

[Daily News 16 / 01 / 2019](#)

EU increases its humanitarian assistance – record budget adopted for 2019

As more and more people face humanitarian crises worldwide, the EU has adopted its highest ever initial annual humanitarian budget of €1.6 billion for 2019. From long-lasting conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, to the growing impact of climate change worldwide, humanitarian crises are worsening and conflict threatens aid delivery to those most in need. *“With this new budget, the EU remains a leading humanitarian donor in the face of crises such as Syria and Yemen. Humanitarian aid alone cannot solve all problems but we must do everything in our power to help the most vulnerable. This is our humanitarian duty. We must also think about the impact of these many crises on children, on the next generation. That’s why a record 10% of the new budget, 10 times more than in 2015, is dedicated to education in emergencies, so we can give children the tools to build a better future,”* said Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. The biggest bulk of the budget will address the crisis in Syria, refugees in neighbouring countries and the extremely critical situation in Yemen. Further funding will address needs in Africa, Latin America, Asia as well as in Ukraine. The Commission closely monitors the use of EU funds via its global network of humanitarian experts and has strict rules in place to ensure funding is well spent. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Faster, more comfortable commutes in Budapest thanks to Cohesion Policy funds

Passengers will soon enjoy better travel conditions from and to the Hungarian capital thanks to a €166 million EU investment. This will allow the purchase of 11 high capacity double decker carriages to run on railway lines 30, 30a, 80 and 100. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *“Cohesion Policy is investing to make railways services in Hungary faster and more reliable, while significantly improving passenger comfort. This is how the EU is concretely changing our daily lives, for the better.”* The trains, with a 600-seat capacity, will have dedicated space for wheelchairs and bicycles. They will be equipped with on-board Wi-Fi, audio-visual systems, security cameras and power sockets. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission welcomes agreement on stricter rules on European political party funding

Today, the European Parliament and the Member States reached provisional agreement to tighten the rules on European political party funding. The amendment to [the Regulation](#) on funding of European political parties was part of a [series of measures](#) proposed by President Juncker in his 2018 State of the Union speech to secure free and fair European elections. First Vice-

President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“This agreement is good news. It will contribute to bolstering our democratic resilience just in time for the European elections”* Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** added: *“We have seen how personal data can be misused for manipulation in election times. Strong data protection rules are crucial to protect the upcoming European elections. We expect European political parties to fully respect them, so that Europeans can cast their vote being fully and fairly informed during the campaign.”* The amendment will make it possible to impose financial sanctions for breaching data protection rules in order to deliberately influence the outcome of the European elections. Sanctions would amount to 5% of the annual budget of the European political party or foundation concerned. The sanction will be enforced by the Authority for European political parties and European political foundations. In addition, those found to be in breach would not be able to apply for funding from the general budget of the European Union in the year in which the sanction is imposed. The text must now be quickly formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in the coming weeks, so that the rules are in place for the 2019 European elections. All information on the election package is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Eurostat: Commerce international de services: l’excédent de l’UE en hausse à plus de 190 milliards d’euros en 2017, les États-Unis restent le 1er partenaire des exportations et importations

L’excédent du commerce international de services de l’Union européenne (UE), qui avait diminué entre 2013 et 2016, a augmenté pour s’établir à 191,8 milliards d’euros en 2017. Cela s’explique par la hausse de 5% des exportations de services de l’UE vers le reste du monde, passant de 870,5 milliards d’euros en 2016 à 912,4 milliards en 2017, tandis que les importations de l’UE ont diminué de 2%, passant de 732,3 milliards à 720,7 milliards. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tél.: +32 229 51383)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Le commissaire Moscovici à Athènes devant la Chambre de Commerce Franco-Hellénique

M. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire chargé des Affaires économiques et financières, de la Fiscalité et des Douanes, sera à Athènes aujourd’hui pour prononcer un discours devant la [Chambre de Commerce Franco-Hellénique](#). A l’occasion de cette visite, il s’entretiendra avec les autorités grecques des perspectives économiques et de la mise en œuvre des engagements pris à la conclusion du programme de soutien à la stabilité l’été dernier. Le commissaire **Moscovici** rencontrera le président Prokópis Pavlópoulos; le Premier ministre Alexis Tsipras; le ministre des Finances Euclide Tsakalotos,

ainsi que les ministres de l'Économie et du Développement, du Travail et de l'Énergie. Il rencontrera également des banquiers et des représentants du secteur privé. (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Commissioner Navracsics travels to The Netherlands for European Music Awards Night

This evening, the [twelve winners](#) of the first [Music Moves Europe Talent Awards](#) will receive their trophies at a ceremony at the Eurosonic Noorderslag festival in Groningen, The Netherlands. This new EU prize for popular and contemporary music, co-funded by the [Creative Europe](#) programme, succeeds the European Border Breakers Awards which ran from 2004 to 2017. It recognises the success of emerging artists who have reached audiences outside their own countries. Ahead of the ceremonies, Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics**, in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“Tonight in Groningen we are celebrating the European sounds of today and tomorrow. This year, the talent awards have become part of a much larger EU music initiative called Music Moves Europe – an important step as we seek to provide special support to the music sector in the years ahead. I am also pleased to be presenting the Take a Stand Award that recognises the power of music and the arts to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. Congratulations to all the winners on Music Awards Night!”* The twelve winners of the Music Moves Europe Talent Awards were announced in November. An international jury selected them in six categories – pop, rock, electronic, R&B/urban, hip hop/rap and singer/songwriter. During tonight's award ceremony, which will be co-hosted by TV personality and musician Jools Holland and Dutch presenter Eric Corton, a number of bands including Albin Lee Meldau, AVEC or blackwave, will perform live. The ceremony takes place back-to-back with the [10th European Festival Awards Show](#), which Commissioner **Navracsics** will also attend. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Commissioners Vytenis Andriukaitis and Phil Hogan attending the [International Green Week](#) in Berlin

Commissioners Vytenis **Andriukaitis** and Phil **Hogan**, respectively in charge of Health and Food safety and of Agriculture, will both be attending the [International Green Week](#) in Berlin which gathers exhibitors from the food, agriculture and gardening sectors on 17-19 January. On Thursday, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** will start his visit in Germany by holding a citizen dialogue in Potsdam on the theme of health, entitled: “Where we stand today – and how to improve Europe's health status”. Meanwhile, Commissioner **Hogan** will address the Committee on Food and Agriculture at the German Bundestag. Later on that day, at 16:00 CET, both Commissioners will attend the Green Week's premises before the event's official opening. On Friday and Saturday, both Commissioners **Andriukaitis** and **Hogan** join the [11th Global Forum for Food and Agriculture \(GFFA\)](#) organised in

the context of the Green Week. On Friday, Commissioner **Hogan** will participate in the EU High-Level Panel “Innovation and Digitalisation of Agriculture”. He will also speak on a panel entitled “EU Africa Alliance in Agriculture – the way forward”, alongside African Union Agriculture Commissioner Josepha Sacko and the [Taskforce Rural Africa](#) Chairman Tom Arnold. On Saturday, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** will also participate in a conference on “Western Balkans: Potentials of Agriculture Trade”. Also, whilst in Berlin, Commissioner **Hogan** will meet Ms Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany, the Australian agriculture Minister David Littleproud and Japanese Agriculture Minister Takamori Yoshikawa. Ahead of his visit, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said: *“I look forward to visiting this important event and to discussing with ministers from the EU and third-countries topics which are high on the Commission’s agenda, notably African swine fever”*. Commissioner **Hogan** added: *“Berlin Green Week and the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture are major events in the global agricultural policy calendar. This week’s events provide a big opportunity to increase our cooperation at a global level, for example with the Taskforce Rural Africa and by sharing ideas on how to mainstream digitalisation in the agriculture sector.”* The European Commission is present throughout the duration of the International Green Week 2019 with a stand on the theme of sustainable food for a healthy lifestyle. Visitors will receive information about the Common Agricultural Policy, digital innovations in agriculture and rural areas, the EU’s work on food safety and nutrition labelling and research, and measures to reduce food waste, as well as AMR. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel: +32 229 91269; Daniel Rosario – Tel +32 229 56185; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

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