

Daily News 25 / 07 / 2018

EU mobilises further support for devastating fires in Greece

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** arrived in Athens yesterday to coordinate the EU assistance being provided to Greece through the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) following the deadly fires. The Commissioner announced that **Italy** and **Romania** have now sent 4 planes and ground forces from Cyprus started operating yesterday. Offers of assistance to Greece through the Mechanism were also made by **Spain, Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Malta** and **Montenegro**. Today Commissioner **Stylianides** will meet with Prime Minister Tsipras and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, leader of the opposition as well as visit the affected areas and coordinate the EU's support on the ground. Commissioner **Stylianides** said: *"Here in Athens I have met Minister Nikos Toskas to exchange information on developments. I reiterated that the EU will continue to do all it takes to help the Greek people and authorities in this heart-breaking situation. We are all in this together. It is a day of grief, but together, as Europeans, we are determined to decisively combat these fires. Through our EU Civil Protection Mechanism, we have helped mobilise planes, vehicles, medical personnel and firefighters. We had further offers last night and I thank all countries that have offered support. The priority must continue to be to help those affected for as long as it takes."* The [EU's Copernicus satellite](#) system has also been activated to provide the authorities with highly specialised maps. The Commission continues to help other Member States that have asked for help. In Sweden, EU support continues with 7 planes, over 300 firefighters and 60 vehicles, already operating in the affected areas. For Latvia, the [EU's Copernicus Satellite system](#) has been activated to assist the national authorities with emergency mapping of the risk areas. The Commission co-finances the transport costs of assistance through the Civil Protection Mechanism and links together all civil protection authorities in Europe. The Commission has proposed to strengthen EU civil protection response through [rescEU](#) – so that when multiple disasters hit Member States they are better prepared to confront them. The rescEU proposal is a central part of President **Juncker's** agenda for a Europe that protects. [Photos](#) and [video](#) stockshots of the Emergency Centre are available, as well as a [MEMO 'Fighting forest fires in Europe – how it works'](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey: €400 million to further support education of Syrian refugees

The European Commission has approved a new assistance package worth €400 million, for the education of Syrian refugees in Turkey. This is the first action adopted following the agreement by EU Member States to finance an additional €3 billion for the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. The package of €400 million will be given in the form of a direct grant to the Turkish Ministry of National Education of Turkey. The funding will provide for the continuation of the current education project for Syrian refugees in Turkey which will expire in October 2018. Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European

Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, said: *"With the endorsement of the second tranche of funding by EU Member States, we are continuing to deliver on our commitment to support Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. The approval of this new assistance package is proof of this, allowing for the smooth continuation of our support in addressing the needs of both students and teachers."* The full [press release](#) and a dedicated [factsheet](#) are available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

Juncker Plan supports innovation projects in Spain and energy modernisation in Croatia worth more than €240 million in total

The European Investment Bank (EIB) Group has signed two new agreements in Spain, both of which were made possible by the Juncker Plan's European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The first is an €80 million loan for CIE Automotive to help finance its research and innovation strategy aimed at developing innovative technologies to reduce the weight of vehicles and ensure more efficient, less polluting manufacturing processes. The second is €32.5 million in financing for industrial group Velatia to enable the firm to incorporate new digital technologies into the products that it develops for electricity networks. The EIB has also signed a €130 million loan agreement, alongside the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to support Croatia's energy company Hrvatska Elektroprivreda make its systems more modern, efficient and environmentally-friendly. Commenting on this agreement, Jyrki **Katainen**, Commission Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"As the EU transitions to a cleaner and more sustainable economy, it is crucial that we replace older, polluting power plants with climate-friendly versions. This is precisely what this project will do: generate electricity for residents of Zagreb in a more sustainable way. With financing support from the European Investment Bank under the Investment Plan for Europe, as well as from the EBRD and national power company Hrvatska Elektroprivreda, this is a collective effort to modernise energy supply in Croatia and contribute towards the EU's climate goals."* (Full press releases can be found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

L'Union européenne s'engage à reconstruire le Quartier général de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel à Sévaré, Mali

A la suite de l'attaque meurtrière contre le Quartier Général de la Force Conjointe du G5 Sahel à Sévaré au Mali, le 29 juin dernier, l'UE a décidé de financer la totalité de la reconstruction d'un nouveau Quartier Général et de poursuivre son soutien afin d'assurer la continuité de l'action de l'Etat-major de la Force sur place. Cette décision fait suite à une concertation étroite entre le Commandant de la Force avec la [mission militaire européenne "EUTM" au Mali](#), la coopération de défense française et les forces de l'opération "Barkhane". L'UE poursuivra ce travail de concertation avec le nouveau Commandant de la Force dès qu'il sera en fonction. La Haute Représentante/Vice-Présidente Federica **Mogherini** a déclaré: *"L'Union européenne est le premier partenaire du G5 Sahel. L'attaque contre le*

quartier général de la Force conjointe du G5 Sahel au Mali est aussi une attaque contre notre priorité commune de ramener la paix dans la région. Nous avons ainsi décidé de soutenir pleinement la reconstruction du quartier général de Sévaré, au Mali, confirmant notre engagement déterminé aux côtés des pays du G5, pour permettre aux institutions de contrôler pleinement leurs territoires et de lutter contre le terrorisme et les trafics d'êtres humains, d'armes et de drogue. Garantir la sécurité, le développement de la région est également un investissement dans notre propre sécurité." Le [communiqué de presse](#) ainsi qu'un [mémo](#) sur le partenariat de l'UE avec les pays du G5 Sahel sont disponible en ligne. (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Antitrust: Commission fines four consumer electronics manufacturers for fixing online resale prices

The European Commission fined, in four separate decisions, consumer electronics manufacturers Asus, Denon & Marantz, Philips and Pioneer for imposing fixed or minimum resale prices on their online retailers in breach of EU competition rules. The fines totalling over €111 million were in all four cases reduced due to the companies' cooperation with the Commission. The four manufacturers engaged in so called "fixed or minimum resale price maintenance" (RPM) by restricting the ability of their online retailers to set their own retail prices for widely used consumer electronics products such as kitchen appliances, notebooks and hi-fi products. They intervened particularly with online retailers, who offered their products at low prices. If those retailers did not follow the prices requested by manufacturers, they faced threats or sanctions such as blocking of supplies. These price interventions limited effective price competition between retailers and led to higher prices with an immediate effect on consumers. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "The online commerce market is growing rapidly and is now worth over 500 billion euros in Europe every year. More than half of Europeans now shop online. As a result of the actions taken by these four companies, millions of European consumers faced higher prices for kitchen appliances, hair dryers, notebook computers, headphones and many other products. This is illegal under EU antitrust rules. Our decisions today show that EU competition rules serve to protect consumers where companies stand in the way of more price competition and better choice." A full press release is available in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears creation of joint venture by Kuehne + Nagel and Temasek

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over a newly created joint venture by Kuehne + Nagel International AG ("K+N") of Switzerland and Temasek Holdings Limited of Singapore. The joint venture will identify and invest in young growing logistics technology companies. K+N is a global logistics company active in all types of freight and related services. Temasek is an investment company

with a broad range of investments in different industries including financial services, telecommunications, media, transportation, energy and others. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given that the main focus of the joint venture's activities will be outside the European Economic Area (EEA). 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.9001](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Giulia Astuti – +32 229 55344)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Stylianides on the end of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo

"The World Health Organisation has today declared the Ebola virus outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo to be over. These are welcome news. Today our thoughts are with the victims and the brave health workers who fought on the frontline against this dangerous virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is testament to our immediate collective action and cooperation that this outbreak did not turn into an enormous epidemic. From the very early stages of the outbreak, the European Union was at the forefront of efforts to treat those affected and to contain the virus. The European Union worked hand-in-hand with the World Health Organisation, the Congolese authorities and international aid organisations to take action. The EU mobilised all the emergency response instruments at our disposal: we supported our humanitarian partners with life-saving interventions, provided logistic support through our humanitarian air service, and deployed experts to the country. Through our Civil Protection Mechanism, we also provided medical equipment, while our satellite mapping system Copernicus produced maps of the affected areas. New vaccines, used in DRC against Ebola, were developed with the help of EU research grants. As the EU Ebola Coordinator, I am very pleased that our rapid and strong collective response helped save lives. As we reflect on the achievement to halt this outbreak, we must continue to remain vigilant and be prepared. Our experience in West Africa in 2015 and DRC this year have shown that there can be no complacency concerning health threats." The statement is available online [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

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

Civil protection: Council agrees

negotiating mandate on strengthening civil protection cooperation

On 25 July 2018, EU ambassadors endorsed, on behalf of the Council, a mandate for negotiations on a proposal to amend the EU civil protection mechanism. On the basis of this mandate, the Council Presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament.

Strengthening response capacities

The existing rules on civil protection foresee a voluntary pool to provide mutual support in Europe. In addition to strengthening current capacities, the new rules would establish rescEU, a system to be used as a last resort when existing national capacities and the pool prove to be insufficient.

Through this system the EU will be able to support member states by co-financing leasing or rental arrangements as well as the acquisition of capacities which are otherwise lacking. rescEU capacities will be hosted by the member state acquiring, leasing or renting them, and shall be available for response operations under the EU mechanism. Decisions on their deployment, demobilisation and on arbitration in cases of conflicting requests will be taken by the Commission, in close cooperation with the member states involved.

Improving risk prevention

Prevention is vital in both reducing the risk of disasters and in lessening their impact. Under the new rules, member states will be required to develop further their risk assessments, risk management planning and risk management capability.

If a member state requests the same type of assistance for the same type of disaster three times within three years, it will have to provide to the Commission additional information on its prevention and preparedness measures related to that risk. The Commission will then assess whether adequate prevention and preparedness measures have been taken.

The Commission, in cooperation with member states, will be able to establish consultation mechanisms to improve the prevention, preparedness and coordination between member states which are prone to similar types of disasters.

Sharing knowledge

The proposed new rules also improve training and knowledge-sharing. The Commission will be tasked with establishing a EU civil protection knowledge network of those involved in civil protection and disaster management. This network will be responsible for carrying out various tasks in the area of

training, exercises and knowledge dissemination.

Background

The EU civil protection mechanism was established in 2001. It has helped improve cooperation between the EU and its member states, and facilitates wider coordination in the area of civil protection. Any country in the world, as well as the United Nations and relevant international organisations may request assistance through this mechanism in the event of a disaster.

However, recent experience has shown that reliance on voluntary offers of mutual assistance coordinated and facilitated by the mechanism does not always ensure that the capacities made available in the event of a disaster are adequate. This is particularly the case where member states are simultaneously affected by recurrent disasters and collective capacity is insufficient.

To address the existing shortcomings, the European Commission presented a proposal in November 2017 to strengthen the existing rules.

Currently, support under the EU civil protection mechanism is being mobilised to help tackle the tragic fires which are raging in parts of Greece, Sweden and Latvia.

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[The European Union pledges to rebuild the headquarters of the G5 Sahel Joint Force in Sévaré, Mali.](#)

This decision follows close consultation between the Commander of the Force and the [‘EUTM’ European military mission in Mali](#), the French Defence Cooperation and the forces of ‘Operation Barkhane’. The EU will continue this consultation work with the new Commander of the Force as soon as he takes up his post.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *‘The EU is the first partner of the G5 Sahel. The attack against the headquarters of the G5 Sahel Joint Force in Mali is also an attack against our joint priority of restoring peace in the region. We have therefore decided to fully support the rebuilding of the headquarters in Sévaré in Mali, thereby confirming our firm commitment, side by side with the G5 countries, to enable institutions to fully control their territories and tackle terrorism and trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs. Guaranteeing the security and development of the region is also an investment in our own security.’*

These decisions follow on from the [EU/G5 Sahel ministerial meeting](#) in Brussels on 18 June, chaired by Federica **Mogherini** and the Nigerien Foreign Minister, Kalla Ankourao, and from the [International High-Level Conference on the Sahel](#) in February, at which the European Union provided support to the Joint Force to the tune of EUR 100 million. The main shared objectives of the Union and the G5 Sahel are the stability and development of the countries in the region, better management of the border areas and combating the trafficking that is rife in those areas.

Background

In 2014 Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger created the 'G5 Sahel' group of countries to foster closer cooperation and address the major regional challenges faced by these countries, in particular extreme poverty, terrorism and trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings.

With EUR eight billion in development aid over 2014-2020, the EU is the biggest donor to the G5 Sahel countries.

The EU uses all the tools at its disposal to support development efforts in the region, notably the ['Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa'](#), under which EUR 843 million has been committed so far to support additional projects to bolster security, governance, job creation and the resilience of the communities affected in key areas of Mali and the region.

The EU is a crucial player in the security sector in Mali and the Sahel region through the presence of three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions: [EUCAP Sahel Niger](#) (training and advice to help the security forces in Niger tackle terrorism and organised crime), [EUCAP Sahel Mali](#) (training and advice to the Malian security forces to safeguard the democratic order), and the [EU training mission \(EUTM\) in Mali](#) (support for the instruction and training of command staff in the Malian army).

For more information

[Memo Q&A – The European Union's partnership with the G5 Sahel countries](#)

[119/2018 : 25 July 2018 – Judgment of the Court of Justice in Case C-96/17](#)

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EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey: EUR 400 million Special Measure on education adopted

€400 million will be given in the form of a direct grant to the Turkish Ministry of National Education of Turkey. The funding will provide for the continuation of the current education project for Syrian refugees in Turkey which will expire in October 2018.

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, said: *"With the endorsement of the second tranche of funding by EU Member States, we are continuing to deliver on our commitment to support Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. The approval of this new assistance package is proof of this, allowing for the smooth continuation of our support in addressing the needs of both students and teachers."*

The new assistance package is broader in scope than the current education project: it will focus on outreach, increased quality of formal education for students, Turkish language training for adults in Public Education Centres, the continuation and improvement of the examination system, and social cohesion activities. The duration of the new assistance is also longer than the previous package, covering three academic years rather than two.

The package aims to ensure the sustainability of activities for the period after EU Facility funding has ended. For example, the number of contracted teachers should gradually reduce as Syrian students become fully integrated into public schools and Turkish Ministry teachers take over.

Continued support to Syrian refugees via the EU Facility

On 29 June, EU Member States agreed on how to finance the [second tranche of €3 billion of the Facility](#), with €2 billion of this amount financed from the EU budget and the remaining €1 billion by Member States' contributions. The agreement honours the commitment undertaken by the EU under the [EU-Turkey statement](#) of 18 March 2016 to provide a second instalment of €3 billion for the EU Facility before the €3 billion initially allocated has been fully used up.

As a result, the Commission amended the earlier financing decision, reflecting the mobilisation of €2 billion from the EU budget and €1 billion from the Member States during 2018-2019.

Background

The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey was set up in 2015 in response to the [European Council's call](#) for significant additional funding to support Syrian refugees in Turkey. It provides a joint coordination mechanism, designed to ensure that the needs of refugees and host communities are addressed in a

comprehensive and coordinated manner. The support seeks to improve conditions for refugees in Turkey as part of the EU's comprehensive approach to addressing the refugee crisis inside and outside the EU.

The EU Facility has a total budget of €6 billion for projects including humanitarian and non-humanitarian actions. €3 billion for 2016-2017 and €3 billion for 2018-2019. To date, 72 projects have been contracted for €3 billion, out of which almost €2 billion has been disbursed. The €400 million Special Measure announced today is the 73rd Facility project.

The latest [progress report](#) on the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration was published on 16 May 2018.

For More Information

The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey – [Webpage](#) and [Factsheet](#)

[Factsheet: Humanitarian support to refugees in Turkey](#)

[Second Annual Report for the Facility for Refugees in Turkey](#)

[Facility for Refugees in Turkey – Commission Reports on Progress in tenth Steering Committee](#)

[EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016](#)