

Statement of the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu

“We stand side by side with the Greek people in such difficult moments. We have a permanent dialogue with the Greek authorities and, through the services of the DG Regio, we provide the necessary assistance in order to speed up the procedure for accessing the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF).

Currently, the Greek authorities make an estimate of the damage caused by fires, on the basis of which they will send the application for EUSF to the European Commission. As soon as the necessary conditions for accessing this fund are met, we are ready to do everything possible to pay an advance as quickly as possible.

Moreover, once the requirements for accessing the EUSF are met, there is also the possibility for Greece to benefit from a 95% co-financing rate for reconstruction work financed through Cohesion Policy. And, last but not least, as I have already written to Prime Minister Tsipras and Minister Haritsis, both myself and my services are prepared to change the operational programs dedicated to Greece under the Cohesion Policy, based on a request from the Greek authorities. This will enable us to redirect European funds and to relaunch economic activity in affected areas.”

State aid: Commission approves €500 million in German public funding to promote energy efficiency in rail transport

Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager** in charge of competition policy, said: *“Electrically powered rail transport is one of the most environmentally friendly transport options. By promoting a shift from road to rail, the German scheme will contribute to meeting the EU’s environmental and transport objectives, without distorting competition”.*

In January 2018, Germany notified to the Commission a scheme to provide public support for investment in technologies to make rail transport more cost and energy efficient. The scheme has an overall budget of €500 million and will run from 2018 to 2022.

Under the scheme, companies providing electrically powered rail transport services may be compensated for up to 50% of expenses incurred from energy efficiency measures, such as acquisition of modern energy-saving rolling stock including hybrid locomotives or automated solutions. Such investments allow rail transport companies to increase their energy efficiency, i.e. the energy consumption per passenger or tonne kilometre.

To benefit from this public support, rail transport companies need to demonstrate a year on year improvement of 1.75% in their energy efficiency. From 2020, this energy efficiency must increase by at least 2% year on year for companies to be eligible for support.

The Commission found that the scheme is beneficial for the environment and for mobility because it supports and promotes rail transport, which is less polluting than road transport. The Commission also found that the measure is proportionate and necessary to achieve the objective pursued, namely to support the modal shift from road to rail. As a result, the Commission has concluded that the measure complies with EU State aid rules, in particular the 2008 Commission [Guidelines on State aid for railway undertakings](#).

Background

The non-confidential version of the decision will be published under the case number SA.50165 in the [State aid register](#) on the Commission's [competition website](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The [State Aid Weekly e-News](#) lists new publications of state aid decisions on the internet and in the EU Official Journal.

[Enjoy your new digital rights across Europe during summer holidays](#)

This summer, European citizens will enjoy more digital rights than ever before. Following the end of roaming charges across the European Union last year, holidaymakers can now travel with their online TV, film, sports, music or e-book subscriptions at no extra cost. In addition, everyone across Europe can enjoy world-class data protection rules that ensure all Europeans have better control over their personal data.

Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market said: *“Europeans are already starting to feel the benefits of the Digital Single Market. This summer you will be able to bring your favourite TV programmes and sports matches with you wherever you travel in the EU. By the end of this year, you will also be able to buy festival tickets or rent cars online from all over the EU without being geo-blocked or re-routed.”*

Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality added: *“The digital world offers tremendous opportunities, but also challenges; for example, our personal data is a useful asset for many companies. With the modern data protection rules we have put in place, Europeans have gained control over their data whenever they shop, book their holidays online or just surf the internet.”*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society said: *“We are improving the daily life of our citizens, be it end of roaming charges or safer online environment. By completing all our digital initiatives we will bring even more positive change to consumers and businesses alike.”*

Digital rights already in daily use

- Since June 2017, people have been able use their **mobile phones while travelling** in the EU just like they would at home, without paying extra charges. *Since the [EU abolished roaming charges](#), more than five times the amount of data has been consumed and almost two and a half times more phone calls have been made in the EU and the European Economic Area.*
- Since April 2018, consumers can **access online content services** they have subscribed to in their home country also when travelling across the EU, including among other films, series and sports broadcasts (see examples in [factsheet](#)).
- Under the new **data protection rules** which have been in place across the EU since 25 May 2018, Europeans can safely transfer personal data between service providers such as the cloud or email; everyone now has the right to know if their data has been leaked or hacked, or how their personal data is being collected. Furthermore, with the ‘right to be forgotten’, personal data has to be deleted upon request, if there are no legitimate reasons for a company to keep it.
- Finally, with the **net neutrality rules** applying since spring 2016, every European has access to open internet, guaranteeing their freedom without discrimination when choosing content, applications, services and information of their choice.

Coming soon

With some digital rights already in place, there is more to come in the upcoming months. From September, Europeans will have increasingly the right to use their national electronic identification (eID) across the whole EU to access public services.

As of December, everyone will benefit from the **free flow of non-personal data**, as they will have access to better and more competitive data storage and processing services in the EU, thus complementing the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. Entrepreneurs meanwhile will have the right to decide where in the EU they store and process all types of data.

As of 3 December, Europeans will be able to **shop online without unjustified discrimination** wherever they are in the EU. They will not have to worry about a website blocking or re-routing them just because they – or their credit

card – come from a different country.

As of next year, citizens will be able to compare parcel delivery costs more easily and benefit from more **affordable prices for [cross-border parcel delivery](#)**.

Agreed rules on **value added tax for e-commerce** will allow entrepreneurs to take care of their cross-border VAT needs in one online portal and in their own language.

With the recently agreed [European Electronic Communications Code](#), Europeans will have the right to switch internet services and telecoms providers in a simpler way. They will also have the right to receive public alerts on mobile phones in case of an emergency. The new rules will also guarantee a better and more affordable connectivity across the EU.

With the [updated rules for audiovisual media](#), Europeans will have the right to a safe online environment that protects them from incitement to violence, hatred, terrorism, child pornography, racism and xenophobia.

Background

The [Digital Single Market strategy](#) was proposed by the Commission in May 2015 to make the EU's single market fit for the digital age – tearing down regulatory walls and moving from 28 national markets to a single one. This has the potential to contribute €415 billion per year to our economy and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

Three years later, the strategy is well on its way: 17 legislative proposals have been agreed on, while 12 proposals are still on the table. There is a strong need to complete our regulatory framework for creating the Digital Single Market. Thanks to this the value of Europe's data economy has the potential to top €700 billion by 2020, representing 4% of the EU's economy.

For More Information

[Digital Single Market](#)

[Factsheet: A Digital Single Market for the benefit of all Europeans](#)

[Factsheet: Creating a Digital Single Market – European Commission actions since 2015](#)

[Factsheet: EU Budget for the Future – Digital Transformation 2021-2027](#)

[Data Protection – benefits for citizens](#)

[Blog post by Vice-President Ansip: Getting ready for summer in Europe with more digital freedom](#)

Nordic Credit Rating AS registered as Credit Rating Agency

The EFTA Surveillance Authority (EFTA SA) has [registered](#) today the Nordic Credit Rating AS (NCR) as a credit rating agency under Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on credit rating agencies (the CRA Regulation), as incorporated into the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement). This decision comes into effect on 3 August 2018. NCR is based in Oslo, Norway, with a branch in Stockholm, Sweden. NCR intends to issue corporate ratings.

The decision was adopted by the EFTA SA on the basis of a draft prepared by the European Securities and Markets Authority ([ESMA](#)), which is the EU's single supervisor for Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs).

The CRA Regulation seeks to ensure that credit ratings issued in the EU respect minimum standards of quality, transparency and independence by providing that only companies registered as CRAs may lawfully issue credit ratings which can be used for regulatory purposes by credit institutions, investment firms, insurance and reinsurance undertakings, institutions for occupational retirement provision, management companies, investment companies, alternative investment fund managers and central counterparties.

EFTA SA and ESMA will supervise NCR

In order to be registered as a CRA a company must be able to demonstrate that it can comply with the requirements of the CRA Regulation, including on:

- the governance of CRAs and the management of conflicts of interest;
- the development and application of methodologies for assessing credit risk; and
- the disclosure of information to ESMA and to market participants.

Once registered, CRAs are subject to on-going supervision and monitoring. In this case, NCR will be subject to on-going supervision and monitoring by EFTA SA and ESMA respectively to make sure that the firm continues to meet the conditions for registration. EFTA SA, on the basis of drafts prepared by ESMA, can impose sanctions and/or penalties where it finds that a CRA has failed to meet its obligations under the CRA Regulation as incorporated in the EEA Agreement.

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