

# Daily News 29 / 01 / 2018

## **Le Président Juncker et le Collège des Commissaires participent au lancement de l'année européenne du patrimoine culturel 2018 en Belgique**

Ce mercredi 31 janvier 2018, le Président de la Commission européenne, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, et les membres du Collège des Commissaires participeront au lancement, en Belgique, de l'Année européenne du patrimoine culturel, à l'invitation de Philippe Close, Bourgmestre de la Ville de Bruxelles, et avec la participation de toutes autorités belges compétentes. L'Année européenne du patrimoine culturel 2018 mettra en lumière la richesse et la diversité de notre héritage culturel, en valorisant son rôle dans le développement d'une identité commune et dans la construction de l'avenir de l'Europe. Cette journée de lancement sera marquée par un spectacle en 3 dimensions intitulé « [Mille Reflets d'Europe](#) » sur la Grand-Place de Bruxelles auquel assisteront le Président **Juncker**, Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissaire chargé de l'éducation, de la culture, de la jeunesse et du sport, et les autres commissaires. Cette visite inédite du Président et du Collège des Commissaires témoigne des très bonnes relations qu'entretient la Commission avec la Ville de Bruxelles, et de l'attachement et de la reconnaissance qu'elle souhaite exprimer envers la capitale *de facto* de l'Union et ses habitants qui l'accueillent depuis plus de 60 ans. A cette occasion, le Président **Juncker** a déclaré: « *L'Année européenne du patrimoine culturel doit célébrer en 2018 notre diversité culturelle. L'Europe est réputée dans le monde entier pour la richesse et la diversité de ses expressions culturelles et créatives, notamment ses sites naturels et archéologiques, ses musées, ses monuments, ses villes historiques, ses œuvres d'art, musicales et audiovisuelles, ainsi que ses traditions et coutumes. Cette année de festivités sera une occasion formidable d'encourager les citoyens, en particulier les jeunes, à explorer la richesse de la diversité culturelle européenne et réfléchir à comment la préserver pour les futures générations.* » Les journalistes qui souhaitent participer [à l'événement](#) peuvent s'enregistrer [ici](#). Un communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#), ainsi que le communiqué de presse de la Représentation de la Commission en Belgique [ici](#) et plus d'informations [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations, Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

## **Commission awards almost EUR 330 million in research grants to post-doctoral researchers and to innovative training programmes**

What will the next generation of solar cells look like? What is the most effective way for cities to manage floods? These are just two of the challenges that will be tackled by the new [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellows](#) which have been announced by the European Commission today. Following the 2017 bid for post-doctoral research funding from the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#), the Commission is awarding grants worth EUR 248.7 million in total to 1,348 researchers with the highest potential to make a game-changing impact on our society and economy. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth

and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: “We are today recognising the potential of 1,348 excellent, internationally mobile researchers who faced intense international competition to be awarded a fellowship. The projects they will work on will tackle some of the biggest challenges our societies face, helping to build a resilient, fair, competitive Europe. In addition, the EU is now investing in truly innovative research training programmes for doctoral candidates and experienced researchers, enabling them to make full use of their talents and empowering the organisations supporting them to gain competitiveness on a global scale.” The funding awarded to the researchers, which is part of the EU’s [Horizon 2020](#) programme for research and innovation, represents an increase of €30 million compared to the previous call. Under another strand, the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes](#) the Commission announced that 8 doctoral and 13 post-doctoral research training programmes of outstanding quality – from nine EU Member States and three associated countries – will receive cofunding from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of €80 million over five years. You can find more details on the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions [Individual Fellowships](#) and the [Co-funding of regional, national and international programme](#) as well as a factsheet on [Marie-Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#) online. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Joseph Waldstein – Tel.: +32 229 56184)

#### **State aid: Commission concludes that the introduction of the Road Act Amendment in the Czech Republic does not involve State aid**

The European Commission has found that the prohibition of outdoor advertising such as billboards alongside motorways and main roads, which was introduced by the Czech Republic through the “Road Act Amendment” and entered into force on 1 September 2017, does not involve State aid. In October 2017, the Commission received a complaint from an advertising company alleging that, by introducing amendments to the Act No. 13/1997 Coll. on Roads, the Czech authorities would have granted alleged State aid to its competitors. The Commission assessed the complaint and found in particular that the prohibition: (i) does not grant a selective advantage to any company, since it is a general ban imposed to enhance road safety; (ii) applies equally to all companies operating in the market for outdoor advertising; (iii) does not involve a transfer of State resources in any way to any company. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the measure does not involve State aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). More information will be available on the Commission’s [competition](#) website, in the [State Aid Register](#) under the case number SA.48856. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Commissioners Oettinger, Navracsics and Thyssen to host a meeting on the European Solidarity Corps with key stakeholders**

Tomorrow, 30 January, Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, Günther H.

**Oettinger**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, **Tibor Navracsics**, and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, will host a meeting in Brussels on the [European Solidarity Corps](#). This event will be an opportunity to bring together key partners of the Solidarity Corps, including representatives of the European Parliament and the Presidency of the Council of the EU, to have an open discussion on the lessons learnt during its first year. They will also discuss important issues regarding the [next phase of the European Solidarity Corps](#). Over a working lunch with meeting participants, the Commissioners will discuss remaining issues in the ongoing negotiation process on the legislative proposal on the European Solidarity Corps and give an outlook on key areas. A [stakeholder forum took also place on 12 April 2017](#). Since its [launch on 7 December 2016](#) around 48,000 young people have registered in the European Solidarity Corps portal. Around 2,600 young people have benefitted or are benefitting from placements in more than 1,750 organisations. More information on the European Solidarity Corps can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

#### **Commissioner Hahn in Belarus to follow up the Eastern Partnership Summit**

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will visit [Belarus](#) on 30 January to follow up the [Eastern Partnership Summit](#) which took place on 24 November in Brussels. Commissioner **Hahn** will meet with the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, the Prime Minister of Belarus Andrei Kobyakov and with Vladimir Makei, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss the priorities of the Eastern Partnership Summit and the deepening of EU-Belarus relations. This will also be reflected in the new EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities which will define further cooperation for the coming years. The Commissioner will also meet with representatives of the opposition and participants of the [MOST project](#). Ahead of the mission, Commissioner **Hahn** said: *“Since my last visit in Minsk in 2015, relations between the EU and Belarus developed positively and we extended our cooperation considerably. Cooperation in areas of common interest has been stepped up. The EU increased its support to regional and private sector development; support to civil society; and energy efficiency. The EU’s efforts will continue to focus on increasing engagement with all sectors of Belarus society. My visit will focus on EU-Belarus relations, human rights as well as regional cooperation and our joint progress on the [“20 deliverables for 2020”](#), which aim to bring tangible benefits to the daily lives of Belarusian citizens. Photos and videos of the mission will be available on [EbS](#).* (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887)

#### **Commissioner Vestager visits Berlin and participates in a Citizens’ Dialogue**

Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe **Vestager** travels to Germany today and will participate in a [Citizens’ Dialogue](#) on “Your voice in Europe” at the Representation of the European Commission in Berlin. The Commissioner will also meet Mr Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the Bundestag and receive an

award from the Schwarzkopf Foundation. The [Citizens' Dialogue](#) can be followed live [here](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

## **La Commissaire Crețu en Roumanie pour évoquer l'absorption des fonds européens**

Aujourd'hui et mardi, la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** est en Roumanie. La Commissaire rencontrera la nouvelle Première ministre roumaine, Viorica Dancilă, et prononcera le discours d'ouverture de la conférence "Les fonds européens, l'absorption et la relance: comment ancrer la Roumanie dans l'année du centenaire?". "Il y a eu des progrès notables dans l'absorption des fonds européens en 2017," a commenté la Commissaire avant sa visite, "Mais il faudra redoubler d'efforts en 2018. Je viendrai apporter le soutien et l'expertise de la Commission pour utiliser aux mieux les fonds européens, et évoquer le futur de la politique de Cohésion, après 2020." (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

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

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## **Skimmed milk powder: Council modifies rules on public intervention to help the market**

### **Press contacts**

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On 29 January 2018 the Council decided on a temporary **change to** the operation of the **public intervention mechanism for skimmed milk powder**. It did so by slightly amending the so-called Fixing regulation, which determines measures on fixing certain aids and refunds related to the common market organisation of the markets in agricultural products. The Council decided in particular to **set the quantitative limitation for buying-in skimmed milk powder at a fixed price at zero tonnes for 2018**.

The Council decided today to intervene to stabilise the dairy

markets in 2018. This is in line with our commitment to keep track of market developments and to make sure that the safety net is used in a timely and prudent manner, not just to react to market disruptions, but also to avoid them in the first place whenever possible.

*Rumen Porodzanov, minister of agriculture, food and forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria and president of the Council*

As a consequence of the difficult situation in the dairy markets, **public intervention stocks of skimmed milk powder (SMP)** in the EU rose to **almost 400 000 tonnes in 2017**, thereby risking severe pressure on the market, with a negative impact on dairy prices.

In order to avoid a drop in prices and a consequent worsening of farmers' standards of living, the Commission proposed and the Council decided to **forego the automatic buying-in of SMP** in a context in which stocks are already very high. By setting the quantitative limit at zero for 2018, buying-in at a fixed price will not be activated automatically. However, the **safety net will still function**, as the EU will continue to be able to buy-in SMP through a tendering procedure, and to decide on a case by case basis how much to buy and at what price level.

The Common Market Organisation (CMO) is a set of rules which regulates agricultural markets in the European Union. This includes setting the parameters for intervening on agricultural markets through market support instruments (e.g. public intervention and private storage, emergency measures) and sector-specific support.

The period in which public intervention is open for skimmed milk powder starts on 1st March and ends on 30 September every year.

The adopted regulation will enter into force on the day following its publication, scheduled for 31 January 2018.

[Visit the meeting page](#) [Download as pdf](#)

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## [Government finance statistics – The extent of contingent liabilities and non-performing loans in the EU Member States](#)

Data on contingent liabilities and non-performing loans of EU governments for

the year 2016 have been published today by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. This publication includes data on government guarantees, liabilities related to public-private partnerships recorded off-balance sheet of government and liabilities of government controlled entities (public corporations) classified outside general government. Contingent liabilities are only potential liabilities. They may become actual government liabilities if specific conditions prevail.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

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## **Just a few days left to fill out EUIPO's user satisfaction survey**

January 29, 2018 [About the EUIPO](#)

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Our annual user satisfaction survey can be filled out before February 4.

**We would like to take this opportunity to thank the users that have already taken the time to fill out the 2017 survey.** Their feedback will help us shape our future objectives and measure our performance in various areas including:

- Legal practice
- Online tools
- European Union trade mark registration
- Community design registration
- Customer and information services

### **How you can give us your opinion**

The 2017 User Satisfaction Survey has been sent via e-mail to the users of EUIPO's services.

Via this link provided, they are able to access a secure web-based questionnaire which can be completed in any of the five working languages of the Office (English, Spanish, German, French and Italian) with deadline February 4.

Are you a EUIPO user and you have not received the e-mail yet?

[Get in contact with our information centre staff.](#)

### **More on our quality management system**

User feedback is paramount in all of EUIPO's activities. That is why our quality management policy is based on ISO 9001, an international standard for

which organisations need to demonstrate their ability to meet user expectations and establish continual improvement procedures.

We have been measuring levels of satisfaction with our services and decisions relating to the registration of trade marks and designs since 2005.

[More information on EUIPO's management system standards.](#)

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