

“Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success”, interview with Gabriel Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri

“Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success”, interview with Gabriel Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri

08/06/2018 14:30

[□“Gabriel Bernardino: Solvency II is a success”, interview with Gabriel Bernardino, Chairman of EIOPA, conducted by Ola Hellblom for Pensioner & Förmåner and Dagens Industri](#)

Daily News 08 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Boosting cooperation between tax and customs authorities for a safer and more prosperous EU

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing measures to make tax and customs cooperation between Member States better and more efficient. The new **Customs Programme** will help put in place a modern Customs Union which puts the interests of EU business and citizens at its heart, while the **Fiscalis Programme** will support cooperation between Member States’ tax administrations and better contribute to the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance. Continued funding of these programmes will help the EU to progress in offering businesses unfettered and easy access to the EU’s Single Market so that trade can flourish, protect citizens from dangerous goods entering the Union at our external borders and ensure that Member States are equipped to fight tax avoidance and tax evasion. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *“Protecting the European Union’s customs territory and*

implementing our common rules on taxation require strong cooperation between the relevant national authorities. Our new Customs and Fiscalis programmes will help to make that happen. At minimal cost, they provide a true European added value, offering unprecedented advantages to Member States' tax and customs authorities as they work together in the interests of our citizens and businesses." The Commission is proposing a continued financial commitment of €950 million for the EU's customs programme and €270 million for the EU's Fiscalis programme, representing just 0.07% and 0.02% of the next EU budget respectively for programmes with a big added value for the EU. A full [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available online, while the legislative proposals and factsheets are available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Telecommunication Council reached a general approach on the Cybersecurity Act

The Telecommunications Council reached today a general approach on the [Cybersecurity Act](#), which was presented by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in his annual State of the Union Address in 2017. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** welcomed the political agreement from the Council in a joint statement: *"Today's agreement opens the door to transform and strengthen the mandate of European Union Agency for Network and Information and Security (ENISA) into the EU Agency for Cybersecurity, which will support Member States with tackling cybersecurity threats and attacks. [...]* *Strengthening Europe's cybersecurity is the only way to assure a strong and viable Digital Single Market for the benefit of all. It is vital for Member States to work together in building a more cyber secure European Union and avoid the complication of different national laws."* The full statement is available [here](#). The cybersecurity package was proposed by the Commission in September 2017 as a part of a [wide-ranging set of measures](#) to deal with cyber-attacks and to build strong cybersecurity in the EU. This included the Cybersecurity Act: a proposal for strengthening the EU Agency for Cybersecurity as well as creating a new European certification framework, ensuring that products and services in the digital world are cyber secure. More details on cybersecurity are available [here](#) and in the [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Transport Council: Ministers support 3 initiatives of the Commission for clean and competitive mobility

Meeting yesterday in Luxembourg, the European transport ministers agreed on three proposals put forward by this Commission to support the competitiveness and sustainability of the mobility sector. This will allow for the opening of interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament ('trilogue') in view of a swift adoption. [Speaking after the meeting](#), Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said *"We have reached an agreement within the Council on three important files, and I am confident that we can complete their*

adoption by the end of the year. Progress has also been achieved on other files that are still under negotiation, and I look forward to work closely with the incoming Austrian Presidency.” More specifically, ministers firstly agreed on new rules aiming to safeguard competition in air transport. This was the flagship initiative of the [‘Open and Connected Aviation’](#) tabled by the Commission a year ago. It will allow the EU to take appropriate action, should European airlines be subject to unfair practices affecting competition with third country carriers. Secondly, ministers agreed on [European rules](#) providing incentives for ships to dispose of their waste on land, rather than dumping it at sea. This agreement was reached only five months after the Commission put forward this proposal as parts of its [ongoing efforts to tackle plastic waste](#). Ministers also agreed on common specifications for a European electronic toll service. They will establish interoperable road tolling services throughout the EU and improve cross-border cooperation on enforcement. In addition, ministers discussed progress made on other important dossiers, such as the market and social aspects of Europe on the Move or the [Commission’s proposal to update rail passenger rights](#). More information is available [here](#) and on the [Council website](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43)

2018 Skills Forecast: EU agency for the Development of Vocational Training publishes insights in tomorrow’s trends in skills demand and supply

Today, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training ([Cedefop](#)) has released its [2018 skills forecast](#), which shows future trends in skills needed on the labour market for the period up to 2030 across Europe. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion Marianne **Thyssen** said: *“Cedefop’s work on the skills forecast is an important contribution to employment and skills policies, including the implementation of the Skills Agenda for Europe and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar puts emphasis on person’s right to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. Knowledge of tomorrow’s trends in skills demand and supply is necessary to design growth, employment and education policies today.”* The 2018 Skills Forecast projections suggest that four in five new jobs will require a high level of skills. The Forecast also projects fast growth of high-skills occupations, with some growth in certain less-skilled jobs (for example, sales, security, cleaning, catering and caring occupations). In contrast, the number of jobs in medium-skill occupations, such as skilled manual workers and clerks, is projected to see a very slow growth or even to decline over time. At the same time, the need to replace the existing workforce (e.g. due to retirement) will generate numerous job openings, including for occupations that are otherwise in declining demand (e.g. metal and machinery trades workers or agricultural workers). On the supply side, there may be an even larger pool of high-qualified workers from which workers can be drawn, which means that some highly trained workers may therefore end up in jobs below their qualification level. The 2018 skills forecast launch is taking place today at the Residence Palace in Brussels. More information

on the event can be found [here](#). The 2018 skills forecast can be found [here](#).
(For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de CityFibre par Goldman Sachs et Antin Infrastructure Partners

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition conjointe de la société CityFibre, basée au Royaume-Uni, par Goldman Sachs, basée aux Etats-Unis, et Antin Infrastructure Partners, basée en France. Cityfibre est un opérateur grossiste de réseaux urbains en fibre optique au Royaume-Uni. Goldman Sachs est une banque d'affaires, de placement et de gestion de portefeuille de dimension mondiale. Antin Infrastructure Partners est une société de capital-investissement axée sur les infrastructures, en particulier dans les secteurs de l'énergie, de l'environnement, des télécommunications, des transports et des infrastructures sociales. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où les entreprises ne sont pas actives sur les mêmes marchés. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8935](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the styrene monomer purchasing sector

The European Commission can confirm that on 5 June 2018 its officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in styrene monomer purchasing. The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities. Styrene monomer is a chemical product used as a base material for a number of chemical products such as plastics, resins, rubbers and latexes. A full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740; Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182)

STATEMENTS

World Oceans Day 2018: Statement by Commissioner Karmenu Vella

On the occasion of World Oceans Day, taking place every year on 8 June, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **Karmenu Vella** stated: *“Today, on World Oceans Day, I want to join the global celebration of our oceans. I want to highlight their importance for our wellbeing and for the wellbeing of future generations: as an abundant supplier of food, energy and other natural resources; as a regulator for our climate and many of our natural cycles; and as source of inspiration, imagination and humility. On this day, I also want to recall the urgent need to address the immense challenges that our oceans are faced with: climate change, pollution, environmental degradation and unsustainable management of their resources [...] The theme of this year’s World Oceans Day is “Preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean [...] The European Union is playing its part, we are taking care of our future; standing up for our oceans.”* Full statement available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini travels to Jordan on 9-10 June

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission **Federica Mogherini** will travel to Jordan on 9-10 June. She will reiterate the EU’s strong longstanding partnership with Jordan and the continued EU support to the country and the Jordanians. During her visit, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will be received by H.E. King Abdullah II and will hold a number of other meetings in Amman. The meetings will provide an opportunity for the EU and Jordan to discuss the latest events and exchange views on the concrete progress on socio-economic cooperation, which is one of the top priorities of the EU-Jordan partnership to increase growth as well as job opportunities for Jordanians, in particular in the context of the Syria crisis and its regional impact. The regional situation, including the Syria crisis and the Middle East Peace Process, will also be part of the discussions. While in Jordan, the High Representative/Vice-President will also deliver a speech at the German Jordanian University in Madaba on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of Jordanian and Syrian students supported under EU programmes. The visit will be covered on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833)

Commissioner Stylianides in Rome to open exhibition on EU emergency response for natural disasters

Today, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, **Christos Stylianides** will open the [EU SAVES LIVES](#) virtual reality exhibition in Rome in the presence of Ms Elisabetta Gardini, Member of European Parliament and Mr Fabrizio Curcio, Coordinator of Civil Protection, the Council Presidency. Speaking at the opening ceremony in Rome, Commissioner **Stylianides** said: *“This campaign is about bringing Europe closer to its citizens. We want to showcase the added value of the EU in situations when natural disasters hit.*

The EU, through its emergency response, saves lives and protects European citizens in Europe and worldwide.” This campaign comes just a few months after the European Commission launched an ambitious proposal to further support Member States by upgrading the current collective [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#) via [rescEU](#). The European Commission’s virtual reality exhibition EU SAVES LIVES is travelling to several countries to explain in an interactive way how Europe helps coordinate emergency response to natural disasters and other crises in Europe and worldwide. The traveling exhibition has already been in Berlin, Bucharest and Vilnius attracting more than 160,000 visitors so far. Following a ten-day stop in Rome, the roadshow will travel to Marseille and Madrid. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Les commissaires Hogan et Moedas participent à un dialogue citoyen au Portugal sur l’avenir de l’Europe et du secteur agricole européen

Le commissaire à l’agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, est aujourd’hui en visite à Santarém, au Portugal, où il participe à un [dialogue citoyen](#) aux côtés du commissaire à la recherche, l’innovation et la science, Carlos **Moedas**. Le dialogue portera sur les débats autour de l’avenir de l’Europe et plus particulièrement les défis auxquels font face les agriculteurs européens. La Commission a présenté à ce propos la semaine dernière ses propositions législatives pour la [future politique agricole commune](#). L’événement est organisé dans le cadre d’une conférence plus générale sur l’agriculture européenne et sera suivi d’une intervention du Premier Ministre portugais, M. António Costa, ainsi que du ministre portugais de l’agriculture, M. Luis Capoulas Santos. A la suite de la conférence, les commissaires **Hogan** et **Moedas** visiteront le [Salon de l’agriculture](#) à Santarém avec le Premier ministre Costa. Le commissaire Hogan aura également une réunion avec M. Capoulas Santos. (Pour plus d’informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél .: +32 229 56 185, Clémence Robin – Tél .: +32 229 52509)

Commissioner Gabriel travelling to Hanover for CeBIT 2018 digital business fair

Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will participate on Monday and Tuesday in the digital business fair [CEBIT](#). On Monday evening she will hold a keynote speech at the official opening ceremony of CEBIT 2018. The Commissioner will meet on the sidelines of the event German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier. On Tuesday morning she will meet Minister-President of Lower Saxony Stephan Weil as well as Bernd Althusmann, Minister of Economic, Labor, Transport and Digitalisation of Lower Saxony. In the afternoon the Commissioner will deliver a keynote speech on the benefits of the [Digital Single Market](#) at the CEBIT Digital Transformation Forum and participate in the following panel discussion. She will additionally make a tour through the exhibition halls and meet, among others, German Minister of Education and Research Anja Karliczek. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Commissioner Thyssen visits European Social Fund project in Germany

On Monday 11 June Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen** will travel to Mannheim, Germany, where she will visit a European Social Fund project in presence of Member of European Parliament Ms Ingeborg Grässle. The project concerns the [Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit \(LAG KJS\) of Baden-Württemberg](#), an association specialised in youth care aid, youth homes, help with school work, part-time education for single parents and more. It will be an opportunity for the Commissioner to learn more about the association and exchange views on how EU funding can be used. (For more information: *Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094*)

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger at the Conference on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 in Sofia

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is participating to the [Conference](#) on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020, “Perspectives for Convergence and Sustainable Regions”, organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council. Decision-makers and key cohesion stakeholders from across Europe will meet in the Bulgarian capital to share their visions of the future of the policy, following the [Commission’s proposal](#) for Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 presented on 29 May. Commissioner **Oettinger** will deliver a speech on challenges and opportunities for the new EU budget and Cohesion Policy after 2020. “The Commission’s proposal for the next Cohesion Policy is both rational and ambitious,” said Commissioner **Oettinger**, “Rational, because the cost of non-cohesion between EU regions and Member States will be far greater than the effort of solidarity we ask for. And ambitious, because a strong Cohesion Policy with an investment power of €373 billion can help reach EU-wide goals of growth, jobs and innovation in every corner of Europe.” In Sofia, Commissioner **Oettinger** met Pedro Marques, Minister of Planning and Infrastructures of Portugal, Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister of Investment and Economic Development of Poland, Gabrijela Žalac, Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia and László Palkovics Minister for Innovation and Technology of Hungary. (For more information: *Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169*)

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

Daily News 08 / 06 / 2018

EU budget: Boosting cooperation between tax and customs authorities for a safer and more prosperous EU

For the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, the Commission is proposing measures to make tax and customs cooperation between Member States better and more efficient. The new **Customs Programme** will help put in place a modern Customs Union which puts the interests of EU business and citizens at its heart, while the **Fiscalis Programme** will support cooperation between Member States' tax administrations and better contribute to the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance. Continued funding of these programmes will help the EU to progress in offering businesses unfettered and easy access to the EU's Single Market so that trade can flourish, protect citizens from dangerous goods entering the Union at our external borders and ensure that Member States are equipped to fight tax avoidance and tax evasion. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Protecting the European Union's customs territory and implementing our common rules on taxation require strong cooperation between the relevant national authorities. Our new Customs and Fiscalis programmes will help to make that happen. At minimal cost, they provide a true European added value, offering unprecedented advantages to Member States' tax and customs authorities as they work together in the interests of our citizens and businesses."* The Commission is proposing a continued financial commitment of €950 million for the EU's customs programme and €270 million for the EU's Fiscalis programme, representing just 0.07% and 0.02% of the next EU budget respectively for programmes with a big added value for the EU. A full [press release](#) and [MEMO](#) are available online, while the legislative proposals and factsheets are available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

Telecommunication Council reached a general approach on the Cybersecurity Act

The Telecommunications Council reached today a general approach on the [Cybersecurity Act](#), which was presented by President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in his annual State of the Union Address in 2017. Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** welcomed the political agreement from the Council in a joint statement: *"Today's agreement opens the door to transform and strengthen the mandate of European Union Agency for Network and Information and Security (ENISA) into the EU Agency for Cybersecurity, which will support Member States with tackling cybersecurity threats and attacks. [...] Strengthening Europe's cybersecurity is the only way to assure a strong and viable Digital Single Market for the benefit of all. It is vital for Member States to work together in building a more cyber secure European Union and avoid the complication of different national laws."* The full statement is available [here](#). The cybersecurity package was proposed by the Commission in September 2017 as a part of a [wide-ranging set of measures](#) to deal with

cyber-attacks and to build strong cybersecurity in the EU. This included the Cybersecurity Act: a proposal for strengthening the EU Agency for Cybersecurity as well as creating a new European certification framework, ensuring that products and services in the digital world are cyber secure. More details on cybersecurity are available [here](#) and in the [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Transport Council: Ministers support 3 initiatives of the Commission for clean and competitive mobility

Meeting yesterday in Luxembourg, the European transport ministers agreed on three proposals put forward by this Commission to support the competitiveness and sustainability of the mobility sector. This will allow for the opening of interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament ('trilogue') in view of a swift adoption. [Speaking after the meeting](#), Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc said "We have reached an agreement within the Council on three important files, and I am confident that we can complete their adoption by the end of the year. Progress has also been achieved on other files that are still under negotiation, and I look forward to work closely with the incoming Austrian Presidency." More specifically, ministers firstly agreed on new rules aiming to safeguard competition in air transport. This was the flagship initiative of the '[Open and Connected Aviation](#)' tabled by the Commission a year ago. It will allow the EU to take appropriate action, should European airlines be subject to unfair practices affecting competition with third country carriers. Secondly, ministers agreed on [European rules](#) providing incentives for ships to dispose of their waste on land, rather than dumping it at sea. This agreement was reached only five months after the Commission put forward this proposal as parts of its [ongoing efforts to tackle plastic waste](#). Ministers also agreed on common specifications for a European electronic toll service. They will establish interoperable road tolling services throughout the EU and improve cross-border cooperation on enforcement. In addition, ministers discussed progress made on other important dossiers, such as the market and social aspects of Europe on the Move or the [Commission's proposal to update rail passenger rights](#). More information is available [here](#) and on the [Council website](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 6 91 43)

2018 Skills Forecast: EU agency for the Development of Vocational Training publishes insights in tomorrow's trends in skills demand and supply

Today, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training ([Cedefop](#)) has released its [2018 skills forecast](#), which shows future trends in skills needed on the labour market for the period up to 2030 across Europe. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion Marianne Thyssen said: "Cedefop's work on the skills forecast is an important contribution to employment and skills policies, including the implementation of the Skills

Agenda for Europe and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar puts emphasis on person's right to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. Knowledge of tomorrow's trends in skills demand and supply is necessary to design growth, employment and education policies today." The 2018 Skills Forecast projections suggest that four in five new jobs will require a high level of skills. The Forecast also projects fast growth of high-skills occupations, with some growth in certain less-skilled jobs (for example, sales, security, cleaning, catering and caring occupations). In contrast, the number of jobs in medium-skill occupations, such as skilled manual workers and clerks, is projected to see a very slow growth or even to decline over time. At the same time, the need to replace the existing workforce (e.g. due to retirement) will generate numerous job openings, including for occupations that are otherwise in declining demand (e.g. metal and machinery trades workers or agricultural workers). On the supply side, there may be an even larger pool of high-qualified workers from which workers can be drawn, which means that some highly trained workers may therefore end up in jobs below their qualification level. The 2018 skills forecast launch is taking place today at the Residence Palace in Brussels. More information on the event can be found [here](#). The 2018 skills forecast can be found [here](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de CityFibre par Goldman Sachs et Antin Infrastructure Partners

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition conjointe de la société CityFibre, basée au Royaume-Uni, par Goldman Sachs, basée aux Etats-Unis, et Antin Infrastructure Partners, basée en France. Cityfibre est un opérateur grossiste de réseaux urbains en fibre optique au Royaume-Uni. Goldman Sachs est une banque d'affaires, de placement et de gestion de portefeuille de dimension mondiale. Antin Infrastructure Partners est une société de capital-investissement axée sur les infrastructures, en particulier dans les secteurs de l'énergie, de l'environnement, des télécommunications, des transports et des infrastructures sociales. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où les entreprises ne sont pas actives sur les mêmes marchés. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8935](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the styrene monomer purchasing sector

The European Commission can confirm that on 5 June 2018 its officials carried

out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in styrene monomer purchasing. The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities. Styrene monomer is a chemical product used as a base material for a number of chemical products such as plastics, resins, rubbers and latexes. A full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740; Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182)

STATEMENTS

World Oceans Day 2018: Statement by Commissioner Karmenu Vella

On the occasion of World Oceans Day, taking place every year on 8 June, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, **Karmenu Vella** stated: *“Today, on World Oceans Day, I want to join the global celebration of our oceans. I want to highlight their importance for our wellbeing and for the wellbeing of future generations: as an abundant supplier of food, energy and other natural resources; as a regulator for our climate and many of our natural cycles; and as source of inspiration, imagination and humility. On this day, I also want to recall the urgent need to address the immense challenges that our oceans are faced with: climate change, pollution, environmental degradation and unsustainable management of their resources [...] The theme of this year’s World Oceans Day is “Preventing plastic pollution and encouraging solutions for a healthy ocean [...] The European Union is playing its part, we are taking care of our future; standing up for our oceans.”* Full statement available [here](#). (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini travels to Jordan on 9-10 June

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission **Federica Mogherini** will travel to Jordan on 9-10 June. She will reiterate the EU’s strong longstanding partnership with Jordan and the continued EU support to the country and the Jordanians. During her visit, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will be received by H.E. King Abdullah II and will hold a number of other meetings in Amman. The meetings will provide an opportunity for the EU and Jordan to discuss the latest events and exchange views on the concrete progress on socio-economic cooperation, which is one of the top priorities of the EU-Jordan partnership

to increase growth as well as job opportunities for Jordanians, in particular in the context of the Syria crisis and its regional impact. The regional situation, including the Syria crisis and the Middle East Peace Process, will also be part of the discussions. While in Jordan, the High Representative/Vice-President will also deliver a speech at the German Jordanian University in Madaba on the occasion of the graduation ceremony of Jordanian and Syrian students supported under EU programmes. The visit will be covered on [EbS](#). (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833)

Commissioner Stylianides in Rome to open exhibition on EU emergency response for natural disasters

Today, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** will open the [EU SAVES LIVES](#) virtual reality exhibition in Rome in the presence of Ms Elisabetta Gardini, Member of European Parliament and Mr Fabrizio Curcio, Coordinator of Civil Protection, the Council Presidency. Speaking at the opening ceremony in Rome, Commissioner **Stylianides** said: *“This campaign is about bringing Europe closer to its citizens. We want to showcase the added value of the EU in situations when natural disasters hit. The EU, through its emergency response, saves lives and protects European citizens in Europe and worldwide.”* This campaign comes just a few months after the European Commission launched an ambitious proposal to further support Member States by upgrading the current collective [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#) via [rescEU](#). The European Commission’s virtual reality exhibition EU SAVES LIVES is travelling to several countries to explain in an interactive way how Europe helps coordinate emergency response to natural disasters and other crises in Europe and worldwide. The traveling exhibition has already been in Berlin, Bucharest and Vilnius attracting more than 160,000 visitors so far. Following a ten-day stop in Rome, the roadshow will travel to Marseille and Madrid. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Les commissaires Hogan et Moedas participent à un dialogue citoyen au Portugal sur l’avenir de l’Europe et du secteur agricole européen

Le commissaire à l’agriculture, Phil **Hogan**, est aujourd’hui en visite à Santarém, au Portugal, où il participe à un [dialogue citoyen](#) aux côtés du commissaire à la recherche, l’innovation et la science, Carlos **Moedas**. Le dialogue portera sur les débats autour de l’avenir de l’Europe et plus particulièrement les défis auxquels font face les agriculteurs européens. La Commission a présenté à ce propos la semaine dernière ses propositions législatives pour la [future politique agricole commune](#). L’événement est organisé dans le cadre d’une conférence plus générale sur l’agriculture européenne et sera suivi d’une intervention du Premier Ministre portugais, M. António Costa, ainsi que du ministre portugais de l’agriculture, M. Luis Capoulas Santos. A la suite de la conférence, les commissaires **Hogan** et **Moedas** visiteront le [Salon de l’agriculture](#) à Santarém avec le Premier ministre Costa. Le commissaire Hogan aura également une réunion avec M. Capoulas Santos. (Pour plus d’informations: Daniel Rosario – Tél .: +32 229 56 185, Clémence Robin – Tél .: +32 229 52509)

Commissioner Gabriel travelling to Hanover for CeBIT 2018 digital business fair

Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will participate on Monday and Tuesday in the digital business fair [CEBIT](#). On Monday evening she will hold a keynote speech at the official opening ceremony of CEBIT 2018. The Commissioner will meet on the sidelines of the event German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier. On Tuesday morning she will meet Minister-President of Lower Saxony Stephan Weil as well as Bernd Althusmann, Minister of Economic, Labor, Transport and Digitalisation of Lower Saxony. In the afternoon the Commissioner will deliver a keynote speech on the benefits of the [Digital Single Market](#) at the CEBIT Digital Transformation Forum and participate in the following panel discussion. She will additionally make a tour through the exhibition halls and meet, among others, German Minister of Education and Research Anja Karliczek. *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

Commissioner Thyssen visits European Social Fund project in Germany

On Monday 11 June Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen** will travel to Mannheim, Germany, where she will visit a European Social Fund project in presence of Member of European Parliament Ms Ingeborg Grässle. The project concerns the [Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit \(LAG KJS\) of Baden-Württemberg](#), an association specialised in youth care aid, youth homes, help with school work, part-time education for single parents and more. It will be an opportunity for the Commissioner to learn more about the association and exchange views on how EU funding can be used. *(For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)*

Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger at the Conference on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 in Sofia

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is participating to the [Conference](#) on Cohesion Policy beyond 2020, “Perspectives for Convergence and Sustainable Regions”, organised by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council. Decision-makers and key cohesion stakeholders from across Europe will meet in the Bulgarian capital to share their visions of the future of the policy, following the [Commission’s proposal](#) for Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 presented on 29 May. Commissioner **Oettinger** will deliver a speech on challenges and opportunities for the new EU budget and Cohesion Policy after 2020. “The Commission’s proposal for the next Cohesion Policy is both rational and ambitious,” said Commissioner **Oettinger**, “Rational, because the cost of non-cohesion between EU regions and Member States will be far greater than the effort of solidarity we ask for. And ambitious, because a strong Cohesion Policy with an investment power of €373 billion can help reach EU-wide goals

of growth, jobs and innovation in every corner of Europe.” In Sofia, Commissioner **Oettinger** met Pedro Marques, Minister of Planning and Infrastructures of Portugal, Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister of Investment and Economic Development of Poland, Gabrijela Žalac, Minister of Regional Development and EU Funds of the Republic of Croatia and László Palkovics Minister for Innovation and Technology of Hungary. *(For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)*

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

EU Sustainable Energy Week in Armenia – EIB and multi-donor fund E5P spearhead the rehabilitation of kindergartens in Yerevan

- **A pioneer project in Armenia will make buildings more energy efficient and resilient to earthquakes**
- **Almost 150 kindergartens will benefit from the EUR 5m grant from the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P) to which the European Union is the largest contributor**
- **The project is jointly implemented by the EIB, the Municipality of Yerevan, the Green Climate Fund and UNDP**
- **The grant completes the EIB loan of EUR 7m signed in 2017**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) signed today with the multi-donor fund E5P and the Municipality of Yerevan a pioneering grant agreement of EUR 5m to support an unprecedented upgrading of public buildings in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. The Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership, or E5P, is a EUR 200m fund supporting municipal investments in energy efficiency and environmental projects in the Eastern Partnership countries*.

The E5P grant represents support additional to the EUR 7m EIB loan signed in December 2017 to help the Municipality of Yerevan finance energy efficiency improvements in public buildings. The grant will finance projects that will increase the energy efficiency and the resilience to earthquakes of kindergartens: 29 kindergartens will be fully renovated, while 118 will benefit from a lighter renovation, namely energy efficiency measures subject to satisfactory preliminary studies. This will create a much safer and caring environment for approximately 34,500 people, including pupils, teachers and staff members. It will result in primary energy savings of 27,800 MWh a year,

reduce CO₂ emissions by 5,502 tonnes a year and significantly decrease other greenhouse gas emissions. This will contribute to climate change mitigation and reduce Yerevan's municipal budget expenditures for energy services by EUR 1.1m. In addition, it will generate local and regional economic activities, particularly in the construction industry, and therefore support the development of private sector businesses.

EIB Vice-President Vazil Hudák commented: *"The EU bank, together with its partners, is making a real difference for the people of Armenia. We encourage projects like this one that help to improve the environment and therefore also the quality of life. The 147 Yerevan kindergartens will show the way on energy efficiency and savings because the cheapest energy is the one we avoid generating".*

Head of EU Delegation H.E. Piotr Antoni Switalski stated: *"Energy efficiency is the cheapest energy as it's the one on which money is not spent! New technologies can generate cleaner energy and create jobs, while mobilising stakeholders from the government, international financial institutions, municipalities, civil society and citizens will be the key task for scaling up reforms and investments. The EU has been and will continue supporting energy efficiency measures in Armenia, including for the 21 signatory municipalities of the Covenant of Mayors and more than 6,000 households which have benefited from EU-funded projects. The proposed E5P grant of EUR 5m will thus make affordable the implementation of the refurbishments and renewable energy measures, support Armenia's investment efforts in demand-side energy management, ensure strong economic impacts at the municipal budget level, and bring positive social and environmental benefits. The EU believes that with a successful large-scale pilot like the one proposed, other cities/actors will be willing to invest as well."*

Mayor of Yerevan Taron Margaryan noted: *"Yerevan Municipality highly appreciates the projects implemented with the financial assistance of the European Investment Bank and European Union. The cooperation in various spheres of the urban economy is important for the development of Yerevan's infrastructure. Through the EIB loan public buildings will be renovated, and in the first stage we will refurbish the majority of the municipality's kindergartens, which is very important for us as children are our future. The project will be a pioneer in Armenia: as it contains energy efficiency and seismic resilience component. Yerevan Municipality is highly committed to participating in the funding of the project along with the EIB, E5P and GCF, and with the signing of the E5P Grant Agreement the implementation of the project is entering into a realistic phase. I would like to emphasize that all of the projects which are under way will have very positive impact and are aimed at improving the well-being of the residents of the capital and I hope that similar projects will be continuous."*

The Grant Agreement signature took place today in 110 Kindergarten Yerevan. The children and teachers of the kindergarten attended the ceremony, together with the representatives of the diplomatic representations of the EU in Armenia and the EU Member States, and Yerevan Municipality and RA Government. The event was organised under the **EU4Energy Initiative** and in the context of **the EU Sustainable Energy Week**, which is the biggest energy efficiency event

in Europe, aimed at encouraging citizens and stakeholders to discover and debate the major issues driving the transition to sustainable energy.

The project was developed thanks to the results of a study on energy efficiency and renewables financed by the technical assistance grant support from the Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund (EPTATF).

* Eastern Partnership covers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the styrene monomer purchasing sector

The European Commission can confirm that on 5 June 2018 its officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in styrene monomer purchasing.

The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices ([Article 101](#) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities.

Styrene monomer is a chemical product used as a base material for a number of chemical products such as plastics, resins, rubbers and latexes. These products are then used in a very wide range of applications (insulation, packaging, etc.).

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary step in investigations into suspected anticompetitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anticompetitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the undertakings concerned cooperate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.