

Déclaration de la Haute Représentante Federica Mogherini au nom de l'Union européenne sur la situation au Burundi en amont du référendum constitutionnel

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Les autorités burundaises ont lancé la dernière phase préparatoire au référendum constitutionnel prévu le 17 mai 2018. Ce processus a lieu dans un climat persistant d'intimidation et de répression et est marqué par l'absence d'approche consensuelle entre les différents groupes sociétaux et politiques du Burundi. Le manque d'information officielle publique sur les éléments clé du projet de Constitution et le contrôle étroit des journalistes et des médias risquent de compromettre davantage ce processus. A cet égard l'UE déplore la récente suspension des radios VoA et BBC.

L'Union européenne (UE) regrette la nature non-inclusive de cette phase préparatoire et s'associe pleinement à l'appel de l'Union africaine à «initier toutes les réformes constitutionnelles à travers un large consensus national de toutes les parties prenantes en question». Le processus actuel va à contre-courant des efforts en cours de médiation et de facilitation d'un dialogue politique inclusif inter-burundais portés par la Communauté d'Afrique de l'Est et l'Union africaine et pleinement soutenus par l'UE.

L'UE reste vivement préoccupée par la situation des droits humains au Burundi qui nuit à toute initiative de réconciliation, de paix et de justice. Elle relève en particulier, la persistance d'exécutions extrajudiciaires et d'arrestations arbitraires, y compris de défenseurs des droits humains comme Germain Rukuki qui est menacé par un verdict aussi arbitraire que sévère, et l'absence d'espace politique et restrictions aux libertés d'expression et d'association. A cet égard, la mise en œuvre des deux Résolutions de la 36ème session du Conseil des droits de l'homme à Genève reste une priorité politique.

L'UE, en tant que garant, appelle les autorités burundaises à respecter l'esprit et la lettre des Accords de paix d'Arusha, dont les dispositions ont servi de base pour le transfert pacifique du pouvoir au Burundi et qui ont promu la paix et la stabilité dans la région.

Dans la poursuite de ses efforts en soutien d'un dialogue inclusif, seul

processus viable en vue d'un règlement politique durable au Burundi, l'UE continuera de se coordonner étroitement avec ses principaux partenaires internationaux, en particulier la Communauté d'Afrique de l'Est, l'Union africaine, l'ONU et son Envoyé spécial, ainsi que l'Office du HCDH au Burundi.

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[Report on the state of EU-Tunisia relations: towards a strengthening of the Privileged Partnership](#)

That is the conclusion of the [progress report on the state of EU-Tunisia relations](#) published today by the services of the European Commission and the European External Action Service ahead of the EU-Tunisia Association Council in Brussels on 15 May 2018.

The report highlights the intense high-level exchanges, dialogue and cooperation on key issues such as youth employability and reforms, consolidating democracy and promoting good governance (in which Tunisian civil society continues to play a central role), the response to common security challenges and the coordinated management of migration.

'The European Union and Tunisia are natural partners on account of their geographical, cultural and commercial links. We are eager to deepen our Privileged Partnership, and the EU remains committed to a democratic, strong and prosperous Tunisia. Our efforts are focused in particular on the aspirations of Tunisia's young people, for whose benefit we launched a Partnership for Youth in 2016, which we are in the process of strengthening. The local elections on 6 May, which the Tunisian Government invited us to observe, marked an important step in consolidating democracy in the country and implementing the 2014 Constitution. They pave the way for an ambitious process of decentralisation,' declared High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**.

'The EU is continuing to deploy all its cooperation instruments to support the political and socio-economic transition in Tunisia. Our commitment takes the form, for example, of increased financial assistance; in 2017 the European Commission provided €300 million in grants. The population is looking for tangible progress and results, and in the light of the current economic situation, the process of institutional and socio-economic reform needs to be speeded up. In this connection, I am delighted that a Roadmap for Priority Reforms was presented last month in Brussels by the Head of the Tunisian Government,' added the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**.

The report finds that tangible progress has been made in numerous fields, including women's rights, judicial reform, measures to promote youth entrepreneurship, local development, the green economy, culture and civil protection. In addition, Tunisia's involvement in the Horizon 2020 programme and its active participation in Erasmus+ have made possible an increase in the exchanges between researchers, students, teachers and young people, contributing to the development of an innovation-oriented society. Negotiations on ambitious bilateral agreements on air transport, economics and trade, and migration, also moved forward.

Over the last 12 months, the European Union has demonstrated its continued support for Tunisia's political and socio-economic transition, including by supporting urgent and essential structural reforms to boost inclusive and sustainable growth. Through this report, the European Union is reiterating its determination to continue supporting Tunisia and exploring the vision for the future of the EU-Tunisia partnership.

For more information

[The full report](#)

[Single Support Framework 2017-2020](#)

[Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council 'Strengthening EU support for Tunisia' \(19/10/2016\)](#)

[European Union Delegation to Tunisia](#)

[Cooperation between the EU and Tunisia](#)

European Commission and EIB further clarify statistical treatment of Energy Performance Contracts



The new Guide follows the [Eurostat Guidance note on the revised treatment of Energy Performance Contracts in government accounts, issued in September](#)

[2017](#), and explains its practical application, making use of technical assistance resources from the [European Investment Advisory Hub \(EIAH\)](#). The guide is available [here](#).

Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner responsible for Eurostat, said: *“I am very pleased to launch a new guide today that clarifies how investments in energy efficient infrastructure should be statistically treated. This will help all stakeholders involved in commissioning, financing and undertaking energy performance contracts. This is a win-win for public authorities and private stakeholders, with a clear understanding of the impact on the national budget. I am confident this new guide will encourage both private and public project promoters to step up investments in energy efficiency projects.”*

Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action, Miguel **Arias Cañete**, added: *“Thanks to this guide, it will be easier for schools, hospitals, and other public buildings – which make up more than 10% of the overall EU building stock – to invest for the purpose of improving energy efficiency. Energy efficiency measures are also an important means to combat energy poverty, which this Commission aims at tackling at the roots.”*

Andrew **McDowell**, EIB Vice-President with oversight for Energy, said: *“Managers of public buildings – such as schools, hospitals and other public agencies – often lack the budget and technical expertise to design and secure finance for energy savings projects that reduce carbon emissions, save taxpayers’ money and make buildings more comfortable for staff and public service users. This new Guide aims to help public authorities to prepare and finance projects, by mobilising private capital and expertise for the benefit of the public sector under Energy Performance Contracts. This is one of many steps that the EIB is taking through our joint “Smart Finance for Smart Buildings” initiative with the European Commission to unlock more energy efficiency investments in public and private buildings.”*

The Guide explains in detail how Energy Performance Contracts work and gives a clear overview of the potential impact on government finances. This will help Member States and other stakeholders to better understand the impact that the different features of these contracts have on the classification of the investment undertaken, on or off government balance sheet, and will assist public authorities in taking better-informed decisions when preparing and procuring their EPCs. This Guide is also a helpful tool to provide clarity to public and private promoters in the context of the Investment Plan and remove perceived barriers to investment.

Background

Investment is a key priority for Europe. This is why, with the EIB as its strategic partner, the European Commission launched the [Investment Plan for Europe](#) in November 2014. The Investment Plan – the Juncker Plan – focuses on boosting investment to generate jobs and growth by making smarter use of financial resources, removing obstacles to investment, and providing visibility and technical assistance to investment projects. The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is the main pillar of the Juncker Plan and provides first loss guarantees, enabling the EIB to invest in more projects

that often come with greater risks.

Another major priority is energy efficiency as a part of a low-carbon economy. Here, so-called Energy Performance Contracts, or EPCs for short, can help mobilise private investment and expertise in energy efficiency in public sector buildings. Energy Performance in buildings is part of the [legislative package “Clean Energy for all Europeans”](#) – a key element for achieving a resilient Energy Union and a forward-looking climate change policy.

The public sector’s decision to procure energy efficiency projects as EPCs, however, is sometimes influenced by expectations as to their statistical treatment (i.e. impact on government debt and deficit figures). Uncertainty in how to assess the statistical treatment of EPCs can therefore create difficulties and delays in the various stages of preparation and implementation of investment projects.

Eurostat is the Directorate-General of the European Commission providing statistical information to the institutions of the European Union (EU) and promoting the harmonisation of statistical methods across its member states. The organisations in the different countries which actively cooperate with Eurostat are summarised under the concept of the European Statistical System.

The **European Investment Bank (EIB)** is the long-term lending institution of the European Union owned by its Member States. It makes long-term finance available for sound investment in order to contribute towards EU policy goals.

The **European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH)** is a single access point to a wide range of advisory and technical assistance services. The hub is a joint initiative of the Commission and the EIB, which provides technical assistance and tailored advice to private and public project promoters.

For More Information

[MEMO: Eurostat clarifies how to record energy performance contracts in national accounts – Questions and Answers](#)

[Practitioner’s Guide on the Statistical Treatment of Energy Performance Contracts](#)

Follow Marianne Thyssen on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Follow Miguel Arias Cañete on [Twitter](#)

Follow EIB Vice-President Andrew McDowell on [Twitter](#)

Press contacts:

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President Juncker addresses members of the Parliament of Wallonia and the Flemish Parliament

In the context of Europe Day, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, will address both the Wallonian and Flemish parliaments of Belgium. This afternoon, he will address members of the Parliament of Wallonia, in Namur. Following last week's unveiling of the long-term European budget, he will explain the priorities proposed by the Commission for a Europe that protects, empowers and defends. He will then meet with the Minister-President of Wallonia, Mr Willy Borsus. Tomorrow, on Europe Day itself, the President will address members of the Flemish Parliament, in Brussels. He will then meet Minister-President Geert Bourgeois. The President's speeches can be followed live on [EbS +](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel .: +32 229 60524, Natasha Bertaud – Tel .: +32 229 67456)

Un enfant sur trois de l'UE a maintenant accès à des gardes d'enfants abordables et de bonne qualité, souligne un rapport de la Commission

Aujourd'hui, la Commission européenne a publié un rapport expliquant comment les États membres ont atteint les objectifs fixés en 2002 par le Conseil européen sur le développement des offres de services concernant les gardes d'enfants en Europe (aussi dénommé les "[objectifs de Barcelone](#)"). Le rapport indique que d'une manière générale, l'UE a atteint son objectif visant à assurer une garde de grande qualité et abordable pour tous les enfants âgés de 0 à 3 ans. Avec une moyenne européenne de 86.5%, les pays européens sont aussi sur le point d'atteindre la cible de 90% d'enfants – âgés entre 3 ans et l'âge scolaire obligatoire- qui bénéficient de garde d'enfants. Ces objectifs représentent un point crucial de la stratégie de la Commission européenne qui vise à permettre aux femmes une pleine participation au marché du travail. La Commissaire Věra **Jourová**, commissaire en charge de la justice, des consommateurs et de l'égalité des genres, a déclaré: "*Le processus pour atteindre ces objectifs en matière de gardes d'enfants a été trop lent. Des améliorations pour adapter les services de gardes d'enfants aux besoins des familles modernes ont été réalisées, nous devons toutefois poursuivre nos efforts. Nous espérons accélérer nos progrès à présent afin que le changement se fasse plus rapidement pour aider les parents qui travaillent.*" Marianne **Thyssen**, la commissaire en charge de l'emploi et des affaires sociales, des compétences et de la mobilité des travailleurs, a ajouté: "*J'accueille les progrès effectués par les Etats Membres, en ce qui concerne les services en matière de gardes d'enfants. L'accès à des gardes d'enfants de haute qualité et abordables est l'un des principes du Socle des Droits Sociaux. Des gardes d'enfants de haute qualité et abordables ne sont pas seulement bénéfiques au développement de l'enfant, mais aident également les parents, et notamment les femmes, à entrer ou à revenir sur le marché du travail.*" Des progrès ont été faits, mais le rapport met en évidence des différences significatives

entre les pays de l'UE: 12 Etats Membres ont atteint ou dépassé l'objectif, mais 16 d'entre eux se situent encore au-dessous et leur situation s'est parfois même aggravée. Les améliorations les plus marquantes depuis 2011 ont eu lieu à Malte, en Roumanie et en Estonie. Ces résultats mettent en évidence l'importance d'initiatives telles que [la proposition d'équilibre entre vie professionnelle et vie privée de la Commission](#), visant à permettre aux pères et aux mères de partager équitablement les responsabilités des prises en charge grâce à des standards minimum de congés parentaux, paternels et des pauses-carrières et des conditions de travail flexible. La proposition encourage aussi les États membres à envisager des subventions appropriées, par exemple au travers du Fond Social Européen et du Fond Européen de Développement Régional – pour des mesures qui visent à créer un meilleur équilibre entre la vie privée et la vie professionnelle, incluant les gardes d'enfants. Plus d'informations dans [le rapport et les graphiques joints](#).
(Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 5865)

EU Nature Action Plan: Commission issues guidance for renewable energy projects

As part of the "[EU Action plan for nature, people and the economy](#)" the European Commission has today issued two guidance documents on energy transmission infrastructure and hydropower, explaining the steps that need to be taken under EU nature legislation when such energy projects are prepared. They aim to improve the implementation of the EU biodiversity legislation ([Birds and Habitats Directives](#)) on the ground while ensuring a safe, sustainable and affordable energy supply across Europe. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said, "*Our objective is to ensure that EU nature laws deliver for nature, people and the economy. Today's guidance documents offer practical recommendations to guarantee that renewable energy developments do not pose further threat to our species, habitats and Natura 2000 sites. By allowing everybody involved in the preparation of renewable energy projects to consider environment early in the process, they will facilitate projects that work with nature, and not against it.*" The guidance documents are primarily designed for national authorities and stakeholders involved in the planning and approval of energy projects. They underline the need to take into consideration, early on, the ecological requirements of protected species and habitats and to include, wherever possible, measures to improve their conservation. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Alexis Perier – Tel.: +32 229 69143)

European Commission and EIB further clarify statistical treatment of Energy Performance Contracts

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Commission, and the European Investment Bank (EIB) are launching a new Practitioner's Guide on the Statistical Treatment of Energy Performance Contracts today. The Guide explains in detail how these contracts work and gives a clear overview of the potential impact on government finances. This will assist public authorities

in taking better-informed decisions when preparing and procuring their EPCs. Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner responsible for Eurostat, said: *“I am very pleased to launch a new guide today that clarifies how investments in energy efficient infrastructure should be statistically treated. This will help all stakeholders involved in commissioning, financing and undertaking energy performance contracts. This is a win-win for public authorities and private stakeholders, with a clear understanding of the impact on the national budget.”* Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action, Miguel **Arias Cañete**, added: *“Thanks to this guide, it will be easier for schools, hospitals, and other public buildings – which make up more than 10% of the overall EU building stock – to invest for the purpose of improving energy efficiency. Energy efficiency measures are also an important means to combat energy poverty, which this Commission aims at tackling at the roots.”* The Guide is also a helpful tool to provide clarity to public and private promoters in the context of the Investment Plan and remove perceived barriers to investment. It follows the [Eurostat Guidance note on the revised treatment of Energy Performance Contracts in government accounts, issued in September 2017](#), and explains its practical application, making use of technical assistance resources from the [European Investment Advisory Hub \(EIAH\)](#). More information is available in this [press release](#). The Practitioner’s Guide can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into restructuring support for Romanian National Uranium Company

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether various public support measures from Romania in favour of Compania Nationala a Uraniului SA (‘CNU’, the National Uranium Company) are in line with EU rules on State aid to companies in difficulty. On 12 June 2017, Romania notified to the Commission a plan for the restructuring of CNU. The restructuring plan foresees around €95 million (RON 441 million) of support to CNU, in the form of grants, subsidies, debt write-off and debt-to-equity conversion. It follows an urgent rescue aid loan of around €13.3 million (RON 62 million) to keep the company afloat, which the Commission temporarily [approved on 30 September 2016](#). EU State aid rules only allow a State intervention for a company in financial difficulty under specific conditions, requiring in particular that the company is subject to a sound restructuring plan to ensure its return to long-term viability, that the company contributes to the cost of its restructuring and that any competition distortions are limited. At this stage, the Commission has doubts that the planned restructuring aid is in line with these conditions. The Commission will now investigate further to find out whether its initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of an investigation gives interested third parties the opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#) and [RO](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)

Rapport sur l’état des relations UE-Tunisie: vers un renforcement du Partenariat Privilégié

Les services de la Commission européenne et le Service européen pour l'action extérieure ont publié aujourd'hui le [rapport sur l'état d'avancement des relations UE-Tunisie](#), en vue du prochain Conseil d'association UE-Tunisie du 15 mai 2018, à Bruxelles. Le rapport met en avant l'intensité des échanges à haut niveau, ainsi que du dialogue et de la coopération autour de questions essentielles comme l'employabilité des jeunes et les réformes, la consolidation démocratique et la promotion de la bonne gouvernance – avec le rôle toujours central de la société civile tunisienne, la réponse aux défis sécuritaires communs et la gestion concertée de la migration. *«L'UE et la Tunisie sont des partenaires naturels de par leurs liens géographiques, culturels et commerciaux. Nous avons à cœur d'approfondir notre Partenariat Privilégié et l'engagement de l'Union européenne envers une Tunisie démocratique, forte et prospère reste constant. Nous le faisons en particulier en songeant aux aspirations de la jeunesse tunisienne, pour laquelle nous avons lancé un Partenariat pour la Jeunesse en 2016 et que nous sommes en train de renforcer. Les élections municipales du 6 mai, que le gouvernement tunisien nous a invités à observer, ont constitué une étape importante dans la consolidation démocratique du pays et la mise en œuvre de la Constitution de 2014 et ouvrent la voie à un processus de décentralisation ambitieux.»* a déclaré la Haute Représentante/Vice-Présidente Federica **Mogherini**. Le commissaire à la politique européenne de voisinage et aux négociations d'élargissement, Johannes **Hahn**, a complété: *«L'UE continue de mobiliser tous ses instruments de coopération afin d'accompagner la transition politique et socioéconomique en Tunisie. Cet engagement se concrétise, entre autres, par une assistance financière accrue; la Commission européenne a mobilisé 300 millions d'euros sous forme de dons en 2017. La population demande des progrès et des résultats tangibles et la situation économique actuelle nécessite une accélération du processus de réformes institutionnelles et socio-économiques. Dans ce contexte, je me réjouis de la présentation d'une Feuille de route de réformes prioritaires par le Chef du gouvernement tunisien le mois dernier à Bruxelles.»* Le rapport fait état du développement accru des relations UE-Tunisie et de l'intensification de leur coopération dans les nombreux domaines de leur Partenariat Privilégié. Le [communiqué de presse](#) complet et le [rapport](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Citizens' Dialogue with Commissioner Gabriel in Sofia

Tomorrow, on 9 May, on the occasion of Europe Day, Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel**, will take part in a Citizens' Dialogue in Sofia, Bulgaria. Taking place at Sofia University, the Commissioner will be on stage with Lilyana Pavlova, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and Iskra Mihaylova, MEP, Chair of Committee on Regional Development. They will notably talk about the future of youth in digital Europe. The moderator will be TV journalist Peter Georgiev, from the Bulgarian National Television. The Citizens' Dialogue can be followed live on the [European Commission Representation in Bulgaria website](#) and via Facebook. (Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-

Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Berlin

Commissioner Jourová will be in Berlin on Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 May to meet her counterparts in the new German government and deliver a speech on data protection. On Monday, she will meet Justice Minister, Katherina Barley, the Minister for Family, Senior, Woman and Youth, Franziska Giffey and Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior Helmut Teichmann. She will then deliver a keynote speech to open the 8th European Data Protection [days](#). Finally, she will exchange views with Klaus Müller, the Managing Director of the Association of German consumer protection agencies (VZBV). On Tuesday, she will participate in an extraordinary session of the Legal Affairs and Consumer Protection committee of the Bundestag. She will then meet with Peter Altmaier, Minister of Economy, and Dorothee Bär, Minister for Digitalisation. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

La commissaire Thyssen rencontre les autorités et partenaires belges dans le cadre du Semestre européen

A l'occasion de la publication des recommandations spécifiques par pays du Semestre européen prévue pour ce mois-ci, Marianne **Thyssen**, commissaire européenne à l'emploi, aux affaires sociales, aux compétences et à la mobilité des travailleurs, rendra visite à la Belgique le lundi 14 mai. Elle rencontrera d'abord le Premier ministre belge, Charles Michel. La Commissaire rencontrera également les partenaires sociaux, ainsi que le Vice-Premier ministre et Ministre de l'emploi, de l'économie et des consommateurs, Kris Peeters. (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commissioner Crețu in Italy: “Achieving great results with EU investments now to keep a strong cohesion policy in the future”

From Wednesday 9 to Monday 14 May, Commissioner for regional policy Corina **Crețu** will be in Rome and Florence, Italy. In Rome the Commissioner will meet Pope Francis, as well as Virginia Raggi, Mayor of Rome and Nicola Zingaretti, President of the Lazio region. In Florence the Commissioner will deliver a speech on solidarity and the EU budget at the 2018 State of the Union [conference](#), participate in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) and meet Enrico Rossi, President of the Tuscany region as well as Dario Nardella, Mayor of Florence. The Commissioner will also visit several EU-funded projects. *“My visit will focus on the sound and swift implementation of the 2014-2020 EU funds programmes,”* said the Commissioner ahead of her visit, *“because achieving good results now will be key in the negotiations on the future long term EU budget and the future cohesion policy. As always my services and I stand ready to provide all the assistance needed so EU resources can turn into concrete benefits for citizens on the ground.”* (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Vice-President Dombrovskis in Riga for European Semester Visit

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, is on a European Semester visit in Latvia until 10 May. He meets President Raimonds Vējonis, Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis, Deputy Prime minister and Minister for Economics Arvils Ašerādens and Minister for Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkēvičs. He will also discuss the deepening of Europe's Economic and Monetary Union with the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament, participate in a [Citizen's Dialogue](#) dedicated to Europe Day and deliver a keynote speech at the conference "[New Challenges in Economic and Business Development – 2018: productivity and economic growth](#)". The visit to Latvia is part of the regular dialogue with Member States on topical economic and social issues in the context of the European Semester. (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

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

[State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into restructuring support for Romanian National Uranium Company](#)

On 12 June 2017, Romania notified to the Commission a plan for the restructuring of Compania Nationala a Uraniului SA ('CNU', the National Uranium Company). The restructuring plan foresees around €95 million (RON 441 million) of support to CNU, in the form of grants, subsidies, debt write-off and debt-to-equity conversion. It follows an urgent rescue aid loan of around €13.3 million (RON 62 million) to keep the company afloat, which the Commission temporarily [approved on 30 September 2016](#).

EU State aid rules only allow a State intervention for a company in financial difficulty under specific conditions, requiring in particular that the company is subject to a sound restructuring plan to ensure its return to long-term viability, that the company contributes to the cost of its restructuring and that any competition distortions are limited.

At this stage, the Commission has doubts that the planned restructuring aid is in line with these conditions. In particular, the Commission's in-depth investigation will examine:

- whether the proposed restructuring plan could restore the long-term viability of CNU without continued State aid;
- whether CNU or market investors sufficiently contribute to the restructuring costs, thus ensuring that the restructuring plan does not

- rely mainly on public funding and that the aid is proportionate; and
- whether Romania is offering appropriate measures to limit the distortions of competition created by the aid.

The Commission will now investigate further to find out whether its initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of an investigation gives interested third parties the opportunity to submit comments. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation.

Background

CNU is a fully State-owned Romanian company active in the exploitation of Romanian uranium mines and production of raw material transformed into fuel for nuclear power plants. CNU extracts uranium ore, processes it to form uranium octoxide (U_3O_8) and, after further refinery, transforms it into uranium dioxide (UO_2). CNU has two operating sites: an uranium mining site, located in Crucea-Botusana (Suceava County, North-East region) and a processing-refining plant, located in Feldioara (Brasov County, Centre region). In 2017 the company employed 772 people.

CNU has been in financial difficulty since the loss of its main client, the nuclear energy producer Societatea Nationala Nuclearelectrica. The notified restructuring plan foresees various public support measures:

- prolongation of the initial rescue loan of RON 62 million (€13.3 million);
- grant of RON 75.5 million (€16.2 million) to support investments for the modernisation of CNU;
- write-off of public debt of RON 77 million (€16.6 million);
- conversion of CNU's public debt of RON 13.34 million (€2.9 million) into CNU shares held by the Romanian State; and
- operating subsidy of RON 213 million (€45.8 million) to cover the difference between CNU's production costs and market prices over the planned restructuring period.

Under the Commission's [2014 Guidelines on State aid for rescue and restructuring](#) non-financial undertakings in difficulty, companies in financial difficulty may receive State aid provided they meet certain conditions. Aid may be granted for a period of 6 months ("rescue aid"). Beyond this period, the aid must either be reimbursed or a restructuring plan must be notified to the Commission for the aid to be approved ("restructuring aid"). The plan must ensure that the viability of the company is restored without further State support, that the company contributes to an adequate level to the costs of its restructuring and that distortions of competition created by the aid are addressed through compensatory measures.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number SA.48394 in the [State Aid Register](#) on the Commission's [competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.