

ESMA highlights progress on MiFID implementation at ECON hearing

MiFID II

In his statement Mr. Maijoor focused on ESMA's progress on the implementation of MiFID II:

"MiFID II has given a new perspective on the use of ESMA's Opinions: in the last 12 months, ESMA issued around 400 Opinions to NCAs on both pre-trade transparency waivers and position limits in commodity contracts, and a few hundred more will be finalised soon."

"The application date of the MiFID II/MiFIR package marked the assignment of new product intervention powers to ESMA. This was an important development for retail investors in the EU, who have been put at risk for years by Binary Options and Contracts for Differences (CFDs), distributed across the EU out of a few Member States. Equipped with these new powers, ESMA adopted in spring this year measures banning Binary Options and restricting the sales, marketing and distribution of CFDs, and so directly improved retail investor protection across the Union."

"Overall, I believe that MiFID II implementation is a very good example of what ESMA's contribution to investor protection, orderly markets and financial stability in the EU financial markets can and should be. I would underline that this project is still ongoing, and significant allocation of resources, in particular for data and IT issues, market monitoring and supervisory convergence work, continues to be planned over the next months."

Capital Markets Union

"We have progressed swiftly on a number of Level 2 mandates assigned to ESMA under the new Prospectus and Securitisation Regulations. In both cases, the co-legislators arranged for a sufficiently long implementation period, which is helpful for planning and executing ESMA's work."

"Furthermore, ESMA has continued to support the CMU project through its multiple supervisory convergence activities. This included, during the year, important peer reviews – on Guidelines dealing with Efficient Portfolio Management Techniques (EPM) for UCITS and on certain aspects of the compliance function under MiFID I – and the cross-sectoral project on the performance and fees of investment services, which has been carried out jointly with the EBA and EIOPA.. I believe it is important to keep the momentum of these convergence activities, as a number of CMU areas require further attention, including participation of retail investors in the capital markets."

UK withdrawal from the European Union

He also spoke about ESMA's work on preparing for the withdrawal of the UK

from the European Union:

“[As] as the supervisor of Credit Rating Agencies and Trade Repositories in the EU with a number of them headquartered in London – ESMA required appropriate contingency planning from individual supervised entities. We are carefully monitoring the execution of these plans to ensure that they are meeting all the requirements in the EU27 in case of a no-deal by the end of March 2019.”

Joint Committee of the European Supervisory Authorities

As the current Chair of the Joint Committee of the three European Supervisory Authorities, Steven Maijor also delivered a [statement](#) on the work of the Joint Committee over the past year, focusing primarily on PRIIPs issues and developments in anti-money laundering.

Indicative programme – Environment Council, 9 October 2018

Press contacts

Katharina Pausch-Homblé

Press officer

+32 2 281 62 63

+32 470 88 42 96

Place:

European Convention Center Luxembourg ([ECCL](#))

Chair:

Elisabeth Köstinger, Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism of Austria

All times are approximate and subject to change

from 08.00

Arrivals

+/- 08.45

Doorstep by Minister Köstinger

+/- 09.30

Beginning of Environment Council meeting (Roundtable)

Adoption of the agenda

Approval of non-legislative A items

Approval of legislative A items ([public session](#))

+/- 09.40

CO2 standards for cars and vans (recast) ([public session](#))

+/- 11.40

Conclusions on the preparations for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

+/- 13.15

Informal working lunch discussion on key environment and climate change priorities in the Eastern Partnership region: Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Azerbaijan and Armenia

+/- 14.45

Conclusions on the Convention on Biological Diversity

+/- 15.45

Any other business

- Current legislative proposals ([public session](#))
 - Single-use plastics
- Reports on main recent international meetings
- Berlin declaration on nanomaterials
- Outcome of the high-level environment conference “Earth Innovation Forum”
- Measures at EU level to tackle air pollution related to the import of used cars
- The Clean Air Programme

+/- 17.00

CO2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles ([public session](#))

At the end of the meeting

Press conference ([live streaming](#))

[Download as pdf](#)

[Environment](#)

[Commission brings together religious leaders to discuss “The Future of Europe: addressing challenges through](#)

concrete actions”

The participants debated “The Future of Europe: addressing challenges through concrete actions”.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *“Europe is home to people of many faiths, and every European has the right to practice his or her faith in peace and security. Ahead of next year’s European elections, I reassured the participants in today’s meeting that the European Commission will continue to stand up and speak up against any discrimination or attacks that their communities might face. Every European citizen will have a chance to shape our common future at the ballot box next year, and I invited the participants in today’s meeting to engage actively in the political process and to encourage their communities to do so as well. While we may worship in different ways, our values are universal, including our commitment to democracy and equality.”*

Today’s meeting builds on the high-level meeting with religious leaders of 7 November 2017 dedicated to the future of Europe and how to develop a values-based and effective Union. Today’s meeting focused on the main policy challenges Europe faces in the next year, as well as the perspectives for the future, beyond the European Parliament elections. Participants discussed in particular how the EU is addressing migration, social integration and the sustainability of our way of life.

Background

Today’s meeting is the 14th annual high-level meeting with religious leaders organised by the Commission. Since 2009, the dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). President Juncker has entrusted the dialogue to First Vice-President Timmermans.

In previous meetings, participants looked into the future of Europe through a number of challenges facing the European Union, in particular migration, terrorism and integration. This is also where they stressed the need to define common values to underpin the foundations of our Union, and find concrete ways of putting those values into good use.

More information

More information on the future of Europe on the Europa website:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/white-paper-future-europe-reflections-and-scenarios-eu27_en

European Commission dialogue with churches, religious communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations on DG Justice home page on fundamental rights:

List of Meeting Participants

- Metropolitan ATHANASIOS of Achaia, Permanent Representative of the Church of Greece to the European Union
- Imam Khalid BENHADDOU, El Fath mosque, Gent, Belgium
- Bishop Mariano CROCIATA, Bishop of Latina, First Vice-President of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)
- Rabbi Albert GUIGUI, Chief Rabbi of Brussels and Permanent Representative at Conference of European Rabbis
- Bishop Antoine HEROUARD, Auxiliary Bishop of Lille, President of the Commission on Social Affairs of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)
- Bishop Robert INNES, Anglican Bishop in Europe
- Dr. Frank JULY, President Bishop of Wuerttemberg, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), President of the EKD Commission on Europe
- Rev. Christian KRIEGER, President of the Reformed Protestant Church of Alsace and Lorraine, President of the Conference of European Churches (CEC)

Commissioner Crețu on “The next generation of EU Funds programmes”

*Press statement by Commissioner **Crețu**, in charge of Regional Policy, at the European Week of Regions and Cities; in Brussels.*

Good morning!

I am always glad to see so many journalists in the press room,
a reminder of the importance of cohesion policy
and of what it has achieved in your countries.

But today we talk not about past achievements.

We talk about the next generation of programmes.

In May the European Commission proposed,
an ambitious reform of cohesion policy.

It is a proposal that I am very proud of!

First of all, because we propose

a policy for all regions – with no region left behind.

And every region has needs; different, specific needs!

Then, we want

a more modern policy,

Tightly focussed on the twin priorities

of modernising the economy

and moving to a low carbon economy.

And furthermore, a simpler and more flexible policy:

we must cut red tape and speed up implementation.

Speeding up implementation is on my mind today.

Because the job does not end with proposals.

For investments to start as soon as 2021

programme design must start now.

Today starts the European Week of Cities and Regions!

A good time, and a good opportunity, I would say,

to reflect and discuss the future cohesion policy.

But before anything,

I would like to thank the president

of the Committee of the Regions,

Karl-Heinz Lambertz,

for his wholehearted support for cohesion policy.

So, today, I will start this debate

sharing my four important directions/suggestions

in line with our proposals and with EU priorities;

to help Member States and regions start

on the work of designing programmes.

“A smarter Europe”.

These investments are a priority,

If our regions are to remain competitive.

National authorities and regions must start reflections now.

On smart specialisation strategies,

i.e. innovation strategies based on local strengths

On finance and clustering for SMEs,

On how to help digitisation for citizens, business and government,

On training in the skills of tomorrow.

The new priority "A greener, low carbon Europe".

Regions should start reflecting now on how to achieve:

Better energy efficiency and a greater use of renewables,

The transition to a circular economy.

Smarter energy systems.

Europe has the potential to lead the world in these technologies.

A new priority "A Europe closer to citizens".

I encourage our regions to reflect,

On community-led local development.

Local strategies, targeting local issues.

Fully involving local authorities and local people.

This must be deeply rooted in our programmes.

Whether the area is urban or rural, island or mountain.

In particular, national authorities and regions must reflect,

On local strategies for the integration of migrants.

Reception, education, employment,

Housing and local regeneration.

Building administrative capacity.

We have provided a series of tools:

PEER2PEER

the public procurement action plan,

the state aid action plan,

and, in the next period, the reform support instrument.

National authorities and regions must start reflections now,

on how best to use those tools.

Today, I shared my vision with the 4 main directions,

because we must do our utmost

at all levels of the decision making process

to avoid delays in preparing the next programmes.

We have ambitious, but also solid proposals for future cohesion policy.

Our proposals are currently with Council and European Parliament.

I urge them not to wait:

we must have a deal before the European elections.

But proposals are not enough.

Regions must already start to reflect,

on how they will turn these proposals into reality.

Thank you!

Daily News 08 / 10 / 2018

La Commissaire Crețu présente sa vision pour les futurs programmes de la politique de Cohésion

Ce matin la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a accueilli les journalistes participant à la Semaine européenne des régions et des villes 2018, aux côtés du Président du Comité des Régions Karl-Heinz Lambertz, et leur a présenté sa vision pour les futurs programmes de la politique de Cohésion. La Commissaire **Crețu** a dit : *« Je suis fière de la proposition pour la nouvelle politique de Cohésion que nous avons présentée en mai, pour une politique plus moderne, flexible et simplifiée. Mais notre travail n'est pas fini. Pour que les investissements puissent effectivement commencer dès 2021,*

il faut dès maintenant penser aux prochains programmes. Aujourd'hui s'ouvre la Semaine européennes des régions et des villes ; c'est une bonne opportunité pour discuter du futur de la politique de Cohésion et c'est pourquoi je vais présenter mes suggestions pour aider les Etats-membres et les régions à préparer leurs programmes. » Le [discours](#) de la Commissaire est disponible en ligne, ainsi que la [vidéo](#) de la conférence de presse. Retrouvez plus d'informations sur les grands projets de la politique de Cohésion dans votre pays dans [ces fiches d'informations](#). (Pour plus d'information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission brings together religious leaders to discuss “The Future of Europe: addressing challenges through concrete actions”

European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** hosted today a high-level meeting with eight representatives of religious organisations from across Europe. The participants debated “The Future of Europe: addressing challenges through concrete actions”. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: “Europe is home to people of many faiths, and every European has the right to practice his or her faith in peace and security. Ahead of next year’s European elections, I reassured the participants in today’s meeting that the European Commission will continue to stand up and speak up against any discrimination or attacks that their communities might face. Every European citizen will have a chance to shape our common future at the ballot box next year, and I invited the participants in today’s meeting to engage actively in the political process and to encourage their communities to do so as well. While we may worship in different ways, our values are universal, including our commitment to democracy and equality.” Today’s meeting builds on the high-level meeting with religious leaders of 7 November 2017 dedicated to the future of Europe and how to develop a values-based and effective Union. Today’s meeting focused on the main policy challenges Europe faces in the next year, as well as the perspectives for the future, beyond the European Parliament elections. Participants discussed in particular how the EU is addressing migration, social integration and the sustainability of our way of life. (For more information: Tim McPhie – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

EU Battery Alliance: regions join forces to build a strong industrial value chain in advanced materials for batteries

Today, in the context of [the European Week of Cities and regions](#), Vice-President in charge of the Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** and Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** are participating to the launch of an interregional partnership on batteries. The European Battery Alliance is part of our Energy Union Strategy and aims at strengthening clean mobility, fight climate change and reduce dependencies deriving from energy imports. Led by Slovenia and gathering Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Nouvelle Aquitaine in France, Andalucía, Basque country and Castilla y León in Spain and Lombardy in Italy, this interregional partnership will receive tailored support from the Commission to develop and scale-up joint projects in advanced materials for batteries, under the [smart specialisation pilot action](#) for interregional innovation. Vice President **Šefčovič** said: “Regions are the living labs of our industrial policy. It is therefore excellent to see that the European Battery

Alliance is now attracting those set to embrace this modernisation opportunity and join up with their strengths and capabilities. These interregional partnerships will play a crucial part in building a competitive, innovative and sustainable battery value chain in Europe, to capture a market that could grow to €250 billion annually by 2025 onwards. In the run to the first anniversary of the EU Battery Alliance next week, we will be showcasing that the EU has what it takes to become a global leader here.” Commissioner **Crețu** added: *“I hope this new partnership inspire other regions to think about how they can make best use of the available EU support for reinforcing the European value chain for batteries in the years to come, include in the next generation of Cohesion Policy programmes, for the 2021-2027.”* The pilot will run until the end of 2019 and the partnership will benefit from the support of special teams established within the Commission, involving experts from several thematic departments, but also from external experts on financial modelling, business plans or intellectual property. More information on the [EU Battery Alliance](#) and smart specialisation [pilot actions](#) for interregional innovation and industrial transition is available online. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959)

The Joint Research Centre launches new exhibition to highlight the science behind EU policy

The European Commission’s [Joint Research Centre](#) is launching an exhibition called ‘[ARTEFACTS](#)’ on October 8th in the Berlin Museum für Naturkunde. The exhibition will use art to engage citizens in a discussion about EU policies and the scientific evidence behind them, demonstrating the value in our everyday lives. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, responsible for the Joint Research Centre, said: *“At a time when the role of expert knowledge and facts in decision-making is increasingly questioned, it is crucial to demonstrate to citizens that we carry out research in order to provide independent scientific advice to inform our work. This innovative exhibition enlists art to help people discover for themselves how EU policies based on evidence serve them in their everyday life and help us tackle the big challenges facing our societies.”* The exhibition will take place at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin from 9 October 2018 until autumn 2019. A digital version of the exhibition will be [available to download](#) at the end of the month. For more information see [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by Boeing and Adient for the production of aircraft seating

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Boeing and Adient, both of the US. The joint venture will design, develop, manufacture and sell seats for commercial aircraft. Boeing designs, manufactures and sells commercial aircraft and defence, space and security systems. Adient designs, manufactures and markets

a full range of seating systems and components for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and light trucks. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns. First, the overlaps between the companies' activities are limited: Boeing does not manufacture but only resells aircraft seats on a minority of its aircrafts, while Adient is not active in the production of aircraft seating. Second, the Commission found that despite Boeing's strong position in the manufacturing of large commercial aircraft, the transaction is unlikely to lead to competing aircraft seat suppliers being shut out from the market. The market in commercial aircraft seating is currently characterised by the presence of three large players and the transaction will lead to the creation of a new entrant in that market. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8960](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

STATEMENTS

Commissioners Miguel Arias Cañete and Carlos Moedas welcome the UN climate change report on 1.5° C global warming limit

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has today issued its Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways. The report provides policy-makers across the globe with a strong scientific basis for their efforts to modernise the economy, tackle climate change, promote sustainable development and eradicate poverty. The Commission welcomes the report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It will provide a strong scientific basis for further climate change negotiations in Katowice, Poland in December. Commissioner **Moedas** and Commissioner **Arias Cañete** said: *"The EU has been at the forefront of addressing the underlying root causes of climate change and strengthening a concerted global response to it in the framework of the Paris Agreement. Taking the valuable input from the Report into account, the Commission is working towards presenting in November a proposal for an EU strategy for long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction. It will be a comprehensive vision for the modernisation of our economy, our industries and our financial sector. The EU will work to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in-line with the Paris Agreement's temperature goals, and to make our economy more modern, innovative, competitive and resilient."* The EU will continue to work to address those challenges and expect others to follow. All parties must step up efforts from the pledges made under the Paris Agreement". Please find our full press statement [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Lynn Rietdorf – Tel.: +32 229 74959; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Migration et sécurité: les Commissaires Avramopoulos et King participent à la

réunion des ministres de l'Intérieur des pays du G6

Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissaire européen pour la Migration, les Affaires Intérieures et la Citoyenneté, et Julian **King**, Commissaire chargé de l'Union de la Sécurité, participeront aujourd'hui et demain à la réunion des ministres de l'Intérieur du G6 à Lyon en France aux côtés des ministres de l'Intérieur français, italien, polonais, espagnol et britannique et du secrétaire d'Etat allemand auprès du ministère de l'intérieur. Le Ministre de l'Intérieur du Maroc, le procureur général des États-Unis ainsi que le Sous-secrétaire américain à la Sécurité intérieure seront aussi présents. Aujourd'hui, les discussions porteront sur la gestion des flux migratoires irréguliers et notamment sur le renforcement de la coopération avec les pays d'origine et les pays de transit. Demain, les échanges se concentreront sur la coopération en matière de sécurité, notamment sur le retour des combattants étrangers, la coopération avec les pays du Sahel et la lutte contre les contenus terroristes en ligne. Les délégations participant au G6 seront également invitées à assister à un exercice impliquant une attaque terroriste simulée. Une conférence de presse aura lieu mardi à 16h15 et sera diffusée sur [EbS](#). (Pour plus d'informations: *Natasha Bertaud – Tél .: +32 2 296 74 56; Markus Lammert – Tél .: +32 229 80423; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tél .: +32 229 63444*)

High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini in Lisbon

High Representative/ Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** is travelling to Lisbon for meetings with the Portuguese Government today and tomorrow, 8 and 9 October. Today, she will be received by Prime Minister António Costa for a working dinner. On Tuesday, she will meet Minister of Defence José Azeredo Lopes and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Augusto Santos Silva. After their meeting they will address the press at around 10:30 CET/ 09:30 Lisbon time. Their press point can be followed live on [Ebs](#), where also audio-visual coverage of her other meetings will be available. (For more information: *Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Esther Osorio – Tel.: +32 229 62076*)

Commission holds the 12th European Platform for Roma Inclusion dedicated to inequalities in housing and health

On 8 and 9 October, the [European Platform for Roma Inclusion](#) holds its 12th meeting in Brussels, around the theme of inequalities faced by Roma in the areas of health and housing. Commissioner Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, will give an opening remarks on Monday evening and will join panel discussion on Tuesday. She said ahead of the event: *"Improving health and housing access for Roma are preconditions for their full participation in society. I encourage all actors to address the prevailing issues, such as segregation and forced evictions and difficult access to quality health services."* The platform brings together national governments, European institutions, international organisations and Roma civil society representatives to enhance cooperation and the sharing of

expertise on successful Roma inclusion. The Platform will start with an event celebrating Roma culture and its contribution to the European cultural heritage. Two parallel workshops devoted to Roma inequalities in the areas of health and housing will take place on 9th October, followed by two dialogues with the various stakeholders. The event is open to journalists upon registration and will be [web streamed](#). All information is available [here](#).
(For more information Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Melanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Bieńkowska discuss developments in the collaborative economy

On 11 October, the European Commission is organising a [high-level conference](#) in Brussels to take stock of developments in the collaborative economy with representatives of consumers, trade unions, economic operators and public authorities. In 2016 the Commission provided [guidance](#) on how existing EU law applies to the collaborative economy. It has since complemented this “horizontal” guidance with specific work on short-term accommodation rentals, consumer rights, platforms as well as labour rights and social protection. The conference will be an opportunity to take stock of the economic development in the collaborative economy and its regulatory environment, and to report on the exchange of experiences and good practise with public authorities and stakeholders. In the run-up to the conference, today the Commission publishes a new [Eurobarometer](#) which confirms strong and growing consumer interest in the collaborative economy: almost a quarter of EU citizens use services offered by collaborative platforms in different sectors, such as accommodation or transport. While nearly 90% of respondents would recommend their use, wider policy concerns exist as regards the impact on local communities, consumer protection, employment issues and taxation.
(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Gabriel in Finland to attend the 2018 Artificial Intelligence Forum 2018

Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki **Katainen** and Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society will be in Finland tomorrow to attend the annual [AI Forum 2018](#). While the Vice-President will participate today in the ministerial working dinner and tomorrow in a panel discussing how Europe can support AI-driven businesses, Commissioner **Gabriel** will open the Forum, emphasising the commitment of the European Commission to remain at the forefront of AI-deployment, which will create growth and competitiveness in Europe. Following her opening speech at the AI Forum, Commissioner **Gabriel** will meet Serbian Minister of Innovation and Technological Development Nenad Popović, Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology, Rene Tammist, followed by a press conference with Mika Lintilä, Finnish Minister of Economic Affairs. Finally, Commissioner Gabriel will meet with the members of

the [High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence](#) and its chair, Pekka Ala-Pietilä. More information on the forum is available [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Transport Commissioner Bulc visits Genoa to honour the memory of the victims of the Morandi bridge collapse and to assess opportunities to relaunch the area

Today, Commissioner for Transport, Violeta **Bulc**, visits the site of the Morandi bridge collapse in Genoa, Italy, to pay tribute to the victims of the tragedy. Violeta **Bulc** will meet the Italian Minister for Infrastructures and Transports, Mr Danilo Toninelli, and regional and local authorities to understand the needs and challenges of the area, and to assess all possibilities to help the development of the region. Commissioner **Bulc** says: *"It is obviously up to the Italian authorities to establish responsibilities for such a horrible disaster and give the most adequate first replies to the most urgent needs. But we have to start looking ahead. And Europe is ready to do its part to help Genoa, and the whole area, regain a future and maintain its crucial role within the multimodal trans-European transport system"*. The European Union is already an essential partner for the development of infrastructures in Liguria and in particular in the Genoa area. The EU intends to help the Italian authorities to explore the best use of all the European instruments at disposal to help relaunching the region, offered by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), central pillar the Juncker Commission's [Investment Plan for Europe](#), the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the Invest EU programme and, where possible, the structural funds. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: [+32 229 56172](#); Stephan Meder – Tel.: [+32 229 13917](#))

Commissioners Hogan and Navracsics meet with Hungarian civil society to discuss ideas for making rural areas more vibrant, sustainable and attractive

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil **Hogan** and Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Tibor **Navracsics** are meeting today in Gödöllő (Hungary) with over 150 representatives of rural organisations, non-governmental organisations and academia to discuss the ways to enhance rural services – such as health, social services, education, energy, transport, retail – through modern technology to make rural areas more vibrant, sustainable and attractive. The event organised in the framework of the [Citizens' Dialogue](#) and the [Smart Villages](#) initiative will also be attended by Mr Károly Balázs Solymár, Hungarian Deputy Secretary of State responsible for information-communication, MEP Franc Bogovič and MEP Tibor Szanyi, Members of the European Parliament's Committee for Regional Development and Dr. Bálint Csatári, Emeritus Researcher of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Smart Villages is the current sub-theme of the broader European Networks for Rural Development (ENRD) thematic work on 'Smart and Competitive Rural Areas'. The initiative explores ideas and initiatives around revitalising rural services through digital and social innovation and acts as a sounding board for developing practical orientations for using all

the policy tools available to help Smart Villages emerge and develop. (*For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184*)

Commissioner Gabriel in Montenegro and Kosovo to promote Digital Agenda for Western Balkans

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society is today in Podgorica, Montenegro, and will travel to Pristina, Kosovo, [on 11-12 October](#) to promote the Commission's strategy for a credible enlargement perspective through an enhanced support to the Western Balkan countries in the digital transformation of their economies and societies. Her visit to the region is an essential step for the swift implementation of the Digital Agenda for the Western Balkans launched on 25 June 2018, and follows the commitment taken by the leaders during the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia, in May 2018. Today in Podgorica, the Commissioner will meet with Montenegrin Prime Minister Duško Marković to discuss a number of digital files, such as the reduction of roaming tariffs. She will also meet with Suzana Pribilović, Minister of Public Administration, to encourage the digitisation of the country's public services. In the afternoon, she will meet with Minister Pribilović and the Macedonian Minister of Information Society and Administration Damjan Manchevski, the Albanian Vice-President of Government Senida Mesi, and, the Kosovar Minister of Public Administration, Mahir Yagcilar. On Thursday, in Pristina, Commissioner Gabriel will start her visit with a meeting with Minister for Innovation, Besim Beqaj tbc and Minister for Economic Development, Valdrin Lluka, and representatives of the Kosovar private sector, including Telecom Operators, ICT businesses and startups and civil society associations. On Friday, the Commissioner will notably deliver a keynote speech on the potential of digitalisation as a driver for economic development at the International Conference "DigitalKS". (*For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184*)

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission