regroupant des exemples de meilleures pratiques venant de grandes villes européennes, notamment Amsterdam, Athènes, Berlin, Paris et Rome, le rapport présente 12 points clés à destination des décideurs et acteurs locaux, régionaux et nationaux, afin qu'ils les prennent en compte dans le développement et la mise en œuvre des programmes locaux d'intégration. Les recommandations couvrent des secteurs tels que la santé, le travail, le logement et l'éducation, allant de l'adaptation des compétences des migrants aux besoins des marchés de l'emploi locaux jusqu'à l'établissement d'espaces partagés permettant aux communautés de se rencontrer et de créer du lien. Un [communiqué de presse](#) et une [fiche d'information](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr - Tel.: +32 229 56169)

### **Juncker Plan set to mobilise €284 billion of investment across the EU**

Following the latest transactions under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to be approved by the European Investment Bank's (EIB) Board of Directors, the Juncker Plan is now set to trigger €283.7 billion in investments in the EU. This represents around 90% of the original target to mobilise €315 billion of investment. The deals which will benefit from the EU budget guarantee now amount to €56.2 billion in financing and are located in all 28 Member States. The EFSI financing agreements with intermediary banks and funds are set to benefit 611,000 European SMEs. Currently, the top five countries ranked in order of EFSI investment triggered relative to GDP are Greece, Estonia, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain. (For more information see the [EFSI results page](#) or contact Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

### **Better, safer roads in Western Greece and new economic opportunities thanks to cohesion**

## policy

€293 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#) is invested in a new motorway between Patras and the town of Pyrgos in Western Greece. Located on the Trans-European Transport network ([TEN-T](#)), the new motorway will ensure faster and safer travel. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"I am proud that Cohesion Policy funds can contribute to this major infrastructure project. It will significantly improve road safety in Achaia and Ilea. And by completing the motorway network around Patras, the regional capital and the third largest Greek city, it will offer new economic opportunities in the region as well as better transport connections, not only within the country, but also with neighbouring Member States."* The EU-funded project also includes the necessary associated infrastructure, such as bridges and underpasses, as well as works to facilitate access to the motorway from residential or agricultural properties, with 130 km of new or upgraded dirt roads. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke - Tel. : +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr - Tel. : +32 229 56169)

## New EU rules to make parcel delivery more affordable signed into law

The Commission welcomes the signature into law later today in Strasbourg of its [proposal](#) to make prices for cross-border parcel delivery services more transparent and affordable and to increase regulatory oversight of the EU parcel market. The new Regulation will allow consumers and companies, in particular SMEs, to buy and sell products and services online more easily and confidently across the EU. Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, responsible for the Digital Single Market, said: *"With today's rules, cross-border parcel delivery prices will be more transparent and easier to compare. Just a few weeks after the adoption of our proposal against unjustified geoblocking, we are making good again on our promise to make shopping online more affordable and to create a Digital Single Market."* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *"Cross-border parcel delivery services are essential for e-commerce and are a great example of how the Single Market can work for businesses and citizens. By increasing price transparency and improving regulatory oversight, we are tackling the barriers people face when trying to buy on-line and we are helping to create a true Single Market."* The Regulation on parcel delivery is one of three pillars of the Commission's efforts to boost e-commerce in the EU, together with rules on [unjustified geo-blocking](#) and [consumer protection](#) that have already been adopted. The Regulation will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal and will be fully applicable from 1 January 2019. You can find the [press release](#) and the [MEMO](#) published when a political agreement was found in December 2017. (For more information: Lucia Caudet - Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Maud Noyon - Tel.: +32 229 80379; Victoria von Hammerstein - Tel.: +32 229 55040)

## Commission kicks off Fair Taxation Roadshow tomorrow

The European Commission will tomorrow launch a series of seminars on fair taxation in the EU, with a first event in Riga, Latvia. Tomorrow's seminar brings together civil society, business representatives, policy makers, academics and interested citizens to discuss and exchange views on the problem of tax avoidance and tax evasion. Further events are planned throughout 2018 in Austria (May), France (June), Italy (September) and Ireland (October) and build on last year's successful seminars, where around 150 civil society organisations came to Brussels for wide-ranging discussion on fair taxation issues. The upcoming roadshow should further encourage active engagement on tax fairness principles at EU, national and local level. Fair taxation is a top political priority for the Commission, which has pursued a very active and successful agenda in this field in recent years. Thanks to several major legislative packages from the Commission, important progress has been made at EU level to tackle tax abuse, increase tax transparency and restore the level playing field for all businesses. Among the most recent proposals, still to be agreed by Member States, were solutions for the fair and effective taxation of the digital economy, a fundamental reform of corporate taxation through the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base and an overhaul of the EU's outdated VAT system. Further information on the Fair Taxation events is available on [the DG TAXUD website](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough - Tel.: +32 229 87183)

## Commission welcomes final vote on energy performance of buildings

New rules will make buildings smarter and more energy efficient, saving money and creating jobs in the renovation and construction sector. The European Parliament gave yesterday its final approval on the revised Energy Performance of Buildings directive. The vote signals the closure of the first of 8 legislative proposals part of the [Clean Energy for All Europeans](#) package brought forward by the European Commission on 30 November 2016. This package is a key element of one of the Juncker

Commission's priorities, "[a resilient Energy Union and a forward-looking climate change policy](#)". The changes agreed by the Parliament tap into the huge potential for efficiency gains in the building sector, the largest single energy consumer in Europe. They include measures that will accelerate the rate of building renovation towards more energy efficient systems and strengthen the energy performance of new buildings, making them smarter. Read more in the [press release](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen - Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller - Tel.: +32 229 52589)

## **16 jeunes leaders à la tête de l'édition 2018 des Journées Européennes du Développement**

La Commission européenne annonce que seize jeunes personnalités issues du monde entier et âgées de 21 à 26 ans, vont participer au Programme de Jeunes Leaders des [Journées Européennes du Développement](#) (#EDDs18), les 5 et 6 juin prochains à Bruxelles. Le commissaire pour la coopération internationale et le développement Neven **Mimica** a déclaré: "*Plus de la moitié de la population mondiale a moins de 30 ans aujourd'hui. Ce n'est pas suffisant de travailler à construire un avenir meilleur pour la jeune génération. Nous devons le construire avec elle, lui donner les opportunités dont elle a besoin pour mettre en pratique ses brillantes idées. Je me réjouis de rencontrer ces jeunes gens inspirants durant les Journées Européennes du Développement 2018.*" Les seize Jeunes Leaders ont été sélectionnés parmi 283 candidats originaires de 82 pays pour leurs compétences exceptionnelles et leur engagement, et vont contribuer avec des idées nouvelles aux discussions globales sur les politiques de développement soutenable et en particulier, sur le rôle essentiel que les femmes doivent jouer. Pendant les deux jours de l'événement, ils échangeront leurs opinions et expériences avec des leaders internationaux, les institutions européennes, des professionnels du développement et des représentants du secteur privé. Davantage d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#). Rejoignez la conversation sur Twitter sous les hashtags #EDDs18, #ShEDDs. (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela - Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder - Tel.: +32 229 92256)

## **EU and Argentina reinforce cooperation in marine research and innovation**

The European Commission and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation of Argentina sign today an administrative arrangement encouraging cooperation in marine research and innovation. The partners will work together to tackle challenges linked to the Atlantic Ocean, including ocean observation, food security, polar research and climate variability. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: "*I am certain that the signature of this arrangement with Argentina will help us overcome the challenges related to the Atlantic Ocean, improve our common knowledge of marine ecosystems, develop new technologies, share research infrastructures data and develop our scientific exchanges*". The arrangement will complement the EU's wide-ranging and successful cooperation with Argentina on science and technology and also its long-standing commitment towards Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Cooperation. Better ocean knowledge is essential to improve [ocean governance](#) and to help de-risk investment in the blue economy. To this end Commissioner **Vella** will host [Blue Invest 2018](#) bringing together innovators and the financial community to boost the economic potential of the ocean while protecting its marine resources. A [news item](#) will be published after the signature (approx. 3:30 pm) also including information on bilateral relations with Argentina in the field of research and science. (For more information: Lucía Caudet - Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein - Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon - Tel. +32 229-80379)

## **Pratiques anticoncurrentielles: la Commission autorise les mesures grecques visant à garantir un accès équitable à la production d'électricité à partir de lignite aux concurrents de PPC**

La Commission européenne a rendu juridiquement contraignantes en vertu des règles de l'UE en matière de pratiques anticoncurrentielles les mesures proposées par la Grèce pour garantir aux concurrents de Public Power Corporation (PPC), l'opérateur historique dans le secteur de l'électricité, un accès équitable à la production d'électricité à partir de lignite. La Commission est parvenue à la conclusion que la version finale modifiée des mesures correctives présentée par la Grèce le 19 janvier 2018 permettait de remédier totalement à l'infraction constatée dans sa décision de 2008. Les mesures correctives visent à supprimer les privilèges créés par les droits d'accès spéciaux accordés à PPC. En particulier, elles prévoient que PPC cède les unités alimentées au lignite de Meliti (y compris l'unité sous licence d'exploitation de Meliti 2) et de Megalopoli 3 et 4. La consultation des acteurs du marché réalisée par la Commission a révélé que les mesures proposées sont de nature à répondre de manière satisfaisante aux préoccupations de cette dernière. Un accès accru aux capacités de production d'électricité à partir de lignite contribuera à augmenter la pression concurrentielle sur le marché de gros en Grèce et de remédier aux distorsions persistantes en faveur de PPC. Dans le même temps, en

cédant les capacités existantes de production à partir de lignite et en évitant l'ouverture et l'exploitation de nouvelles mines de lignite, les mesures correctives tiennent également compte de la politique environnementale de la Grèce et des objectifs de l'UE en matière de réduction des émissions de CO2 d'ici à 2020. Un communiqué de presse est disponible en ligne en [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [EL](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou - Tel.: +32 229 13740)

### **Agriculture: the Commission approves new geographical indication from the United Kingdom**

The Commission has approved today the addition of a new product from the United Kingdom to the quality register of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). "[Lough Neagh Pollan](#)" is a white fish with a bright silver skin caught and processed in Lough Neagh, a lake in Northern Ireland. Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the UK and one of the largest lakes in north-western Europe. Before 1900, the harvesting of "Lough Neagh Pollan" dominated fishing activities on the lake. It is still considered an economically important species and depending on the time of year "Lough Neagh Pollan" makes up a significant proportion of catches. It is caught using the traditional draft netting and gill netting method. The new denomination will be added to the list of over 1,425 products already protected. More information: webpages on [quality products](#) and [DOOR database](#) of protected products. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56 185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229)

### **Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel en hausse à 1,3% dans la zone euro et celui de l'UE en hausse à 1,5% (Mars 2018)**

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro s'est établi à 1,3% en mars 2018, contre 1,1% en février. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,5%. Le taux d'inflation annuel de l'Union européenne s'est établi à 1,5% en mars 2018, contre 1,4% en février. Un an auparavant, il était de 1,6%. Les taux annuels les plus faibles ont été observés à Chypre (-0,4%), en Grèce (0,2%) et au Danemark (0,4%). Les taux annuels les plus élevés ont quant à eux été enregistrés en Roumanie (4,0%), en Estonie (2,9%) ainsi qu'en Slovaquie et en Lituanie (2,5% chacune). Par rapport à février 2018, l'inflation annuelle a baissé dans six États membres, est restée stable dans six et a augmenté dans quinze autres. En mars 2018 les plus fortes contributions au taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro proviennent des services (+0,67 point de pourcentage), suivis de l'alimentation, alcool & tabac (+0,41 pp), de l'énergie (+0,20 pp) et des biens industriels hors énergie (+0,07 pp). Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

### **Eurostat: La production dans le secteur de la construction en baisse de 0,5% dans la zone euro et en baisse de 0,8% dans l'UE28 (Février 2018 comparé à janvier 2018)**

En février 2018 par rapport à janvier 2018, la production dans le secteur de la construction, corrigée des variations saisonnières, a diminué de 0,5% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,8% dans l'UE28, selon les premières estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En janvier 2018, la production dans le secteur de la construction avait reculé de 0,8% dans la zone euro et de 1,1% dans l'UE28. En février 2018 par rapport à février 2017, la production dans le secteur de la construction a augmenté de 0,4% dans la zone euro et a diminué de 0,1% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioners participate in IMF/World Bank spring meetings with G20 Finance Ministers in Washington**

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** as well as Commissioners **Hahn**, **Mimica** and **Moscovici** will travel to Washington DC (USA) for the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring Meetings on 19-21 April. The G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings will also be held in the margins of this meeting. The Members of the Commission present in Washington will participate in a variety of high-level bilateral meetings, speaking engagements and other commitments. Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will meet, among others, Mr Steven Mnuchin, United States Secretary of the Treasury; Mr Larry Kudlow, Director of the National Economic Council; Mr. Jerome H. Powell, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board; Mr. Oleksandr Danyliuk, Minister of Finance of Ukraine and Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of Iceland and US Senator Mr. Lindsey Graham.

On 22 April, the Vice-President will travel to New York where he delivers a keynote speech at the conference "Transatlantic Economy Ten Years After the Crisis: Macro-Financial Scenarios and Policy Responses" at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and meets numerous business leaders from the financial sector. Commissioner **Moscovici** will meet, amongst others, US finance minister Steven Mnuchin, as well as Mr. Wilbur Ross, United States Secretary of Commerce; Mr Larry Kudlow, Director of the National Economic Council; Mr. Jerome Powell, Chairman of the United States Federal Reserve, Mr. Nhlanhla Musa Nene, Minister of Finance of South Africa, Mr. Nicolás Dujovne, Minister of the Treasury of Argentina, and Mr. Octavian Armasu, Minister of Finance of Moldova. He will also deliver a speech at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and the American Enterprise Institute. Commissioners **Hahn** and **Mimica** will co-host an event on sustainable development together with Kristalina Georgieva, CEO of the World Bank. Commissioner **Hahn** will lead the 4th High Level Meeting of the Initiative for Enhanced Cooperation with the International Financial Institutions to discuss EU cooperation in support to Neighbouring and Enlargement countries. He will also sign a new agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to set up, jointly with the German government, a new Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Energy Efficiency in Ukraine. Moreover Commissioner **Mimica** will co-host the annual ministerial roundtable event on "Improving Opportunities and Human Capital through Social Safety Nets" and speak at the World Bank-World Health Organisation flagship event "Towards Universal Health Coverage: Tackling the Health Financing Crisis to End Poverty". *(For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

### **Commissioner Avramopoulos in Berlin**

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in Berlin tomorrow to meet Federal Minister of the Interior, Building and Community Horst Seehofer. He will also take part in an extraordinary session of the Committee on Internal Affairs of the Bundestag on the reform of the Common European Asylum System and questions related to migration and internal security. The meeting with Minister Seehofer will be followed by a joint press point at 17:00 which will be streamed live on [EbS](#). *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

### **Commissioner Navracsics in Bulgaria for digital and youth conferences**

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Sofia, Bulgaria, to give a keynote speech at a conference organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU and the European Commission: '[Educate to Create: from Digital Consumers to Digital Creators](#)'. He will highlight the [Digital Education Action Plan](#) put forward by the Commission in January which aims to ensure that young people are not only digitally confident but digitally competent. Initiatives of the Action Plan include supporting schools with high-speed broadband connections, scaling up a new self-assessment tool for schools on the use of technology for teaching and learning (SELFIE) and a public awareness campaign on online safety, media literacy and cyber hygiene. Also tomorrow, Commissioner Navracsics will, with Bulgarian Youth Minister Krasen Králev, hold a Citizens' Dialogue at the [European Youth Conference](#). These conferences take place under each EU Presidency as part of the [Structured Dialogue](#) process. Commissioner Navracsics will then deliver the closing address alongside the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Boyko Borissov. The conference provides an opportunity for discussion ahead of the upcoming new EU Youth Strategy and proposals for the future [Erasmus programme](#) and the [European Solidarity Corps](#) post-2020. See also two factsheets on the [Digital Skills Gap in Europe](#) and [A Digital Single Market for the benefit of all Europeans](#) *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein - Tél.: +32 229 56184)*

### **Commissioner Vella and Commissioner Crețu in Malta to discuss the future of cohesion policy**

Today and tomorrow, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** and Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** are in Malta to discuss cohesion policy after 2020, with members of the Maltese government and citizens. In Gozo, the Commissioners will meet Elena Dalli, Minister for European Affairs and Equality, Justyne Caruana, Minister for Gozo and Aaron Farrugia, Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds and Social Dialogue. Both Commissioners will also visit the EU-funded Xewkija Industrial Park and participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the future of cohesion policy for Malta and Gozo. Tomorrow in Valletta, Commissioner **Crețu** will visit EU-funded projects in the field of sustainable urban development, tourism and transport. *"Cohesion policy has had tangible benefits for Malta and Gozo with many emblematic projects having been realised thanks to EU funds,"* said Commissioner **Vella**. Commissioner **Crețu** added: *"I'm here to invite the Maltese people –*

government and citizens alike – to join the discussion on cohesion policy after 2020; it is ultimately about what Europe we want in the future." (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615; Iris Petsa - Tel.: +32 229 93321; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr - Tel.: +32 229 56169)

### **Commissioner Gabriel in Sofia to discuss High-Performance Computing and participate to Bulgaria's signature of Declaration on Genomic Databanks**

Tomorrow, Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, will attend [Sofia Digital Forum 2018](#) to discuss Europe's [High-Performance Computing](#) (HPC) strategy in the Digital Single Market alongside Europe's leading stakeholders in the field. This event is organised by the Bulgarian Presidency in collaboration with the Commission to raise awareness on the role of High Performance Computing (HPC) to transform Europe's digital future. The session is opened by Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov. At 9:15 (GMT+3), the Commissioner will give a speech, outlining the significance of [EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#) for South and Eastern European scientific, economic and societal developments and market competitiveness. The conference follows the announcement in January that the Commission plans to invest jointly with the Member States in building a world-class European supercomputers infrastructure ([press release](#)). At 15:00 (GMT+3), Commissioner **Gabriel** will oversee the signing of [Declaration on Genomic Databanks](#) by Bulgaria, joining 13 EU Member States who signed this declaration during the Digital Day 2018 on 10 April in Brussels. The signatory Member States of the Declaration committed to cooperate closely in order to overcome data silos, lack of interoperability and fragmentation of smaller national initiatives. See also a factsheet on [A Digital Single Market for the benefit of all Europeans](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt –m Tel.: [+32 229 56172](#); Inga Höglund Tel.: [+32 229 55040](#))

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

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