

STEVEN MAIJOOR SPEECH AT THE SECOND ANNUAL FINTECH AND DIGITAL INNOVATION CONFERENCE

The Chair of the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), Steven Maijor, delivered a [keynote speech](#) at Afore Consulting's Second Annual FinTech and Digital Innovation Conference in Brussels on 27 February.

In the course of his speech he addressed three key areas of FinTech, beginning with the structural features of FinTech, monitoring FinTech by looking at economic function and concluded his remarks by outlining the challenges and opportunities for regulators.

Afore Consulting's Second Annual FinTech and Digitalisation Conference: Regulation at the European Level and Beyond – Stanhope Hotel Brussels

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Daily News 27 / 02 / 2018

L'UE investit pour une meilleure protection contre les inondations en Roumanie

Un paquet d'investissement de 1,8 million d'euros du [Fonds de Cohésion](#) financera des mesures de protection contre les inondations pour onze bassins hydrographiques répartis dans tout le pays. Ces mesures incluent la construction de stations pour mesurer les précipitations. Près de 52 000 habitants devraient bénéficier d'une protection accrue contre les inondations grâce à ce projet financé par l'UE. *"Voici un exemple concret d'une Europe qui protège, grâce à la politique de Cohésion. D'ici à la fin de la période budgétaire, c'est plus de 13 millions de personnes dans l'UE qui seront mieux protégées contre les inondations avec ces investissements,"* a commenté la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu**. Plus d'information sur les fonds européens et la gestion des risques naturels est disponible sur la [plateforme Cohesion Open Data](#). (Pour plus d'information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

The European Union and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reaffirm strong commitment to serving Palestine refugees

The European Union and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) are holding a Strategic Dialogue on the way forward for their partnership. The discussion takes place in light of the current financial crisis facing UNRWA and the need to broaden its donor base and continue reforming the Agency. [The EU and UNRWA](#) remain committed to protecting the rights of Palestine refugees and continue the delivery of essential services to more than 5 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**, has said that *"the European Union stands by its commitment to Palestine refugees and UNRWA. We have accelerated our contribution to UNRWA's Programme Budget in 2018 and are committing to maintaining the present level of support to 2020. I recognise the importance of providing predictability to UNRWA in these difficult times. The Agency is a crucial stabilising factor in the Middle East. We stress the need, in parallel, for UNRWA to pursue deep reforms and to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable refugees."* UNRWA Commissioner-General PierreKrähenbühl expressed gratitude that, *"once again, UNRWA could count on the support of the EU to overcome the unprecedented challenges it faces. The EU has been one of our most reliable donors for decades. I am very grateful for the support of the EU in mobilising the international community around a concerted global response to the most severe financial crisis in our seventy year history and helping us build new funding alliances needed to ensure improved income diversity."* The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Phoenix by Apollo

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Phoenix Services International LLC by Apollo Management, L.P., both of the US. Phoenix provides services to steel producers such as handling, processing and sales of slag, as well as recovery and sizing of scrap metal to customer specifications. Apollo controls several investment funds, investing globally in companies and debt in various businesses such as chemical, cruise line, hospital, security, financial services and glass packaging. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given that the companies' activities do not overlap. 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.8778](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Navracsics in Sofia for Culture Ministerial meetings

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, travels to Sofia, Bulgaria today for two ministerial meetings on culture. Given the momentum for EU cultural policy following the Commission's recent communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture, both meetings provide timely opportunities for high-level discussions on the subject. Tomorrow, [28 February](#), the Commissioner will participate in the Informal Culture Council organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU with the theme of 'Culture – an inclusive value for the EU'. He will highlight the important role culture plays in various policy areas to strengthen a European identity in all its diversity as well as ways how to involve young people in preserving and developing European values through culture. [On Thursday, 1 March](#), the Commissioner will attend the [Asia-Europe Meeting](#) (ASEM) of Culture Ministers to discuss 'The Role of Culture in International Relations: the Road Forward'. He will update ministers on the implementation of the 2016 [EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations](#) and on upcoming policy and programme developments in the field of culture in the EU. The Commissioner will also highlight the international dimension of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#). The Asia-Europe Meeting is an Asian-European political dialogue forum to strengthen relations and different forms of cooperation between its 53 partners. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Citizens' Dialogue in Copenhagen – tomorrow's landscape of European research and innovation

On 27 February, Commissioner Carlos **Moedas** in charge of research, science and innovation engages in a discussion with Danish education and science professionals from the field of politics, academia and business. The

[Citizens' Dialogue](#) will focus on how to boost innovation in Europe, create better links between research and education, and increase impact through a mission-oriented approach. This event comes at an opportune moment in the discussion about the EU research and innovation programme beyond 2020. It is particularly important to receive public input in the context of the public [consultation](#) open until 8 March. The Citizens' Dialogue with some 250 expected guests takes place at 3:00 pm at the University of Copenhagen and can be followed [live](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel. +32 229-80379)

Vice-President Šefčovič in Austria for second Energy Union Tour

On 28 February-1 March, Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič will be in Austria for the second [Energy Union Tour](#). He will meet the Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism Elisabeth Köstinger, the President of the National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, members of the National Council as well as representatives of Austrian social partners. Their discussions will focus on Austria's progress towards Energy Union targets and its post-2020 national energy and climate strategy, its role in regional energy cooperation in central Europe, and the possibility of using EU funding to invest in projects that will contribute to the clean energy transition. Vice-President Šefčovič will give a [keynote speech](#) at the Urban Future Conference 2018 and participate in a discussion on the future of energy and climate with students of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), as well as visit the "Aspern Smart City Research" project in Vienna's new district of Seestadt Aspern. Ahead of his visit, Vice-President Šefčovič said: "I am happy that Austria is already very close to achieving its 2020 renewables target, and in particular that 73% of its electricity comes from renewables: it is a European champion in this area, and we look forward to Austria's plans for 2030. However, it will need to do more to meet its energy efficiency and effort sharing targets, especially in the transport and residential sectors. Furthermore, Austrian energy infrastructure projects have already benefited from the European Fund for Strategic Investments, but there is potential for more, and I also encourage project promoters to make full use of the EU's European Investment Advisory Hub and European Investment Project Portal". (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel: +32 2 299 12 69; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel: +32 2 298 76 24)

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

Missing man in Sham Shui Po located

A man who went missing in Sham Shui Po has been located.

Kwan Siu-wa, aged 65, went missing after he was last seen on Nam Cheong

Street on February 25 afternoon. Staff of his hostel made a report to Police on the same day.

Police located the man on Reclamation Street in Mong Kok this afternoon (February 27).