

Collector Bank to lend SEK 1 billion to Swedish SMEs with Juncker Plan support

The European Investment Fund has signed a guarantee agreement worth SEK 1 billion (around €94 million) under the EU's COSME programme with Collector Bank to support its lending to SMEs in Sweden. The deal is backed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the heart of the Juncker Plan. The agreement allows Collector Bank to offer loans to start-ups and small businesses at favourable terms, for example, without collateral requirements. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"SMEs and start-ups play a critical role in Sweden's economy. With this European support, Collector Bank can provide more finance and on more favourable terms, meaning these small businesses will get the boost they need to expand their activities and create jobs."* Collector Bank aims to launch its loan programme to SMEs in Finland towards the end of the year. A full press release is available [here](#). As of May 2019, the Juncker Plan has already mobilised nearly €400 billion of additional investment, including €12.8 billion in Sweden. The Plan is currently supporting 949,000 small and medium businesses across Europe. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

2019 U-Multirank university ranking: European universities performing well

The sixth and largest-ever edition of the [U-Multirank](#) university ranking, scoring more than 1,700 universities from 96 countries, has been published today. Every year, U-Multirank compares higher education institutions' performance in areas that matter most to students. A [map](#) showing the universities with top overall performance is a new feature U-Multirank has added in this year's edition. European higher education institutions are doing very well: EDHEC Business School (France), Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden), and the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) are among the top performers. U-Multirank has also analysed the international openness of universities worldwide. Results show that the more universities cooperate internationally, the more satisfied their students are with their learning experience. These universities also do better in knowledge transfer and research impact. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"I am pleased to see the latest U-Multirank results which show that EU universities perform very well when education, research and student satisfaction are looked at together. As we work towards creating a European Education Area where everyone gets the best education and can study freely across borders, as well as developing our flagship European Universities initiative, I am sure that U-Multirank will continue to provide valuable information for applicants."* Initiated by the European Commission and co-funded by the [Erasmus+ Programme](#), U-Multirank is the first global multi-dimensional ranking allowing users to create their own personalised rankings by selecting performance indicators on teaching and learning, international orientation, knowledge transfer, regional engagement and research. Following the call of EU leaders at the [2017 Gothenburg Summit](#), the

Commission launched a €60 million call to develop the [European Universities initiative](#), which aims to support the establishment of highly competitive, inclusive transnational universities. The results of the call are set to be published in the coming weeks. More information can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tél.: +32 229 56184).

Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro en baisse à 1,2% (mai 2019)

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro est estimé à 1,2% en mai 2019, contre 1,7% en avril selon une estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. S'agissant des principales composantes de l'inflation de la zone euro, l'énergie devrait connaître le taux annuel le plus élevé en mai (3,8%, comparé à 5,3% en avril), suivie de l'alimentation, alcool et tabac (1,6%, comparé à 1,5% en avril), des services (1,1%, comparé à 1,9% en avril) et des biens industriels hors énergie (0,3%, comparé à 0,2% en avril). Un communiqué de presse complet est [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidthardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 58615)

Eurostat: Le taux de chômage à 7,6% dans la zone euro, à 6,4% dans l'UE28 (avril 2019)

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 7,6% en avril 2019, en baisse par rapport au taux de 7,7% de mars 2019 et au taux de 8,4% d'avril 2018. Cela est le taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis août 2008. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 6,4% en avril 2019, inchangé par rapport au taux de mars 2019 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 7,0% d'avril 2018. Cela est le taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis le début de la série mensuelle sur le chômage en janvier 2000. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Eurostat estime qu'en avril 2019, 15,802 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient au chômage dans l'UE28, dont 12,529 millions dans la zone euro. Par rapport à mars 2019, le nombre de chômeurs a diminué de 108 000 dans l'UE28 et de 64 000 dans la zone euro. Comparé à avril 2018, le chômage a baissé de 1,394 million de personnes dans l'UE28 et de 1,147 million dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse complet est [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: + 32 229 50055; Sara Soumillon – Tél.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sixth annual European Union-International Organisation for Migration strategic meeting to strengthen cooperation on migration takes place in Brussels

Today, the sixth EU-IOM Strategic Cooperation Meeting is taking place in Brussels. This year, senior officials from the EU and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) discuss developments at global level, EU-IOM cooperation on return and sustainable reintegration and the issue of migrants' protection. Discussions focus in particular on the way forward for EU-IOM cooperation in the context of the African Union-European Union-United Nations Joint Task Force on Migrant Protection in Libya. Ahead of the meeting, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"Migration is a global phenomenon that requires a comprehensive response and global synergies. No single country or organisation can address this challenge alone. Our cooperation with the International Organization for Migration is a key element in our comprehensive approach to managing migration operationally and in all aspects and I am glad to have today the opportunity to strengthen ties with such a trusted and long-standing partner."* In the afternoon, High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner **Avramopoulos** will hold bilateral meetings with António Vitorino, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, to discuss external aspects of migration as well as the migration situation in the EU and cooperation with third countries. More information on the EU-IOM meeting is available [online](#). (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)

The EESC dedicates its flagship Civil Society Prize in 2019 to the empowerment of women and the fight for gender equality



Applications for 2019 are now open

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has launched its Civil Society Prize for 2019. This year's theme is *More women in Europe's society*

and economy, and the prize will honour innovative initiatives and projects which aim to fight for equal opportunities for women and men and their equal treatment in all spheres of economic and social life.

The EESC Civil Society Prize is open to all civil society organisations officially registered within the European Union and acting at local, regional, national or European level. Individuals can also apply. To be eligible, initiatives or projects must have already been implemented or be still ongoing.

A total of **EUR 50 000** will be awarded to a maximum of five winners. The **deadline for entries is 10 a.m. on 6 September 2019**, while the award ceremony will take place on 12 December 2019 in Brussels.

MORE ABOUT THE THEME OF THIS YEAR'S PRIZE

The EESC – which gives a voice to Europe's trade unions, NGOs and employers' organisations at the EU level – has repeatedly warned of persistent gender segregation and discrimination in European labour markets and society. Sixty years after the EU committed to the goal of eliminating the gender pay gap in the Rome Treaty, it is still looming large at around 16%, with a gender pension gap at a staggering 38%.

Women account for 51% of the EU population, yet only 67% of them work. Of all entrepreneurs, just 31% are women. Due to their care duties at home, they are more likely to take part-time or precarious jobs, ending up earning less. They are still massively under-represented in political and economic decision-making bodies, such as company boards.

Gender stereotypes permeate all spheres of life. The media often perpetuate gender roles, stereotypes or norms or even portray degrading images of women. Faced with the latest backlash on women's rights in Europe and with bleak estimates that it will take more than a century for women to be treated equally to men, the EESC has recently called for a political commitment to achieving equality between women and men in Europe.

The EESC will this year be awarding its Civil Society Prize to outstanding projects and initiatives covering at least one of the following issues:

- fighting against or raising awareness of gender stereotypes, discriminatory social behaviour and prejudice in all spheres of economic and social life;
- raising awareness of the consequences of gender stereotypes produced by media content;
- promoting participation of women in traditionally male-dominated occupations, such as in the STEM and ICT sectors, and combating gender segregation in education;
- combating the gender pay and pension gaps;
- promoting female entrepreneurship, equality in decision-making, women's economic independence and gender-life balance;
- addressing the specific challenges facing vulnerable women such as single mothers, women with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities or

low-skilled workers.

The full description of requirements and the online application form are available on our webpage: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/civilsocietyprize/>

ABOUT THE CIVIL SOCIETY PRIZE

The Civil Society Prize, now in its eleventh year, was launched by the EESC to reward and encourage initiatives and achievements by civil society organisations and/or individuals that have made a significant contribution to promoting the common values that bolster European cohesion and integration. In 2018, the prize focused on identities, European values and cultural heritage in Europe.

We kindly invite you to encourage civil society organisations in your country to apply for the EESC Civil Society Prize 2019 and thus help valuable projects win recognition.

Flash estimate – May 2019 – Euro area annual inflation down to 1.2%

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 1.2% in May 2019, down from 1.7% in April according to a flash estimate from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

Looking at the main components of euro area inflation, energy is expected to have the highest annual rate in May (3.8%, compared with 5.3% in April), followed by food, alcohol & tobacco (1.6%, compared with 1.5% in April), services (1.1%, compared with 1.9% in April) and non-energy industrial goods (0.3%, compared with 0.2% in April).

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

April 2019 – Euro area unemployment at 7.6% – EU28 at 6.4%

The euro area (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 7.6% in April 2019, down from 7.7% in March 2019 and from 8.4% in April 2018. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since August 2008. The EU28

unemployment rate was 6.4% in April 2019, stable compared with March 2019 and down from 7.0% in April 2018. This remains the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since the start of the EU monthly unemployment series in January 2000. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

ESMA SEEKS INVESTOR PROTECTION EXPERTS FOR STAKEHOLDER PANEL

IPISC undertakes ESMA's work relating to the provision of investment services and activities to different categories of clients by investment firms and credit institutions. Its focus is on investor protection, in particular the distribution of financial instruments and, more generally, on the authorisation of investment firms, conduct of business and organisational requirements, product intervention rules, as regulated by the Markets in Financial Instruments framework.

The purpose of the CWG is to provide technical assistance to ESMA in relation to all aspects of a group's work. CWG members are selected for a renewable term of two years. Interested experts are asked to send their application by 4 July 2019 following the procedure in the call for expression of interest.