

Commission launches Knowledge Centre to fight malnutrition

Today, the European Commission will launch a new Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security. This Knowledge Centre, led by the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre, will act as a reference point for scientific data supporting the EU's global commitment to end hunger, guarantee food security and improve nutrition levels in third countries where people lack access to sufficient affordable and nutritious food.

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, who is responsible for the Joint Research Centre, will launch the new Knowledge Centre in Brussels in the presence of Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management and Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"To end hunger and fight malnutrition, we need to do more together, using the very best knowledge at our disposal within the Commission and beyond. In most cases, we are not short of data or information – rather, the challenge is making sense of the unprecedented volume of knowledge we have. The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security will help identify where crucial information and knowledge gaps exist, and indicate how to fill them."*

The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security will:

The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security will produce briefings, interactive maps, databases and regular reports, and will make this information [publicly accessible](#). The Knowledge Centre will be fully funded by the European Commission.

Background

According to the [Global Report on Food Crises](#), published in March this year, in 2017, 1 in 9 people in the world were undernourished. Due to conflicts and political or economic insecurity, sometimes coupled with extreme climatic events, the number of people affected by food crises has grown since 2016, and reached a staggering 124 million people in 2017. The Global Report on Food Crises highlighted the risk of more acute, persistent and complex food crises in the future.

Implement a long-term strategy that integrates humanitarian aid, development assistance and support for peace-building, the EU supports measures to improve food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture in over 60 partner countries. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU will provide around €8.5 billion in funding for these activities.

The Joint Research Centre coordinates knowledge and competence centres,

processing science-based evidence to inform policy-makers and providing tools and services for all EU policy areas. The Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security is the sixth to be launched under the leadership of the Joint Research Centre after those on the [Bioeconomy](#), [Territorial Policies](#), [Migration and Demography](#), [Disaster Risk Management](#) and [Food Fraud and Quality](#).

For more information

[Factsheet on the Joint Research Centre](#)

[European Citizens' Initiative: European Commission declares as inadmissible request for EU referendum on the United Kingdom remaining or leaving](#)

The Commission found that that the conditions for registration of this initiative were not met as the matter falls outside of the EU's field of competence.

The initiative states that: *"All European Citizens should have the possibility to express their political opinion, whether they wish the United Kingdom to stay in the European Union."* The organisers call on the European Commission to *"support this public opinion poll giving all European Citizens in all 28 member states, the possibility to express their wish whether the Brexit should happen or not."* Article 50(1) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) explicitly allows any Member State to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements. While the European Commission regrets the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, it respects the outcome of the referendum.

Background

European Citizens' Initiatives were introduced with the Lisbon Treaty and launched as an agenda-setting tool in the hands of citizens in April 2012, upon the entry into force of the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation which implements the Treaty provisions. In 2017, as part of President Juncker's State of the Union address, the European Commission tabled [reform proposals for the European Citizens' Initiative](#) to make it even more user-friendly.

Once formally registered, a European Citizens' Initiative allows one million

citizens from at least one quarter of EU Member States to invite the European Commission to propose a legal act in areas where the Commission has the power to do so.

The conditions for admissibility, as foreseen by the European Citizens' Initiative Regulation, are that the proposed action does not manifestly fall outside the framework of the Commission's powers to submit a proposal for a legal act, that it is not manifestly abusive, frivolous or vexatious and that it is not manifestly contrary to the values of the Union.

Over the last two years the Commission registered four 'Brexit-related' initiatives:

While two 'Brexit-related' initiatives did not meet the conditions for registration and were declared as inadmissible:

For More Information

[ECIs currently collecting signatures](#)

[ECI website](#)

[ECI Regulation](#)

[Initiative citoyenne européenne: la Commission européenne déclare irrecevable une demande de référendum européen sur la question du départ ou non du Royaume-Uni](#)

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
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, ...

[Taxation in 2017 – Tax-to-GDP ratio up to 40.2% in EU – A one-to-two ratio across Member States](#)

The overall tax-to-GDP ratio, meaning the sum of taxes and net social contributions as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, stood at 40.2% in the **European Union** (EU) in 2017, an increase compared with 2016 (39.9%). In the **euro area**, tax revenue accounted for 41.4% of GDP in 2017, slightly up from 41.2% in 2016.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

[Capital markets union: Council agrees stance on EU framework for covered bonds](#)

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EU ambassadors today took a step forward in expanding the capital markets

union and promoting access to long-term finance. They reached an agreement on the Council's stance on a **harmonised EU framework for covered bonds**.

On the basis of the text agreed today, the presidency will be able to **start negotiations with the European Parliament**.

The capital markets union project is about creating new investment possibilities in a safe and stable environment. Once adopted, the new EU framework for covered bonds will contribute to this goal by encouraging the development of a type of product that proved to be very reliable during the financial crisis.

Hartwig Löger, minister for finance of Austria which currently holds the Council presidency

Covered bonds are financial instruments backed by a separate pool of assets – typically mortgages or public debt – to which investors have a preferential claim in case of failure of the issuer. Covered bonds are an **efficient source of financing of the economy which ensure a high level of certainty** for investors.

The covered bonds market is very developed in the EU. In December 2015, the outstanding volume of covered bonds issued by EU-based institutions reached €2.1 trillion and constituted 84% of the total volume at global level. Covered bonds' markets are particularly developed in Germany, Denmark, France, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden, as those countries have longstanding national regimes in place.

The aim of the proposed framework (composed of a directive and a regulation), put forward by the Commission in March 2018, is to set **minimum harmonisation requirements** that all covered bonds across Europe will have to meet. This will **increase security for investors and open up new opportunities**, in particular where markets are less developed.

The proposed framework:

- provides a common definition of covered bonds;
- defines the structural features of the instrument;
- defines the tasks and responsibilities for the supervision of covered bonds;
- sets out the rules allowing the use of the 'European Covered Bonds' label;
- strengthens the conditions for granting preferential prudential treatment to covered bonds under the capital requirement regulation.

Next steps

The economic and financial affairs committee of the Parliament voted on its draft report on 20 November. The Parliament's stance is due to be confirmed by a plenary vote in December 2018.

The presidency and the Parliament will then be able to begin trilogue negotiations.

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