

ASEAN: Council adopts conclusions

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Chemical weapons: the EU places nine persons and one entity under new sanctions regime

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Daily News 21 / 01 / 2019

The Juncker Plan supports chronic disease prevention in Finland

The Investment Plan for Europe, or [Juncker Plan](#), is backing a €20 million European Investment Bank (EIB) loan to Finnish company Nightingale Health. The company will use the financing to further develop its blood analysis technology, which facilitates the detection and prevention of chronic diseases. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, who attended the signature event in Helsinki, said: *“Europe invests heavily in education and science as we believe that putting a strategic effort into these areas can reap huge benefits. This commitment has resulted in Europe’s position today as a world leader in cutting edge medical research. We are delighted that the Investment Plan for Europe is fostering the development of Nightingale’s technology which has the potential to add significant value to European healthcare.”* Nightingale’s innovative blood analysis technology can detect early signs of chronic diseases, improving for example the assessment of a person’s future risk of developing heart disease or type 2 diabetes. A press release is available [here](#). As of December 2018, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), at the heart of the Juncker Plan, had already mobilised €371.2 billion of additional investments, including €7.8 billion in Finland. (*For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169*)

Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings, 21 and 22 January 2019

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the Commission at today’s Eurogroup meeting. The Eurogroup will discuss the Commission’s [Recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area for 2019](#), issued in November 2018 in the context of the European Semester. It will discuss the international role of the euro on the basis of the [Commission’s Communication from December 2018](#). The ministers will also launch the process to appoint a new member of the European Central Bank’s Executive Board to replace Peter Praet, whose term ends on 31 May 2019. The Eurogroup will then continue in an inclusive format to followup on the [December 2018 Euro Summit](#) and discuss the state of play of the ongoing work on the deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union. Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. At tomorrow’s ECOFIN meeting, Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will represent the Commission. The Council will discuss the [InvestEU programme](#), the Commission’s proposal to boost private and public investment in Europe in the next long-term EU budget, building on the success of the [Juncker Plan](#). Ministers will then exchange views on the review of the European system of financial supervision, focusing in particular on the way forward on the Commission

proposals to improve the mandates, governance and funding of the three European supervisory authorities (ESAs) and the proposed additional measures to strengthen supervision in the area of anti-money laundering. A press conference with Vice-President **Dombrovskis** will follow the meeting. (For more information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229-56153; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

First EU citizens using ePrescriptions in other EU country

Today, the first EU patients can use digital prescriptions issued by their home doctor when visiting a pharmacy in another EU country: Finnish patients are now able to go to a pharmacy in Estonia and retrieve medicine prescribed electronically by their doctor in Finland. The initiative applies to all ePrescriptions prescribed in Finland and to the Estonian pharmacies that have signed the agreement. The novelty of this initiative is that the ePrescriptions are visible electronically to participating pharmacists in the receiving country via the new eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure, without the patient having to provide a written prescription. This is in line with our policy on [Digital Health and Care](#), which aims to empower patients by giving access to their health data and ensuring continuity of care. Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, and Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, have welcomed this the first step in the exchange of ePrescriptions between Finland and Estonia, which paves the way for eHealth cooperation between states and is a great starting point for better care for our citizens. A press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [FI](#), [SV](#) and [ET](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel: +32 229 91269; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

The EU makes proposals to advance the UN reform process of international investment-related disputes

The EU and its Member States submitted last Friday two proposals to the UN Working Group under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) tasked with examining reform of investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS). The proposals by the EU and its Member States, as well as proposals submitted by other countries, will be discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group from 1 to 5 April 2019 that has been convening since November 2017. The [first EU paper](#) sets out the EU's proposal of establishing a permanent multilateral investment court with an appeal mechanism and full-time adjudicators. The EU views this as the only reform option that can effectively respond to all the concerns identified in this UN process. It would enhance the predictability and consistency of decisions and ensure their correctness, eliminate the ethical concerns of the current system, and effectively address the problems of excessive costs and duration. The [second paper](#) makes proposals for an effective work plan so that the Working Group develops concrete solutions and text proposals to be adopted by the UNCITRAL Commission and ultimately the UN General Assembly. The [reports](#) of the meetings of the Working Group are available on the [UNCITRAL website](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska –

Tel: +32 229 51383)

State aid: Commission finds sale of Austria's 25% shareholding in Hypo Steiermark to Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark involves no State aid

The European Commission has found that the sale by the Austrian State of the 25% plus 2 shares it holds in Landeshypothekenbank Steiermark AG ("Hypo Steiermark") to private bank Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark AG does not involve State aid within the meaning of EU rules. Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark already holds 75% minus 2 shares of Landeshypothekenbank Steiermark and has a pre-emption right to buy the remaining shares. Austria notified the sale to the Commission and submitted valuations of the Hypo Steiermark shares by two independent experts. On this basis and on the basis of further information submitted by Austria, the Commission concluded that the sale price was in line with market conditions. The transaction therefore does not involve any State aid within the meaning of EU rules. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#), under the case number SA.51650 once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Eurostat: La dette publique en baisse à 86,1% du PIB dans la zone euro, en baisse à 80,8% du PIB dans l'UE28 (Troisième trimestre 2018 par rapport au deuxième trimestre 2018)

À la fin du troisième trimestre 2018, le ratio de la dette publique par rapport au PIB s'est établi à 86,1% dans la zone euro (ZE19), contre 86,3% à la fin du deuxième trimestre 2018. Dans l'UE28, le ratio a diminué, passant de 81,0% à 80,8%. Par rapport au troisième trimestre 2017, le ratio de la dette publique par rapport au PIB a baissé tant dans la zone euro (de 88,2% à 86,1%) que dans l'UE28 (de 82,5% à 80,8%). À la fin du troisième trimestre 2018, les titres de créances ont représenté 81,2% de la dette publique de la zone euro et 82,0% de celle de l'UE28, les crédits respectivement 15,7% et 13,8%, et le numéraire et dépôts 3,1% et 4,2%. En raison de l'implication des gouvernements de l'UE dans l'aide financière à certains États membres, des données trimestrielles sur les prêts intergouvernementaux sont également publiées. À la fin du troisième trimestre 2018, la part des prêts intergouvernementaux dans le PIB s'est établie à 2,0% dans la zone euro et à 1,5% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

Eurostat : Déficit public désaisonnalisé de la zone euro en hausse à 0,5% du PIB, en hausse à 0,6% du PIB dans l'UE28 (Troisième trimestre 2018)

Au troisième trimestre 2018, le ratio du déficit public par rapport au PIB, corrigé des variations saisonnières, s'est établi à 0,5% dans la zone euro (ZE19), en hausse par rapport au deuxième trimestre 2018 où il se situait à

0,3%. Dans l'UE28, le ratio du déficit public par rapport au PIB s'est établi à 0,6%, contre 0,4% au trimestre précédent. Un communiqué de presse Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidthardt – Tél.: +32 229 56153; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The European Commission at the Davos World Economic Forum

The European Commission will participate in the 2019 edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF), which takes place in Davos between the 22 and 25 January. Six Members of the College will participate at this year's WEF: Vice-President **Katainen** and Commissioners **Oettinger**, **Hahn**, **Malmström**, **Moscovici** and **Moedas**. The main theme of this year's meeting is "Globalisation 4.0: Shaping a global architecture in the age of the fourth industrial revolution". The Members of the College participating in this year's WEF will represent the European Commission in panel debates, sessions as well as bilateral meetings to relay how the Commission is working to turn the EU into a stronger, more competitive and more innovative global actor at the centre of a multilateral rules-based international order. Panels in which the Members of the College will speak will be broadcast on [EbS+](#). For more details, see this week's [Commission calendar](#) and the [website](#) of the World Economic Forum. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456)

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

[First EU citizens using ePrescriptions in other EU country](#)

The initiative applies to all *ePrescriptions* prescribed in Finland and to the Estonian pharmacies that have signed the agreement. The novelty of this initiative is that the *ePrescriptions* are visible electronically to participating pharmacists in the receiving country via the new eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure, without the patient having to provide a written prescription. This is in line with our policy on Digital Health and Care, which aims to empower patients by giving access to their health data and ensuring continuity of care.

Andrus **Ansip**, Vice President for the Digital Single Market, said: *"Congratulations to Finland and Estonia for showing the path in eHealth cooperation between states and I would like other countries to follow soon. People should be able to use their e-prescriptions across borders. Free movement is a founding principle of the EU: we must make it as easy as possible for people to get treatment or medicines when abroad in the EU. The next major step will be to simplify patient access to their very own health data, by developing a common format for exchanging electronic health records"*

between EU countries.”

Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *“I very much welcome the first step in the exchange of ePrescriptions between Finland and Estonia. Sharing ePrescriptions and Patient Summaries will be crucial for patient safety as it can help doctors to better understand a foreign patient’s medical history and can reduce the risks of incorrect medication and the costs of duplicate tests. The Commission will continue its support to expand these exchanges across the EU.”*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, said: *“This is a great starting point for better care for citizens, something arguably very important for them. ePrescriptions and International Patient Summaries can save lives in case of emergency situations. The EU Budget financed the technical solutions used for these exchanges, showing once again how important and how close it is to citizen’s daily life.”*

In 2011, the European institutions adopted [Directive 2011/24](#) which ensures continuity of care for European citizens across borders. The directive gives the possibility for Member States to exchange health data in a secure, efficient and interoperable way. The following cross-border health services are now being progressively introduced in all EU Member States:

1) *ePrescription* and *eDispensation* allow any EU citizen to retrieve his/her medication in a pharmacy located in another EU Member State, thanks to the electronic transfer of their prescription from his/her country of residence to the country of travel. The country of residence is then informed about the retrieved medicine in the visited country;

2) *Patient Summaries* provide background information on important health-related aspects such as allergies, current medication, previous illness, surgeries, etc., making it digitally accessible in case of a medical (emergency) visit in another country. It is an abstract of a larger collection of health data called the [European Health Record](#). To make this a reality, the Commission will soon be presenting a Recommendation on the European Electronic Health Record Exchange Format.

Data protection rules are strictly observed and patients will have to provide their consent before these services are accessed.

Both services were made possible thanks to the *eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure* which connects the eHealth national services, allowing them to exchange health data, and which is funded by the European Commission’s Connecting Europe Facility.

Next steps

22 Member States are part of the *eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure* and are expected to exchange *ePrescriptions* and *Patient Summaries* by the end of 2021. 10 Member States (Finland, Estonia, Czechia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Croatia, Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Belgium) may start these exchanges by the end of 2019.

The [eHealth Network](#) (the body of eHealth authorities in the EU) has recently given the green light to Finland and Estonia to start exchanging *ePrescriptions* and to Czechia and Luxembourg to receive *Patient Summaries* of foreign citizens.

More information:

More information can be found [here](#)

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[Main topics and media events 21](#) [January – 3 February 2019](#)

Roaming charges ended in the European Union on 15 June 2017. Europeans travelling within EU countries will 'Roam Like at Home' and pay domestic prices for roaming calls, SMS and data. ...

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. ...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...