EU supports recovery and resilience in the Caribbean region with €300 million

Today, at the High-Level Donor Conference for the Caribbean in New York, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica** pledges a substantial €300 million development support package to the Caribbean region. This assistance comes in the aftermath of the recent hurricanes <u>Irma</u> and Maria. Out of the total amount, about a third will be new grant resources for the countries of the region.

Commissioner **Mimica** said: "Caribbean countries have again been struck by deadly hurricanes. The European Union stands by the region, and our assistance package of €300 million will provide much needed support to accelerate recovery, strengthen resilience, and step up progress towards a sustainable economic path. The EU is supporting the region to reinforce its resilience to natural disasters and climate change."

While some of the funds will be used to cover humanitarian gaps in Dominica, St Kitts and Nevis, and Cuba, the majority will provide support for mediumterm reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts at national level in Antigua and Barbuda, in Dominica, in St Kitts and Nevis, in Cuba and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). At regional level, the EU's assistance will help to build longer term resilience by increasing the region's disaster preparedness as well as its ability to adapt to climate change.

In the margins of the conference, Commissioner **Mimica** will meet key Caribbean counterparts to discuss reconstruction efforts, EU support and overall bilateral relations. This includes the prospects for a renewed partnership, after the Cotonou Agreement will <u>expire in 2020</u>. The Cotonou Agreement is the current legal framework for the relations between the EU and the Caribbean region.

Finally, the Commissioner is also signing a new programme with the President of the Caribbean Development Bank, Dr Warren Smith. This programme will support the <u>development of geothermal energy sources</u>. The project will help these countries to reduce their dependence on energy imports and hence, promote clean energy sources and improve their energy security.

Background

In the aftermath of the hurricanes the EU has intervened immediately to provide immediate relief to those in need.

Under the <u>EU Civil Protection Mechanism</u>, EU Member States have provided logistical support for humanitarian relief, civil protection expertise and in-kind assistance to affected Caribbean countries and territories. This has been complemented by humanitarian assistance worth €2.9 million to provide shelter, water and sanitation, food, logistics and health in Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti,

Sint Maarten, and Turks and Caicos.

Moreover, within few weeks after the disaster, the European Commission has disbursed €7 million to the state budgets of Anguilla and Turks and Caicos from on-going programmes. A new budget support payment of €3.5 million will be released shortly for Dominica.

The EU has also provided funding for the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNAs) which have been carried out jointly with the UN and the World Bank in Antigua and Barbuda and in Dominica.

Looking ahead, the EU has put <u>resilience at the centre of its development</u> <u>policy</u> — highlighting the need to move from crisis containment to anticipation, prevention and preparedness. Therefore, the EU will join forces with the Caribbean islands to reduce structural vulnerability, and increase the resilience of economic infrastructure and fragile coastal ecosystems to extreme recurrent natural events. The EU support will target interventions at national and regional level, and look into innovative financing solutions and mechanisms to help Caribbean countries in reducing vulnerability and building long term resilience.

Daily News 21 /11/ 2017

Solidarité avec l'Italie: les fonds européens soutiennent la reconstruction de la basilique San Benedetto de Norcia

28 millions d'euros des fonds de la politique de Cohésion contribueront à redynamiser l'activité économique dans la région de l'Ombrie, touchée par les terribles tremblements de terre. Cela inclut 5 millions d'euros pour la restauration de la basilique San Benedetto de Norcia, détruite par la catastrophe. En tout 400 millions d'euros, venant pour moitié de l'Europe et pour moitié de l'Italie, soutiendront la relance de l'économie dans les quatre régions affectées par les séismes de 2016 et 2017: les Abruzzes, le Latium, les Marches et l'Ombrie. La Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina Cretu a dit: "La reconstruction de ce joyau du patrimoine européen avec les fonds de la politique de Cohésion sera le symbole éternel de la solidarité de l'Europe avec l'Italie, comme l'a déclaré le Président **Juncker**. L'histoire de l'église de Saint Benoît de Norcia, Grand patron de l'Europe, retrouvant son ancien éclat avec l'aide de jeunes volontaires venus de France, de Grèce ou de Hongrie, inspirera les générations futures d'Européens." La Commissaire Creţu et la Présidente de la région de l'Ombrie, Catiuscia Marini, ont tenu un point presse ce matin, que vous pouvez revoir sur EbS. Vous trouverez plus d'informations dans ce communiqué de presse et cette fiche, en <u>anglais</u> et <u>italien</u>. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr - Tel.: +32 229 56169)

EU supports recovery and resilience in the Caribbean region with substantial financial support

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to support the Caribbean region in the aftermath of recent hurricanes <u>Irma</u> and Maria, as it will pledge substantial support during the High-level Donor Conference on the Caribbean in New York. At this occasion, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica said: "Caribbean countries have again been struck by deadly hurricanes. The European Union stands by the region, and our assistance package of €300 million will provide much needed support to accelerate recovery, strengthen resilience, and step up progress towards a sustainable economic path. The EU is supporting the region to reinforce its resilience to natural disasters and climate change." In the margins of the conference, Commissioner Mimica will meet key Caribbean counterparts to discuss reconstruction efforts, EU support and overall bilateral relations. This includes the prospects for a renewed partnership after the Cotonou Agreement will expire in 2020. The Cotonou Agreement is the current legal framework for the relations between the EU and the Caribbean region. Finally, the Commissioner will also sign a new programme with the President of the Caribbean Development Bank, Dr Warren Smith. This programme will support the development of geothermal energy sources. The project will help these countries to reduce their dependence on energy imports and hence, promote clean energy sources and improve their energy security. A press release on the outcome of the High-level Donor Conference will be published at 15:00 here.(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela - Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder - Tel.: +32 229 92256)

Commission proposes fishing opportunities in the Black Sea for 2018

The Commission today has tabled its proposal on catch limits and quotas for the Black Sea ahead of the December Fisheries Council, where EU Member States will agree fishing quotas for 2018. The proposal, which concerns Bulgaria and Romania, takes into account the best available scientific advice and is the outcome of this year's <u>General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean</u> (GFCM) Annual Session, which approved the first-ever multiannual management plan for the Black Sea. For sprat, the Commission proposes to maintain a catch limit of 11,475 tonnes; 70% is allocated to Bulgaria and 30% to Romania. For turbot, the Commission transposes in its proposal the quotas adopted in the GFCM management plan for turbot (114 tonnes for 2018 and 2019, 50% assigned to Bulgaria and 50% to Romania), including a 2-month closed period (15 April - 15 June) and limitation of fishing efforts to 180 days at sea per year. Following the recent successful GFCM plenary, for the first time, the new management and control measures for two iconic Black Sea species will be implemented by all riparian countries. This marks remarkable progress in shifting towards an equal level playing-field in the region, and will also help to incentivise joint efforts to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Collectively, the Commission expects these measures to have a positive impact on stock recovery. The Commission's proposal will be submitted for discussion and pronouncement by the Member States at the next Fisheries Council (11-12 December, Brussels), to be applied as from 1 January

2018. More information on the proposal here. (For more information: Enrico Brivio - Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa - Tel.: +32 229 93321)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée de Pologne

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription de la <u>«kiełbasa piaszczańska»</u> dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Il s'agit d'une saucisse à base de viande de porc grossièrement hachée fabriquée dans le sud de la Pologne dans les communes suivantes de la voïvodie de Petite-Pologne: Wieliczka, Świątniki Górne et Cracovie. La «kiełbasa piaszczańska» tire sa dénomination de la localité dans laquelle elle est fabriquée, Piaski Wielkie, un ancien village des environs de Cracovie. Cette localité et les villages voisins étaient réputés pour la production de viande et de charcuterie, dont cette saucisse reconnue pour le marinage de sa viande et son fumage au feu de bois. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1410 produits déjà protégés dont la liste est disponible dans la base de données <u>DOOR</u>. Pour plus d'informations, voir aussi les pages sur la <u>politique de qualité</u>. (pour plus d'information: Daniel Rosario — Tel: +32 2 29 56185; Clémence Robin — Tel: +32 229 52 509)

Marché unique numérique: Les négociateurs de l'UE décident de mettre un terme au géoblocage injustifié

Hier soir, le Parlement européen, le Conseil et la Commission européenne sont parvenus à un accord politique afin de mettre un terme au géoblocage injustifié pour les consommateurs souhaitant acheter des produits ou des services en ligne au sein de l'UE. Avec cet accord sur une proposition prioritaire pour l'année 2017, l'UE tient ses engagements pris lors du sommet numérique de Tallinn, en septembre. Pour les consommateurs, cela veut dire qu'ils seront capables d'acheter de nouveaux biens électroniques en ligne, de louer une voiture ou d'acheter des billets de concert dans un autre Etat Membre: ils ne devront plus faire face à des barrières, comme par exemple une obligation de payer avec une carte de crédit ou de débit issue d'un autre pays. Pour les entreprises, ces nouvelles règles signifient plus de sécurité juridique pour opérer de manière transfrontalière. Andrus Ansip, Viceprésident pour le marché unique numérique, a déclaré: "Aujourd'hui, nous mettons un terme à la discrimination injustifiée lors des achats en ligne, ce qui est une excellente nouvelle pour les consommateurs. Avec les nouvelles règles, les Européens pourront choisir le site web à partir duquel ils souhaitent acheter sans être bloqués ou réacheminés". L'accord politique doit maintenant être confirmé par le Parlement européen et le Conseil. Le communiqué de presse est disponible en ligne. Plus d'information sur le géoblocage et la Stratégie pour un marché intérieur numérique <u>ici</u>. (Pour plus d'information: Nathalie Vandystadt — Tel.: +32 229 67083; Julia-Henriette Bräuer - Tel.: +32 229 80707; Inga Höglund - Tel.: +32 229 50698)

European Commission acts for better broadband in rural areas

In the margins of the ongoing <u>Broadband Days</u>, the Commission launched yesterday the <u>Broadband Competence Offices</u> and a <u>toolkit for rural broadband</u>. This toolkit consists of a 5 point action plan with concrete deadlines to

bring more broadband in rural areas of the EU because currently only 40% of rural households have next generation access compared to 76% of total EU households. Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Creţu and Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya Gabriel, said in a joint statement after the launch event: "All EU citizens should be able to benefit from high-speed broadband connections. This is not the case today, especially in rural areas, which are less attractive to investors. This is why the Commission pays particular attention to good connectivity and supports the roll-out of broadband connections to 18 million rural citizens until 2020. The Broadband Competence Offices are an important step forward to bridge financing with potential investors, authorities and citizens. They must work on concrete issues and help on the ground with professional adapted advice to boost broadband investment. We also launched a toolkit on how best to accelerate this process and facilitate investments in rural areas. This toolkit will be finalised by mid next year. If we want to keep our rural communities strong and sustainable, while generating the additional benefit of reducing the burden on our cities, we need to do more, and we need to do it faster." More details are available in the news item as well as in Commissioner Hogan's speech from yesterday. Yesterday evening Commissioners Hogan and Cretu also awarded the <u>five best European broadband projects</u>. This year's winners come from Finland, Greece, Italy, UK and Sweden. More information on EU financial support to digital technologies and broadband is available on the Cohesion Open Data Platform. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt - Tel.: +32 229 67083; Daniel Rosario - Tel.: +32 229 64267; Johannes Bahrke - Tel.: +32 229 58615; Inga Höglund - Tel.: +32 229 50698).

Eurostat: Semaine européenne des PME 2017 — Les PME dans l'Union européenne génèrent la moitié du commerce intra-UE de biens

Les petites et moyennes entreprises (PME — jusqu'à 249 personnes occupées) sont considérées comme un moteur de l'économie de l'Union européenne (UE), créant des emplois et contribuant à la croissance économique. Elles contribuent également largement au commerce au sein de l'UE. 98% des entreprises échangeant des biens au sein de l'UE sont des PME, y inclut environ 70% de micro-entreprises (jusqu'à 9 personnes occupées). Les PME sont responsables de la moitié de la valeur du commerce intra-UE de biens. En détail, elles représentent 51% des importations intra-UE et 45% des exportations intra-UE. Un communiqué de presse est disponible <u>ici</u>. (Pour plus d'informations: Lucía Caudet — Tél.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon — Tél.: +32 229 80379; Victoria von Hammerstein — Tel.: +32 229 55040)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) hosts Annual Conference of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS)

On Wednesday 22 November, Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations, will participate in the <u>2017 Annual Conference of the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS)</u> hosted by the <u>European Political Strategy Centre</u> (EPSC), the European Commission's in-house think tank. The conference entitled <u>'Global Trends to</u>

2030: The Making of a New Geopolitical Order?', brings together various renown speakers including Stefanie Babst, Head, Strategic Analysis Capability, NATO; Benoni Belli, Head, Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil; Jon Finer, Former Chief of Staff, US Department of State; Hadeel Ibrahim, Founding Executive Director, Mo Ibrahim Foundation; Wolfgang Ischinger, Chairman, Munich Security Conference; Parag Khanna, Senior Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy; Jeanette Kwek, Deputy Head, Centre for Strategic Futures, Singapore; Rob Wainwright, Executive Director, Europol, as well as many others from around the world. The European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) is an inter-institutional collaboration between the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the External Action Service, initiated in 2010. It engages in strategic foresight, anticipates future challenges and opportunities, and examines global trends. The conference will take place on the 5th floor of the Commission's Berlaymont building. To attend, register here. You can follow the conference on Twitter with the hashtag #ESPAS17. (For more information: Mina Andreeva - Tel.: +32 229 91382)

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

Solidarity with Italy: EU funds support reconstruction efforts in Umbria, including the Basilica of San Benedetto

This money will be matched with the same amount by Italy. In total, €400 million from EU and national funds will support reconstruction efforts and revitalise the economy in the four regions — Abruzzo, Lazio, Marche and Umbria — hit by the 2016 and 2017 earthquakes, including €10 million overall for the reconstruction of the Basilica.

Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Creţu** said: "Rebuilding this jewel of European heritage in Norcia with Cohesion policy funds will be a lasting symbol of EU solidarity with Italy, as President **Juncker** said. The story of the church of Benedict of Norcia, Saint patron of Europe, restored to its former beauty with the help of young volunteers from France, Greece or Hungary, will inspire future generations of Europeans."

The money comes from the additional €1.6 billion of Cohesion Policy funds that Italy is set to receive as part of the 'technical adjustment', the midterm re-evaluation of all 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy envelopes which takes into account the impact of the economic and financial crisis.

The Commission approved the modification of the <u>regional Cohesion Policy</u>

<u>programme for Umbria</u>, where the town of Norcia is located, in order to include the additional funding and the new priorities for investments. The regional programmes for Lazio, Marche and Abruzzo will soon be subject to the same procedure.

In Umbria, the extra Cohesion Policy money will help improve seismic resilience in schools as well as energy efficiency, support local businesses and finance the restoration of cultural landmarks, including the Basilica, to re-boost tourism.

Background

In November 2016, after Italy had been struck by devastating earthquakes in August and October 2016, and before it was to be hit again in January 2017, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: "The EU has to mobilise money in order to help our Italian friends overcome the consequences of the earthquakes. This is a European duty too. This is above all about the people but also about the cultural heritage that has been destroyed by the earthquakes. There is this beautiful cathedral in Norcia. I would like the EU to help rebuild it."

In addition to this commitment which the Commission is delivering on today, young volunteers under the European Solidarity Corps <u>arrived in Norcia in August 2017</u> to lend a hand to the population and help rebuild the town, including the Basilica of San Benedetto, a valuable and momentous contribution ahead of the 2018 <u>European Year of Cultural Heritage</u>.

The EU has put forward several strands of support for Italy following the earthquakes, including $\underbrace{\text{fl.2 billion of financial aid under the EU Solidarity}}_{\text{Fund}}$, the highest sum ever allocated to a country under this fund.

More information

European Commission Vice-President
Ansip and Belgian Deputy Prime
Minister De Croo visit imec, a worldleading research hub in
nanoelectronics and digital
technologies

On Thursday 23 November afternoon, European Commission Vice-President Ansip, in charge of the Digital Single Market, and Belgian Deputy Prime Minister De

Croo, responsible for the Digital Agenda, will visit <u>imec</u>, in Leuven. On this occasion, results of EU investments in research and innovation will be presented, such as microchips used for better diagnosis and health monitoring. Imec has been participating in EU projects since its creation in 1984 and has become one of the best research and innovation hubs in nanoelectronics in the world.

Imec employs close to 3,500 brilliant minds and hosts state-of-the-art infrastructure. Imec works closely with industrial partners such as <u>ASML</u>. ASML is headquartered in the Netherlands — where it has been constantly growing and is currently recruiting 500 high-skilled people. ASML is one of the world's leading manufacturers of cutting-edge lithography equipment used in the development and production of semiconductors — materials part of all electronic devices such as mobile phones and computers. This equipment achieves levels of miniaturisation and performance never reached before. For example, in 2016 chip makers produced electronic chip features with geometries of between 20 nm and 10 nm (around 10,000 times thinner than a hair), compared to typical geometries of 10,000 nm in the early 1970s.

The range of applications that benefits imec's solutions is very broad and includes computing, health, energy, security, communications, and transport.

EU investments leading to success stories

EU research and innovation projects have contributed to imec's success, based on cross-border cooperation, scientific excellence and collaboration with the industry.

Imec has been involved in European public-private partnerships on electronic components and systems since 2008 (ENIAC & ARTEMIS Joint Undertakings). It is today involved in ECSEL, a European initiative representing EUR 1.2 billion of EU investment for the period 2014-2020, to be leveraged by an equal amount from participating states and twice as much from industry (a total of EUR 4.8 billion).

In the past five years, imec has attracted five prestigious grants from the <u>European Research Council</u>(ERC). The funding is worth in total more than EUR 10 million. ERC-funded researchers at imec — Paul Heremans, Liesbet Lagae, Kris Myny, Bart Vermang, Jan Genoe — push the frontiers of science in the areas of nanotechnology-based sensors, thin-film electronics and photovoltaics, and flexible displays (<u>video</u>).

This visit is an excellent opportunity to discuss EU investments in research and innovation and hear from policy makers, researchers and industry leaders.

In a nutshell:

When?

Thursday 23 November, from 15:30 to 17:30

Programme:

Thursday 23 November, from 15:30 to 17:30

Programme:

15:30-16:05 : Presentation of imec with focus on EU-funded projects, by <u>Luc</u> Van den hove, President and CEO of imec

16:05-16:15 : Collaboration with ASML, testimonial by Markus Matthes, Executive Vice President Development & Engineering, Member of the Executive Committee of ASML

16:15-16:20: Remarks by Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecommunications and Postal Services

16:20-16:25 : Remarks by Andrus Ansip, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market

Going to the cleanroom

16:35-16:50: Visit of the cleanroom

16:50-17:15: Possibility of interviews with Andrus Ansip, Luc Van den hove, Markus Matthes and Bert De Colvenaer, Executive Director of the ECSEL Joint Undertaking.

17:15-17:30 : Possibility of interviews with researchers

Where?

Imec Tower, Remisebosweg 1, 3001 Leuven (for GPS: enter Gaston Geenslaan). Around 25 min from the centre of Brussel). For map and details (public transport and car), see link:

https://www.imec-int.com/en/connect-with-us/imec-belgium

Contact person: Please register via Alexia Van Daele, <u>Alexia.van-Daele@ec.europa.eu</u> (0032 460 76 79 76), European Commission, Representation in Belgium, by 22 November 2017.

<u>Digital Single Market: EU negotiators</u> <u>agreed to end unjustified geoblocking</u>

Tonight, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission reached a political agreement to end unjustified geoblocking for consumers wishing to buy products or services online within the EU. The new rules will boost ecommerce for the benefit of consumers and businesses who take advantage of

the growing European online market.

Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, responsible for the Digital Single Market, said: "Today we put an end to unjustified discrimination when shopping online. This is excellent news for consumers. With the new rules, Europeans will be able to choose from which website they wish to buy, without being blocked or rerouted. This will be a reality by Christmas next year."

Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, in charge of Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, added: "We are upgrading the EU Single Market to the digital world by giving consumers the same possibility to access the widest range of offers regardless of whether they physically enter a shop in another country or whether they shop online. Next stop: bringing down prices of cross-border parcel delivery, which still discourage people from buying and selling products across the EU."

Commissioner Mariya **Gabriel**, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, concluded: "Ending unfair geoblocking is a great step forward for consumers and the building of a real Digital Single Market working for all. Along with the end of roaming charges and portability, EU citizens will be able to buy their new furniture online, book hotel rooms or use their credit card across borders, like at home."

For citizens this means they will be able to buy their new electrical goods online, rent a car or get their concert tickets across borders as they do at home. It will ensure that they no longer face barriers such as being asked to pay with a debit or credit card issued in another country. For businesses, this means more legal certainty to operate cross-border.

As the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said at the <u>Digital Summit in Tallinn</u> last September, the EU legislators have to conclude on all the 24 legislative proposals that the Commission has put forward since the beginning of this mandate to complete the Digital Single Market. The European Commission is willing to help the European Parliament and the Council to find good agreements and proved it tonight by making the deal possible.

The new rules define three specific situations where no justification and no objective criteria for a different treatment between customers from different EU Member States are conceivable from the outset.

These are:

- The sale of goods without physical delivery. Example: A Belgian customer wishes to buy a refrigerator and finds the best deal on a German website. The customer will be entitled to order the product and collect it at the trader's premises or organise delivery himself to his home.
- The sale of electronically supplied services. Example: A Bulgarian consumer wishes to buy hosting services for her website from a Spanish company. She will now have access to the service, can register and buy this service without having to pay additional fees compared to a Spanish consumer.

• The sale of services provided in a specific physical location. Example: An Italian family can buy a trip directly to an amusement park in France without being redirected to an Italian website.

The Regulation does not impose an obligation to sell and does not harmonise prices. It does however address discrimination in access to goods and services in cases where it cannot be objectively justified (e.g. by VAT obligations or different legal requirements).

The new rules will come directly into force after nine months from the publication in the EU Official Journal, to allow in particular small traders to adapt.

Background

A <u>Commission survey</u> found that geoblocking practices were identified in 63% of all websites assessed. It shows that in 2015, less than 40% of websites allowed cross-border customers to complete a purchase. This results in less revenue for companies and less choice for consumers. Proposed in May 2016 as part of the Digital Single Market, the Regulation to end unjustified geoblocking was identified as a <u>legislative priority for 2017</u> by the agreement of the three European institutions in their Joint declaration earlier this year. This Regulation was part of an e-commerce package together with a legislative proposal on cross-border parcel delivery services and a legislative proposal to strengthen enforcement of consumers' rights.

For More Information

May 2016 study on geoblocking of consumers online:

<u>Findings of a mystery shopping carried out by the European Commission</u>

Factsheets on Digital Single Market strategy