

Daily News 01 / 12 / 2017

Investment Plan for Europe: largest financing amount to date for trains in Austria

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed an agreement under the Investment Plan in the transport sector today. The [€500 million loan](#) – the largest transaction under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to date – will allow Austrian train company ÖBB- Personenverkehr AG to purchase new rolling stock. ÖBB will use the loan to purchase new Cityjet train sets for local and regional services. European Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said: *“This project not only supports investment and job creation in Europe, it also enables the transition to low emission mobility. These new trains will contribute to the attractiveness of the rail sector in Austria. All in all, this is good news for Austrian commuters and for the environment.”* (For more information see the [Investment Plan website](#) or contact Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Siobhán Millbright – Tel.: +32 229 57361)

Global Forum agree on measures to tackle steel overcapacity

The Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity bringing together 33 economies – all G20 members, some other interested OECD countries and all the world’s major steel producers – agreed yesterday in a meeting in Berlin on an ambitious package of concrete policy solutions to tackle the pressing issue of global overcapacity in the steel sector. According to the agreed package, Global Forum members must ensure market-based outcomes in the steel industry, refrain from market-distorting subsidies and other government support measures that contribute to overcapacity, provide a level playing field between state-owned and private companies, and enact effective adjustment policies. These steps are underpinned by a robust monitoring mechanism on capacity and policy developments to track implementation in 2018 and 2019. Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said: *“The problem of excess capacity of steel has real effects on people’s lives – especially those who become unemployed. This is a global challenge, and it has to be dealt with accordingly. In the run-up to the World Trade Organisation’s 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, this success underlines the importance of effective multilateral cooperation to solve global problems. Of course, our work is not yet done. Now we need to walk the talk.”* As a matter of priority, the Global Forum members should now ensure swift application of the agreed principles and recommendations and share – in the first half of 2018 – the information on the steps taken to eliminate market-distorting subsidies. The overcapacity issue was raised on several occasions by President Juncker at both bilateral and multilateral level, notably during the last two G20 Summits. Launched in December 2016 after a call by G20 Leaders in the Hangzhou, the Forum was reinforced by the outcomes of the July 2017 G20 Hamburg Summit. The Global Forum will continue meeting at least three times per year to monitor the implementation of the today’s commitments. The [press](#)

[release](#) and a [report](#) are available online. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

EU and its Arctic partners agree to prevent unregulated fishing in high seas

The European Union, together with partners engaged in Arctic matters (Canada, China, the Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States), last night succeeded in reaching an international agreement to prevent unregulated commercial fishing in the Arctic high seas. That is, until sufficient scientific information to support the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks in the region is available. The Arctic region is warming at almost twice the global average rate, causing a change in the size and distribution of fish stocks. As a result, the Arctic high seas potentially become more attractive for commercial fisheries in the medium to long term. However, until present, most of the Arctic high seas were not covered by any international conservation and management regime. The agreement, reached in Washington DC at the fifth and final round of negotiations, will be a first step towards the creation of regional fisheries management organisations for the Central Arctic Ocean, to ensure that any future fishing is carried out sustainably. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for the Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, said: *“The commitment and leadership shown by all parties have made it possible to reach this historic agreement. It will fill an important gap in the international ocean governance framework and will safeguard fragile marine ecosystems for future generations.”* The agreement is fully in line with the European Union’s long-standing position – emphasised recently at the EU-hosted [Our Ocean Conference](#) in Malta in October – that no commercial fisheries should begin in the Arctic high seas before a science-based and precautionary management regime is in place. Sound stewardship of the high seas has a prominent place in the EU’s [Arctic policy](#) and [Ocean Governance](#) policy, as regards a responsible approach towards utilizing Arctic marine resources, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples. The agreement will enter into force when all ten Parties have signed and ratified the agreement. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Financial services: Commission follows up on the Call for Evidence and consults on supervisory reporting

The Commission is today following up on its stock-taking exercise of financial regulation with a new report on [Call for Evidence on EU financial services](#). The Call for Evidence was launched in 2015 to assess whether rules adopted since the financial crisis were working as intended. It led to new measures to make financial rules more proportionate and to reduce unnecessary regulatory constraints on market players. In this context, the Commission is today also launching a public [consultation](#) on supervisory reporting requirements. The aim is to assess the effectiveness of reporting, which supervisors in the EU need from financial market players. This consultation is a response to concerns raised in the Call for Evidence about the burden and costs that such requirements impose on market players. Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice President in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: *“With our Call for Evidence we were the first to assess the overall impact of financial services regulation on*

the market. We will continue to push for more coherent supervision and regulation across the board and ensure that EU financial services rules remain fit for purpose.” Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President in charge of Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness said: “The Call for Evidence confirmed that we can create better and more growth-friendly regulation. We can do so by developing and adjusting policies based on factual evidence and by involving interested parties. This in turn fosters job creation, growth and investment, while safeguarding financial stability and protecting both consumers and investors.” More information on the [consultation](#) and the [report](#) can be found online. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Letizia Lupini – Tel.: +32 229 51958)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de Croatie

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du [«Međimursko meso 'z tiblice»](#) dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Produit dans le comté de Međimurje dans le nord-ouest de la Croatie, la «Međimursko meso 'z tiblice» est une charcuterie à base de viande de porc salée et assaisonnée et d'une préparation de lard appelé «slanina». Dans la région de Međimurje, l'élevage porcin a toujours été le secteur d'élevage le plus important et l'est resté jusqu'à aujourd'hui. La spécificité du «Međimursko meso 'z tiblice» résulte précisément de son mode traditionnel de préparation qui consiste à superposer des couches successives de viande de porc et de slanina jusqu'au sommet du récipient. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1415 produits déjà protégés dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données [DOOR](#). 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)

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of joint control over SMATRICS and E-Mobility Provider Austria by VERBUND and OMV

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over SMATRICS GmbH & Co KG and E-Mobility Provider Austria GmbH, the latter being the unlimited partner of SMATRICS, by VERBUND AG and OMV Aktiengesellschaft, all of Austria. SMATRICS provides e-mobility services across Austria and will constitute a full-function joint venture operating on the market autonomously. E-mobility services are needed for operating electric vehicles, including for example the provision of charging infrastructure. VERBUND is an electricity supply company, whose core business includes generating and transmitting electricity, as well as electricity trading. OMV is an integrated oil and gas company, active across the entire crude oil and natural gas value chain. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlap between the companies' activities and the negligible actual or foreseen activities of the joint venture in the European Economic Area. 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.8618](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of three regional savings banks in Italy by Cariparma.

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of three Italian savings banks (Cassa di Risparmio di Cesena S.p.A., Cassa di Risparmio di Rimini S.p.A. and Cassa di Risparmio di San Miniato S.p.A.) by Crédit Agricole Cariparma S.p.A. ("Cariparma"), also of Italy. The three banks being acquired are mainly active in retail banking in North and Central Italy. Cariparma, an Italian subsidiary of Crédit Agricole S.A., is a provider of a complete range of financial services in Italy. The acquisition is taking place in the context of an agreement with the Voluntary Scheme of the Interbank Deposit Fund. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because there are only minor horizontal overlaps or vertical relationships between the combined activities of these four banks. 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.8639](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Eurostat: R&D expenditure in the EU remained stable in 2016 at just over 2% of GDP

In 2016, the Member States of the European Union (EU) spent all together over €300 billion on Research & Development (R&D). The R&D intensity, i.e. R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP, remained stable at 2.03% in 2016. Ten years ago (2006), R&D intensity was 1.76%. A Eurostat press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyan – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

STATEMENTS

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: Statement by Commissioner Thyssen

"By 2020, one in five Europeans is expected to experience some degree of disability. Enabling people with disabilities to participate fully in society is one of the major societal challenges we face – there is still a long way to go in fighting the social exclusion of people with disabilities. Inclusive growth and social fairness are at the core of the European Commission's agenda, as confirmed by the recent proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. [...] The European Union continues to stand by its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As part of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 this European Commission has notably taken important initiatives to help removing barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities. Two years ago I presented my proposal for a [European Accessibility Act](#), which aims at making key products and services accessible for people with disabilities. It is now high time for my proposal to be adopted by all EU institutions." The full statement can be found [here](#). On 4 and 5 December, the Commission organises a European Day for People with Disabilities, including the yearly Access City Award ceremony. More information on both events is available [here](#). (For more

information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Ansip and Commissioner Gabriel at Telecoms Council to urge progress in spectrum coordination

On Monday, Ministers in charge of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy issues will discuss several key digital and telecoms files. Both Vice-President for Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip** and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** are participating in the Council meeting to urge Ministers to progress on key legislation – the [European Electronic Communications Code](#) and spectrum coordination. Vice-President **Ansip** said: “Without coordinated spectrum, we will be lagging behind in deploying 5G and rolling out IoT solutions. Hence, I welcome the calls from EU leaders to agree on the new telecoms code as soon as possible. We cannot afford losing more time.” Commissioner **Gabriel** said: “High-speed connectivity and good spectrum coordination are the backbone of the Digital Single Market. Europe has a lot to win with the new telecoms rules. The direct benefits vary from economic growth to improved health care and intelligent energy consumption based on real-time needs.” Other topics touched upon on the Council meeting will be the [free flow of non-personal data](#), future investment policy for digitalisation beyond 2020, and the progress report on the proposed [e-Privacy rules](#). The Council will also adopt a general approach on the [BEREC Regulation](#), which will strengthen EU level coordination of electronic communications. The Ministers will additionally be updated on the Council Conclusions and Action Plan on Cybersecurity ([see more on cyber security](#)) and the incoming Bulgarian Presidency will present its work programme. More information on spectrum coordination is available in the factsheets on [spectrum](#) and [connectivity](#). An overview of the Digital Single Market is available in the [state of play factsheet](#); additional factsheets can be found [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

La Coalition pour les compétences et les emplois numériques célèbre sa première année de réalisations

[La Coalition pour les compétences et les emplois numériques](#) a été lancée il y a exactement un an avec les États membres, les entreprises, les partenaires sociaux, les ONG et les professionnels de l'éducation pour répondre à la forte demande en matière de compétences numériques en Europe. La Commission européenne organisera le 7 décembre une [conférence](#) à Bruxelles pour marquer cette étape et discuter des progrès réalisés jusqu'à présent. Au cours de la conférence, Mariya **Gabriel**, commissaire à l'économie et à la société numériques, présentera sa vision de la future politique sur les compétences numériques et lancera officiellement l'initiative de “[stages pour des opportunités numériques](#)”. Ce projet pilote offrira des stages dans un autre pays de l'UE à plus de 6 000 étudiants et récemment diplômés en 2018-2020. La commissaire remettra également les [Prix européens 2017 sur les compétences numériques](#) à cinq projets exceptionnels qui ont renforcé les compétences numériques des Européens dans quatre catégories: les compétences numériques

pour les citoyens, les compétences numériques pour la main-d'œuvre, les compétences numériques pour les professionnels des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) et les compétences numériques dans l'éducation. Un prix spécial sera décerné à l'un des projets qui promeut les compétences numériques chez les femmes et les jeunes filles afin de souligner l'importance qu'il y a à combler l'écart entre les sexes dans le secteur numérique. La conférence comprendra des panels sur les investissements futurs nécessaires dans les compétences numériques. En outre, des ateliers interactifs se concentreront sur la manière de sensibiliser les citoyens ainsi que les petites et moyennes entreprises aux compétences numériques, et sur des solutions pour mieux les introduire dans l'éducation. Les journalistes peuvent s'inscrire à l'événement [ici](#). Plus de détails et le programme complet sont disponibles [ici](#). Plus d'informations sur les finalistes des Prix européens sur les compétences numériques 2017 sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: +32 229 67083, Inga Höglund – Tél .: +32 229 50698)

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' Weekly Activities

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

[Verena Ross Keynote Address at ASIFMA Annual Conference 2017](#)

Verena Ross, ESMA Executive Director, gave a [keynote address](#) at the ASIFMA Annual Conference 2017 in Hong Kong. The two-day conference is one of the largest fora to discuss issues influencing the development of Asia's capital markets.

In a wide-ranging speech, Ms. Ross focused her remarks on three main areas;

- The EU regulatory framework and the role of ESMA;
- The work carried out by ESMA in the context of third country frameworks and how these can be further strengthened;
- Some of the implications of the EU regulation on Asian firms.

In her address, Ms. Ross touched upon several issues of particular relevance of Asian firms, namely MiFIDII, EMIR and LEI's. Addressing the implementation on January 3rd of MiFIDII, Ms. Ross said, *"Asian-headquartered firms with branches or subsidiaries providing investment services in the EU will be directly subject to the new MiFID requirements. But MiFID II obligations for Asia-based institutions are often indirect, arising by virtue of them dealing with European firms or counterparties on a cross border basis for example."*

The full text of the keynote address can be accessed [here](#).

CALENDRIER du 04 décembre au 10 décembre 2017

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 04 décembre 2017

Eurogroup, in Brussels

04-05/12 Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE), in Brussels

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Ms Theresa May, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for a working lunch.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Gianni Pittella, President of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Ditmir Bushati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Ms Chrystia Freeland, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** co-chairs the EU-Canada Joint Ministerial Committee.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Jorma Malinen, Chairman of Trade Union Pro, Mr Samu Salo, Chairman of the Union of Professional Engineers in Finland; and Mr Heikki Kauppi, Executive Director at TEK Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** attends the meeting of Eurogroup ministers of the European People's Party.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** attends the meeting of the Presidency of the European People's Party.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Ms Ursula von der Leyen, Minister for Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr Johannes **Hahn** in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: on official visit.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Wilfred Peter Elrington, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belize.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Vinicio Cerezo, Secretary General of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Pim Van Ballekom, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** delivers a keynote speech at the [ITER \(International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor\) Industry Day](#) on “The way to clean energy from fusion: future technology, today’s jobs”, in Brussels.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Tarek El-Molla, Minister for Petroleum and Mineral Resources of Egypt.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Ditmir Bushati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives the Board of Directors of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA).

Mr Phil **Hogan** in Dublin, Ireland: delivers a speech at the [Food Wise 2025 Conference](#); and meets Mr Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** delivers a keynote speech at the [Connected Transport Summit 2017](#) , in Brussels.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** delivers a speech at the [European Defence Industry Summit](#), in Brussels.

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Prague, Czech Republic: meets Mr Andrej Babiš, President of the ANO Party.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives Ms Christiane Wendehorst, President of the European Law Institute.

Ms Corina **Crețu** is in Coimbra, Portugal: visits the areas affected by the fires in *Centro* region; meets representatives of local authorities; and Mr Luís Medeiros Vieira, Secretary of State for Agriculture and Food.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** receives Mr John Pecman, Commissioner for Competition of Canada.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** in Madrid, Spain: presents [the Prima initiative – Innovation and Research in the Mediterranean area](#) at the Ministry for Economy, Industry and Competitiveness.

Mr Julian **King** in Munich, Germany: attends the Munich Strategy Forum.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Ismir Jusko, Minister for Communication and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mardi 05 décembre 2017

Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE), in Brussels

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), in Brussels

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** delivers a keynote speech at the [GLOBE EU High-Level lunch](#), at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** receives Mr Mario Ohoven, President of the European Entrepreneurs organisation (CEA-PME), accompanied by a Delegation of European Entrepreneurs.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Rex Tillerson Secretary of State of the United States; and chairs an informal lunch of EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs in attendance of Mr Rex Tillerson, in Brussels.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** delivers the opening remarks at the 19th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum “Human Rights under threat: exploring new approaches in a challenging global context”, in Brussels.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** participates in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, in Brussels.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** and Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receive high-level representatives of several Member States for a meeting on cybersecurity.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** receives Mr Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Helsinki, Finland (until 06/12): meets Mr Mika Ihmäs, Executive Chairman of Marimekko; attends a celebratory plenary session at the Parliament of Finland; delivers a keynote speech at the [Future of Europe Youth Convention](#), organised by Finnish Youth Cooperation organisation Allianssi; meets Mr Ilkka Suominen, honorary Chairman of the National Coalition Party; and attends the Independence Day reception of the National Coalition Party.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** participates in the opening session and in a plenary panel at the [EU Trade Policy Day](#), in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** participates in the launch of the event on the flagship EU-funded project “Bridging the Gap II – Inclusive Policies and Services for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, in Brussels.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Ben Voorhorst, President of the Assembly of ENTSO-E.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** delivers a keynote speech at the ENTSO-E Annual

Conference on “The Energy Union in 2030”, in Brussels.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister for Energy; and Mr Michał Kurtyka, Vice-Minister for Energy of Poland.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** receives Mr Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Nairobi, Kenya (until 06/12): at the [3rd Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#): attends the opening plenary; delivers an opening speech at the [Side Event: The Role of a Circular Economy in the transition: Towards pollution-free Planet](#), and attends the [Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue](#); meets Mr Li Ganjie, Minister for Environmental Protection of China; and Mr Mahesh Sharma, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Milan, Italy: participates in the 8th International Forum on Food and Nutrition.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** participates in the “EU-Africa: Strengthening a sustainable partnership” event, in Brussels.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Carl Hollister, Supreme President of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA).

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** chairs the [Access City Award 2018](#), closing the European Day of Persons with Disabilities, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** prononce un discours lors de la conférence “Building an EU Tax system” organisée par la Fédération des Conseillers Fiscaux, à Bruxelles.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** rencontre des étudiants-stagiaires de l’Université du transport aérien lancée par la Direction générale de l’aviation civile (DGAC) et l’Ecole Nationale de l’Aviation Civile (ENAC), à Bruxelles.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Zoran Đorđević, Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of Serbia.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** delivers a keynote speech at a seminar organised by the French National School of Administration, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** participates in the 46th Session of the International Grains Council (IGC), in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives a delegation from the Oireachtas (Irish National Parliament) Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives Mr Gianni Fava, Regional Minister for Agriculture of Lombardy, Italy.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** receives Mr Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister for Energy; and Mr Michał Kurtyka, Vice-Minister for Energy of Poland.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** receives car industry representatives.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** receives Mr Andres Jaadla, Member of Rakvere City Council and Member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Rapporteur on Space Strategy for Europe.

Ms Věra **Jourová** delivers a keynote speech at the 4th Meeting of the EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance, in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** delivers concluding remarks at [Erasmus+ Sport Cluster event](#) on “Encouraging participation in Sport and Physical activities”, in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** participates and delivers a speech at a reception organised by the Chinese Mission to the EU on the occasion of the assumption of office of Mr Zhang Ming, Head of the Mission of the Republic of China, in Brussels.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** receives Mr Krzysztof Tchórzewski, Minister for Energy of Poland.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** delivers a keynote speech on the role of EU competition policy and women leadership during a breakfast meeting hosted by the European Network for Women in Leadership in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Richard Hatchett, CEO of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

Mr Julian **King** in Berlin, Germany: meets Mr Thomas De Maizière, Federal Minister for the Interior of Germany; and Mr Hans-Georg Maaßen, President of the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV)* of Germany; and attends the Berlin Policy Forum.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr José María Álvarez-Pallete López, Chairman and CEO of Telefonica.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives local representatives of Sevlievo municipality.

Mrs Mariya **Gabriel** receives Ms Chen Lifang, President of the Public Affairs and Communications Department at Huawei.

Mrs Mariya **Gabriel** receives Ms Antonyia Parvanova, Board Member of the General Board of Women in Leadership (WIL)

Mrs Mariya **Gabriel** receives Mr Mogens Blicher Bjerregård, President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).

Mrs Mariya **Gabriel** delivers a speech and awards a prize at the [European Bee Award](#), at the European Parliament, in Brussels.

Mercredi 06 décembre 2017

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives Mr Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** receives Mr Zoran Zaev, Prime Minister of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** delivers a presentation at the First DecarbHeat Platform meeting with CEOs who signed the DecarbHeat Industry Pledge, in Brussels.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** receives Mr Jānis Reirs, Minister for Welfare of Latvia.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Helsinki, Finland: attends the National Coalition Party Helsinki district's Independence Day celebration; and the Independence Day Reception of the President of the Republic.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** meets representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Employers' Group Bureau, in Brussels.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Nairobi, Kenya: attends the [3rd Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#) and delivers a speech at the EU Ministerial breakfast on Environment and Health, co-hosted by the Estonian Presidency.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** participates in the closing meeting of the European Patients Forum (EPF) Access Campaign, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** participates in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Plenary session; and discusses the implementation of food-related Sustainable Development Goals, in Brussels.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Fatmir Xhafaj, Minister for the Interior of Albania.

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** hosts the EU Internet Forum, in Brussels.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** and Mr Christos **Stylianides** deliver speeches at the Plenary of the [4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities](#) (EPPD), in Brussels.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Mr Eduardo Cabrita, Minister for Internal Administration of Portugal.

Mr Phil **Hogan** and Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** participate in the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain, in Brussels.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** delivers a speech at the [International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products' \(A.I.S.E.\) Cleaning and Hygiene Forum](#), in Brussels.

Ms Věra **Jourová** delivers a keynote speech at the Fundamental Rights Agency's Conference entitled "[Reality Bites: Experiences of Immigrants and Minorities](#)

[in the EU](#)", in Brussels.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Milan, Italy (until 07/12): participates and delivers a speech at the launch of the special edition of the annual review Cartaditalia dedicated to the [2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage](#).

Ms Corina **Crețu** receives Mr Gheorghe Șimon, Minister for the Economy of Romania.

Mr Julian **King** delivers the closing remarks at the EU Internet Forum, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** receives Ms Lilyana Pavlova, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Jeudi 07 décembre 2017

07-08/12 Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), in Brussels

07-08/12 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), in Brussels

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives a group of representatives of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) including Mr Vasco Alves Cordeiro, President of the CPMR and of the Regional Government of the Azores; Mr Enrico Rossi, President of the Region of Tuscany, Mr Loïc Chesnais-Girard, President of the Regional Council of Brittany; Mr Erik Bergkvist, President of the Region of Västerbotten and Mr Thomas Lenz, Secretary of State in the Regional Government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** receives a group of students of the Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE).

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** presents medals awarded to European Commission officials for 20 years of service, in Brussels.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** attends the General Assembly of the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME), in Brussels.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** in Maastricht, The Netherlands: attends the closing event of "[Europe Calling Festival](#)".

Mr Frans **Timmermans** meets Mr Ferdinand Grapperhaus, Minister for Justice and Security of The Netherlands.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** in Paris, France: participates in a round table organised by Ms Sabine Thillaye, Chair of the European Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly in the presence of Mr François de Rugy, President of the French Assembly and Mr Mounir Mahjoubi, Secretary of State in charge of digital affairs; meets Ms Françoise Nyssen, Minister for Culture; and delivers a speech at the launch of the European Start-up Price for Mobility

in the presence of Ms Élisabeth Borne, Minister with responsibility for Transport of France.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** attends the welcome reception of the EU-Turkey High Level Economic Dialogue and EU-Turkey Business Dialogue, in Brussels

Mr Johannes **Hahn** in Sofia, Bulgaria: participates at the conference 'World Bank – Bulgaria: Celebrating 25+ Years of Partnership'.

Mr Neven **Mimica** in Croatia (until 08/12): addresses a keynote speech at the "Future of Peace" international conference; and presents the Commission Work Programme 2018 to the Parliament of Croatia.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in China (until 08/12): meets Mr Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China; and Mr Han Changfu, Minister for Agriculture of China.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** meets with a group of bloggers and vloggers from Poland, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives representatives of Food Bank Belgium.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives representatives of Global Sepsis Alliance.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** meets a group of Members of the French Senate, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr Zhang Ming, Head of the Mission of the Republic of China to the EU.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** meets Mr Zoltán Balog, Minister of Human Capacities of Hungary, in Brussels.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** meets Mr Wouter Koolmees, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands, in Brussels.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** à Paris, France: participe à la ["Conférence de Paris – Repenser la Mondialisation"](#) organisée par Le Forum Economique International des Amériques; et rencontre M. José Angel Gurría, Secrétaire général de l'Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques (OCDE).

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives Mr Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development of Ireland.

Mr Phil **Hogan** delivers a keynote speech at the [Bio-Based Industries \(BBI\) Joint Understanding Stakeholder Forum](#), in Brussels.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** in Vienna, Austria: delivers a keynote speech at the [4th EU Rail Freight Days](#); and participates in a [Citizens' dialogue](#).

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** receives Ms Katrin Suder, State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Defence State of Germany.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** delivers the open speech "Joining Forces in Public

Procurement to Power Investment” at the [High-Level Conference on Transparency and Integrity, Professionalisation and Large Infrastructures](#), in Brussels.

Ms Věra **Jourová** receives Mr Mike Cherry, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Milan, Italy: participates and delivers a speech at the [European Culture Forum](#); and delivers a speech at the official launch of the [2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage](#).

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a keynote speech at the [FT-EIB Global Investment Forum](#): “Innovation, Digitalisation and Social Inclusion – corner stones of EU’s economic policy”, Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a keynote speech at the [“Embedding digital into societal challenges”](#), research conference organised by the Estonian Presidency, in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** delivers a speech at the [CEF Building Blocks Conference](#), in Brussels.

Ms Mariya **Gabriel** delivers a speech at the [Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition Conference](#), in Brussels.

Vendredi 08 décembre 2017

Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA), in Brussels

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), in Brussels

Ms Federica **Mogherini** chairs the EU-Georgia Association Council.

Ms Federica **Mogherini** chairs the EU-Ukraine Association Council.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** meets Mr Sander Dekker, Minister for Legal Protection of the Netherlands.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** participates in the EU-Turkey High Level Economic Dialogue (HLED) and EU-Turkey Business Dialogue, in Brussels.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** participates in an EU-Turkey High-level Economic Dialogue (HLED), in Brussels.

Mr Neven **Mimica** in Osijek, Croatia: participates in a [Citizens’ dialogue](#).

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Shenzhen, China: delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of China-EU Blue Industry Cooperation Forum; a speech at the closing ceremony of EU-China Blue Year; and meets Mr Wang Hong, Head of State Oceanic Administration of China.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** participates in a meeting of health ministers from the Party of European Socialists.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** meets Mr Bruno Bruins, Minister for Medical Care of the Netherlands, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** meets Mr Kiril Ananiev, Minister for Health of Bulgaria, in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Ms Annika Saarikko, Minister for Family Affairs and Social Services of Finland.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** receives Mr James O'Shaughnessy, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health of the United Kingdom.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** receives Ms Véronique Willems, Secretary General of the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME).

M. Pierre **Moscovici** participe au dialogue économique à haut niveau entre l'Union européenne et la Turquie avec M. Mehmet Şimşek, Vice-Premier Ministre de la Turquie, à Bruxelles.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** receives Ms Amanda Sloat, Robert Bosch senior fellow in the Centre on the United States and Europe at Brookings.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** delivers opening remarks at "Iran's role as host-country for millions of displaced Afghans" event, in Brussels.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** in Ljubljana, Slovenia: speaks to the parliamentary committee for EU affairs of the Slovenian National Assembly.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Mr Sébastien Candel, President of the French Academy of Sciences, Mr Jörg Hacker, President of the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina – National Academy of Sciences, and Mr Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, President of the The Royal Society – independent scientific academy of the UK.

Mr Julian **King** receives Mr Vladimir Ivanovich Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office.

Dimanche 10 décembre 2017

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** in Buenos Aires, Argentina (until 13/12): participates in the [11th World Trade Organization \(WTO\) Ministerial Conference](#).

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 Environment Council (ENVI), in Brussels.

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[Cooperativa de Ahorro y Préstamo Tosepantomin \(Mexico\), winner of the 2017 European Microfinance Award](#)



8th European Microfinance Award

H.R.H. Maria Teresa, Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, H.R.H Hereditary Grand Duke Guillaume of Luxembourg, Mr Romain Schneider, Luxembourg Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs and EIB President, Werner Hoyer are the honored guests to the 8th edition of the Microfinance Awards ceremony. This edition is focused in microfinance for housing.

30/11/2017

EIB

[Luxembourg]

37 microfinance institutions from 23 developing countries contended for this award, which this year focussed on “**microfinance for housing**”.

The 2017 European Microfinance Award honours a microfinance institution, based in a developing country, that implemented innovative solutions to

support access to better quality residential housing for low income, vulnerable and excluded groups, with no or limited access to housing finance in the mainstream sector.

The Cooperativa de Ahorro y Préstamo Tosepantomín helps marginalised rural Mexican communities with their residential housing building projects by offering savings and home loan products paired with technical support. The cooperative is also recognised for its promotion of eco-friendly building techniques.

This award, a EUR 100,000 prize from the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of Luxembourg's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, was given at a ceremony held at the European Investment Bank, in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses the Grand Duchess and the Hereditary Grand Duke.

The President of the High Jury, His Royal Highness the Hereditary Grand Duke, has said he was *"very impressed by the respect this initiative shows for the natural environment and its degree of rooting in the local community, which fosters the trust of indigenous populations"*.

The Award, which pays tribute to the importance of microfinance in the fight against poverty, addresses economic and social issues impacting low-income families and communities. What caught the attention of Mr Romain Schneider, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs and also a member of the Grand Jury: *"This cooperative does not only adopt a holistic approach to the multiple housing issues, but also promotes environmental responsibility in a truly remarkable way."*

For his part, Dr Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank, also underscores the importance of such an award for the sector. *"With at least 1.6 billion people living in substandard housing conditions, the need for better housing solutions is pressing. The microfinance sector, which responds to the needs of the financially excluded, is heeding the call to provide housing loans to low-income groups unserved by the traditional financial sector. I am convinced that we can all learn from the example set by the contestants in this year's competition, and especially by the winner of the 2017 Award: Cooperativa de Ahorro y Préstamo Tosepantomín."*

New this year, the two finalists, Mibanco from Peru and The First MicroFinance Bank- Afghanistan, each received EUR 10,000.

European Microfinance Award

The only one of its kind in the world, the European Microfinance Award was launched in October 2005 by the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs to nurture innovative microfinance initiatives. It is jointly organised by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP) and the Inclusive Finance Network Luxembourg (InFiNe.lu).

Atlantic strategy needs strengthening after Brexit

European Committee of the Regions calls on EU and national governments to step up efforts to develop Atlantic coastal economies.

□The United Kingdom's planned departure from the European Union poses a threat to fragile coastal economies and communities across the Atlantic region, the European Committee of the Regions has said. In recommendations adopted on 1 December, the EU's assembly of local and regional leaders urges the EU to reinforce its still-young Atlantic strategy and to allow UK regions and local authorities to be able to continue to take part in EU programmes.

The [recommendations](#) also urge Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal to respond to the UK's withdrawal from the EU by cooperating more closely on maritime issues to fill resulting gaps in science and innovation, surveillance, ocean energy and maritime investments. In its opinion, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) described the potential consequences for the Common Fisheries Policy of the UK's departure as alarming, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive approach to economic development and job growth in coastal regions and islands.

The author of the report – **Jerry Lundy** (IE/ALDE), member of Sligo County Council and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly – said: "We've now had the EU [Atlantic strategy](#) and its [action plan](#) for almost five years, and it has helped regions to recover from the economic crisis and to preserve the marine and coastal ecosystem, but we need to update and strengthen the plan. We in the Atlantic region are about to lose a major maritime nation from the European Union and a big investor in the marine economy and research, the United Kingdom. For the strategy's credibility and visibility, we think that the EU should provide dedicated funding, rather than obliging communities to search for support across the EU's funds. We're looking at cooperation between the Atlantic states in terms of job creation, tourism, fisheries, sustainable energy and, most of all, funding."

[Mr Lundy](#) continued: "We need to continue the work of rejuvenating our coastal regions and islands. You can't have an economy if you don't have a community. You can't revitalise your community if you don't have an economic plan that will keep young people there. So you need to make sure that skills, heritage and folklore of your community are not lost, and you need to keep investing in young people and new jobs."

Emphasising the potential for a revitalisation of coastal regions, Mr Lundy said: “Instead of looking downwards – for coal, gas and oil – as we did in the past, let’s look up – at the wind, sun and waves producing sustainable and clean energy. Training, skills and good roads are important, but also broadband. A lot of companies that would set up business along the coastline need to get their products to the market and need good connectivity. If we fulfil these conditions I’m confident we can create more jobs in coastal and island regions. An example from my region is the [Wild Atlantic Way](#), which we are developing to encourage tourists and entrepreneurs to visit and invest.”

Also on 1 December, the European Committee of the Regions adopted [recommendations](#) that called on the EU to focus more on modernising Europe’s rural regions, by transforming its ‘smart villages’ initiative into a full EU Rural Agenda. The EU adopted an EU urban agenda in 2016. The rapporteur on ‘smart villages’ is **Enda Stenson** (IE/European Alliance), a member of Leitrim County Council.

Mr Lundy’s opinion on the Atlantic strategy builds on the recommendations of the CoR for the future of the EU’s [Cohesion Policy post-2020](#) and on the [Committee’s resolution in March 2017 on the UK’s intention to withdraw from the European Union](#). On 30 November, members of the CoR held a wide-ranging [debate on the implications of the UK’s planned departure from the EU](#), with over 30 speakers taking the floor, Mr Lundy included.

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