

## **€2 billion to fast forward the creation of the European Innovation Council**

Ahead of the 21-22 March European Council discussion on innovation, industry and competitiveness, the European Commission takes decisive steps to set up a European Innovation Council (EIC). With the European Innovation Council, the Commission responds to the need to close the innovation gap in Europe by identifying and funding Europe's most promising start-ups and SMEs. Currently in its pilot phase, the EIC will become a full-fledged reality from 2021 under the next EU research and innovation programme Horizon Europe. At a press conference today (watch it again [here](#)), Commissioner for research, science and innovation Carlos **Moedas** announced important steps for the final years of the pilot phase of the EIC: over €2 billion of funding in 2019-2020 for early stage to more mature projects; a call for application for innovation leaders to oversee the EIC pilot and prepare the future EIC; 68 startups and SMEs selected for an overall funding of €120 million; and a soon to be opened call for application for programme managers to provide hands-on support for funded projects. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation said: *"With the European Innovation Council, we don't simply put money on the table. We create a whole innovation system to place Europe at the forefront in strategic technologies and innovation that will shape our futures such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology and zero-emission energy. We must focus on the needs of the innovators, who are the ones who will generate jobs, strengthen our global competitiveness and improve our daily lives."* Global competition is intensifying and Europe needs to deepen its innovation and risk-taking capability to compete on a market increasingly defined by new technologies. That is why the Commission launched in 2017 the pilot phase of EIC to identify and fund Europe's most innovative start-ups and SMEs. Since then, 1276 highly innovative projects have already benefitted from an overall funding of over €730 million. More information is available in a [press release](#), [factsheet](#) and [info sheet](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

## **Clean mobility: Commission hands "roadmap towards clean vehicles" over to Council presidency**

Today, during the Automotive Industry Forum organised by the Romanian Presidency in Craiova (Romania) Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** handed over a [roadmap towards clean vehicles](#) to Mr Nicolae Bădălău, Minister for Economy of Romania representing the presidency of the Council of the EU. The roadmap, which the Commission has worked on jointly with national experts, lays out actions that Commission, Member States and industry should take to realise a full shift to clean cars. The **Juncker** Commission has led the transition to low and zero-emission mobility. Three major legislative packages called '[Europe on the Move](#)' and different measures to support alternative fuels, battery production and connected and automated driving build the core of the Commission efforts. The objective of today's *roadmap* defines various action areas including: the

efficient implementation of [new type approval rules](#) and [emissions tests](#) developed and proposed by the Commission; a quick delivery on the recalls of non-compliant cars; the creation of a cleaner car fleet by means of retro-fitting; and improved consumer information and protection. The Commission will work on the implementation of the roadmap with Member States. The Competitiveness Council end of May will offer a platform for Member States to exchange about the roadmap at political level.

Commissioner **Bieńkowska** will deliver an opening address in the morning and hold a press point at 11:45. Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă, Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Grațiela Gavrilescu and Romanian Minister of Economy Nicolae Bădălău will also participate in the conference and deliver speeches. The Commission has published an [overview](#) of EU actions in the follow-up to the emissions scandal. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

### **ENISA, EU Agency for Cybersecurity celebrates 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with reinforced mandate**

Tomorrow, ENISA, the EU Agency for Cybersecurity will celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Since 2004, the [European Agency for Network and Information Security](#) (ENISA) has contributed to shaping the EU's response to the growing cyber threats in the EU. ENISA's main task is to help the EU and its Member States to improve their cyber resilience and increase trust in the [Digital Single Market](#). The [Cyber Security Act](#) recently adopted by the European Parliament and the Council will strengthen the role of ENISA by giving it a permanent mandate and increasing its staff and budget. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** said: "We are better protected against cyber threats when we have a good exchange of information about cybersecurity. ENISA plays an important role in facilitating information exchange between the Member States. We are now setting up the EU cybersecurity framework where ENISA will have a major part in making sure that it works." ENISA will celebrate [its 15 years anniversary](#) in Brussels in the presence of the Romanian presidency of the Council of the EU and other EU institutions. Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, who will deliver a keynote speech, added: "The security of citizens has always been one of the biggest priorities for the European Union. Since it was set up in 2004, ENISA has steadily worked to help reinforce the cybersecurity across the Union. 15 years later, it is established as a strong and credible player in the European cybersecurity eco-system. And now a new chapter is starting, with the Cybersecurity Act giving ENISA a permanent mandate and new important tasks for the Digital Single Market, such as its future role in the European cybersecurity certification framework." For more information on the celebrations and the EU Cyber Agency work, see [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083 – Marietta Grammenou Tel.: +32 229 83583)

**State aid: Commission clears increase in regasification capacity of LNG terminal in Świnoujście, Poland**

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, Polish plans to support the increase of the regasification capacity (from 5 to 7.5 billion cubic metres per year), as well the development of additional functionalities, of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście, Poland. The Commission approved the aid for the construction of this LNG terminal in 2011. The increase in capacity was included in the list of Projects of Common Interest of the European Union as part of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) corridor. The Polish LNG will receive PLN 553 million (€128 million) from the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, under the 2014-20 Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme, which has among its priorities the improvement of energy security. The Commission assessed the measure under EU State aid rules, in particular the Commission 2014 [Guidelines on State aid for environmental protection and energy](#) and found that it is in line with the requirements of the Guidelines. In particular, the project will contribute to ensuring security of gas supplies in Poland and in the Baltic countries by making supplies more diverse and promoting new gas transport routes in the region. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the State Aid Register under the case number SA.50905. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

#### **Concentrations: la Commission approuve la création d'une entreprise commune contrôlée par Moma Lieux et Unibail-Rodamco**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, la création d'une entreprise commune ayant pour objet de développer et d'exploiter des espaces de restauration de type *food halls* par les entreprises Moma Lieux SAS et Unibail-Rodamco SE, toutes deux basées en France. Moma Lieux appartient au groupe Moma, qui est actif dans la restauration commerciale, les prestations traiteur, la location de lieux pour l'organisation d'événements, le conseil en communication et production événementielle, et le développement et la production de spectacles. Unibail-Rodamco est active dans la gestion et la location d'espaces commerciaux au sein de centres commerciaux, d'immeubles de bureaux et de centres de congrès et expositions. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.9263](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526; 55344)*

#### **Concentrations: La Commission autorise l'acquisition de l'aéroport de Gatwick par VINCI Airports**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de Ivy Topco Limited, basée aux Iles Caïmans, une société holding qui contrôle indirectement Gatwick Airport Limited, basée au Royaume-Uni par VINCI Airports, filiale du groupe français VINCI. Gatwick

Airport Limited possède et exploite l'aéroport de Gatwick dans la région de Londres. VINCI Airports gère et exploite des aéroports dans le monde entier, tous situés hors de Grande-Bretagne. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu du caractère limité des chevauchements entre les activités commerciales des parties à la concentration. La transaction a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le registre public des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.9270](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526; 55344)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Coty by JAB**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Coty Inc. of the US by JAB Holding Company, S.a.r.l. (JAB) of Luxembourg. Coty is a global beauty products company. JAB is a privately held group focused on investments in companies such as tea and coffee brands, bakery, food, non-alcoholic beverages, doughnuts businesses and fashion retail. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because there is no overlap between the activities of the companies. 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.9312](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of RPC by Apollo Management**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control of RPC Group plc ("RPC") of the UK by Apollo Management, L.P. of the US. RPC is active in the manufacture of plastic products, including packaging and non-packaging. Apollo Management is a global investment fund. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because there are no horizontal overlaps and vertical relationships between the activities of RPC and the companies controlled by Apollo Management. 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.9291](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

### **Mergers: the Commission clears the acquisition of joint control over Kabu.com by KDDI and Mitsubishi Securities**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over Kabu.com Securities Co., Ltd. ("Kabu.com") by KDDI Corporation ("KDDI") and Mitsubishi UFJ Securities Holdings Co. Ltd. ("Mitsubishi Securities"), all of Japan. Kabu.com is a securities company that mainly provides online brokerage services and supplies computer systems,

programs, and software for online securities transactions in Japan. KDDI is a supplier of telecommunication services, including mobile phone services, fixed line communication, information technologies, e-commerce, energy and financial services. Mitsubishi Securities is a subsidiary of the Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc., that operates globally and provides a full range of banking services. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns in the European Economic Area given that Kabu.com is active only in Japan. 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.9301](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **Eurostat: Excédent de 1,5 milliards d'euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro, Déficit de 24,9 milliards d'euros pour l'UE28**

Selon les premières estimations, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 183,4 milliards d'euros en janvier 2019, en hausse de 2,5% par rapport à janvier 2018 (179,0 milliards). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 181,8 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 3,4% par rapport à janvier 2018 (175,9 milliards). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en janvier 2019 un excédent de 1,5 milliard d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +3,1 milliards en janvier 2018. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 164,6 milliards d'euros en janvier 2019, soit +2,4% par rapport à janvier 2018. Selon les premières estimations, les exportations de biens extra-UE28 se sont établies à 153,6 milliards d'euros en janvier 2019, en hausse de 2,1% par rapport à janvier 2018 (150,4 milliards). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 178,5 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 3,9% par rapport à janvier 2018 (171,8 milliards). En conséquence, l'UE28 a enregistré en janvier 2019 un déficit de 24,9 milliards d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre -21,4 milliards en janvier 2018. Le commerce intra-UE28 s'est élevé à 297,9 milliards d'euros en janvier 2019, soit +2,3% par rapport à janvier 2018. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

### **Eurostat: Le taux d'emplois vacants à 2,3% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28**

Le taux d'emplois vacants s'est établi à 2,3% dans la zone euro (ZE19) au quatrième trimestre 2018, en hausse par rapport au taux de 2,1% du trimestre précédent et au taux de 2,0% relevé au quatrième trimestre 2017, selon les chiffres publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Le taux d'emplois vacants dans l'UE28 s'est quant à lui également établi à 2,3% au quatrième trimestre 2018, en hausse par rapport au taux de 2,2% du trimestre précédent et au taux de 2,0% enregistré au quatrième trimestre 2017. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [en ligne](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumilion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**



## **First Juncker Plan matchmaking event for EU businesses and investors in Brussels**

Tomorrow, the European Commission is organising the first InvestEU Matchmaking Event 2019, where EU businesses can come and pitch their projects directly to investors and where investors can find great investment opportunities. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner Carlos **Moedas** will open this event, which is sponsored by the [European Investment Project Portal](#) (EIPP), the online database of EU investment projects, and by the [Seal of Excellence](#), Horizon 2020's quality label. *"The European Investment Project Portal is one of the best kept secrets of the Investment Plan"*, said Vice-President **Katainen** ahead of the event, *"But we want to change this. This accessible database of mature, quality projects in the EU for investors worldwide deserves greater attention. It helps EU entrepreneurs to get the financial boost they need to get their projects off the ground. I will be very glad to open the first InvestEU Matchmaking Event tomorrow."* Businesses and investors will be able to attend workshops on "Sustainable Finance and Innovation", "Supporting Disruptive Innovation", and "How to secure financing: the Investors' view" as well as networking meetings. The event will take place at The Egg, in Brussels, and is open to the press. The agenda is available [here](#). In February 2019, the Investment Plan for Europe – [the Juncker Plan](#) – had already mobilised more than 380 billion euros in additional investment across Europe, with 842,000 small and medium businesses set to benefit from improved access to finance. *(For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

## **Competition: EU and China will discuss competition policy priorities at 18<sup>th</sup> Competition Week in Beijing**

Officials and experts from the EU and China are meeting in Beijing from 18 to 21 March for technical discussions and cooperation on competition law and enforcement. The 18<sup>th</sup> EU-China Competition Week provides a forum for exchanges on competition policy between the European Commission and the Chinese State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR). The roundtable discussions will focus on State aid control and the Fair Competition Review System, merger review and antitrust issues. The EU-China Competition Week is part of the [Competition Cooperation project](#), a 5-year EU funded programme offering technical cooperation to competition authorities in Asia. The objective is to exchange experiences and strengthen convergence in competition policy, to the benefit of citizens and businesses in both the EU and Asia. EU-China Competition Weeks take place twice a year, in March and October. The 19<sup>th</sup> EU-China Competition Week will take place in October 2019. More information about the European Commission' bilateral dialogue with China in the field of competition policy is available on the Commission's [website](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

## **Commissioner Navracsics is hosting Citizens' Dialogue in Budapest**

Today, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, is in Budapest to hold a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) with around 100-120 students and staff members at Budapest's Pázmány Péter University. Participants are discussing topics such as the importance and benefits of Erasmus+, the role of youth in the upcoming European Parliament elections or the biggest challenges facing youth today. The discussion is currently ongoing and can be followed live [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#) – Marietta Grammenou- Tel.: [+32 229 83583](#))

## **Commissioner Crețu at the OECD regional development ministerial meeting in Athens**

Today until Wednesday, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** is in Athens, Greece, where she is representing the European Union at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) regional development ministerial meeting. She will discuss the EU budget and Cohesion Policy responses to megatrends. In Athens, the Commissioner will meet Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. She will also meet Christos Spirtzis, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, and Nikos Pappas, Minister of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media. Commissioner **Crețu** said: *"In a changing world, faced with economic, social and demographic challenges, I remain convinced that Cohesion Policy is one of the best tools the EU has to remain ahead of the curve. It will help us achieve the transition towards a fairer, more sustainable society in Greece and in Europe."* The Commissioner will also attend several side events to the ministerial meeting. On 18 March, Commissioner **Crețu** will deliver a keynote speech at the 4th meeting of OECD champion mayors for inclusive growth, alongside Georgios Kaminis, Mayor of Athens, and Ángel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General. On 19 March, the Commissioner will attend the 7th Roundtable of Mayors and Ministers, where she will discuss the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy. On 20 March, she will take part in a session on the OECD's ongoing Territorial Review of Greece, which has a special focus on Regional Policy in Greece after 2020. She will also meet Ignacio Sanchez Amor, Secretary of State for Territorial Policy of Spain and Çetin Ali Dönmez, Deputy Minister of Industry and Technology of Turkey. Finally, the Commissioner will meet the Romanian community of Athens. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 2 295 00 55; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

## **Commissioner Stylianides in Germany**

Today, Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, will travel to Berlin to meet representatives of VENRO, the umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian aid non-governmental organisations in Germany. He will exchange views on the current and future challenges for humanitarian aid. In the margins of the round-table debate, Commissioner Stylianides is meeting representatives of the German Chancellor's office, the Ministry for Development Cooperation and the Foreign

Affairs ministry. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

### **Energy Union: Clean Energy Industrial Forum on Renewable Energy**

Today, the second High-level meeting of the renewable energy section of the Clean Energy Industrial Forum takes place at the Berlaymont building, [chaired](#) by Miguel **Arias Cañete**, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy. The Commission is committed to having the EU becoming world leader on renewable energy and of placing Europe on the right path towards a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy. The clean energy transition is an important opportunity for European industries. Last year the Commission established a Clean Energy Industrial Forum with action on renewable energy, electricity storage and batteries, and construction sector in order to make recommendations on how to strengthen the industrial basis and the EU value chain for renewable energy technologies. The Forum brings together 30 CEOs and industry leaders, including from Small and Medium Enterprises, as well as representatives from international organisations. Its objective is to identify new actions and initiatives for key sectors and segments of the value chain in which EU industries need to maintain and step up their competitiveness at global scale. During this 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the members of the Forum will review progress made on competitiveness, research and innovation, and trade in the context of the recently adopted regulatory framework for renewables. They will also focus on discussing financing possibilities for the next decade. For more details about the event, see [website](#). *(For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)*

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