

Pressemitteilung: Bei der EU-Unterstützung für produktive Investitionen in Unternehmen ist ein größeres Augenmerk auf Dauerhaftigkeit erforderlich, so das Fazit der EU-Prüfer

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counterparties, as well as investors and retail consumers, to consider timely mitigation actions to prepare for the UK's withdrawal from the EU – including possible relocations and actions to address contract continuity risks;

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- **Climate change:** the ESAs recommend financial institutions to consider sustainability risk in their governance and risk management frameworks and to develop responsible, sustainable financial products – moreover, supervisors should enhance their analysis of potential risks related to climate change for the financial sector and financial stability.

Background

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[Daily News 12 / 04 / 2018](#)

La Commission européenne lutte contre les pratiques commerciales déloyales dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire

La Commission propose aujourd'hui d'interdire les pratiques commerciales déloyales les plus dommageables dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire, de façon à garantir des conditions plus équitables pour les agriculteurs et les petites et moyennes entreprises de l'agroalimentaire. La proposition de la Commission prévoit également des mesures coercitives appropriées; des sanctions pourront être en effet infligées par les autorités nationales en cas d'infraction avérée. Les petits opérateurs de la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire, dont les agriculteurs, sont particulièrement vulnérables aux pratiques commerciales déloyales utilisées par leurs partenaires commerciaux au sein de la chaîne. Bien souvent, ils ne disposent

que d'un faible pouvoir de négociation et n'ont pas d'autres moyens de faire parvenir leurs produits aux consommateurs. Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-président chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, a déclaré: *«Les rapports de forces dans la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire ne sont pas égaux. Avec cette proposition, la Commission s'attaque de front aux pratiques commerciales déloyales. En fixant des normes minimales et en renforçant l'application des règles, la proposition devrait permettre à ces opérateurs d'affronter la concurrence dans des conditions équitables, et de contribuer ainsi à l'efficacité globale de la chaîne.»* Phil **Hogan**, Commissaire chargé de l'agriculture et du développement rural, a dit: *«Une chaîne a la solidité de son maillon le plus faible: pour être efficace et efficiente, la chaîne d'approvisionnement alimentaire doit aussi être équitable. La proposition présentée aujourd'hui vise fondamentalement l'équité – donner la parole à ceux qui ne l'ont pas-, pour aider ceux qui, sans qu'ils n'y soient pour rien, subissent une position de négociation faible.»* Des pratiques commerciales déloyales seront directement prosrites tandis que d'autres ne seront autorisées qu'à condition d'avoir été convenues en des termes clairs et univoques entre les parties, par exemple le renvoi au fournisseur, par l'acheteur, des denrées alimentaires invendues. Les mesures proposées complètent celles qui existent déjà dans les États membres, ainsi que le code de conduite volontaire appelée "Supply Chain Initiative". Un [communiqué de presse](#) et un [mémo](#) sont en ligne dans toutes les langues. (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Juncker Plan: €120 million for innovative Dutch SMEs

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Aegon Asset Management have signed a guarantee agreement supporting a €120 million portfolio of loans for innovative Dutch companies. This InnovFin SME Guarantee agreement was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the Juncker Plan. Thanks to this EU support, Aegon will provide subordinated loans (loans which will be repaid after all other debt is repaid) to innovative SMEs and small mid-caps at favourable terms. Carlos **Moedas**, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"The deal signed today brings exciting opportunities for small Dutch companies with innovative ideas they want to make a reality. With this fresh injection of €120 million into the Dutch SME eco-system, we are helping our small businesses to grow and create jobs."* (Full press release is found [here](#). For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Commission adopts the Opinion on the Austrian Draft Budgetary Plan

The European Commission has today adopted its Opinion on the updated Draft Budgetary Plan (DBP) of Austria and found it to be broadly compliant with the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). In October last year, Austria submitted a DBP based on unchanged policies, which is an agreed practice for governments without full budgetary powers. The Commission called on Austria to submit an updated plan as soon as a new government takes office and received the document on 21 March. The assessment of the updated DBP is more favourable compared to the one in the autumn, which was based on a no-policy change DBP.

This reflects the markedly improved economic situation and outlook, as well as the policy measures for 2018 included in the updated plan. Still, there is a risk of some deviation for 2018 as well as for 2017 and 2018 taken together. The Commission therefore invites the authorities to stand ready to take further measures within the national budgetary process to ensure that the 2018 budget will be compliant with the SGP. The Opinion and related documents are available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr – Tel.: +32 229 50055; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229 56151)

The future of EU finances: Commissioner Crețu debates cohesion policy after 2020 in Luxembourg

Today, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** debated the future of cohesion policy at the General Affairs Council in Luxembourg. This was the last Council on cohesion before the Commission puts forward its proposal on the next long term EU budget, on 2 May, with the post-2020 cohesion policy proposal following closely. Discussions focused on the future scope and priorities of the policy. Commissioner **Crețu** stated her conviction that Europe needs a cohesion policy for all regions. But the statu quo is not an option; the Commissioner highlighted the need for more flexibility, a more tailored approach to regional needs, with a new allocation method and new indicators for example, as well as a stronger link between cohesion policy and structural reforms. On priorities for investments; *“we know the growing impact globalisation is having on regions,”* said the Commissioner, stressing the necessity to help regions achieve industrial transition, embrace innovation and invest in their people, with the help of [smart specialisation](#). The Commissioner also mentioned the need for a long-term response to the migration challenge, supported by cohesion policy. In addition, Commissioner **Crețu** briefed the ministers on the progress made under the [seven communication actions](#) to improve the visibility of cohesion policy, which she presented in April 2017 with Commissioner **Thyssen**. Commissioner **Crețu**’s speaking points at the Council are available [here](#). The press conference will start at 13h30 CET and can be watched [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l’acquisition d’une partie de l’activité “gaz naturel liquéfié” d’Engie par Total

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l’acquisition par Total d’un portefeuille d’actifs dans le domaine du gaz naturel liquéfié (GNL) appartenant à Engie, toutes deux basées en France. Le portefeuille d’actifs GNL d’Engie (“Engie GNL”) qui fait l’objet de la concentration comprend des contrats de fourniture, de vente et de regazéification de GNL, des droits de propriété et de tirage sur des usines de liquéfaction et des méthaniers, ainsi que les entités juridiques et le personnel associés à ces activités. Total est un fournisseur d’énergie qui exerce des activités à l’échelle internationale dans les secteurs pétrolier et gazier, ainsi que dans les secteurs des énergies renouvelables et de la production d’électricité. La Commission a conclu que l’acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problèmes de concurrence au regard des chevauchements limités entre les activités de Total et d’Engie GNL dans le domaine de la

fourniture en gros, du transport et de la regazéification du GNL, ainsi que de la liquéfaction du gaz naturel. De plus, les relations verticales entre Total et Engie GNL ne sont pas susceptibles d'affaiblir la concurrence dans la fourniture en gros et la regazéification de GNL dans l'Espace économique européen et en France en particulier. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure normale de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site concurrence de la Commission](#), dans le [registre public des affaires](#) sous la référence [M.8771](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat press release: Eurostat press release: La production industrielle en baisse de 0,8% dans la zone euro, en baisse de 0,7% dans l'UE28 (Février 2018 comparé à janvier 2018)

En février 2018 par rapport à janvier 2018, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,8% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et de 0,7% dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En janvier 2018, la production industrielle avait reculé de 0,6% dans la zone euro et de 0,3% dans l'UE28. En février 2018 par rapport à février 2017, la production industrielle a augmenté de 2,9% dans la zone euro et de 3,1% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué Eurostat est à votre disposition [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Thyssen following the adoption of the revised Europass framework

Today, EU Member States adopted the [Commission's proposal to revise the Europass framework](#). The revision, which aims at simplifying and modernising the Europass CV and other skills tools for the digital age, will enable people across the EU to make their skills and qualifications more visible, and will help policy makers to anticipate labour market needs and trends. In reaction to the agreement of the Member States, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: "I warmly welcome today's adoption in Council of the revision of the Europass Decision. [...] Europass has clearly demonstrated its added value as vehicle to communicate skills across the EU, but it has to evolve in parallel to challenges and opportunities in the digital age. Thanks to today's adoption of our proposal to modernise Europass, the framework will offer an e-portfolio for storing and sharing information, tools for people to self-assess their skills and tools for describing formal and informal learning as well as qualifications. [...] The Commission looks forward to beginning work on implementation of this new era for Europass in close co-operation with the Member States and stakeholders. I wish to thank all those involved for their commitment to ensuring better tools and services for skills and qualifications for our citizens." With today's agreement, the Commission has now delivered on all ten actions under the [Skills Agenda for Europe](#), launched in June 2016. The state of play of the Skills Agenda is available [here](#). The

full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Stylianides meets Bulgarian Prime Minister Borissov to discuss rescEU, the EU's comprehensive plan to strengthen its emergency response to disasters

Today Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** travels to Sofia to meet Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov. During the meeting Commissioner **Stylianides** will present and discuss [rescEU](#) – the Commission's ambitious plans to further strengthen Europe's ability to deal with disasters in the framework of the [European Civil Protection Mechanism](#). Bulgaria is already one of the 34 participating states to the European Civil Protection Mechanism and has both provided and received assistance during times of crises. The comprehensive proposal put forward by the European Commission in November 2017 is set to upgrade the existing mechanism in order to more effectively address natural hazards in Europe: floods, forest fires, earthquakes and epidemics. The Commission proposals foresees two complementary strands of action, targeting (1) a stronger collective response at European level via rescEU, and (2) stepping up disaster prevention and preparedness capacities. Administrative procedures will also be streamlined and simplified to reduce the time needed to deploy life-saving assistance. With the implementation of rescEU, Bulgaria, alongside the rest of the Member States, will be able to directly benefit from a strengthened European response to disasters. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Commissioner King in Zagreb to discuss security issues

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** will be in Zagreb, Croatia today and tomorrow, where he will meet Minister for the Interior Davor Božinović and State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice Kristian Turkalj to discuss security issues including the fight against terrorism and cooperation on information exchange. In addition, Commissioner King will meet with members of the European Affairs and the Domestic Policy and National Security Committees of the Croatian Parliament. He will also participate, together with Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner Neven **Mimica**, in a working lunch with Prime Minister Andrej Plenković. (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Katarzyna Kolanko – Tel.: +32 229 63444)

Migration: Commissioner Avramopoulos visits reception facilities in Greece

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos is in Greece today to visit reception facilities in Ritsona as well as rental accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees in Livadia funded by the Commission's [ESTIA programme](#) together with the Greek Minister for Migration Dimitris Vitsas. A joint press point is scheduled to take place around 12:45 CET in the Ritsona facility and will be broadcast live by [EBS](#).

(For more information: Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 299 80423)

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

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European Commission acts to ban unfair trade practices in the food supply chain

The Commission proposes today to ban the more damaging unfair trading practices in the food supply chain to ensure fairer treatment for small and medium sized food and farming businesses. In addition, the proposal includes effective enforcement provisions: sanctions can be imposed by national authorities where infringements are established.

Smaller operators in the food supply chain, including farmers, are vulnerable to unfair trading practices employed by partners in the chain. They often lack bargaining power and alternatives to get their products to consumers.

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"There are imbalances of bargaining power in the food supply chain and with this proposal the Commission is tackling the unfair trading practices head-on. We act because unfair business conduct undermines the economic viability of operators in the chain. By setting minimum standards and reinforcing the enforcement, the proposal should ensure that these operators are able to compete on fair terms, thereby contributing to the overall efficiency of the chain. This is a clear statement for more fair business conduct."*

Agriculture and rural development Commissioner Phil **Hogan** said: *“Any chain is only as strong as its weakest link. An efficient and effective food supply chain is a fair one. Today’s proposal is fundamentally about fairness – about giving voice to the voiceless – for those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves the victims of a weak bargaining position. Today’s initiative to ban unfair trading practices is about strengthening the position of producers and SMEs in the food supply chain. The initiative is equally about providing strong and effective enforcement. We are looking to eliminate the “fear factor” in the food supply chain, through a confidential complaints procedure.”*

The unfair trading practices to be banned are late payments for perishable food products, last minute order cancellations, unilateral or retroactive changes to contracts and forcing the supplier to pay for wasted products. Other practices will only be permitted if subject to a clear and unambiguous upfront agreement between the parties: a buyer returning unsold food products to a supplier; a buyer charging a supplier payment to secure or maintain a supply agreement on food products; a supplier paying for the promotion or the marketing of food products sold by the buyer.

The Commission’s proposal requires Member States to designate a public authority in charge of enforcing the new rules. In case of proven infringement, the responsible body will be competent to impose a proportionate and dissuasive sanction. This enforcement authority will be able to initiate investigations of its own initiative or based on a complaint. In this case, parties filing a complaint will be allowed to request confidentiality and anonymity to protect their position towards their trading partner. The Commission will set up a coordination mechanism between enforcement authorities to enable the exchange best practices.

The proposed measures are complementary to measures existing in Member States and the code of conduct of the voluntary Supply Chain Initiative. Member States can take further measures as they see fit.

The Commission’s proposal will take the form of a European law (directive) and will now be submitted together with an impact assessment to the two co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, where Member States’ governments are represented.

Background

The Commission Work Programme 2018 states that *“the Commission will propose measures to improve the functioning of the food supply chain to help farmers strengthen their position in the market place and help protect them from future shocks”*.

This initiative follows the references to the food chain in President Juncker’s State of the Union speeches of 2015 and 2016, and is a political response to the resolution by the European Parliament adopted in June 2016 inviting the European Commission to submit a proposal for an EU-level framework concerning unfair trading practices. Moreover, in December 2016, the Council called on the Commission to undertake an impact assessment with a

view to proposing an EU legislative framework or other non-legislative measures to address unfair trading practices.

The Commission has been working towards a fairer and more balanced food supply chain since the beginning of its mandate. In 2016 we set up the [Agricultural Markets Task Force](#) (AMTF) to assess the role of farmers in the wider food supply chain and make [recommendations](#) on how it can be strengthened. On the basis of these recommendations, the Commission launched an [inception impact assessment](#) and a [public consultation](#) on the improvement of the food supply chain in 2017, which in turn helped identify the specific unfair trading practices covered by the Directive. A [recent EU-wide opinion poll](#) published in February 2018 shows that a great majority of respondents (88%) consider that strengthening farmers' role in the food supply chain is important. 96% of the respondents to the 2017 public consultation on the modernisation of the CAP agreed with the proposition that improving farmers' position in the value chain including addressing UTPs should be an objective of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.

The proposals build on an existing voluntary code of best practice in the supply chain, known as the [Supply Chain Initiative](#) (SCI). The SCI was established in 2013 by seven EU-level associations covering the food and drink industry, branded goods manufacturers, the retail sector, small and medium-sized enterprises, and agricultural traders. The SCI was developed as a result of the Commission-led [High-Level Forum on a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain](#) established in 2010 to help develop policy in the food and drink sector and contribute to a better functioning food supply chain.

For More Information

[Commission proposal against unfair trading practices in the food supply chain](#)

[MEMO: Tackling unfair trading practices in the food supply chain](#)