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EU budget: Investing in people with a new Social Fund, Erasmus, Creative Europe, Globalisation Adjustment Fund and Justice, Rights and Values Fund

Investing in people and strengthening the social dimension of the European Union has been a core priority of the Juncker Commission. The next long-term EU budget clearly reflects this commitment, as the Commission proposes to reinforce, pool and better target several existing Funds that already now put people at the centre. More specifically, the Commission proposes to establish a renewed [European Social Fund](#), the 'European Social Fund Plus' (ESF+), and a strengthened and more effective [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund \(EGF\)](#). Both are geared to invest in people: ensuring they are equipped with the right skills needed to deal with challenges and changes on the labour market, following up on the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). For the period 2021-2027, the European Social Fund Plus would be worth €101.2 billion, and the Globalisation Adjustment Fund €1.6 billion. The Justice, Rights and Values Fund will be worth €947 million over 7 years and will further support the development of a European Area of Justice based on the rule of law and mutual trust and ensure people can enjoy their rights. More information on the European Social Fund Plus will be available in this [press release](#) and [memo](#) as well as this [factsheet](#). Further details on the Justice, Rights and Values Fund will be published [here](#). The Commission also proposes to double the funding for [Erasmus](#) to €30 billion for 2021-2027 and increase the budget for [Creative Europe](#) to €1.85 billion. The Erasmus programme already enables millions of young Europeans to study, train or learn abroad while broadening their experience and awareness of Europe, and increasing their future chances on the job market. With doubled funding, Erasmus will be even more effective in supporting key political objectives such as building a European Education Area by 2025, empowering young people and promoting a European identity through youth, education and culture policies. It will also be more inclusive reaching out to people from all backgrounds. Beneficiaries will include school pupils, higher education students, trainees, teachers, trainers, youth workers, sports coaches, and also learners in vocational education and training and adult learning staff. The main goal of the Creative Europe programme is to promote, strengthen and protect European cultural and linguistic diversity, cultural heritage and creativity, as well as the competitiveness of Europe's cultural and creative sectors. Culture plays a pivotal role in addressing key societal and economic challenges, especially in promoting active citizenship, common values, wellbeing, innovation, economic growth and job creation. A [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) on Erasmus as well as a [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) on Creative Europe will be available online. At 13:00 today, Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioners **Thyssen**, **Navracsics** and **Gabriel** will give a press conference on all the aforementioned Funds. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253, Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083, Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094, Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

EU budget: €181 million to strengthen the fight against fraud affecting the EU budget

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission proposes to make €181 million available to support Member States' efforts to fight fraud, corruption and other irregularities affecting the EU budget. The new EU Anti-Fraud Programme will finance targeted training and the exchange of information and best practice between anti-fraud enforcers across Europe. It will also provide support for investigative activities through the purchase of technical equipment used in detecting and investigating fraud, as well as facilitate access to secure information systems. "The new EU Anti-Fraud Programme will make a tangible contribution to boosting the fight against fraud and corruption to the detriment of the EU budget. Reinforcing cooperation between Member States enforcers and providing them with state of the art investigative tools can make all the difference in identifying fraudsters, stopping smugglers, or preventing corruption in procurement procedures" said Günther H. **Oettinger**, European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources. A [press release](#) in all languages is available online. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Protecting and supporting migrants and refugees: new actions worth €467 million under the

EU Trust Fund for Africa

The European Union adopts today new programmes and projects worth a total of €467 million under the [EU Trust Fund for Africa](#), in line with its continuous commitment to assist vulnerable migrants and refugees and address root causes of irregular migration. The new support measures in the Sahel/Lake Chad region and the Horn of Africa will foster stability, jobs and growth, especially for young people and vulnerable groups. They complement ongoing bilateral and multilateral efforts, such as through the Joint African Union – European Union – United Nations Task Force and will allow for live-saving assistance to be taken forward, including accelerating resettlements of refugees from Niger as a priority. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *"We continue working to save lives, provide safe and dignified returns and legal avenues, and tackle the root causes of migration, by creating jobs and growth. With the UNHCR, we have evacuated 1,287 refugees from Libya to Niger, who need to be resettled swiftly now. With the IOM, we helped 22,000 people to return home and provide reintegration assistance. Today's additional commitments will further consolidate our work towards managing human mobility - in a humane, secure and dignified way together with our partners."* Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"The majority of today's €467 million assistance package will be dedicated towards improving employment opportunities, especially for young people. But challenges remain, and the Trust Fund's resources are running out. If we want to continue our live-saving assistance, additional contributions by EU member states' and other donors will be crucial."* The full [press release](#), the MEMOs [on the Horn of Africa](#) and [on the Sahel](#) windows are available online. (for more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela - Tel.: +32229 65322; Maja Kocijancic - Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder - Tel.: +32 229 92256; Esther Osorio - Tel.: +32 229 62076)

European Union increases efficiency and rapidity of civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions

As of today, the European Union's civilian missions under Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) will be able to carry out their work with greater efficiency and rapidity, thanks to a new logistical platform (the CSDP Warehouse) that will ensure the rapid deployment of key equipment and assets for EU crisis management missions to any area of operation within 30 days. The Warehouse will substantially improve the logistic support to EU crisis management and allow the EU's 10 civilian CSDP missions and 8 EU Special Representatives to benefit from support services, and quickly resort to new and used equipment and assets, such as vehicles, IT and communication equipment, protective and medical equipment. It will provide technical maintenance and repair facilities and maintain a strategic stock of assets. An electronic System will be developed and made available to the civilian CSDP missions to ensure a centralised asset management and the standardisation of logistics processes. Located in Kristinehamn, Sweden, the Warehouse will be operated by the Swedish [Civil Contingencies Agency MSB](#), in agreement with the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments and the European External Action Service, on the basis of the agreement signed today. It will have a budget of approximately €50 million over a period of three years. Strengthening the EU's civilian Common Security and Defence Policy is an essential element of the EU's joined-up approach, and one of the priorities of the [Implementation Plan on Security and Defence](#) presented High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini in November 2016. Today's decision is in line with the call by the [Council](#) this Monday, 28 May, to further increase the responsiveness of civilian CSDP mission, encouraging stronger synergies in logistical support among them. Background information and pictures of the signing ceremony will be made available [here](#) shortly. (for more information: Maja Kocijancič - Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio - Tel.: +32 229 62076)

Common Fisheries Policy: Commission proposes new rules to step up enforcement

The Commission is proposing improvements to modernise and simplify the way in which fishing rules are monitored and complied within the EU. An effective control system is key to ensuring that the EU's fisheries are sustainably managed, which in turn guarantees the long-term viability of the EU fishing sector and protects the livelihoods of our fishermen. The proposal includes measures to improve the enforcement of the Common Fisheries Policy, for example with a common list of criteria for what qualifies as serious infringements; a more reliable and complete fisheries data system, including fully digitised reporting of catches; reinforced rules on fishing gear and revising the mandate of the European Fisheries Control Agency to upgrade its inspection powers. Commissioner Karmenu Vella, responsible for the Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *"The EU's [Common Fisheries Policy](#) has already gone a long way towards making sure our seas are healthy, while building a strong fishing industry and thriving coastal communities. At the same time, we need to keep up the work and make sure the commonly agreed rules are enforced across the EU. This is why we are proposing improvements to modernise the existing control system to make it more efficient and ensure that all*

operators in the fishing industry in the EU are treated equally." A [press release](#) is available. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa - Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Juncker Plan supports flood defence project in the Netherlands

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing €330 million in financing to modernise the "Afsluitdijk" dam, which runs between the provinces of Noord-Holland and Friesland in the Netherlands. This major overhaul of crucial flood defence works will keep the Netherlands safe, while special pumps will re-establish fish migration between the lake and sea. The EIB financing is guaranteed under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the Juncker Commission's Investment Plan for Europe. Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: "The coming decades are likely to see a higher flood risk in Europe and potentially greater economic losses. I am happy to see that the EFSI loan guarantee will provide crucial flood defence for the Netherlands, but also make an important contribution to nature protection with the creation of passages enabling the re-establishment of fish migration, vital for the ecosystem." (Full press release is found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Validus Holdings by American International Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Validus Holdings Limited ("Validus") of Bermuda by American International Group Inc ("AIG") of the US. Validus is globally active in insurance, reinsurance, specialty lines insurance and investment advisory. AIG is a global insurance company providing a wide range of insurance and other financial services to commercial and individual customers. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the small horizontal overlaps and the minor vertical relationships between the companies' activities. 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.8865](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou - Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Capita Specialist Insurance Solutions by HPS Investment Partners and Madison Dearborn Partners

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Capita Specialist Insurance Solution Ltd ("Capita") of the UK by HPS Investment Partners ("HPS") and Madison Dearborn Partners ("MDP"), both of the US. Capita, currently solely controlled by Capita Insurance Services Holdings, is a provider of insurance brokerage services, specialising care, charity and school staff absence insurance in the UK. HPS is an investment company with a focus on acquisitions and strategic financing of recapitalisation of companies that require financial assistance. MDP is a private equity investment company, with investments in a broad range of industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the minor horizontal overlaps and the lack of vertical relationships between the companies' activities. 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.8913](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou - Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Conseil européen de la recherche: Mario Monti nommé à la tête d'un comité exploratoire en vue de désigner son prochain président

Carlos **Moedas**, commissaire européen en charge de la recherche, de la science et de l'innovation, a nommé aujourd'hui sept experts de haut niveau chargés de faire des recommandations en vue de la désignation du prochain président du Conseil européen de la recherche (CER, ERC en anglais). Une fois formellement en place, le groupe d'experts sera présidé par Mario Monti, ancien commissaire européen et président du Conseil des ministres d'Italie, et actuellement président de l'Université Bocconi à Milan. Avec un budget total de plus de 13,1 milliards d'euros pour la période 2014-2020, le CER contribue à promouvoir l'excellence scientifique européenne dans la recherche fondamentale et à attirer les meilleurs talents en Europe. Le commissaire Carlos **Moedas** a déclaré: "Je suis ravi que Mario Monti ait accepté mon invitation à présider le comité constitué en vue de recruter le prochain président du CER. Le CER est devenu un moteur de la science et constituera un pilier essentiel du prochain programme-cadre de recherche et d'innovation, que j'espère encore plus ambitieux qu'Horizon 2020. Je suis convaincu que M. Monti et son éminent groupe de scientifiques et de chercheurs européens peuvent

nous aider à trouver la bonne personne pour mener l'ERC vers encore plus de succès." La Commission européenne doit désigner le prochain président du CER qui devra prendre ses fonctions le 1er janvier 2020, en tant que successeur de l'actuel président, le professeur Jean-Pierre Bourguignon. Plus d'informations [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet - Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon - Tél.: +32 229-80379; Victoria von Hammerstein - Tél.: +32 229 55040)

STATEMENTS

"Tobacco consumption still a threat to our societies": Statement by Commissioner Andriukaitis on the World No Tobacco Day

"Tobacco use remains the single biggest cause of chronic disease and avoidable death in the EU. [Statistics](#) on deaths in the EU from lung cancer, the cancer most associated with smoking, show that in 2015, there were 273 400 deaths from lung cancer alone, 273 400 too many. [...] Having been personally affected by the loss of loved ones to the terrors of tobacco, I am deeply upset by the statistics of young people smoking. We need to reverse this trend. One of the key aims of the new [Tobacco Products Directive](#) (TPD) which became fully applicable in the EU two years ago, is to make tobacco products less attractive to young people. However, the growing popularity of new products such as electronic cigarettes among the young generation worries me a lot. Concerns are now being raised about whether such products are encouraging young people to start smoking instead of helping them to quit. That being said, we have taken important steps towards better protecting our citizens' health from tobacco consumption [...] Non-governmental organisations can also play a big role here, which is why in April this year I launched the [EU Health Award for NGOs](#), to highlight the outstanding initiatives of international, European, national and regional NGOs that have significantly contributed to prevent tobacco use within the EU. The deadline for submissions is 15 June 2018, and I will be presenting the Award this November. As a medical doctor, I have seen first-hand the devastation tobacco use has on health, and how important it is to attack the problem from all angles. We should all step up our efforts to inform, educate and protect our citizens from the harmful effects of tobacco", said Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis** on the eve of the World No Tobacco Day. The full Statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Šefčovič in the Czech Republic for second Energy Union Tour

As part of his second Energy Union Tour, Vice-President of the European Commission for Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** will travel to the Czech Republic on 31 May and 1 June. He will be discussing the EU's plan to help provide Europe with secure, affordable and clean energy. During the visit, he will meet with Prime Minister in resignation Andrej Babiš, as well as the Ministers of Industry and Environment and ministerial experts. Furthermore, the Vice-President will meet with the Minister of Regional Development to discuss the coal initiative and strategy for regions affected by planned mine closures (see Platform for Coal Regions in Transition [IP/17/5165](#)). During his Energy Union Tour to Prague, he will also have a meeting at the EU committee of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament, EU Committee of the Senate and Economic policy Committee of the Lower Chamber. The Vice-President will focus on encouraging the Czech Republic to continue its efforts to sustain and further deploy renewable energy in electricity, heating and cooling and transport, as well as its effort to lower greenhouse gas emissions. The preparation of National Climate and Energy Plan will be discussed, too. During his visit at the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems Agency (GSA), he will have a bilateral meeting with the GSA executive director Carlo des Dorides. The Vice-President will conclude his visit by participating in the [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on future of space and mobility in GSA premises. Ahead of the visit, Vice-President **Šefčovič** said: "I am impressed that Czech Republic has already reached its 2020 targets on renewable energy and is well on track to meet its greenhouse gas emissions target. But there is still incredible potential to evolve in the field of energy intensity. EU investments in energy efficiency improvements in Czech buildings aims at keeping a low average in energy intensity within the EU. Under the Horizon 2020 energy programme Czech participants have received funds for several projects, including one which aims at creating more flexible local energy systems." More information on the [Commission's website](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen - Tel.: +32 229 56186; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Japan and to the Republic of Korea to make

progress on data flows

Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, is visiting Japan today and tomorrow before heading to the Republic of Korea. The main focus of her visit will be to make progress on the data protection discussions with the aim to reaching an adequacy decision as soon as possible in 2018. To that end, she will meet Ms. Kamikawa, the Minister of Justice, as well as the Personal Information Protection Commission of Japan. She will then speak at the public event dedicated to the General Data Protection Regulation and international data transfers. In Seoul, she will exchange views on various areas of her portfolio with Lee Nak-yeon, Prime Minister of South Korea, Kang Kyung-wha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, with Park Sang-ki, Minister of Justice of South Korea with Yanghee Choi, Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning of South Korea and with Chung Hyun-back, Minister of Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of South Korea. On data protection topics, she will then meet Lee Hyo-seong, Chairman of the Korea Communications Commission and Kim Seok-hwan, President of Korea Internet & Security Agency, and speak at the Personal [Information Security Fair 2018](#). Finally, she will discuss consumer topics with representatives of the Korea Consumer Agency and gender topics with representatives of civil society and non-government organisations. *(For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

Commissioner King on official visit to the Middle East

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** is in the Middle East from today until Friday to discuss issues related to cybersecurity and counter-terrorism. Commissioner King will meet with senior Israeli and Palestinian security and government representatives. He will also visit the Ben Gurion Airport and its facilities with particular focus on cybersecurity and the protection of passengers and infrastructure. At the end of his visit the Commissioner will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)*

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

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