

CALENDRIER du 19 mars au 25 mars 2018

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 19 mars 2018

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Werner Faymann, United Nations' Special Envoy on Youth Employment.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Nikos Christodoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Stef Blok, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** receives representatives of the Northern Innovation Board (NIB).

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** receives representatives of IG Metall Trade Union.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Theodor Weimer, CEO of Deutsche Börse Group AG.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Finland (until 20/03): in Vantaa: attends an investEU international journalists' visit concerning the EPIQUS Social Impact Bond Project; meets Mr Samu Konttinen, President and CEO of F-Secure and Mr Mikko Hyppönen, Chief Research Officer of F-Secure; Mr Risto Siilasmaa, Chair of the Board of Directors of Nokia Corporation and of F-Secure Corporation; Mr Petteri Orpo, Minister for Finance of Finland; and Mr Jyri Häkämies, Director-General of the Confederation of Finnish Industries EK.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** participates in the 10th Union for the Mediterranean trade ministerial meeting, in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** participates in the opening of the EU Nutrition Seminar, in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Spain: in Orense: delivers a keynote speech at the presentation of the Ecobarrio project; and in Lugo: delivers a keynote speech at the inauguration of Norvento Energy Innovation Centre.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** meets Ms Julia Klöckner, Minister for Agriculture and Food of Germany, in Brussels.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** meets Mr Stéphane Travert, Minister for Agriculture and Food of France, in Brussels.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** meets Mr Sándor Fazekas, Minister for Agriculture of Hungary, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives the members of The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Gergely Karácsony, Prime Minister Candidate of the Alliance of MSZP and Parbeszed of Hungary, and Mr Bertalan Toth, President of the Socialist Group at the Hungarian Parliament.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Jiří Milek, Minister for Agriculture of the Czech Republic.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Jari Leppä, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, and Mr Sven-Erik Bucht, Minister for Rural Affairs of Sweden.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** participates in the 8th trilogue on the reform of the Posting of Workers Directive, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Buenos Aires, Argentine (jusqu'à 20/03): participe à la réunion G20 des Ministres des Finances et Gouverneurs de Banque Centrale.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Elias Mossialos, Professor of Health Policy at the London School of Economics (LSE).

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Abdullah Ayaz, Deputy Director-General for Migration Management at the Turkish Ministry of Interior.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Nikos Christodoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

Mr Phil **Hogan** meets Ms Elisabeth Köstinger, Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism of Austria, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** meets Ms Julia Klöckner, Minister for Agriculture and Food of Germany, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** meets Mr Clint Camilleri, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights of Malta, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** meets Mr Luís Capoulas Santos, Minister for Agriculture,

Forestry and Rural Development of Portugal, in Brussels.

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Washington DC, the United States (until 21/03): meets representatives of the civil society.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** receives rectors from Polish Universities.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: meets Mr Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark; and Mr Jens Klarskov, CEO of the Danish Chamber of Commerce.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Alexander Stubb, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Mr Carlos **Moedas** gives a keynote interview at the [POLITICO AI Summit: Innovation and Governance](#), in Brussels.

Mr Julian **King** in Sofia, Bulgaria: delivers a speech at the 2nd meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Sofia, Bulgaria: delivers a speech at the [Meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation \(Europol\)](#).

Mardi 20 mars 2018

General Affairs Council

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Peer Steinbrück, former Minister for Finance of Germany, for a working lunch.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Ms Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** delivers a speech at the event “Albania: committed to reform”, at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** hosts the regular session of the International Donor Group for Palestine (Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC)), in Brussels.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Yukiya Amano, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mr Andrus **Ansip** delivers a speech at the closing session of [POLITICO AI Summit: Innovation and Governance](#), in Brussels.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** receives Mr Bernhard Mattes, President of the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA).

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** delivers a speech at the conference EU for Climate Action and Sustainable Energy in the Southern Neighbourhood, in Brussels.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** speaks at the NATO North Atlantic Council meeting on global energy developments, Brussels.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Leo Williams, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN).

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Helsinki, Finland: delivers a keynote address at a seminar on the Future of European Defence, organised by the Advisory Board for Defence Information; attends a hearing by the Finnish Parliament's Education and Culture Committee; meets Mr Jouko Pölönen, Executive Vice-President for Banking and member of the executive board at OP Financial Group, and Mr Petri Kalervo Niemisvirta, CEO of Mandatumlife.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** co-chairs the Donors' Conference for the Gaza Central Desalination Plant, in Brussels.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** participates in the International Donor Group for Palestine (Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC)), in Brussels.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** participates in a strategic dialogue on the Instrument of Pre-Accession and on the European Neighbourhood Instrument at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** receives Mr Nikos Christodoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** receives Mr Zoran Pažin, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Justice of Montenegro, and Ms Vesna Medenica, President of the Supreme Court.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Ms Nataliya Mykolska, Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Mr Adrian Marius Dobre, Trade Secretary of Romania.

Mr Neven **Mimica** participates in the opening of the 6th Global Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development, in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** delivers a keynote speech at the conference on Strategic Agenda for Medical, Industrial and Research Applications of nuclear and radiation technology (SAMIRA), in Brussels.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Yukiya Amano, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mr Karmenu **Vella** receives Mr John Scanlon, Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Mr Karmenu **Vella** delivers closing speech at an event on "[Europe, the Ocean and Feeding the World event](#)", organised by the European Parliament's Intergroup Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** delivers a speech at the conference "Advancing the Medical, Industrial and Research Applications of Nuclear and Radiation Technology", in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** delivers a speech at the launching symposium for the European Sepsis Alliance, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** delivers a keynote speech at the Food Waste Awards event organised by Food Waste Innovation Network, in Brussels.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Nikos Christodoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** receives H.E. Mgr. Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Buenos Aires, Argentine: participe à la réunion G20 des Ministres des Finances et Gouverneurs de Banque Centrale.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Ms Sophia Kalantzakos, Professor of Environmental Studies and Public Policy at New York University Abu Dhabi.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Tønder, Denmark: meets Mr Robert Habeck, Minister for Energy, Agriculture, Environment, Nature and digitalisation of the Land of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany; Mr Martin Merrild, President of the Danish Agriculture and Food Council; and participates in a [Citizens' dialogue](#) on "Challenges for the EU and its farmers".

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Washington, the United States: meets Mr Jeff Sessions, Attorney General of the United States; Mr Wilbur Ross, United States Secretary of Commerce; industry representatives of the US Chamber of Commerce; U.S. Representatives and Senators; and attends a roundtable hosted by The Business Software Alliance (BSA).

Mr Tibor **Navracsics**, Mr Carlos **Moedas** and Ms Mariya **Gabriel** participate and deliver keynote speeches at the [High-level Innovation and Cultural Heritage Conference](#) of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** receives Mr Armen Amiryan, Minister for Culture of Armenia, and participates in a signing ceremony for Armenia's participation

in Creative Europe Programme.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Bertalan Tóth, Leader of MSZP political party and Mr Gergely Karácsony, Prime Minister Candidate of the Alliance of MSZP and Parbeszed.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Stefan-Radu Oprea, Minister for Business Environment, Trade and Entrepreneurship of Romania.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives the representatives of the Association of Regions of France.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Pedro Marques, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure of Portugal and Mr Nelson de Souza, Secretary of State for Development and Cohesion of Portugal.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** co-chairs the strategic roundtable “AI Fairness and Accountability” at the [POLITICO AI Summit: Innovation and Governance](#), in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Pedro Marques, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure of Portugal.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a keynote speech at the Europaeum seminar on Individualised Education Plan (*IEP*), at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Julian **King** receives Mr Joakim Reiter, Group External Affairs Director of Vodaphone.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** delivers a speech at the [Gig Economy or Giga Economy? Equipping young people with digital skills for the jobs of the future](#) event, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives representatives from municipalities in Blagoevgrad region (Bulgaria).

Mercredi 21 mars 2018

College meeting

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** delivers the opening speech at the Tripartite Social Summit, in Brussels.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** in Germany (until 22/03): participates in a public debate on digitisation at Leuphana University of Lüneburg.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** delivers a keynote speech at Rasmussen Global event on Investment Screening, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Pekka Lundmark, President and CEO of Fortum.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister for Investment and Economic Development of Poland.

00:00 Mr Johannes **Hahn** in Tunis, Tunisia: on official visit.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** participates in the Women's European Council 2018, at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** in Rome, Italy (until 22/03): participates in the launch of the 2018 Global Report on Food Crises by the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** participates in the World Down Syndrome Day event, at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Stephen Ostroff, Deputy Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** participates in the Tripartite Social Summit, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit une délégation de l'association Villes de France.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** holds a speech at a public event on civil protection, hosted by the Permanent Representation of Baden-Württemberg, in Brussels.

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Washington, the United States: delivers a speech at the conference "Challenges to Democracy in the Digital Age" organised by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS); and a speech at event organised by the Center for Transatlantic Relations.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** delivers a closing speech at ['Why Europe Matters'](#) event organised by Junior Achievement Europe and the European Round Table of Industrialists, at the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), in Brussels.

Ms Corina **Crețu** hosts an event on the 30th anniversary of the EU Cohesion Policy, in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister for Investments and Economic Development of Poland.

Mr Julian **King** in Rome, Italy: delivers a keynote speech at [the Innovation Group Cybersecurity Summit 2018](#).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** participates in the Women's European Council 2018 of the European Women Alliance, at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** participates in a high-level meeting of the Alliance to better protect minors online, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives representatives of the Association of EU businesses operating in the Russian Federation.

Jeudi 22 mars 2018

22-23/03 European Council

President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Mr Jyrki **Katainen**, Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** and Mr Karmenu **Vella** participate and deliver keynote speeches at the [High-Level Conference on Financing Sustainable Growth](#), in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Ms Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, former Minister for Education of France.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Māris Kučinskis, Prime Minister of Latvia; Mr Jüri Ratas, Prime Minister of Estonia; Mr Saulius Skvernelis, Prime Minister of Lithuania and Mr Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Poland.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and Mr Jyrki **Katainen**, Ms Marianne **Thyssen** participate in the [European People's Party \(EPP\) Summit](#) ahead of the European Council, in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** meets Mr Paolo Gentiloni, Prime Minister of Italy.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** participates in the European Council, in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** participates in the working dinner of the European Council, in Brussels.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** in Hamburg, Germany: holds meetings with the city government; visits the City Science Lab; and delivers a speech at the "Media match policy track 2018" at the Online Marketing Rockstars Festival.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** delivers a speech at the inauguration of the International Headquarters of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, in Brussels.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** receives Mr Andriy Kobolyev, CEO of Naftogaz of Ukraine.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** delivers a keynote speech at the Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), in Brussels.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in London, the United Kingdom: delivers a keynote speech at the [Sustainability Summit on "Reframing the mission: from responsibility to leadership"](#) hosted by The Economist.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** receives Mr Nguyễn Xuân Cường, Minister for Agriculture and

Rural Development of Vietnam.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Lithuania (until 23/03): participates in the 4th Traditional Scientific – Practical Conference on Lifestyle Medicine at the Faculty of Public Health of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, in Kaunas.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Ms Laura Thompson, Deputy Director-General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** delivers a keynote statement on integration of migrants and social cohesion at the plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR).

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Ms Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director of Europol.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Thomas Strobl, Minister for the Interior, Digitalisation and Migration and Deputy Minister-President of the Land of Baden-Württemberg.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr George Kostakos, Executive Director of the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability, and Mr Dominikos Chrysidis, Head of Programmes and Advocacy at the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives Mr Nguyễn Xuân Cường, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.

Mr Phil **Hogan** [participates in a luncheon debate](#), organised by the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg, in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Sofia, Bulgaria: delivers a speech at [EU Sport Forum 2018](#), organised by the European Commission and the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Cristian Octavian Matei, Mayor of the municipality of Turda, Romania.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** participates in ALDE party pre-summit, in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Rui Rio, President of the Social Democratic Party of Portugal.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** in Luxembourg: delivers a closing keynote speech at the [1st European Investment Bank Venture Debt Summit](#).

Mr Julian **King** delivers a speech at the European Policy Centre – European Foundation for Democracy 2nd Annual Conference “Two years after the Brussels attacks: The challenges of jihadist radicalisation in Europe and beyond”, in Brussels.

Mr Julian **King** in Prague, the Czech Republic: meets the EU and Security

Committees of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament; Mr Robert Pelikán, Minister for Justice of the Czech Republic; Mr Lubomír Metnar, Minister for the Interior; and Mr Michal Koudelka, Director of the Security Information Service (BIS).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Sofia, Bulgaria: delivers the closing speech at the [High-level conference Future of Work: A lifecycle approach](#).

Vendredi 23 mars 2018

European Council (Art. 50)

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** participates in the working breakfast of the European Council (Art. 50), in Brussels.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** participates in the Euro Summit, in Brussels.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Bernard Cazeneuve, former Prime Minister of France.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** in Riga, Latvia: participates in the panel “The New Shape of the European Union” at the conference [Baltic EU Conversations 2018: Is Europe Back?](#); and delivers a keynote speech on “Recent EC initiatives within Capital Markets Union package” at the conference [Future of Financial Technology in Baltics and EU](#).

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** delivers a speech at a Helsinki-Uusimaa Region event on entrepreneurial success via growth and jobs programmes, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives a delegation from Finnish Energy Industries.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Ms Sharan Burrow, Secretary General of ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) and Mr Luca Visentini, Secretary General of ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation).

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives representatives of the industry association ‘European Aluminium’.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives the members of the Roundtable of Europe’s Energy Industrialists.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Vilnius, Lithuania: meets Mr Saulius Skvernelis, Prime Minister of Lithuania; participates in the EU Summit on Chronic Allergy and Airways Disease Prevention in the Seimas (Parliament); meets the members of the Committee of European Affairs of the Seimas; and Mr Dainius Žalimas, President of the Constitutional Court of Lithuania.

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Jasionka, Poland: meets Mr Krzysztof Jurgiel, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland; and participates in a [Citizens’ dialogue](#) on “The New Budget Perspective of the CAP – priorities, assumptions, proposals for changes”.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives a delegation of Polish judges, advocates and

lawyers.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Kőszeg, Hungary: delivers an opening speech at the [conference on Heritage and Identity](#), organised by the Hungarian Association of Cultural Heritage Managers.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Zagreb, Croatia: delivers a speech and participates in panel debate at the event celebrating 10 years of the MEDIA programme in Croatia [“10 years: MEDIA and Croatia Strong Women of European Audiovisual Industry in Zagreb for the First Time!”](#); meets Ms Nina Obuljen Koržinek, Minister for Culture of Croatia; holds a [Citizens’ dialogue](#); delivers a speech and participates in a debate at the 9th meeting of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA).

Samedi 24 mars 2018

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in the Democratic Republic of Congo (until 26/03): on official visit.

Dimanche 25 mars 2018

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Blankenberge, Belgium: participates in the Beach Clean-up action.

Prévisions du mois de mars:

26/03 EU-Turkey leaders’ meeting in Varna, Bulgaria

Permanence DG COMM le WE du 17 et 18 mars 2018:

Lucia CAUDET: +32 (0) 460 75 61 82

Permanence RAPID – GSM: +32 (0) 498 982 748

Service Audiovisuel, planning studio – tél. : +32 (0)2/295 21 23

EASO Network of Reception Authorities meets in Malta

Taking stock of its achievements in 2017 and lining out its work programme for 2018, the EASO Network of Reception Authorities, met in Malta at EASO HQ

on 6 and 7 March 2018.

24 national contact points and experts from 21 Member States were joined by representatives from DG Home of the European Commission, UNHR and EPRA (European Platform of Reception Authorities) to discuss the latest developments at national and European level in terms of provision of reception conditions to asylum seekers. Participants also received detailed information on training opportunities and needs for national experts, data collection and operational support provided by EASO to Member States.

The network discussed different methodological options for its first pilot exchange programme, to be run in May 2018 in cooperation with EPRA (European Platform of Reception Agencies) and EASO. Culminating in a workshop to be organised in Warsaw on 6 and 7 June 2018, this exchange programme will focus on the theme of "Prevention measures and sanction regimes in reception centres – Reduction and withdrawal of material reception conditions in practice". It will involve a group of four member states working together through field visits in a mutual support scheme aiming to foster the exchange of knowledge and good practices while actively contributing to build the capacity of host countries in precise aspects of policies and practices. The initial results of this scheme will feed into the Warsaw workshop.

Finally, the participants discussed its priorities for the second semester of 2018 during breakout sessions. Two strong topics of interest emerged from the discussions and will guide the work of the network (exchange programme, new practical tools, and thematic workshops) for the year to come: provision of information to asylum-seekers and monitoring and assessment of reception conditions.

The next plenary meeting of the Reception Network will take place in Brussels in December 2018.

EESC backs Commissioner Ansip's outline of forthcoming Artificial Intelligence strategy

EESC rapporteur on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Catelijne Muller says the strategy, as outlined by Commissioner Ansip to the EESC's plenary on March 15, fully meets the Committee's call for the European Union to take global pole position in determining the framework for the responsible development and deployment of AI.

Ms Muller said the [announcement](#) made by Commissioners Ansip, Moedas and Gabriel on 9 March to set up an expert group on AI was warmly welcomed by the

EESC, as it fully took on board the requests put forward by the EESC nine months before in its [own-initiative opinion](#), which called for:

- a pan-European ethical code for AI to make sure that the development of AI is in line with EU values and fundamental rights;
- a European AI infrastructure to foster the sustainable development of AI;
- checks on laws and regulations to see whether they are fit for purpose in an AI era;
- innovation in AI to be boosted, especially AI for the common good.

“I think Europe really took a global pole position at this point”, said Ms Muller, “Yesterday Steven Hawking died. Hawking warned us that AI could be the best or the worst thing that humanity has ever invented. He also said: ‘all of us should ask themselves what we can do now to reap the benefits of AI and avoid the risks. This is the most important conversation of our time.’ I am convinced that Europe has decided not only to join this most important conversation of our time, but to lead it, and I am proud of that.”

Commissioner Ansip described the state of play of the **digital single market** in Europe and reviewed the Commission’s most important initiatives to make it a reality. Among them, the **abolition of roaming** surcharges, the forthcoming **portability of digital content** – enabling people to access their legally bought music, movies, TV series, e-books, audiobooks, etc. also when travelling to another EU Member State –, and the abolition of unjustified **geo-blocking** with regard to tangible goods and services bought online but consumed locally, like hotel accommodation, car rentals, tickets, etc. The **general data protection regulation**, which is to come into force in May, would also help harmonise rules for all players.

Others important building blocks were still to come in the areas of **telecoms**, the **e-privacy regulation** and **cybersecurity**.

However, Commissioner Ansip emphasised, **fragmentation** remains a major hurdle to the development of the digital single market and consequently AI, and the **cost of non-Europe in the digital single market** is huge. According to an analysis prepared by the European Parliament, it could amount to EUR 415 billion a year.

“It is important for all players to have harmonised rules because while big global players can navigate these 28 different sets of rules, for our start-ups and SMEs, it is practically impossible to understand those 28 sets of rules, and if we continue with this fragmented digital Europe we will send a very simple message to our people, especially our start-ups: stay at home or go to the US if you want to scale up”, said the Commissioner.

Global service providers like Amazon, Google, Facebook, etc. have large parts of the market in Europe too, which enable them to collect huge quantities of data to teach their computers, commented Commissioner Ansip. “But what about our own European start-ups? They have no access to data”.

Speakers in the debate emphasised to the Commissioner the importance of

ensuring a fair transition for workers. While the Commissioner was very optimistic on the outcome of the AI revolution for the labour market, arguing that progress always created more jobs than it destroyed, members insisted that the transition, when traditional jobs disappeared and new occupations had not yet emerged, needed to be managed appropriately.

All agreed that **lifelong learning** must become a reality now more than ever to help everyone find their place in tomorrow's labour market through new skills for new jobs. "In preparing for Artificial Intelligence, do not forget to invest in human intelligence", was President Dassis' closing message to the Commissioner.

Indicative programme – Foreign Affairs Council of 19 March 2018

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EU supports Lebanese security sector with €50 million

This package includes €46.6 million for promoting the rule of law, enhancing security and countering terrorism until 2020 and €3.5 million in support of airport security.

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini** made the [announcement](#) during today's Rome II Ministerial Meeting on support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) in Rome. She said: *"Lebanon can count on the European Union's longstanding partnership in facing its current challenges, from humanitarian aid to development cooperation, but also on economy and security. With this new package, the EU reconfirms its support to the Lebanese security sector and the strengthening of Lebanon's institutions, which are crucial to ensure the stability, security and unity of the country, for the benefit of the Lebanese people and of the entire region".*

The new package is part of the EU's overall and longstanding support to the security sector in Lebanon where the EU has invested more than €85 million across the entire sector since 2006. EU activities have included support to the Lebanese security forces' capacity building, integrated border management, civilian oversight, as well as the mitigation of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threats and mine action. In 2018, the focus is placed on integrated border management and countering terrorism.

Background

The €46.6 million commitment to support Lebanon in promoting the rule of law, enhancing security and countering terrorism until 2020, funded under the [European Neighbourhood Instrument \(ENI\)](#), aims at supporting the security and justice sector in Lebanon.

The €3.5 million measure, adopted under the [Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace \(IcSP\)](#), specifically aims at securing Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport against illicit trafficking and the threat of terrorism. It will provide training for relevant agencies working at the airport under civilian authority, and allow for the improvements of existing security infrastructures.

In November 2016, the European Union and Lebanon adopted [Partnership Priorities](#) for the period 2016-2020, which set up a renewed framework for political engagement and enhanced cooperation. The Partnership Priorities include security and countering terrorism, governance and the rule of law, fostering growth and job opportunities, and migration and mobility. They were agreed in the context of the [revised European Neighbourhood Policy](#) and the [EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy](#).

For More Information

[European Union in Lebanon](#)

[European Neighbourhood Instrument \(ENI\)](#)

[Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace](#)