

Luca Jahier: “Europe must be sustainable or it will simply not be”



Luca Jahier, the president of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), opened the high-level conference on Sustainable Development Goals and Initiatives for Sustainable Global Value Chains co-hosted by the EESC, the European Commission and the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands by stating that there is no alternative to a sustainable economy: “Europe must be sustainable or it will simply not be”. The conference gathered representatives of businesses, trade unions, NGOs and professional organisations from all across Europe, and the opening session also counted on the participation of Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands.

Luca Jahier emphasized the role of civil society in the implementation of adequate policies in order to tackle the risks of climate change, pollution and social inequalities: *“The challenges we face can be seen as an opportunity for private companies to drive the transition towards a sustainable economy, but this will only become a reality if we all pull in the same direction: businesses, trade unions, civil society and local authorities”*. Jahier also called the Commission to take the necessary steps to make sure that the EU plays a leading role in this process, because *“the real question here is if we are leading this change or other will do”*.

Frans Timmermans pointed out that *“for the first time humanity has realized that our planet cannot fulfil all our ambitions if we don’t change the way we live and we produce”*. In his view, this situation can only be solved by facing the challenges instead of chaining people to their fears in order to control them better, even admitting that *“constructive solutions are not being convincing enough and nostalgia has become the new opium for the people”*. Timmermans expressed his optimism by stating that private companies are more and more convinced of the need of implementing sustainable policies as *“sustainability is a winning business proposition in the long term, which creates growth and jobs. However, he declared that this attitude cannot rely only in the good faith of companies and that, at some point, regulation is needed: “From my experience I know that civility helps to drive out rudeness, confidence drives out fear, dialogue drives out violence and love drives out hate; but, unfortunately, this is also true the other way around”*.

Sigrid Kaag presented some examples of good practices implemented by the Dutch authorities that could be scaled up at EU level in order to create a *“EU level playing field” in which sustainable development standards could be used as a starting point*“.

The conference was structured in four parallel workshops dealing with global

value chains and corporate social responsibility in the textile sector, the banking sector, the extractive industries and the agro-food sector. These workshops were addressed to the representatives of the civil society and were aimed to identify and share successful experiences and explore which initiatives could be scaled up to EU-level.

<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=I162772&lg=INT&sublg=none>

Daily News 30 / 10 / 2018

Le Plan Juncker investit dans la recherche médicale pour le traitement des troubles neurologiques

La Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI) vient d'accorder un prêt de 40 millions d'euros à la société biopharmaceutique italienne Newron afin de lui permettre de développer ses activités de recherche et développement sur le traitement des troubles neurologiques, avec un focus sur les maladies rares. Cet accord est soutenu par le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques (EFSI) – le cœur du [Plan d'investissement pour l'Europe, le Plan Juncker](#). Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissaire à la santé et à la sécurité alimentaire, a déclaré: *“Il est essentiel d'investir de manière soutenue dans la recherche et l'innovation pour le traitement des troubles neurologiques. Ce nouvel accord apporte une preuve supplémentaire de la valeur ajoutée du Plan d'Investissement, non seulement pour la compétitivité de l'économie de l'UE, mais surtout pour le bien-être de ses citoyens. “*Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). En octobre 2018, le Plan Juncker a déjà mobilisé 344,4 milliards d'euros d'investissements supplémentaires à travers l'Europe, permettant à 793 000 petites et moyennes entreprises de bénéficier d'un meilleur accès aux financements. *(Pour plus d'informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 229 50055, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél.: +32 229 56169)*

Qualité de l'air urbain: la Commission annonce le lauréat du prix Horizon pour la qualité de l'air

La Commission a annoncé aujourd'hui le lauréat du prix Horizon pour la qualité de l'air, d'une valeur de 3 millions d'euros, récompensant une technologie durable et à prix abordable permettant de réduire la concentration de particules dans les zones urbaines. La Commission soutient ainsi la nécessité pour les Européens de respirer de l'air pur, comme récemment rappelé dans la [Communication sur la qualité de l'air](#). Les particules sont le polluant atmosphérique ayant le plus grand impact sur la santé, provoquant des maladies telles que l'asthme, le cancer du poumon ou les complications cardiovasculaires et respiratoires. L'équipe de recherche lauréate, dirigée par le Dr Jean-Jacques Theron de Corning SAS (France), a

mis au point un filtre à air en céramique en nid d'abeille pouvant atténuer le problème de la mauvaise qualité de l'air, en enlevant jusqu'à 95% des particules fines de l'air et de le maintenir en deçà des normes de qualité de l'air de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS). Cette invention peut réduire la concentration de particules dans les villes, en intérieur et à l'extérieur, par exemple à proximité d'écoles ou d'hôpitaux. Environ 90% des habitants des villes européennes sont exposés à des niveaux de particules supérieurs aux recommandations de l'OMS, comme le souligne également le rapport de l'Agence européenne pour l'environnement intitulé «[La qualité de l'air en Europe – 2018](#)». Carlos **Moedas**, le commissaire chargé de la recherche, de la science et de l'innovation, a déclaré: "Dans de nombreuses villes européennes, la pollution de l'air est une préoccupation majeure pour les citoyens car elle affecte leur santé et pose des problèmes environnementaux. La solution innovante mise au point par le Dr Theron et son équipe contribuera à réduire la concentration de particules en particulier dans les zones urbaines fortement contaminées." Karmenu **Vella**, le commissaire chargé de l'environnement, des affaires maritimes et de la pêche, a ajouté: «C'est le type d'innovation pour la promotion de la santé que nous serons heureux de promouvoir lors de nos dialogues sur la qualité de l'air dans les États membres de l'UE». [Les dialogues sur la qualité de l'air](#) font partie de la vaste étude sur la mise en œuvre environnementale réalisée par l'UE pour aider les États membres à améliorer leurs normes environnementales. Le [prix Horizon pour la qualité de l'air](#), financé dans le cadre du [programme européen de recherche et d'innovation Horizon 2020](#), a été présenté à la [conférence sur les technologies industrielles à Vienne](#). Plus d'informations sont disponibles en ligne avec [notre article](#), [fiche technique](#) et [vidéo](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Daniela Stoycheva – Tel.: +32 229 53664)

New EU rules bring more transparency and information on bank fees for consumers

As of tomorrow, banks and financial services providers across the EU will have to better inform their customers about the fees associated with opening and maintaining bank accounts thanks to new EU rules. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said "Bank accounts are an essential part of everyday life, allowing us to make and receive payments, shop online, and pay our bills. Thanks to the Payment Accounts Directive, consumers have the right since 2016 to open a basic bank account anywhere in the EU, as well as switching to a new provider. With tomorrow's new rules, we will increase transparency of fees for all consumers. This will make it easier to shop around for the best and cheapest offers from banks." Commissioner **Věra Jourová** added "Recent figures show that consumer trust in banking services is low due to a lack of transparency. These new rules will make sure that banks' offers are more transparent and clearer on fees. This is good news for consumers: it will not only make it easier for them to get an overview of the fees, but they will also be able to compare different offers". The 'Fee Information Document' (FID) is a standardised document with a short summary presenting the fees related to most common services, such as

money transfers, that a bank will provide customers with when they open a bank account (see document [here](#)). In addition, EU consumers will also be receiving – at least annually and free of charge – a ‘Statement of Fees’, an information document following the same standardised format. In this document, banks have to detail all expenses incurred by their customers as well as information regarding the interest rates for services linked to a bank account. The [Payment Accounts Directive](#) requires all banks in the EU to present this document as of 31 October 2018, except France and Italy, which already have similar information requirements in place and will implement these changes by the end of July 2019. More information on the new obligations is available on the [Access to bank accounts](#) page. The 2018 Consumer Markets Scoreboard, presenting consumer trust in different markets, is also available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Eurostat: Estimation rapide préliminaire pour le troisième trimestre 2018 – Le PIB en hausse de 0,2% dans la zone euro et de 0,3% dans l’UE28 – +1,7% et +1,9% respectivement par rapport au troisième trimestre 2017

Au cours du troisième trimestre 2018, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,2% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,3% dans l’UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l’estimation rapide préliminaire publiée par Eurostat, l’office statistique de l’Union européenne. Au cours du deuxième trimestre 2018, le PIB avait progressé de 0,4% dans la zone euro et de 0,5% dans l’UE28. Un communiqué de presse est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d’informations: Christian Spahr – Tél.: +32 229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tél.: +32 229 64376)

Mergers: Commission approves Mars’ acquisition of AniCura, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of AniCura by Mars, subject to conditions. Mars is a global supplier of consumer products, including pet food. AniCura is a Swedish veterinary clinic chain, active in several EU Member States. It also owns VetFamily, a purchasing organisation for independent veterinary clinics. The Commission examined the effects of the proposed transaction on the retail market of dietetic pet food sold by veterinarians. It was concerned that the transaction, as originally notified, would have enabled Mars to shut out its dietetic pet food competitors from the downstream retail channels, namely the AniCura veterinary clinics and the VetFamily member clinics, in particular in Denmark and Sweden. In these markets AniCura and VetFamily together account for a very significant share of sales of dietetic pet food. The Commission was concerned that the transaction could affect the ability of other producers of dietetic pet food to compete with Mars, possibly resulting in higher prices, less choice or lower quality and in a reduction in innovation in dietetic pet food. To address these concerns, Mars offered to divest AniCura’s VetFamily business in its entirety in the whole of Europe. As a

result Mars will not be able to influence the purchasing activities of the clinics belonging to VetFamily. The commitments fully address the Commission's concerns as they will significantly reduce Mars' overall influence on the downstream retail channels in Denmark and Sweden. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [SV](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint venture by Continental, CITC and JHTD

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over the newly created joint venture Continental CALB Battery Power System Co., Ltd by Continental Automotive Holding Co., Ltd (“Continental”), Sichuan Chengfei Integration Technology Corp., Ltd (“CITC”) and Jiangsu Jintan Hualuogeng Technology Development Ltd (“JHTD”), all of China. The joint venture will develop, produce and sell battery systems for hybrid electric vehicles. Continental belongs to the German automotive manufacturing group Continental AG which mainly specialises in products for automotive and transportation industries. CITC is owned by Aviation Industry Corporation of China and is active in designing and manufacturing batteries and power systems. JHTD is a vehicle ultimately controlled by two local government bodies of Changzhou, in China. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap in the European Economic Area. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9075](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture by SNAM and Società Gasdotti Italia

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed creation of a joint venture, Sardinia Newco, by SNAM and Società Gasdotti Italia, all of Italy. The joint venture will build and operate a natural gas transmission pipeline in the Sardinian territory. SNAM is active in the development and management of gas infrastructures in Italy and other European countries. Società Gasdotti Italia, jointly controlled by the Macquarie Group of Australia and the Swiss Life Group of Switzerland, is active in the transmission of natural gas in Italy. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap in the European Economic Area. 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.9091](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Antitrust: Commission closes investigation into Brussels Airlines and TAP Air Portugal codeshare agreement on Brussels-Lisbon route

The European Commission has decided to close its antitrust investigation into a codeshare agreement between Brussels Airlines and TAP Air Portugal relating to the Brussels-Lisbon route, which the Commission was carrying out on its own initiative. On 27 October 2016, the Commission adopted a [Statement of Objections](#) against the two airlines, raising preliminary concerns that their codeshare cooperation on passenger services between Brussels and Lisbon may have restricted competition between them. Today's closure decision is based on a thorough analysis of all relevant evidence, including information received from the two airlines in their replies to the Statement of Objections and during an oral hearing, which took place in May 2017. The Commission concluded that the evidence collected was not sufficient to confirm its initial concerns and has therefore decided to close its investigation. Throughout the investigation, the Commission emphasised that its concerns related to certain specific features of this particular codeshare, rather than to codeshares in general. However, today's closure decision does not mean that close forms of cooperation between competing airlines will not raise competition concerns. Finally, it should be noted that since 2014 new airlines have begun to compete with the code-sharing airlines on the Brussels-Lisbon route, to the benefit of consumers. The Commission will continue to monitor the European air travel market. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Hahn in Belarus on 30-31 October for the Munich Security Conference core group meeting

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** is in Minsk, today and tomorrow for an official bilateral visit to [Belarus](#) and to attend the [Munich Security Conference \(MSC\) core group meeting](#). At the MSC core group meeting, Commissioner **Hahn** will address the roundtable on transnational security, where he will call for a joint inclusive approach for the security challenges faced across the region, notably by maintaining open channels of communication and fostering mutual understanding. As part of the official bilateral visit he will meet with Prime Minister of Belarus Sergei Rumas and Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei. The Commissioner will also meet human rights defenders including representatives of civil society and media organisations. More information on EU-Belarus relations is available on our dedicated [factsheet](#). Photos and videos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#). *(For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)*

Commissioner Andriukaitis in Lithuania

Today, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** is in Kelme, Lithuania. He is attending a conference on oncologic diseases, where he will deliver the keynote speech entitled 'The future of preventing oncologic diseases – decisions needed and cooperation'. *"I am looking forward to highlight once again the importance of prevention and the need to mitigate risk factors to reduce the risk of oncological diseases"*, said Commissioner **Andriukaitis** before the event. Whilst in Kelme, he will also hold a [Citizens' Dialogue](#), during which there will be discussions on several issues, including

the future of Europe and the importance of prevention, promotion and protection in healthcare. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

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

[**Preliminary flash estimate for the third quarter of 2018 – GDP up by 0.2% in the euro area and by 0.3% the EU28 – +1.7% and +1.9% respectively compared with the third quarter of 2017**](#)

Seasonally adjusted GDP rose by 0.2% in the **euro area** (EA19) and by 0.3% in the **EU28** during the third quarter of 2018, compared with the previous quarter, according to a preliminary flash estimate published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In the second quarter of 2018, GDP had grown by 0.4% in the **euro area** and by 0.5% the **EU28**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

[**Updated technical RFR documentation for the Danish krone and Denmark applicable as of 1 January 2019**](#)

On [14 August 2018](#) the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) published an updated technical documentation for risk free interest rate term structures (RFR) including a revised methodology for the calculation of the Danish Volatility Adjustment.

Due to a technical error the application of the methodology was suspended until further notice on 6 September 2018. This error has now been resolved.

The new date for the updated technical RFR documentation to become applicable

is set for 1 January 2019. Therefore, the first calculation based on the updated technical RFR documentation will be end of January 2019.

Until the end of this year, the [current version of the technical RFR documentation](#) will apply.

All the documents are available via a dedicated section on [EIOPA's Website](#).

Background

Technical information relating to risk-free interest rate (RFR) term structures is used for the calculation of the technical provisions for (re)insurance obligations.

In line with the Solvency II Directive, EIOPA publishes technical information relating to RFR term structures on a monthly basis via a dedicated section on EIOPA's Website also containing the provisional release calendar for 2018, the RFR Technical Documentation, the RFR coding and Frequently Asked Questions.

By this publication EIOPA ensures consistent calculation of technical provisions across Europe.

[Investment Plan for Europe: EIB backs Italian CNS drug developer Newron Pharmaceuticals with up to EUR 40m](#)

The European Commission has approved an investment package of €243 million from the EU budget for projects under the LIFE programme supporting nature, the environment and quality of life in Europe's transition to a more sustainable and low-carbon future.