

More than one in four working-age adults in the EU remain economically inactive

Unemployment in the EU continues to fall, however more than one in four of the EU's working-age population are economically inactive; meaning they are not working and are either not seeking work or are not available for work. Furthermore, the vast majority of economically inactive people would like to work in some form. Eurofound's new publication [Reactivate: Employment opportunities for economically inactive people](#) looks in detail at what could be Europe's most important economic resource.

The number of economically inactive people has been steadily declining in the EU in recent years: in 2015 it stood at 27.5%, down significantly from 31.4% in 2002, and less than the pre-crisis figure of 29.7% in 2007. However, this substantial section of the population remains outside the labour market, and is not included in official employment statistics. While employment policy tends to focus primarily on the unemployed, there is scope for policies to focus more explicitly on the labour market integration of inactive people, and to harness their economic and social potential.

The new report examines groups within the inactive population that find it difficult to enter or re-enter the labour market and explores the reasons why. It also maps the characteristics and living conditions of these groups, discusses their interest in taking up employment and examines the barriers that prevent them from doing so. It finds that around four out of five inactive people would like to work at least some hours per week, depending on their financial needs, and approximately half would like to work 32 hours or more. The desire to work is particularly strong among students and homemakers.

The report also looks at strategies currently being implemented by Member States to promote the inclusion of those outside the labour market. It highlights that inactive people often face more than one barrier to employment, such as a low level of education coupled with care responsibilities, and stresses the importance of focusing on the specific needs of the inactive population.

Finally, the report underlines that Member States should fully implement the 2008 European Commission Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the design and implementation of labour market integration strategies. In this regard, the European Pillar of Social Rights, which refers to inactivity as an issue in relation to inclusive education and lifelong learning, provides a unique and timely political impetus.

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Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, 2 November 2017

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On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, the European Union commends the work of journalists in uncovering abuses of power, shining a light on corruption and human right violations, and questioning received opinion, often putting themselves at risk of intimidation, violence and death. An independent and free media is the basis of a participatory and pluralist democracy, and a tool to make governments accountable for their actions.

An attack on journalists represents an attack on democracy and pluralistic societies. Information comes to us at a price: journalists are still being persecuted, detained or even killed, not only in situations of armed conflict, but also in peacetime, including in the European Union, as we have sadly witnessed only a few weeks ago. Violence against journalists and media actors not only represents an attack on the victim, but also limits the ability of the public to access information and ideas of all kinds, both online and offline.

The EU will continue to use all appropriate external policy and financial instruments to enhance the quality of journalism, access to public information and freedom of expression. The EU plays a key role in funding the European Centre for Press and Media freedom (ECPMF) and provides targeted

protection through Human Rights Defenders programmes.

We condemn killings, acts of violence, intimidation and harassment against journalists and other media actors in the strongest possible terms. We expect State authorities to uphold their international obligations by protecting journalists against intimidation, threats and violence, irrespective of their source, whether governmental, judicial, religious, economic or criminal. Any alleged unlawful killing, ill-treatment, threat or attack against journalists, whether by State or non-State actors, should be promptly investigated in an effective and independent manner, with a view to prosecuting the perpetrators of such crimes and bringing them to justice. Any impunity for these crimes is a blow to democracy and to the fundamental rights such as freedom of expression.

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[Joint statement by the European Commission and the Department for Exiting the European Union](#)

The following joint statement has been issued by the European Commission and the Department for Exiting the European Union:

"Michel Barnier, the European Commission's Chief Negotiator, and David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, agreed today that the two teams would meet for Article 50 negotiations on 9 and 10 November 2017. An agenda will be published in due course."

For More Information

[Task Force on Article 50 Negotiations with the United Kingdom \(TF50\) webpage](#)

[Daily News 31 / 10 / 2017](#)

Employment: Report confirms effectiveness of EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund

Today the Commission has published its [report on the performance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund \(EGF\) in 2015 and 2016](#). The report reaffirms the role of the Fund as a flagship demonstration of European solidarity within the limits of its set-up and budgetary availabilities,

having helped close to 19,500 workers to adjust to changing trade patterns and consequences of the economic and financial crisis in that period. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** said: *"Today's results demonstrate the added value of the Globalisation Fund in helping redundant workers who have difficulties to find a new job. The assistance worth €70 million of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund has paid off: in 2015 and 2016, 9,072 assisted workers were re-employed, despite the challenging labour market situation these people faced. This year's tenth anniversary of the Fund marks it as a proof of European solidarity to workers falling victim to mass lay-offs caused by globalisation or the crisis."* 9,072 workers, or close to half of the workers who participated in the Globalisation Adjustment Fund measures, had found new jobs or were self-employed after one year, at the end of the implementation period of the measures. An additional 645 people were at that time in education or training to increase their future employability. Member States also reported that the personal situation, employability and self-confidence of the workers concerned had visibly improved thanks to the Globalisation Adjustment Fund assistance and services. More information can be found in this [press release](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Eurostat: Septembre 2017 – Le taux de chômage à 8,9% dans la zone euro – À 7,5% dans l'UE28

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 8,9% en septembre 2017, en baisse par rapport au taux de 9,0% d'août 2017 et au taux de 9,9% de septembre 2016. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis janvier 2009. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 7,5% en septembre 2017, stable par rapport à août 2017 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 8,4% de septembre 2016. Cela demeure le taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis novembre 2008. Eurostat estime qu'en septembre 2017, 18,446 millions d'hommes et de femmes étaient au chômage dans l'UE28, dont 14,513 millions dans la zone euro. Par rapport à août 2017, le nombre de chômeurs a diminué de 116 000 dans l'UE28 et de 96 000 dans la zone euro. Comparé à septembre 2016, le chômage a baissé de 2,076 millions de personnes dans l'UE28 et de 1,463 million dans la zone euro. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Eurostat: Estimation rapide – octobre 2017, le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro en baisse à 1,4%

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro est estimé à 1,4% en octobre 2017, contre 1,5% en septembre selon une estimation rapide publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. S'agissant des principales composantes de l'inflation de la zone euro, l'énergie devrait connaître le taux annuel le plus élevé en octobre (3,0%, comparé à 3,9% en septembre), suivie de l'alimentation, alcool & tabac (2,4%, comparé à 1,9% en septembre), des services (1,2%, comparé à 1,5% en septembre) et des biens industriels non

énergétiques (0,4%, comparé à 0,5% en septembre). Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

Le PIB en hausse de 0,6% dans la zone euro et dans l'UE28

Au cours du troisième trimestre 2017, le PIB corrigé des variations saisonnières a augmenté de 0,6% tant dans la zone euro (ZE19) que dans l'UE28 par rapport au trimestre précédent, selon l'estimation rapide préliminaire publiée par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Au cours du deuxième trimestre 2017, le PIB avait progressé de 0,7% dans les deux zones. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'information: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Juliana Dahl – Tel.: +32 229 59914)

Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Mongolia enters into force

On 1 November, the [Partnership and Cooperation Agreement \(PCA\)](#) between the European Union and Mongolia enters into force. The High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini** said: *"The European Union and Mongolia are consolidating their strong ties, based on shared values and interests, and a common will to work more closely together. The entry into force of our Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, combined with the establishment of a European Union Delegation in Ulaanbaatar, which will take place in the coming days, consolidates existing areas of cooperation and engagement, and deepens and diversifies relations further in areas of mutual interest, for the sake of our peoples."* Replacing the 1993 Agreement on trade and economic cooperation, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement strengthens the [existing relationship between the EU and Mongolia](#), consolidates existing areas of cooperation and engagement, and deepens and diversifies relations further in areas of mutual interest. The entry into force of the PCA coincides with the [opening of an EU Delegation in Mongolia](#), for which implementing the Agreement will be a top priority. A full press release is available [online](#). More information on EU-Mongolia relations is available on the website of the [EU Delegation to Mongolia](#) and a [factsheet](#) on the new Agreement is available online. (For more information: Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

EU-Cuba: new landmark agreement entering into force on 1 November 2017

A new chapter in EU-Cuba relations will be marked tomorrow, on 1 November 2017, with the start of provisional application of the first ever agreement between the European Union and Cuba – [the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement \(PDCA\)](#). *"The EU and Cuba are truly turning a page, and the new chapter of our partnership begins now – with the provisional application of our new agreement. Today the European Union gets closer to Cuba and all Cuban*

*citizens as the country goes through economic, political and social modernisation”, said the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/VicePresident Federica **Mogherini**, adding: “We Europeans are tied to Cuba, Latin America and the Caribbean by a shared history, culture, values, and aspirations for the present and the future”. The PCDA comprises three main chapters on political dialogue, cooperation and sector policy dialogue as well trade cooperation. A full press release is available [online](#). More information on the EU-Cuba relations is available on the website of the [EU Delegation to Cuba](#) and a [factsheet](#) on the EU-Cuba relations is available as well. (For more information: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

Rohingya crisis: Commissioner Stylianides visits Bangladesh and reaffirms EU humanitarian support

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** has started a two-day visit to Bangladesh, to assess the situation on the ground and visit EU aid projects that are addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis. His visit comes a week after the EU and its Member States pledged more than 50% of the USD 344 million total funding raised at the international Conference on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis held in Geneva. *“Here in Bangladesh the scale of this emergency is painfully clear to see; this is the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world. The EU has decisively stepped up its aid to Rohingya communities. The Rohingya people are not alone in these difficult times. We commend and support the generous approach of the Bangladeshi authorities. At the same time, the European Union continues to insist on full aid access in Myanmar and is working to address the situation in Northern Rakhine State. Beyond aid, it is crucial that every refugee is registered properly and that Myanmar takes all necessary steps to allow them a voluntary and dignified return in secure conditions.”*, said Commissioner **Stylianides**. Commissioner **Stylianides** is today visiting the Kutupalong camp in the Cox’s Bazar area, where an EU funded project is helping over 100,000 people, mostly vulnerable children and women, gain access to essential services. The Commissioner will also hold meetings with government officials of Bangladesh and humanitarian partners to discuss the international community’s response to the crisis and Bangladesh’s needs moving forwards. Read the full press release [here](#). Audiovisual coverage will be available [here](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Digital contract rules: amended proposal on sales of goods across the EU

The Commission adopted today an amended proposal to extend the scope of the proposed Directive on online and other distance sales of goods to cover sales of goods offline. The initial [proposal](#) on the online sale of goods was presented in December 2015 together with the proposal on the supply of digital content as part of the Commission’s commitment to deliver on its [Digital Single Market Strategy](#). Its aim is to break down the barriers due to differences in contract law which hinder cross-border online trade. The amendments to the proposal follow calls to align the rules applicable to

online and offline sales more closely and avoid fragmentation. The Commission had already committed, when adopting the initial proposal, to assess the need of coherent rules on the basis of the [analysis](#) of existing consumer legislation. These results were introduced into discussions between the co-legislators. Given the increasing importance of both online and offline sales for consumers and businesses, this amended proposal will ensure that they benefit from on a coherent legal framework across EU borders. The amended proposal will now be transmitted to Parliament and Council to continue the ongoing legislative process. The new proposal is available [here](#). *(For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control over Fels-Werke by CRH

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of sole control over Fels-Werke of Germany by CRH of Ireland. Fels-Werke is active in mining, processing and distribution of lime and limestone products, gypsum and mortar in Germany, the Czech Republic and Russia. CRH is active in the manufacture and distribution of various building materials, including aggregates, cement, lime and concrete worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because there is limited geographic overlap between the companies' activities, so that they are only remote competitors. The operation was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8626](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

State aid: Commission approves PLN 1 billion public support for intermodal transport in Poland

The European Commission has approved a PLN 1 billion (around €238 million) aid scheme to support the construction, modernisation and upgrade of intermodal transport infrastructure in Poland. The scheme will also support the purchase of specialised equipment (e.g. lifting and transshipment equipment, telematics and satellite systems) required for intermodal transport, as well the purchase and modernisation of specialised rolling stock. The Commission concluded that the measure is necessary to improve the competitiveness of intermodal transport services in Poland and that it is proportionate in accordance with EU State aid rules. The aid will be available to intermodal operators and rolling stock leasing companies. The Polish government will support up to 50% of the eligible costs, through funding from the EU Cohesion Fund. The scheme will be in place until 31 December 2023. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.48093. *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

STATEMENTS

Equal Pay Day: Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioners Thyssen and Jourová

Today, the average hourly pay of women in Europe is 16.3% lower than that of men. European Equal Pay Day, which falls on 3 November this year, marks the moment when women effectively stop getting paid compared to their male colleagues, with almost two months of the year remaining. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioner Marianne **Thyssen** and Commissioner Věra **Jourová** said: *"Gender equality, including equal pay for men and women, is one of the EU's founding values. But it is still far from a reality. For the past years, the gender pay gap has basically refused to budge. This means that women work for two months a year for free in comparison to their male colleagues. This is a shocking and unacceptable injustice in the 21st century Europe. We urgently need to make progress with this stubborn issue, which affects women and our societies on many other points: Women still tend to work in lesser-paid sectors, get fewer promotions and are underrepresented in management positions. And single-parent households with women as the sole breadwinner are more exposed to poverty, including child poverty and consequent disadvantages. Pay gap is not the only problem. Recent revelations on sexual harassment underline the sometimes hostile working environments which women also have to face, with obvious consequences for their professional development and well-being. The European Commission wants to lead the way to fight this injustice."* Read the full statement [here](#). EU-wide and national infographics are available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Finland

Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Vera **Jourová** is in Helsinki today. She just delivered a keynote speech on *"Justice systems and rule of law in the EU: the ripe time for change"* at the Finland 100 years [event](#) dedicated to Finnish and European perspectives to the rule of law. She said: *"Rule of law is a bedrock of European democracies and one of the core values of the European Union. That's why one of the priorities of the Commission for next year is to look at ways how to strengthen the enforcement of rule of law in the European Union. The judicial system in the EU is like a chain of Christmas lights. When one light goes off, others don't light up and the chain is dark."* The event was concluded by a press point with the Finnish Minister of Justice, Anti Häkkänen, and the Estonian Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu. Commissioner **Jourová** will also meet Minister Häkkänen for a bilateral meeting. In the afternoon, she will visit a vocational school, benefitting from the European Social Fund to develop the promotion of gender equality and better bridge education and working life. She will participate in a roundtable with businesses on digital topics, including the general data protection regulation. Commissioner **Jourová** will also visit Vantaa prison and discuss how prison staff can detect radicalisation and violent extremism. Her last visit at the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland will focus on artificial intelligence. Commissioner **Jourová**'s keynote speech on rule of law is available [online](#) and on [EbS](#), where you can also find other pictures and videos from her trip. (For more information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

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