

First quarter of 2018 compared with first quarter of 2017 – House prices up by 4.5% in the euro area – Up by 4.7% in the EU

House prices, as measured by the House Price Index, rose by 4.5% in the **euro area** and by 4.7% in the **EU** in the first quarter of 2018 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. These figures come from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

First population estimates – EU population up to nearly 513 million on 1 January 2018 – Increase driven by migration

On 1 January 2018, the population of the **European Union** (EU) was estimated at 512.6 million, compared with 511.5 million on 1 January 2017. During the year 2017, more deaths than births were recorded in the **EU** (5.3 million deaths and 5.1 million births), meaning that the natural change of the EU population was negative. The population change (positive, with 1.1 million more inhabitants) was therefore due to net migration.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on President Al-Bashir's visits to Djibouti and Uganda

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of the Council in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

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Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of UPC Austria by T-Mobile Austria

UPC Austria ("UPC") and T-Mobile Austria ("TMA") both provide telecommunications services in Austria. UPC's main activities are related to fixed telecommunications, while TMA is mainly active in mobile telecommunications.

The Commission examined the impact of the proposed transaction in the limited number of markets in the fixed and mobile telecommunications sector in Austria where the activities of TMA and UPC overlap. In particular, both companies are active in the **provision of internet access services for residential customers**, since in Austria internet access at home is often provided through a router connected to a mobile network.

However, the Commission found that the impact of the transaction on this market is likely to be limited, considering in particular that UPC's fixed internet access products differ considerably from TMA's mobile broadband products. These products differ both in terms of the underlying technology and product characteristics and as a result are not closely competing.

The Commission also found that the merged entity would continue to face significant competition from other players such as the incumbent A1 Telekom Austria and Hutchison Drei Austria.

Additionally, the Commission examined a number of vertical and conglomerate relationships in the fixed and mobile telecommunications markets in Austria

arising as a result of the transaction, in particular concerning **bundled multiple play services**. The Commission concluded that the merged entity would not be able to use its market power to shut out or marginalise its fixed or mobile competitors by bundling fixed and mobile products.

Therefore, following its phase I investigation, the Commission concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns in any of the affected telecoms markets and cleared the case unconditionally.

Merger control rules and procedures

The transaction was notified to the Commission on 18 May 2018.

The Commission has the duty to assess mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (see Article 1 of the [Merger Regulation](#)) and to prevent concentrations that would significantly impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

The vast majority of mergers do not pose competition problems and are cleared after a routine review. From the moment a transaction is notified, the Commission generally has a total of 25 working days to decide whether to grant approval (Phase I) or to start an in-depth investigation (Phase II).

More information will be available on the [competition](#) website, in the Commission's [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8808](#).

Presentation of letter of credentials to the President of the European Council Donald Tusk

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