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COLLEGE MEETING: European Commission reports on progress in Bulgaria and Romania under the Co-operation and Verification Mechanism

The European Commission issued today its latest reports on steps taken by Bulgaria and Romania to meet their commitments on judicial reform and the fight against corruption, and in the case of Bulgaria organised crime, in the context of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM). The report on Bulgaria looks at the progress made over the past year to meet the final 17 recommendations issued by the Commission in the January 2017 report and positively notes Bulgaria's continued efforts and determination to implement those recommendations. The Commission is confident that **Bulgaria** – if it pursues the current positive trend – will be able to fulfil all the remaining recommendations and thereby the outstanding benchmarks. This will enable the CVM process for Bulgaria to then be concluded before the end of this Commission's mandate – in line with the orientation given by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** when he started his term of office. For **Romania**, the report notes that while the country has taken some steps to implement the final 12 recommendations issued by the Commission in January 2017, recent developments have reversed the course of progress and called into question the positive assessment made back in January 2017. The recommendations are no longer sufficient to meet the orientation given by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** to conclude the CVM process before the end of this Commission's mandate. Therefore, today's report sets out a number of additional recommendations for immediate follow up. The immediate implementation of the additional measures is essential to put the reform process back on track and resume the path towards the conclusion of the CVM as set out in the January 2017 report. Press releases are available online on the reports for [Bulgaria](#) and [Romania](#), and a [Memo](#) provides more information about the CVM process and the benchmarks and recommendations. The CVM Reports are available online [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Kasia Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 6344)

COLLEGE MEETING: Brexit: European Commission intensifies preparedness work and outlines contingency action plan in the event of a no deal scenario with the UK

The European Commission has today published detailed information on its ongoing preparedness and contingency work in the event of a no deal scenario in the Article 50 negotiations with the United Kingdom. First, the Commission has published a [Communication](#), which outlines a limited number of contingency actions in priority areas that could be implemented if no agreement is reached with the United Kingdom. This follows a first preparedness [Communication published on 19 July 2018](#). Secondly, the College of Commissioners has adopted two legislative proposals to amend existing EU law in the area of [visas](#) and [energy efficiency](#) to take account of the UK's withdrawal. These targeted legislative adaptations are necessary, irrespective of the outcome of the withdrawal negotiations. Thirdly, a [notice](#) has been published providing extensive information on the changes that will occur – in the event of no deal – for persons travelling between the EU and the UK, and vice versa, after 29 March 2019, or for businesses providing services in relation to such travel. It includes information on such things as border checks and customs controls, driving licences and pet passports, amongst others. While the European Commission is working hard for a deal, and continues to put citizens first in the negotiations, the UK's withdrawal will undoubtedly cause disruption – for example in business supply chains – whether or not there is a deal. Contingency measures cannot remedy the full effects of this disruption. In the event of a no deal scenario, these disruptions will be even more significant and the speed of preparations would have to increase significantly. Contingency measures in narrowly defined areas may, exceptionally, be needed in order to protect the interests and the integrity of the EU. For more information, see [here](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500)

Protection des consommateurs: la Commission européenne et le Canada signent un accord pour échanger des informations sur les produits dangereux

La Commission européenne et le Canada signent aujourd'hui un accord permettant la mise en place d'un système d'échange d'informations sur les produits dangereux. Ce nouveau système permettra de connecter le [système d'alerte rapide pour les produits dangereux de l'Union européenne](#) et le [système canadien](#), facilitant ainsi le travail des Etats membres lorsqu'il s'agit de retirer les produits dangereux du marché européen et de se tenir au courant de nouveaux risques pour les consommateurs. Věra **Jourová**, commissaire en charge de la justice, des consommateurs et de l'égalité des genres, a dit: *"Le commerce en ligne ne connaît pas de frontières. Une meilleure coopération internationale facilitera le travail des autorités en permettant à l'information de circuler rapidement. Les consommateurs européens pourront ainsi acheter des produits en toute sécurité."* Cet accord est l'une des nombreuses conséquences de l'Accord économique et commercial global (CETA) de l'Union européenne avec le Canada. La signature de cet accord se déroule dans le cadre de la [Semaine Internationale de la sécurité des produits](#) qui rassemble des experts de tous les pays dans le but d'améliorer la protection des consommateurs. En ouvrant la semaine, la commissaire **Jourová** a annoncé le lancement en 2019 d'un prix pour la sécurité des produits qui récompensera les initiatives des entreprises sur ce sujet. Les entreprises, dont les PME, pourront déposer leur candidature à partir de janvier 2019. La signature de l'accord UE - Canada pourra être suivie [en ligne](#) et sera retransmise sur [EBS](#). Vous trouverez plus d'informations sur le système d'alerte rapide de l'Union européenne [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin - Tel.: +32 229 58659)

La Commission félicite le Parlement européen pour l'adoption des dossiers clés du paquet "Une Énergie propre pour tous les Européens"

Le Parlement européen a approuvé aujourd'hui de nouvelles règles sur les énergies renouvelables, l'efficacité énergétique et la gouvernance de l'Union de l'énergie - une étape importante qui permettra à l'Union européenne et à ses États membres de s'engager pleinement dans la transition vers une économie moderne et une énergie propre, dans le respect de ses engagements sous l'Accord de Paris. Le commissaire européen chargé de l'action pour le climat et de l'énergie, Miguel **Arias Cañete**, a déclaré: *"Quatre propositions sur huit du paquet 'Une l'énergie propre pour tous les Européens' ont maintenant reçu l'accord final du Parlement, ce qui montre que l'Union européenne est sur la bonne voie et que nous tiendrons nos engagements pris en début de mandat par la Commission Juncker. Notre engagement ambitieux pour une énergie propre en Europe et la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de Paris se concrétise par des lois telles que celles votées aujourd'hui. J'appelle maintenant les autorités de nos États membres à faire preuve de la même ambition et du même engagement lors de la présentation de leur projets de Plans nationaux intégrés en matière d'énergie et de climat qui doivent être soumis à la Commission d'ici la fin de l'année."* Une fois pleinement transposés, les trois textes législatifs adoptés aujourd'hui, en combinaison avec nos politiques relatives au climat déjà adoptés, conduiront à des réductions d'émissions plus importantes que prévu pour l'ensemble de l'Union européenne - environ 45% d'ici 2030 par rapport à 1990. Le communiqué de presse complet sera disponible en ligne en [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen - Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf - Tel.: +32 229 74959)

Latvia becomes the 19th EU country to join eHealth cooperation for personalised healthcare

Yesterday Latvia signed the European Declaration [on linking genomic databases across borders](#) that aims to improve understanding and prevention of disease and allow for more personalised treatments, in particular for rare diseases, cancer and brain related diseases. The Declaration is an agreement of cooperation between the countries that want to provide secure and authorised cross-border access to national and regional banks of genetic and other health data, in accordance with all EU data protection rules. The goal is also to keep the EU at the global forefront of personalised medicine, at the same time as fostering scientific output and industrial competitiveness. Latvia is the 19th signatory of the Declaration, which was originally launched on 10 April 2018 during the [Digital Day](#). The other EU Member States that have signed it are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. In April 2018, the Commission put forward an [action plan](#) to secure healthcare data while fostering European cooperation. For more information about the European digital health initiative see [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt - Tel.: +32 229 67083; Marietta Grammenou - Tel.: +32 229 83583)

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture by E.ON and Clever

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed creation of a joint venture between E.ON SE of Germany and Clever A/S of Denmark. The joint venture will develop and operate ultra-fast charging (UFC) stations for electric vehicles in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

E.ON is an energy company with activities in energy networks, renewable energies and customer solutions, including electricity and gas retail supply. Clever is an electric mobility service provider, active in charging solutions for companies, public institutions and end customers. The Commission concluded that the proposed merger would raise no competition concerns due to the negligible actual and foreseen activities of the joint venture in the European Economic Area. 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.9049](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni - Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Agriculture: EU grants protection to two traditional wines from the Netherlands: Vijlen and Oolde

Two Dutch traditional wine-types - Vijlen and Oolde - have been included this week into the [EU register of protected designations of origin](#) (PDO). This means their respective names can as of now only be used within the EU market by the local producers following traditional specific production methods. "Vijlen" comes from the wine growing area in the south of Netherlands, at the border with Germany and Belgium, while "Oolde" is produced more to the north, in the province of Gelderland. They can both be produced as red, white or rosé, plain or sparkling, using grape varieties well-adapted to the Dutch climate. "Oolde" is also produced as a liquor wine. The specific quality of both wines is strongly influenced by the interaction between the climate, soil, cultivation and vinification methods. More information on [Vijlen](#) and [Oolde](#) are available in the EU official journal. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin - Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Commission's Chief Scientific Advisors present advice on the regulation of gene editing

The European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism ([SAM](#)) Group of Chief Scientific Advisors has today published a [statement](#) providing 'a scientific perspective on the regulatory status of products derived from gene editing, and the implications for the GMO Directive'. The advisors recommend that the GMO Directive should be revised to reflect current knowledge and scientific evidence, and as part of a broad dialogue with relevant stakeholders and the public at large. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: "*Gene-editing is a critical technology with an enormous potential to improve human health and preserve the environment. I therefore welcome the statement from our Chief Scientific Advisors which will contribute to a well-informed debate on the regulatory framework needed to maintain high levels of protection while enabling innovations that contribute to the environment and wellbeing. Their statement also provides a valuable input into our reflections on future proofing regulation so that our laws can keep up with our labs.*" Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "*The EU is a champion of the highest standards of food safety. As a scientist myself, I see great merit in keeping pace with innovations so that society can benefit from new science and technology. To make the best out of such developments, I encourage a broad reflection and discussion on how we, as a society, want to go forward with such issues as gene editing.*" The Scientific Advice Mechanism was established in October 2015 to support the Commission with high quality, timely and independent scientific advice for its policy-making activities. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 12 69; Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182).

STATEMENTS

European Pillar of Social Rights: Statement by President Juncker, Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Thyssen one year following its proclamation

About one year ago, on 17 November 2017, the leaders of the European Union solemnly proclaimed the European Pillar of [Social Rights at the Social Summit for fair jobs and growth in Gothenburg](#), Sweden. Celebrating this first anniversary of the Pillar, President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: "*The European Pillar of Social Rights is designed to make a positive difference in the everyday life of all Europeans. In the Commission we are using all the tools at our disposal to make the principles of the Pillar a reality. [...] But several of our proposals are still under negotiation between the European Parliament and the Member States. This concerns in particular the [European Labour Authority](#), our*

initiative on [work-life balance for parents and carers](#), the new [Directive on transparent and predictable working conditions](#), and the [reform of the rules on social security coordination](#). It includes also our [proposal for the next European budget to help the Member States invest in people](#). The European Social Fund Plus alone is to be equipped with more than €100 billion over the period 2021 to 2027. To deliver on our joint promise, we must make swift progress on all these proposals before the European elections in May 2019. Together with the European Parliament, Member States, social partners and civil society, we are committed to safeguard and promote social rights that better support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems now and in the future." The full statement can be found [here](#). A factsheet on the Pillar of Social Rights is available [here](#). A factsheet recapping the Commission's initiatives in the social field is published [here](#). To mark the first anniversary of the Pillar of Social Rights, President **Juncker** and Commissioner **Thyssen** have taken part in a short celebratory event this morning, organised by the European Trade Union Confederation, in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. On Friday 16 November, Commissioner **Thyssen** will participate in a breakfast discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights, organised by the Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU, which will be [streamed live on Facebook](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand-Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Avramopoulos in Ethiopia to discuss cooperation on migration with African partners [updated 13 November 2018 at 16:44]

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia today and tomorrow for bilateral meetings with Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Foreign Affairs Minister Workneh Gebeyehu and Minister of Peace Muferiat Kamil.

Moreover, Commissioner Avramopoulos will open the Valletta Senior Officials Meeting, also taking place in Addis Ababa. The meeting brings together representatives from African and European countries, as well as relevant regional and international organisations, to strengthen EU-Africa cooperation on migration. It is part of the regular follow-up to the 2015 [Valletta Summit on Migration](#), when European and African Leaders met and agreed on a set of operational deliverables outlined in the [Joint Valletta Action Plan](#). A press conference will take place tomorrow at 9:15 CET and will be available on [EBS](#). Commissioner Avramopoulos will also exchange views with African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki, and meet bilaterally Ministers of Foreign Affairs of several African countries who come together in Addis Ababa on the occasion of the extraordinary African Union Summit. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 80423)

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

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