

Daily News 15 / 12 / 2017

Investment Plan now set to trigger €256.1 billion in investment after new projects approved

Following this week's meeting of the European Investment Bank (EIB) Board of Directors, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) is now expected to trigger €256.1 billion in investments. The deals approved under the EFSI amount to €51.1 billion in financing and are located in all 28 Member States. Around 539,600 small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are expected to benefit from improved access to finance. As of December, the top five countries ranked in order of investment triggered relative to GDP are Estonia, Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal and Spain. Also this week, Members of the European Parliament [voted to adopt](#) the Regulation to extend and enhance the EFSI, the central pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe. Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"EFSI-backed investments approved until now will increase EU GDP by 0.7% and create nearly 700,000 jobs by 2020. Now thanks to EFSI 2.0, even more jobs will be created. The Investment Plan is proving particularly successful when it comes to SME financing, with 539,000 small businesses already set to benefit from finance to grow their companies."* (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Call for innovative projects: up to €100 million of EU funds made available to cities

Cities are invited to apply [here](#) as of today and until April 2018 to get EU funding under the 3rd ["Urban Innovative Actions"](#) call for projects. Up to €100 million from the European Regional Development Fund ([ERDF](#)) will help finance creative projects in the following areas: adaptation to climate change, air quality, housing and jobs and skills for the local economy, in line with the objectives of the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#). A [series of seminars](#) will be organised in the Member States to help applicants submit solid proposals and increase their chances of getting funding. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"The Urban Innovative Actions give cities the funding they need to turn their good ideas into ground breaking projects that can inspire other cities in Europe. This 3rd call, focused on urban climate actions, is another brick to the wall of our commitments and achievements under the [Paris Agreement](#), just a few days after the [One Planet](#) summit in Paris."* (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

€5 million prize for innovations that use blockchain technology for social good

The European Commission will award 5 prizes of €1 million each to social innovations as part of the Horizon Prize on “Blockchains for Social Good”. The prizes will be awarded to innovators that use [blockchain technology](#) to bring about positive social change, including for support of fair trade, allowing transparency in production processes, decentralising data governance and enhancing privacy, enabling accountability and contributing to financial inclusion. This prize encourages the development of scalable, efficient and effective solutions using Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), the ground-breaking digital technology supporting decentralised methods of consensus reaching or transactions. The official launch is taking place today in Turin, organized by the city of Turin and innovation foundation Nesta Italia. The prize is the third of six European Innovation Council (EIC) Horizon Prizes and funded under [Horizon 2020](#), the EU’s research and innovation programme. Detailed rules of contest will be available in February 2018, and the deadline for applications is 25 June 2019 in order to allow applicants to demonstrate the viability of their ideas in practice. More information is on the [prize page](#) and the [EIC pilot website](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Combating illicit trade in tobacco products: Commission adopts EU-wide track and trace system

Today, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** welcomed the adoption of a set of legal acts aimed at combatting illicit trade in tobacco products: *“Today the EU has taken a big step forward in combatting the illicit trade in tobacco products. The new EU-wide track and trace system adopted today will ensure that tobacco products in the EU are easily traceable with a [unique identifier](#) for each product. In addition, we are also making sure that tobacco products meet specific security requirements, with at least five types of authentication elements required per packet. The track and trace system and the security requirements should be in place by 20 May 2019 for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco and by 20 May 2024 for all other tobacco products (such as cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco products).”* Full [statement](#) and [Q&A](#) are available online. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over CEPSA Gas by CEPSA

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over CEPSA Gas Comercializadora, S.A. (“CEPSA Gas”) by Compañía Española de Petróleos, S.A.U. (“CEPSA”), both of Spain. CEPSA Gas specialises in the wholesale and retail supply of natural gas to both large industrial customers and small and medium enterprises. CEPSA covers a wide range of activities from oil production and exploration activities to oil refining, and the supply of gas and fuels. It is also active in the production of petrochemicals and other oil-derivative products. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no

competition concerns because CEPSA already had joint control over CEPSA Gas together with Total S.A. before the transaction. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8699](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Toshiba Memory Corporation by Bain Capital

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Toshiba Memory Corporation (“TMC”) of Japan, by Bain Capital Investors LLC (“Bain Capital”), of the US. TMC is a global manufacturer and supplier of NAND flash memory products and solid-state-drive memory products for use in a variety of consumer and enterprise applications. Bain Capital is an investment firm with activities in a variety of industries. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because Bain Capital's portfolio companies and TMC are not active on the same or related markets. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8680](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

La Commission approuve deux nouvelles appellations d'origine protégées pour des vins français et slovaques

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de deux dénominations de vins au registre des appellations d'origine protégées (AOP), «La Clape» et «Skalický rubín». Les cépages pour les vins d'appellation [«La Clape»](#) sont cultivés sur le territoire du même nom situé dans le département de l'Aude dans le sud de la France. Les vins blancs «La Clape» présentent une robe jaune d'intensité moyenne, et une riche palette aromatique où se conjuguent le plus souvent fleurs blanches, fruits, notes balsamiques. Les vins rouges présentent une robe brillante à l'intensité profonde, le plus souvent de couleur pourpre. Cultivé et produit dans l'Ouest de la Slovaquie, dans la ville de Skalica et autour, le [«Skalický rubín»](#) est un vin rouge avec une couleur rouge rubis intense qui donne au vin son nom. Les cépages utilisés proviennent des variétés Frankovka modrá, Svätovavrinecké et Modrý Portugal. Ces deux nouvelles appellations vont rejoindre plus de 1750 appellations de vins déjà protégées dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [e-bacchus](#). Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la [politique de qualité](#). *(Pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel: +32 229 52 509)*

STATEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová met with the Japanese Data protection authority to advance their dialogue on the promotion of high data protection standards

Commissioner Věra **Jourová** met yesterday with the Commissioner of the Personal Information Protection Commission of Japan, Haruhi Kumazawa, to advance their dialogue on data protection as a fundamental right and a central factor of consumer trust in the digital economy. After their meeting, they issued a [joint press statement](#) welcoming the work carried out over the course of the last months and agreed to meet in Brussels early 2018 to finalise the negotiations. A [speech](#) of Commissioner Jourová delivered in front of the Japanese Business Federation, Keidanren, on data protection topics is also available online. *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Avramopoulos meets President el-Sisi in Egypt

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** will be in Cairo, Egypt tomorrow to meet President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi and discuss the cooperation between the European Union and Egypt. In addition, Commissioner Avramopoulos will jointly launch the EU-Egypt Migration Dialogue with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry. He will also discuss EU cooperation with Egypt on security matters with the Minister of the Interior, Magdy Abdel Ghaffar. *(For more information: Natasha Bertaud – Tel.: +32 229 67456; Tove Ernst – Tel.: +32 229 86764; Thomas Kramer – Tel.: +32 229 58602)*

Commissioner Moscovici in London on Monday, 18 December 2017

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs will visit the United Kingdom Monday, 18 December, where he will participate in a roundtable discussion hosted by the [Policy Network](#) and deliver remarks at the [London School of Economics](#). While in London, the Commissioner will also meet Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer. *(For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183; Enda McNamara – +32 229 64976)*

Commissioner Hogan launches the 2017 EU agricultural outlook conference in Brussels

Commissioner for agriculture Phil **Hogan** will open on Monday morning 18 December the third edition of the EU agricultural outlook conference. Running over two days, this annual conference gathers participants from the EU institutions, governments and international organisations, stakeholders involved in the food supply chain, market experts, academics, think tanks and civil society. Discussion on day one will focus on the modernisation and simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy, led by a number of high-level panels, including one keynote speech by Commissioner for budget and human resources Günther H. **Oettinger**. The second day will examine the latest

outlook reports covering EU dairy, meat and crop markets over the next ten years. The full programme is [online](#). The conference will be webstreamed [here](#) for 18 December, day 1, and [here](#) for 19 December, day 2. The discussions can also be followed online with the hashtag #AgriOutlook. Following his speech, Commissioner **Hogan** will hold a press point at 10:00 in the Charlemagne building on Monday morning. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel: +32 229 56185; Clemence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

La Commissaire Crețu en Roumanie

Lundi 18 et mardi 19 décembre la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** se rendra en Roumanie, où elle rencontrera le Premier ministre, Mihai Tudose, le ministre en charge des fonds européens, Marius Nica, la ministre aux affaires intérieures, Carmen Dan, le ministre en charge des transports, Felix Stroe, le ministre délégué aux affaires européennes, Victor Negrescu et le Secrétaire d'Etat à la Santé, Raed Arafat. Lors de sa visite, la Commissaire **Crețu** visitera des projets financés par l'Europe et participera à un [Dialogue Citoyen](#). *“De nombreux efforts ont été mis en œuvre dans l'exécution des programmes roumains de la politique de Cohésion et les progrès sont indéniables. Il faut continuer sur cette voie. Comme je le dis souvent, des investissements efficaces, dont les bénéfices sont rapidement visibles pour les citoyens, voilà le meilleur argument pour conserver une politique de Cohésion importante après 2020,”* a commenté la Commissaire avant sa visite. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

La Commissaire Gabriel participera au Forum sur la gouvernance d'internet à Genève

Du 18 au 19 décembre, Mariya Gabriel, commissaire à l'économie et à la société numériques, se rendra à Genève pour participer au douzième [Forum sur la gouvernance d'internet](#) (FGI). Sur le thème « Façonnez votre avenir numérique ! », le forum mettra l'accent sur les nouveaux enjeux des nouvelles technologies, notamment sur l'intelligence artificielle, la réalité virtuelle, le big data et la problématique des fausses nouvelles ou des droits de l'homme. A la veille de sa visite à Genève, la Commissaire a déclaré: *“Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, nous sommes confrontés à la nécessité de construire un internet ouvert. Les citoyens doivent être au centre de politiques numériques inclusives qui garantissent nos libertés et nos valeurs dans un monde numérique qui évolue de plus en plus rapidement. C'est un moment clé et l'Europe est prête à prendre ses responsabilités pour défendre sur la scène mondiale un internet ouvert et transparent, au service de la démocratie et de ses valeurs fondamentales”*. Au cours de sa visite, la Commission rencontrera notamment David J. Redl, représentant de l'administration des télécommunications et de l'information aux États-Unis (NTIA), Goran Marby, Directeur-général et Président de la Société pour l'attribution des noms de domaine et des numéros sur internet (ICCAN), Houlin Zhao, Secrétaire général de l'Union internationale des télécommunications, ainsi que des représentants d'entreprises américaines et européennes. Au cours du forum, la Commissaire **Gabriel** donnera deux discours, l'un sur la construction d'une future gouvernance globale d'internet et l'autre sur l'impact de la numérisation sur les actions politiques, la confiance publique

et la démocratie. (*Pour plus d'informations : Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083 ; Julia-Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707*)

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

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

CALENDRIER du 18 décembre au 07 janvier 2018

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(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 18 décembre 2017

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives the Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans partners.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** and Mr Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecommunications and Postal Services, visit MolenGeek coding school in Molenbeek, Belgium.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Andrea Rossi, Chief Executive Officer of AXA IM and Board Director.

Johannes **Hahn** in Vienna, Austria: meets Mr Thomas Greminger, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Mr Neven **Mimica** in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (until 19/12): participates in the 34th Session of the Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Dirk Jacobs, Mr Hubert Weber, Ms Mella Frewen, representatives of FoodDrinkEurope.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Ulrich Josef Brandenburg, Mr Seán Ó Riain, Mr Witdoeckt Flory, representatives of the Europa Esperanto-Unio (EEU).

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** in Athens, Greece: participates in the Greek Economic Forum 'Ministry for Tomorrow' event; and delivers a keynote speech at the London School of Economics (LSE) alumni event at the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Londres: rencontre M. Philip Hammond, Chancelier de l'Echiquier; prononce un discours à une table ronde organisée par [Policy Network](#); participe à une conférence organisée par the [London School of Economics](#).

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Hamburg, Germany: meets Mr Andy Grote, Senator for Internal Affairs and Sport of the State of Hamburg; visits the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Hannover, Germany: meets Mr Stephan Weil, Minister President of Lower Saxony; Mr Boris Pistorius, Minister for Internal Affairs and Sport of Lower Saxony.

Mr Phil **Hogan** participates in the [2017 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference](#), in Brussels.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** in Madrid, Spain: delivers a keynote speech at a [meeting](#) with Professional Women's Network and delivers another keynote speech at a seminar on Tourism and Culture: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Europe.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** in New Dehli, India; delivers a keynote speech at the Business roundtable "India's modernisation agenda: opportunities and challenges for European transport companies"; meets Mr Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways, and Shipping; meets Mr Piyush Goyal, Minister for Railways.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Bucharest, Romania (until 19/12): participates in the signing ceremony of the financing agreement on Improving the Competitiveness of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Regional Operational Program 2014-2020, together with Mr Mihai Tudose, Prime Minister of Romania, and Mr Marius Nica, Minister-delegate for European Funds of Romania. She also visits an EU-funded project: "Multi Risk – Module I", Large Infrastructure Operational Program, together with Ms Carmen Daniela Dan, Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Marius Nica, Minister-delegate for European Funds of Romania, and Mr Raed Arafat, Secretary of State, Head of the Department for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Then, Ms **Crețu** visits the Children Center "St. Muceniță Sofia"; meets Mr Felix Stroe, Minister of Transport; participates in the [Structural Funds Gala](#), organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Romania and Structural Consulting Group.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: meets Ms Lizette Riisgaard,

President of the Confederation of Danish Trade Unions.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a keynote speech at the Award Ceremony of the Corporate Startup Stars at the Startup Europe Partnership (SEP), in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** in Geneva, Switzerland: attends the 12th [Internet Governance Forum](#).

Mardi 19 décembre 2017

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** and Mr Andrus **Ansip** receive Mr Dieter Kempf, President of Federation of German industries (BDI).

Mr Frans **Timmermans** and Mr Karmenu **Vella** receive Ms Stientje van Veldhoven, State Secretary for Infrastructure and Water Management of The Netherlands.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** is in Beirut, Lebanon.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives Mr Nick Clegg, Head of office "Open Reason".

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Magnus Berntsson, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and President of the R20-Regions of Climate Action (R20).

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** delivers a speech on European Defence at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) series on the Future of Europe, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, Secretary of the Economy of Mexico.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** delivers welcome remarks at the [2017 Export Control Forum](#), in Brussels.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** receives Mr Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, Secretary of Economy of Mexico.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit M. Gabriel Zucman, chercheur à Université de Californie, M. Ludvig Wier et M. Thomas Tørsløv, chercheurs à Université de Copenhague, à Bruxelles.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** participe à la cérémonie publique d'hommage à Simone Veil et Euro Chanukah organisée par le European Jewish Community Centre à Bruxelles.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Bremen, Germany: meets Mr Christian Weber, President of the Parliament of the State of Bremen. He also meets with the representatives of the Committee for Federal and European Affairs, International Contacts and Development Policy of the Parliament of the State of Bremen; Mr Ulrich Mäurer, Senator for the Interior of the State of

Bremen; Mr Joachim Lohse, Senator for the Environment, Construction and Transport of the State of Bremen. He then visits the Maritime Search and Rescue Service of Germany and the Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association (BORDA e.V.).

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Paris, France: participates in a national conference on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Ms Violeta **Bulc** in New Dehli, India; meets Mr Pusupati Ashok Gajapati Raju, Minister for Civil Aviation; meets Mr Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs.

Ms Corina **Crețu** in Bucharest, Romania: attends the Award ceremony of the "European Leader" Contest, organised by the European Commission Representation in Romania; participates in a Citizens' Dialogue, together with Mr Marius Nica, Minister-delegate for European Funds of Romania.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: meets Mr Karsten Dybvad, CEO of the Confederation of Danish Industries; meets party leader Mr Uffe Elbaek, Danish party Alternativet; meets Mr Kristian Jensen, Minister of Finance of Denmark; meets Mr Soren Pape, Minister for Justice of Denmark and leader of Danish conservative party.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Xavier Barcons, Director General of the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere (ESO).

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** reçoit Mme Véronique Desbrosses, Directrice générale du European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC).

Mercredi 20 décembre 2017

Meeting of the College of Commissioners.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** receives Mr Goran Trivan, Minister for Environmental Protection of Serbia.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Vice-President of European Investment Bank, Mr Ambroise Fayolle.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** and Ms Marianne **Thyssen** host the signing ceremony for the partnership on integration with social partners, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Lisbonne: rencontre M. Mario Centeno, Président de l'Eurogroupe.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** attends with Mr Ambroise Fayolle, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the signature ceremony of the InnovFin Energy Demonstration Projects loans for CHO TIPER and Oxford Photovoltaics Ltd. (Oxford PV).

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives representatives from the Ordem dos Enfermeiros

(Portuguese Order of Nurses).

Jeudi 21 décembre 2017

Johannes **Hahn** in The Hague, The Netherlands: participates at the closing ceremony of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Mr Karmenu **Vella** receives Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR).

Mr Karmenu **Vella** receives representatives from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Lisbonne: prononce un discours lors d'une conférence organisée par le journal [Diário Notícias](#) à l'occasion du 153ième anniversaire.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Ispra, Italy: visit to the European School in Varese and meets with staff and senior students. He also meets with staff of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and visits the Interoperability and Vehicles Emissions Laboratories.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Paul Marie Chavanne, President of GeoPost.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Ms Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value and Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University College London (UCL).

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Manuel Castro Almeida, Director of Ernst and Young in Portugal.

Vendredi 22 décembre 2017

Samedi 23 décembre 2017

Dimanche 24 décembre 2017

Prévisions du mois de décembre:

11/12 Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), in Brussels.

11-12/12 Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH), in Brussels.

11-14/12 European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg.

12/12 General Affairs Council (GAC), in Brussels.

12/12 General Affairs Council (Art. 50), in Brussels.

14-15/12 European Council, in Brussels.

18/12 Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE), in Brussels.

19/12 Environnement Council (ENVI), in Brussels.

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CALENDRIER du 03 janvier au 07 janvier 2018

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Mercredi 03 janvier 2018

Jeudi 04 janvier 2018

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** in Bratislava, Slovakia; participates in the opening ceremony for the first ever battery assisted fast charging system in Central and Eastern Europe.

Vendredi 05 janvier 2018

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Vilnius, Lithuania: meets with the Committee responsible for double quality in food of Lithuanian Parliament.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Luxemburg: meets Mr Dan Kersch, Minister for Interior of Luxemburg.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** in Lisbon, Portugal; delivers a keynote speech at the opening session of the initiative Catolica Research (CARE) at the Conference Ciência Aberta organised by Universidade Catolica.

Samedi 06 janvier 2018

Dimanche 07 janvier 2018

Prévisions du mois de janvier:

15-18/01 European Parliament plenary session, in Strasbourg.

22/01 – Foreign Affairs Council, in Brussels.

22/01 – Eurogroup, in Brussels.

23/01 – Economic and Financial Affairs Council, in Brussels.

25-26/01 – Informal meeting of justice and home affairs ministers, in Sofia, Bulgaria.

29/01 – Agriculture and Fisheries Council, in Brussels.

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EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration: one year on

The joint initiative was launched to strengthen migration governance and to respond to the urgent need to protect and save the lives of migrants along the Central Mediterranean migration route. It covers 14 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea,

Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.

Through the initiative, the EU and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) work with local, national and international stakeholders to implement projects in partner countries, with a total indicative budget of €140 million.

One year after launching the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, concrete results have been achieved: over 15,000 migrants have received voluntary return assistance and almost 15,000 [\[1\]](#) returning migrants are eligible for reintegration support in their communities.

Under the framework of the joint Task Force of the European Union, African Union and United Nations to address the migration situation in Libya, the work under the EU – IOM initiative will be accelerated, in particular as regards voluntary humanitarian return from Libya and reception and reintegration support in countries of origin.

Results

Increase protection and assistance for vulnerable and stranded migrants

Saving lives has always been and continues to be the highest and most urgent priority. The key focus of the EU – IOM joint initiative is to protect and assist migrants all along the migration routes, making sure that migration is safer and better managed and that migrant rights are fully respected. Faced with an increasing and intolerable number of migrants abandoned in the desert along the Central Mediterranean route, the EU-IOM initiative has also resulted in more than 2,600 stranded migrants being saved through search and rescue missions in Niger, conducted jointly with the Nigerien authorities.

Saving lives must go hand-in-hand with comprehensive measures to **improve conditions for migrants** along the migration routes. Migrants Resource and Response Mechanisms provide a comprehensive range of services to this end. The EU-IOM joint initiative has enabled the establishment of five new protection and assistance centres in **Mali** and **Burkina Faso** whilst continuing to support the five existing centres in **Niger**. In these centres, vulnerable and stranded migrants are provided with live-saving assistance and a range of support services, such as food or water (in one year, more than 400,000 meals were served) and temporary shelter, medical and psycho-social assistance, access to information, counselling and family tracing.

The expansion of the Migrant Resource and Response Mechanisms (MRRM) supports Niger's response to complex migratory flows, fosters economic and social development, and promotes feasible and effective alternatives to irregular migration from Niger.

In **Libya**, the key priority is and will continue to be to provide protection and improve the appalling conditions of stranded migrants. Through the EU-IOM initiative, more than 20,000 people have been assisted at disembarkation points, inside and outside detention centres or in host communities. So far, 6,000 people have received medical assistance, and 19,000 have been assisted

through the distribution of basic items and hygiene kits. Direct assistance has also been provided to over 9,000 migrants during the Sabratha crisis, including through the distribution of more than 125,000 meals.

Support is also provided to socio-economic development at the municipal level in order to better integrate migrants, internally displaced people and returnees, and to stabilise their host communities. The EU–IOM initiative also includes collecting information on the profiles, vulnerabilities, intentions and needs of assisted migrants in order to inform policy and programme responses. This helps partner countries to provide adequate protection measures and reinforce migration governance.

Voluntary return

Voluntary return options are an **important protection measure** for many vulnerable and stranded migrants who wish to return to their countries of origin but do not have the necessary means to do so. In 2017, more than 15,000 individuals safely returned to their home countries and were supported with reintegration assistance. This measure will be stepped up to help an additional 15,000 people, who are stranded in Libya, to return home by February 2018.

Towards sustainable reintegration

Reintegration support helps returning migrants re-establish themselves in their countries of origin. Returnees typically receive support such as vocational training and assistance to set up micro-businesses or cooperatives.

This process can take time as returnees may encounter a number of challenges that can impact their ability to readjust and reintegrate. This can also have an impact on other members of their community. For this reason, involving local communities in the projects is crucial.

By addressing returnees' economic, social and psychosocial needs, local ownership, partnership and closer alignment to development planning is being ensured. For example, in Kayes region in Mali, the initiative supported the establishment of a poultry farm for 300 beneficiaries (migrants and community members) in partnership with the NGO Human-Help.

The IOM has also helped more than 900 migrants to return from Niger to Guinea Bissau. As a result of the EU–IOM initiative, twenty returnees and community members are now working in a bakery project in Bissau City.

Enhance government and stakeholder policies and responses

An action is foreseen to strengthen the capacity of the actors involved in reintegration activities by supporting the national coordination structures and other relevant stakeholders.

The aim is to increase government ownership of the reintegration of returning migrants and to develop and strengthen coordination mechanisms.

In this respect, Standard Operating Procedures have been defined at a regional level for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. They will frame the drafting of national operating procedures, as was the case, for example, in Cameroon.

Safe and informed migration for more than 53,000 beneficiaries

Awareness-raising actions are being implemented to provide reliable information on the costs and risks related to irregular migration, European asylum law and the factual realities awaiting migrants in Europe, as well as alternatives such as legal and safe migration, rights and obligations and opportunities for voluntary return and reintegration. These efforts reached 53,381 migrants in Niger between April and November 2017, providing them with a realistic picture on which to base their future decisions.

Improve data on migration flows, routes and trends as well as migrants' needs and vulnerabilities

In order to better provide assistance to vulnerable migrants and to support the governments in the definition of policy promoting safe, orderly and planned migration, a better understanding of current migration flows at a regional level is required. The joint initiative has provided bi-weekly data updates including cumulated numbers, enabling partners to collect reliable data and better monitor migration flows.

Next steps

The EU will support the acceleration of the IOM's programme for assisted voluntary returns from Libya to countries of origin, funding an additional 15,000 voluntary returns from Libya by February 2018.

For More Information

[One year of EU partnership with IOM: migrant protection and reintegration in Africa](#)

[IOM projects under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#)

[1] By 30 November 2017.

Tobacco track and trace system: Questions and Answers

Why do tobacco products on the EU market need to be tracked and traced?

Tobacco use is extremely harmful to health. Smoking is the biggest cause of preventable death in the EU. Illicit trade amplifies its negative effects by

making it easier for people – including children and young adults, to buy tobacco products. Illicit tobacco products are often substantially cheaper than legal products, and they are less likely to comply with important rules, such as the obligation to carry combined health warnings.

Furthermore, illicit tobacco trade is responsible for millions of euros in tax revenue losses by EU countries every year. Measuring the extent of this illicit tobacco trade is extremely challenging, but the amount of duty that EU tax administrations lose to illicit trade has been estimated at about €11.1 billion a year^[1]. Illicit tobacco trade has also been identified as a primary source of revenue for organised crime, and, in some cases, for terrorist groups.

To tackle illicit trade, the [EU Tobacco Products Directive \(2014/40/EU\)](#) provides for the establishment of an EU-wide track and trace system for the legal supply chain of tobacco products (article 15), as well as a system of security features to help detect illicit products (article 16).

What are the main steps in setting up a traceability system?

Each Member State must appoint an 'ID issuer' to be responsible for generating and issuing unique identifier codes to be applied to unit packets, and ensure the ID issuer's independence from the tobacco industry. National authorities should notify the Commission of the appointment of the ID issuer and of its identification code **within one month** of their appointment and make this information publically available.

The appointed ID issuer must generate unique identifiers, composed of numbers and/or letters, for unit packets, and where requested, aggregated packaging. These unique identifiers need to be applied to the product within a period of six months. ID issuers can also be requested to issue 'identifier codes' for all relevant economic operators, facilities and machines, so they may be easily identified under the system.

In the meantime, each manufacturer and importer of tobacco products will be required to conclude a contract with a data storage provider (a 'primary' repository), to host the traceability data exclusively related to their products. The Commission will examine each draft contract and the suitability of all proposed providers, particularly in terms of independence and technical capability, and approve or reject them. In the absence of a reply by the Commission within a given timeframe, the provider will be deemed to be approved.

Once the primary data storage providers have been selected and approved, the Commission will be responsible for selecting the provider of a 'secondary' repository. The secondary repository will store a copy of all traceability data (including that stored in the various primary repositories) and be responsible for ensuring that Member State authorities have access to a single data set. This system will provide authorities with an overview of all product movements.

Once these key steps have been completed, the traceability system will begin

to take shape. The products will begin to be marked with unique identifiers, and their movements scanned and recorded throughout the supply chain.

How does the system ensure independence from industry?

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)'s Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products^[2], which the EU ratified in 2016, requires the traceability system to be independent from the tobacco industry. The secondary legislation adopted by the Commission ensures full compliance with this rule by placing full control of the system in the hands of the national authorities (and not the tobacco industry).

The **key task of issuing a part of the unique identifier** is the responsibility of national competent authorities. This task was identified in the course of the implementation process as most fundamental to system control, as it provides control over the supply of identifiers, offers the possibility to ensure their uniqueness and best protects against manipulation.

Member States may either choose to issue unique identifiers themselves, or appoint third parties – which would be subject to strict independence criteria, to carry out the task.

When third parties are contracted to provide other services, for example repository systems or anti-tampering devices, the Regulation lays down clear criteria to assess their independence from the tobacco industry, which Member States and the Commission must apply.

Last but not least, the system's independence is embedded in a careful design of its overall architecture covering all the movements of tobacco products, defining timelines for reporting, and prescribing a specific format for individual reports. The system is designed to provide high quality data, which in turn will enable Member States and the Commission to effectively control the supply chain of tobacco products and better detect the instances of illicit trade.

What are the main requirements for the security feature?

Security features should enable authorities and citizens to verify the authenticity of a tobacco product. To ensure they are secure, they should be composed of five types of 'authentication elements'. At least one of these must be visible by the human eye – or 'overt'. At least one must be invisible and only detectable with purpose built tools or professional lab equipment – or 'covert'. There must also be at least one 'semi-covert' feature, which is invisible but can be detected with non-specialist equipment such as a UV torch or a special pen. The security features should be applied to packs by means of printing and/or affixing.

What are the measures to protect against forgery?

If a Member State has reason to believe that the integrity of any authentication element of a security feature currently in use on its market is compromised, they will need to replace or modify it. The competent national authority is also obliged to inform, within five days, manufacturers

and importers of compromised security features.

EU countries may also lay down formal guidelines or requirements on the security of production and distribution procedures to protect against forgery or theft. For example, they may insist on the use of secure equipment, regular audits, monitoring tools for production quantities, and secure shipping.

Who was consulted when preparing the legal acts?

The Commission conducted a thorough consultation process to prepare these acts. The views of all relevant stakeholders were sought via 1) a targeted stakeholder consultation; 2) a 12 week public consultation; and 3) the organisation of two stakeholder workshops in Brussels. In addition, the draft acts were published on the Commission's website in September 2017 and the general public and interested parties had four weeks to provide their feedback. The received feedback was published on the website and analysed in detail by the Commission. Justified comments have been taken into account where possible. The advice of independent experts was also sought at various stages throughout the process, and two external studies were commissioned to provide technical input. Regular discussions with Member States, including on amendments to the draft acts, continued throughout the whole process, and the two implementing acts were adopted after a written vote by an overwhelming majority.

When will the new rules take effect?

Both the traceability system and the security features should be in place **by 20 May 2019** for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco and **by 20 May 2024**, for all other tobacco products (such as cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco products).

For more information:

https://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/tracking_tracing_system_en

[1] [Study](#) on measuring and reducing administrative costs for economic operators and tax authorities and obtaining a higher level of compliance and security in imposing excise duties on tobacco products ('Ramboll Study')

[2] <http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/en/>

Combatting illicit trade in tobacco products: Statement by Commissioner

Andriukaitis on the EU's adoption of an EU-wide track and trace system

Today the EU has taken a big step forward in combatting the illicit trade in tobacco products. The new EU-wide track and trace system adopted today will ensure that tobacco products in the EU are easily traceable with a [unique identifier](#) for each product. In addition, we are also making sure that tobacco products meet specific security requirements, with at least five types of authentication elements required per packet.

*The track and trace system and the security requirements should be in place **by 20 May 2019** for cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco and **by 20 May 2024** for all other tobacco products (such as cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco products).*

Tobacco still remains the biggest avoidable cause of premature death in the EU, and the illicit trade in tobacco facilitates access to cigarettes and other tobacco products, including for children and young adults. In addition, millions of euros in tax revenues are lost every year as a result of the illicit trade. I am confident that these measures will improve public health and deliver significant economic benefits for the EU and its citizens.

Background

The [Tobacco Products Directive \(2014/40/EU\)](#) provides for the establishment of an **EU-wide track and trace system** for the legal supply chain of tobacco products and a system of **security features** to help citizens and authorities detect illicit products.

The legal acts adopted today lay out the measures that must be taken by EU Member States and economic operators in order to establish and operate a traceability system for tobacco products, ensuring that all packets of tobacco produced in, destined for, or placed on the EU market, are marked with a unique identifier. They also set out the requirements for the obligatory security features to be applied to tobacco products.

The legal acts adopted today are in line with the [Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\) Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#), which the EU ratified in 2016.

More information

[1] <http://www.who.int/fctc/protocol/en/>