

10 October 2017

Today, Michèle Coninsx, President of Eurojust, and Pedro Serrano, Deputy Secretary-General for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and Crisis Response of the European External Action Service (EEAS), signed a Letter of Understanding at Eurojust's premises in The Hague.

✖ The Letter of Understanding will provide the framework for the regular exchange of non-operational strategic information and experience, particularly in the areas of counter-terrorism, cybercrime, illegal immigrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

Cooperation could take the form of secondments, visits, trainings, research on trends and challenges, and facilitating contacts with third States.

The signing was observed by a delegation of high-level advisors from EEAS and members of the Eurojust Presidency, Brussels and External Relations College Teams

Background:

The EEAS was established by Council Decision 201/427/EU as a functionally autonomous body of the European Union to support the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in fulfilling the mandates outlined in Articles 18 and 27 of the Treaty on European Union, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union and the CSDP.

Eurojust, the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit, was established by Council Decision of 28 February 2002 setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime, as last amended by Council Decision 2009/426/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the strengthening of Eurojust, to stimulate and improve the coordination of investigations and prosecutions and the cooperation between the competent authorities in the Member States. In particular, Eurojust facilitates the execution of requests for international mutual legal assistance and extradition. Eurojust supports in any way possible the competent authorities of the Member States to render their investigations and prosecutions more effective when dealing with serious cross-border crime.

EEAS: <http://www.eeas.europa.eu>

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Fair Taxation: Commission welcomes new rules to resolve tax disputes

The European Commission welcomes EU Member States' formal green light for new rules to better resolve tax disputes. The decision taken by EU finance ministers at the ECOFIN Council meeting in Luxembourg today will ensure that businesses and citizens can resolve disputes related to the interpretation of tax treaties more swiftly and effectively. It will also cover issues related to double taxation – a major obstacle for businesses, creating uncertainty, unnecessary costs and cash-flow problems.

Double taxation refers to cases where two or more countries claim the right to tax the same income or profits of a company or person. It can occur, for example, due to a mismatch in national rules or different interpretations of a bilateral tax treaty with regards transfer pricing arrangements.

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"We proposed this new system to improve legal certainty and EU competitiveness by creating a binding obligation on Member States' authorities to resolve tax disputes in a timely manner. This is an important step to allow EU citizens and businesses alike to have fair tax treatment. I commend the quick action of Member States and the European Parliament to*

support this upgrade of the current rules.”

The improvements to the current rules agreed by EU finance ministers in Luxembourg will give taxpayers much more certainty when it comes to seeking resolution to their interpretation of tax treaties or double taxation problems. In particular, a wider range of cases will be covered and Member States will now have clear deadlines to agree on a binding solution, giving citizens and companies more timely decisions. Member States will now have a legal duty to take conclusive and enforceable decisions under the improved dispute resolution mechanism. If not, the national courts will do this for them.

Today’s agreement will ensure that taxpayers faced with tax treaty disputes can initiate a procedure whereby the Member States in question must try to resolve the dispute amicably within two years. If at the end of this period, no solution has been found, the Member States must set up an Advisory Commission to arbitrate. If Member States fail to do this, the taxpayer can bring an action before the national court to do so. This Advisory Commission will be comprised of 3 independent members and representatives of the competent authorities in question. It will have 6 months to deliver a final, binding decision. This decision will be immediately enforceable and must resolve the dispute.

Estimates show that there are currently around 900 double taxation disputes in the EU today, estimated to be worth €10.5 billion. The new rules formally adopted today will better meet the needs of businesses and citizens and any double taxation will be removed.

Daily News 10 / 10 / 2017

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alike to have fair tax treatment. I commend the quick action of Member States and the European Parliament to support this upgrade of the current rules." The improvements to the current rules agreed by EU finance ministers in Luxembourg will give taxpayers much more certainty when it comes to seeking resolution to their interpretation of tax treaties or double taxation problems. A full [press release](#) is available online. (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: +32 229 56194; Patrick McCullough – Tel.: +32 229 87183)

EU countries should use pesticides more sustainably

The report on the sustainable use of pesticides Directive adopted today by the Commission takes stock of progress made by the EU Member States in applying measures to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticides. It covers a wide range of topics such as aerial spraying, information to the public or training of professionals. The report indicates insufficient implementation of the [Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides](#). Commenting on the report, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"I know first-hand that citizens are concerned about the impact of the use of pesticides on their health and the environment. We take these concerns into consideration and we are working with the Member States to achieve sustainable use of pesticides in the way we grow and produce our food. I will continue encouraging and supporting Member States in their task of implementing the measures to reduce risks derived from the use of pesticides"*. The full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

EU calls for ambition ahead of WTO Ministerial Conference

Ahead of the upcoming ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to be held in Buenos Aires between 10 and 13 December 2017, the EU called upon its partners for more ambition. Meeting her WTO counterparts in Marrakesh, Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström said: *"The time for ambition is now. The multilateral forum remains the best way to deal with international trade issues and the EU continues to strongly support the work of the WTO. If we want to have a positive outcome in Buenos Aires in December, then we need to focus and pick up the pace. The EU has put forward several proposals on critical issues that today's trade policy must address. We hope and expect that other WTO members will engage constructively."* Members of the Cairns group (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, New Zealand, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, Uruguay and Vietnam) have joined the EU in reaffirming their commitment to tackling the most trade distorting domestic support in agriculture in a [joint statement](#) issued to that effect yesterday. Ahead of the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference, the EU leads the way on six specific proposals: a proposal related to agriculture subsidies aiming a to improve a global level-playing field for farmers, proposals on horizontal and fisheries-specific subsidies, on regulations related to trade in services and e-commerce, and on transparency. More information on [EU proposals](#) is available on the Commission website. (For more information: Daniel Rosario –

Tel.: +32 229 56185; Kinga Malinowska – Tel: +32 229 51383)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by AES and Siemens

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by AES Corporation Inc. of the US and Siemens AG of Germany. The joint venture, based in the US and called Fluence Energy LLC will develop and market battery-based energy storage solutions. AES is a global power company and Siemens is active in a number of industrial areas. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlap between the companies' activities. 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.8555](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of the Williams Lea business by Advent

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Williams Lea Tag GmbH of Germany, Williams Lea Holdings, Inc. of the US and Williams Lea Holdings Limited of the UK, together forming the Williams Lea business, by Advent International of the US. The Williams Lea business is active in the provision of marketing communications services and business document process outsourcing. Advent International is a private equity investment firm with portfolio companies active in various business sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the overlaps between the activities of the Williams Lea business and Advent International's portfolio companies are limited. 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.8645](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Jimmy Choo by Michael Kors

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Jimmy Choo PLC of the UK, by Michael Kors Holdings Limited incorporated in British Virgin Islands. Jimmy Choo is a fashion brand specialising in luxury footwear and accessories. Michael Kors is a global luxury accessories, footwear and apparel company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the companies' moderate combined market positions resulting from the proposed transaction. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M. 8624](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou –*

Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition d'un immeuble de bureaux en Allemagne par Sogecap, Cardif et Diversipierre

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle en commun de Horizon Development GmbH (Allemagne) par Sogecap S.A. (France), Cardif Assurance Vie S.A. (France) et Diversipierre Germany GmbH (Allemagne). Horizon Development est une société détenant un immeuble de bureaux à Düsseldorf, en Allemagne, déjà loué à une tierce partie. Sogecap est une compagnie d'assurance vie du groupe Société Générale. Cardif est une filiale du groupe BNP Paribas active dans le secteur de l'assurance vie. Diversipierre est une holding foncière, appartenant également au groupe BNP Paribas. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence, compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée de contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le [site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8590](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de CGI Metropole par Unibail-Rodamco et Commerz Real Investmentgesellschaft

La commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de CGI Metropole, s.r.o. basé en République Tchèque par Unibail-Rodamco SE basé en France et Commerz Real Investmentgesellschaft mbH basé en Allemagne. CGI Metropole est une entreprise commune de plein exercice détenant et exploitant un centre commercial à Prague. CGI Metropole est actuellement entièrement détenu par Commerz Real Investmentgesellschaft. Commerz Real Investmentgesellschaft a pour activité la gestion de fonds immobiliers ouverts, en particulier le fond immobilier ouvert hausInvest. Unibail-Rodamco opère dans l'immobilier commercial en tant qu'investisseur, promoteur et gestionnaire d'actifs de centre commerciaux dans les villes européennes et d'immeubles de bureaux et de centres de congrès et d'exposition dans la région de Paris. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème concurrentiel compte tenu de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8622](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

La Commission approuve une nouvelle indication géographique protégée d'Espagne

La Commission européenne a approuvé la demande d'inscription du [«Capón de](#)

[Vilalba](#)» dans le registre des indications géographiques protégées (IGP). Le «Capón de Vilalba» est un chapon de la race Galiña de Mos élevé dans la région dénommée «Terra Chá», située dans la province de Lugo, dans la Communauté autonome de Galice. L'aire géographique est caractérisée par la présence d'une multitude de petites exploitations familiales dans lesquelles l'élevage des chapons est traditionnellement exercé à titre complémentaire et constitue une source de revenus supplémentaires pour l'exploitation. Le climat humide favorise le développement de cultures essentielles pour l'alimentation des chapons, surtout en ce qui concerne le fourrage et les céréales, parmi lesquelles se distingue le maïs. Les premières informations connues sur l'élevage et la consommation de chapons en Galice datent du Moyen Âge. Cette nouvelle appellation va rejoindre plus de 1405 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)

Commission gathers Industry and Member States to drive battery production in the EU

On Wednesday 11 October, the European Commission will host a high level meeting on battery development and production in Europe. Representatives of the European industry, Member States and financial institutions will participate. Following President Juncker's [SOTEU](#) speech where he presented a new [Industrial Policy Strategy](#) that "will help our industries stay or become the world leader in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation", this initiative aims at identifying and exploring opportunities to complete the gaps in the battery value chain in Europe and discuss actions needed for the EU to remain competitive. Amongst a wide panel of actions, the new industrial policy puts forward new proposals for clean, competitive and connected mobility, including tightened CO2 emissions standards for cars and vans, an Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Action Plan to support the deployment of charging infrastructure, and actions to foster autonomous driving. Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovic who will host the meeting, said: "Batteries represent a key enabling technology in the context of the Energy Union. Their development and production play a strategic role in the ongoing transition to clean mobility and clean energy systems. Its potential should not be left untapped in the EU and we all need to pull in the same direction. Ultimately, it is about making the European industry stronger and more competitive, about creating jobs based on cutting edge technologies, and about leading the fight against climate change." The Commission has supported the development of batteries as a key enabling technology for achieving EU climate and energy goals. It's most recent Communication "[Europe on the Move](#)" sets out an agenda for a transition to clean, competitive, and connected mobility in Europe. Therein batteries have been identified as one of the flagship initiatives under the [Energy Union Strategy](#). Also the [Industrial Policy Strategy](#) highlights the strategic importance of investments in batteries and the need to kick-start industry-led initiatives for a full battery value chain in the EU. Finally, building on Europe's leadership in a low-carbon and circular economy, this helps the EU to implement its [Paris Agreement](#) commitments. The Commission is ready to step up its work with

Member States and stakeholders to support industry-led initiatives. A press point with Vice-President **Šefčovič** on the outcome of the meeting will take place in the Berlaymont VIP corner at 16:00 CET, [Europe by Satellite](#) will transmit live. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Thyssen visits Romania and participates in Citizens' Dialogue

Tomorrow and Thursday, 11 and 12 October, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will go on a two-day visit to Romania. She will first meet with Minister of Labour and Social Justice Olguta Vasilescu. The meeting will be an occasion to discuss the ongoing Council negotiations on the [revision of the Posting of Workers Directive](#), as well as the Romanian labour market challenges highlighted in the framework of the [European Semester](#) and the reforms the government has taken so far to address them. During her stay, Commissioner **Thyssen** will also meet with Minister for Public Consultation and Social Dialogue, Mr Gabriel Petrea, Minister of Development, Mrs Sevil Shhaideh, and Mrs Rovana Plumb, Minister-delegate of EU Funds of Romania. To conclude the first day of the visit, the Commissioner will attend a dinner with trade union and business representatives to discuss the role of social dialogue. On Thursday, Commissioner Thyssen will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue on the [future of \(social\) Europe](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which can be watched [here](#). At the start of the event, she will open an exhibition on '60 years of EU' together with Romanian Minister-delegate Plumb. Commissioner **Thyssen** and Minister-delegate Plumb will conclude the day together by visiting a project supported by the European Social Fund at the Medical University of Iasi. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

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

[EU countries should use pesticides more sustainably](#)

The [report](#) on the sustainable use of pesticides Directive adopted today by the Commission takes stock of progress made by the EU Member States in applying measures to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticides. It covers a wide range of topics such as aerial spraying, information to the public or training of professionals. The report indicates insufficient implementation of the [Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides](#).

Commenting on the report, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"I know first-hand that citizens are concerned about the impact of the use of pesticides on their health and the environment. We take these concerns into consideration and we are working with the Member States to achieve sustainable use of pesticides in the way we grow and produce our food. I will continue encouraging and supporting Member States in their task of implementing the measures to reduce risks derived from the use of pesticides"*.

What are the main conclusions of the Report?

While the Directive offers the potential to greatly reduce the risks derived from pesticide use these improvements are limited and insufficient to achieve the environmental and health improvements the Directive was designed to achieve. This is largely due to the implementation of the Directive that remains patchy.

Some key findings from the report include:

- Aerial spraying is banned in all EU countries, with exceptions granted only under strict conditions.
- Pesticide use is banned or minimised in public parks, sports grounds, hospitals and schools.
- Protection of aquatic environments or specific areas such as public parks is difficult to assess given the lack of measurable targets in most National Action Plans (NAPs).
- [Integrated Pest Management](#) (IPM) remains underused by Member States. This is despite the fact that the number of EU-approved low risk/non-chemical pesticide substances has doubled since 2009. Compliance at individual grower level is not being systematically checked by Member States.
- Training and certification systems for professionals have been set up in all EU countries, and to date almost four million farmers have been trained to use pesticides safely. Furthermore, 900 000 sprayers have been tested for accurate and safe application.

What is next?

When revising their National Action plans, Member States need to improve their quality, primarily by establishing specific and measurable targets and indicators for a long term strategy for the reduction of risks and impacts from pesticide use.

The Commission will continue to monitor and support implementation by the Member States to provide assurance that the objectives of the Directive are being achieved. This monitoring includes a range of actions such as audits, the evaluation of revised NAPs and other follow-up activities – for example exchange of best practices and training of professionals. The Commission will also work with Member States to develop EU harmonised risk indicators, based on Member States' experience with their national indicators.

Today, the Commission launched a new [website](#) which contains links to Member

States' websites on sustainable use of pesticides, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM) , with a view to facilitate the exchange of information between them and increase the flow of relevant information to farmers and the general public.

The full [report](#) is accompanied by an [overview report](#) which includes a more detailed analysis and many examples of good practice being implemented by Member States.

Finally, the Commission also published a [Guidance](#) on monitoring and surveying of impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment

More information

All the documents will be available [here](#) in the course of the day.

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