

## Main topics and media events 12 – 25 February 2018

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## MEP Bernd Kolmel visits Strasbourg operational site

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As rapporteur for the BUDG Opinion on ECRIS-TCN, Mr Kolmel was interested in getting to know more about the activities of the Agency, its mandate, the current systems under eu-LISA's responsibility and our future challenges.

Points raised by the MEP during discussions focused not only on budgetary aspects, considerations on the new MFF and the needs of the Agency in terms of resources, but also on aspects related to security and measures implemented by the Agency to address physical, personal and data security as well as potential risks of cyber-attacks.



# Speech by Michel Barnier following this week's round of Article 50 negotiations (6th-9th February)

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to be here. I would like to thank you for being here rather than in front of your television watching the opening ceremony of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Winter Olympic Games, which has just started in Pyeongchang.

Allow me to extend my personal best wishes to both the Korean hosts and the athletes.

To come back to Brexit, we agreed with the UK side this week that the agenda would cover Ireland, the governance of the withdrawal agreement, and the transition.

We also foresaw an "update" by the UK on the future relationship. This update did not take place this morning because of agenda constraints on the UK side. That was the only meeting to have been cancelled.

Before the beginning of this round, I was very happy to meet David Davis on Monday in London, on his invitation, for a political discussion and also to meet Prime Minister Theresa May.

On the points I will now mention, this round was, for us, a "relaunch" round – the first since the Joint Report in December.

I think it is useful, however – for your work and your information – to give you an update today on the negotiations.

These meetings between us, and with David Davis whenever he wishes, will continue to take place regularly.

This negotiation is organised in rounds. This organisation is important to us – the EU side – because it gives us the time, before and after every round, to consult the 27 Member States and the European Parliament.

This is also how we ensure transparency – to which we have committed since the beginning, particularly when it comes to you.

And this method is also how we managed to reach an agreement with the British in December on the first important step of this negotiation.

I – On Ireland, we focused on solutions to avoid a hard border. Any solution must be precise, clear and unambiguous.

As you know, our Joint Report provides for three options:

1. First, solving the issues on the island of Ireland through the future relationship. This future relationship would need to avoid a hard border, and protect North-South cooperation and the Good Friday Agreement. Once again, ladies and gentlemen, it is important to tell the truth. A UK decision to leave the Single Market and the Customs Union would make border checks unavoidable.
2. Second, the UK has committed to proposing specific solutions to the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland. We are waiting for such solutions.
3. The third option is to maintain full regulatory alignment with those rules of the Single Market and the Customs Union – current or future – which support North-South cooperation, the all-island economy and the Good Friday Agreement.
  - Options 1 and 2 can only be made operational in the context of the future relationship.
  - In the meantime, it is our responsibility to include the third option in the text of the Withdrawal Agreement to guarantee that there will be no hard border whatever the circumstances.
  - This means that we must now start legally defining how this scenario would work in operational terms. There must be no ambiguity here.
  - Based on the discussions this week, the UK has accepted the necessity of discussing how to make this full alignment scenario operational, provided we discuss the other two options in parallel. This is what we will work on in the coming rounds.

## II – Second point: the governance of the withdrawal agreement

- This is one of the keys of our agreement: in order to be credible and durable, this withdrawal agreement should have effective implementation mechanisms.
- As far as we see it, these mechanisms should provide for a role for the European Court of Justice every time the agreement refers to European law.
- This remains a point of disagreement with the UK.

## III – The transition period

- This period consists of extending the *acquis* for a time-limited period, as was requested by the UK itself.
- The Heads of State or Government of the 27 replied positively to this request at the European Council of 15 December. We have a Council mandate since 29 January and we presented this to the UK this week.
- In my meeting in London with David Davis on Monday – and in the negotiations in Brussels this week – the UK insisted on reaching a deal on the transition in March.

- But, at the same time, our interlocutors disagree with us in a number of areas, which –objectively – I consider as substantial. In particular:

On citizens' rights: while the UK recognises that the free movement of people applies fully during the transition period, it does not want – at the end of this transition – to extend the rights, as agreed in the Joint Report, of those citizens who arrived before the withdrawal, to those citizens to arrive during the transition. This is a major point for us, and also for the European Parliament.

On the application of EU rules during the transition: the UK has requested a right of opposition in the case where it disagrees with a new rule or law which could enter into force during this transition period.

On Justice and Home Affairs questions: the UK wants to continue benefitting from new EU policies, the famous *opt-ins*, while at the same time it has decided to leave these policies at the end of the transition.

Frankly, I am surprised by these disagreements.

The EU's positions are, from my point of view, logical:

By asking to benefit from the advantages of the Single Market, the Customs Union and common policies, the UK must accept all the rules and obligations until the end of the transition.

It must also assume the inevitable consequences of its decision to leave the European Union, its institutions and its policies.

- Taking into account these disagreements, and to be frank, the transition period today is not a given.
- As I said, time is short, very short, and we do not have a minute to lose if we want to succeed. We want to succeed in this orderly withdrawal and also begin possible discussions on the future relationship as soon as possible.
- This is precisely why the Commission proposed a legal text on the transition to the Member States this week.
- Once agreed by the 27, this text will form part of our overall draft withdrawal agreement text, which we will then send to the UK. The European Parliament, I repeat, must also give its consent to this draft.
- In this draft legal text, published this week by the European Commission – in full transparency – we set out a provision which will allow existing EU implementation mechanisms to be reinforced during the transition period.
- Why is this provision – which was commented on a lot – necessary for us? This is simply because in the case of a violation of European rules during the transition, our usual infringement procedures, which are applicable to all Member States today, risk taking too much time and will therefore not be operational to resolve any possible dispute

between the UK and the EU during this very short period. That is the only reason.

- It is absolutely normal that, in an international agreement, effective implementation and conflict resolution mechanisms are foreseen. This is the case, for example, with our agreements with Switzerland.
- To be entirely objective, I want to also recall that the UK has traditionally been among those countries with relatively few infringement procedures.
- Throughout this negotiation, you will not find in our attitude or in my attitude – on this subject, or on others – the least trace of discourtesy or willingness to punish. My mind set has been completely the opposite since the beginning of this negotiation and it will continue being so until the last day of the negotiation.
- We need to simply build a legally solid withdrawal agreement, which leaves no uncertainty for anybody.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Once again, we need to advance in this negotiation methodically and in a structured way, through consultation and transparency, which allows us to organise the rounds. This consultation and transparency is first for the 27 Member States, in whose name I negotiate, for the European Parliament, with which we work closely, the national parliaments, which I regularly meet, for citizens, for economic and social actors, and for you.

My deputy, Sabine Weyand, will discuss this afternoon with the UK negotiators the dates and the precise agenda of the coming negotiations.

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## [Daily News 09 / 02 / 2018](#)

### **Commission proposes €2.1 million euro from Globalisation Adjustment Fund for former Goodyear workers in Germany**

The European Commission has proposed a €2.1 million contribution from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to help 646 workers in Germany previously employed at the tyre manufacturer Goodyear find new jobs. Marianne Thyssen, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, commented: *“EU solidarity is key in tackling the challenge of finding new jobs for many people with the same skills who are being made redundant at the same time, in the same geographical area. The proposed support from the EU’s Globalisation Adjustment Fund will help these workers to adapt their skills and facilitate their transition to new jobs or help them set up their own enterprises”*. Germany applied for support from the Globalisation Adjustment Fund following the dismissal of 646 workers at Goodyear, following the complete shutdown of Goodyear’s production plant in Philippsburg in Baden-Württemberg. The measures co-financed by the Globalisation Adjustment Fund will help the concerned workers by providing them with job search support, peer groups and workshops, measures to increase their skills, advisory services towards business start-ups, mentoring after reintegration into employment, and training allowances. The total estimated cost of the package is €3.6 million, of which the Globalisation Adjustment Fund would provide €2.1 million. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the EU’s Council of Ministers for approval. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)*

### **Juncker Plan reaches €264.3 billion in mobilised investment, with 589,000 SMEs set to benefit from financing**

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) – the core element of the Investment Plan for Europe – is now expected to trigger €264.3 billion in investments, following the latest transactions to be approved by the European Investment Bank (EIB) Board of Directors. This represents around 84% of the original target: mobilising €315 billion of investment by summer 2018. The deals which will benefit from the EU budget guarantee now amount to €53.2 billion in financing and are located in all 28 Member States. So far, 366 infrastructure and innovation projects – representing financing of €40.4 billion – have been approved under the EFSI. In addition, 370 financing agreements – worth €12.8 billion – have been approved for smaller companies (SMEs). Thanks to these agreements, around 589,000 SMEs are expected to benefit from improved access to financing. As of February, the top five

countries ranked in order of EFSI investment triggered, relative to GDP, are Greece, Estonia, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain. (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

## **Emergency calls to 112: more accuracy of caller location**

The EU celebrates on Sunday, 11 February the day of the [Single European Emergency Number 112](#). Calling 112 is free of charge in all EU Member States thanks to EU [legislation](#) that was introduced in 1991. As announced last year, emergency calls to 112 are increasingly more effective with the introduction of Advanced Mobile Location (AML) service. Every year, about 300,000 people who call the emergency services cannot describe their location, because they may not know where they are, or are too young or too injured to communicate. In these situations, knowing the exact location of the caller can help emergency services to react quickly and save lives. Calls from mobile phones in countries supporting the Advanced Mobile Location service are expected to send a significantly more accurate caller location information to the emergency service. This accuracy of Advanced Mobile Location that traces the call within a perimeter of less than 100 meters can help to improve the efficiency and response time of the emergency centres. Seven countries have introduced this service: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania and United Kingdom now deploy the Advanced Mobile Location. More information on the uptake of Advanced Mobile Location service is available [here](#) and in the latest [112 implementation report](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

## **Driving battery production in the EU: 2nd meeting between the Commission and Member States on the European Battery Alliance**

On Monday 12 February, the European Commission will host the second high-level meeting on the European Battery Alliance. Political representatives of interested Member States and the European Investment Bank will participate. The meeting builds on the announcements made during the [first meeting in October](#) when representatives of EU industry and the Member States agreed to work together to create a full value chain of batteries in Europe. The meeting aims to flesh out Member States' political commitment to the establishment of large-scale battery cells production capabilities in Europe, to discuss present activities, including emerging industry-led cross-border projects, and to pool and blend support instruments at the national as well as European level. Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič who will host the meeting said: "The estimated potential of this market in Europe is enormous – as of 2025, could reach €250 billion annually, as our battery cell demand is expected to amount to 200 GWh, and 600 GWh globally. The scale and speed required means that no single actor can do it on its own. The European Battery Alliance is providing an umbrella for these prospective partnerships throughout the value chain." Batteries represent a key enabler in the context of the Energy Union. Their development and production play a strategic role in the ongoing modernisation of European industry and economy. A press point with Vice President Šefčovič on the outcome of the meeting will take place in

the Berlaymont VIP corner [at 16:00 CET](#), and [Europe by Satellite](#) will transmit it live. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.:+32 229 52589)

## **European cooperation on supercomputers accelerating: Cyprus 15<sup>th</sup> country to join**

The European effort to build and deploy the next generation of supercomputers accessible everywhere in Europe and capable of at least 10<sup>18</sup> calculations per second is moving up a gear. Cyprus became earlier this week the 15<sup>th</sup> country to participate by signing the [European declaration](#) on [high-performance computing](#) (HPC). Supercomputers are at the core of major innovations in many areas such as personalised medicine, energy saving or smart urban planning. They also hold great potential for job creation and competitiveness of the European economy. With this signature, Cyprus announced its intention to join the [EuroHPC Joint Undertaking](#), once it will be adopted by the Council of the European Union. This Joint Undertaking is a legal and funding instrument aiming at pooling the European and national resources to build and deploy across Europe supercomputers that would rank among the world's top three by 2022-2023. The EuroHPC declaration was originally launched in [March 2017](#) during the [Digital Day](#) and signed by France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Since then another eight countries have joined: in addition to Cyprus also [Belgium](#), [Slovenia](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Switzerland](#), [Greece](#), [Croatia](#) and the [Czech Republic](#). Other Member States and countries associated with the [Horizon 2020](#) framework programme are encouraged to participate in the initiative. Read more about European supercomputing initiative [here](#) and in our recent [press release](#), [Q&A](#) and [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

## **Commission reports on progress under global commitments for sustainable urban development**

Today at the [World Urban Forum](#) in Malaysia, the Commission takes stock of what was achieved under [the three commitments](#) put forward by the EU and its partners 15 months ago, at the [UN Habitat III conference](#). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu said: *“Much like the fight against climate change, the EU is ready to lead the way for clean, safe and prosperous cities around the globe. Europe and its partners are delivering fast on these three concrete commitments, which contribute to shaping the cities of tomorrow.”* Significant progress has been achieved under the three commitments; city-to-city cooperation is now flourishing across continents, important steps have been taken towards a single definition of cities at global level and the EU is showing the world the way to sustainable urban development with the ongoing implementation of its [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). The three commitments contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#). A full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tél .: +32 229 56169)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Future of EU finances – Commissioner Oettinger visits Portugal and Austria**

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of Budget and Human Resources, is visiting Portugal and Austria on 9 and 11-12 February, respectively, as part of his tour across EU Member States (#MFFtour27) aimed at gathering views on the future of EU finances and the EU's multiannual budget post-2020 (#EUBudget). In Portugal, the Commissioner will meet with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Augusto Santos Silva, Minister of Infrastructures, Mr Pedro Marques and Secretary of State for European Affairs, Ms Ana Paula Zacarias. Commissioner Oettinger will attend the Conference with CES "What expectations for the future of EU finances?". He will also meet Prime Minister António Costa and Minister of Finance, Mr Mário Centeno. In Austria, Commissioner Oettinger will meet Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Ms Karin Kneissl, Federal Minister within the Federal Chancellery for the EU, art, culture and media, Mr Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister of Finance, Mr Hartwig Löger, and Federal Minister for Sustainability, Agriculture and Tourism, Ms Elisabeth Köstinger. He is also meeting the President of the Parliament (Nationalrat), Mr Wolfgang Sobotka, and is participating in a discussion there. The Commission kicked off this debate on 28 June 2017 with the publication of its [Reflection paper on the future of EU finances](#), available in all EU languages (also in [Portuguese](#) and [German](#)). Stakeholders' views will be taken into account when preparing the next MFF, to be presented in [May 2018](#). See a speech "[A Budget Matching our Ambitions](#)" given by Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** at the conference "[Shaping our Future](#)" on 8 January 2018. (For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

### **EU co-chairs Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq and renews commitment to Iraqi people and government**

The European Union will co-chair the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, in Kuwait from 12 to 14 February 2018. The three-day event aims to mobilise additional international support for Iraq at this crucial time in the history of the country, following the territorial defeat of Da'esh in 2017. High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** said: "*Iraq is at a crossroads in its history – it is now crucial to act quickly and rebuild the country with the participation of all the components of Iraqi society. The EU will remain a key partner to Iraq and the Iraqi people in reconstruction, stabilisation and longer term sustainable development*". In response to the latest crisis the EU has delivered over €650 million in humanitarian, stabilisation, security and

development assistance, as well as in supporting the political reform agenda. On Wednesday 14 February, High Representative/Vice-President **Mogherini** will co-chair the high level segment of the Conference, along with the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, UN Secretary General António Guterres and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. She will also participate at the Meeting of the Ministers of the Global Coalition against Da'esh on Thursday 13 February. On Monday 12 February, Commissioner **Stylianides** will chair a session focussing on the important remaining humanitarian and protection priorities in Iraq and on the essential links towards early recovery and mid-longer term assistance. Commissioner **Mimica** will chair a specific session on the governance and accountability aspects of reconstruction. More information and audio-visual coverage will be available on [EbS](#). A factsheet on overall EU support to Iraq can be found [here](#) and on EU actions to counter Da'esh [here](#). (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32229 69140; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +3222992256; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

### **Commissioner Avramopoulos in Albania**

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos will be in Tirana, Albania on Sunday and Monday (11 – 12 February) where he will meet with Prime Minister Edi Rama, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Ditmir Bushati and Minister of Interior Fatmir Xhafaj. Discussions will focus on cooperation on migration, security and border management. A meeting with Archbishop Anastasios is scheduled to take place on Sunday evening. A joint press point with Minister of Interior Xhafaj will take place on Monday around 09:30 CET and will be available on [EBS](#). (For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456 ; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 2 298 67 64; Markus Lammert – Tel.: +32 229 58602)

### **[Calendar](#)**

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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