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President Juncker at the EU-India Summit in New Delhi

On Friday 6 October, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, will represent the European Union at the [14th EU-India Summit](#) in New Delhi. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini** will also attend the Summit, which will be hosted by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. In a year when the European Union and India are celebrating 55 years of diplomatic relations, the Summit will provide an opportunity for leaders to review progress in many areas of the bilateral relationship and to discuss international and regional challenges. The [2016 Summit](#), held in Brussels, gave a new momentum to our Strategic Partnership through the adoption of a number of joint initiatives and declarations, including the [EU-India Agenda for Action 2020](#). Leaders are expected to take stock of the implementation of this far-reaching agenda. The European Union is India's largest trading partner and India the EU's 9th, with the total value of [EU-India trade](#) in goods standing at €77 billion in 2016 and trade in services worth €28.4 billion. Leaders will discuss trade and economic relations, and will review the state of play and next steps towards relaunching negotiations for a free trade agreement. As regards global challenges of mutual interest, leaders will discuss the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, effectively addressing migration and refugee challenges, as well as pressing issues such as the situation in the Korean Peninsula, Myanmar, eastern Ukraine, Afghanistan, and cooperation between the EU and India in the Indian Ocean and in Africa. A number of deliverables, including on investment facilitation, counter-terrorism, and research and innovation, are expected to be announced by the leaders at the Summit, who will hold a press point (available live on [EBS](#)) at 14:30 local time, 11:00 CET. After the Summit, also on 6 October, President **Juncker** will deliver the keynote address at an EU-India Business Forum, which will also be available live on [EBS](#).

With the European Union directly investing in and supporting the sustainable development of many Indian cities, including through loans of the European Investment Bank, President **Juncker** is expected to focus on the need for the European Union and India to take further steps to achieve their full economic potential. For more information on EU-India relations see the dedicated

[factsheet](#) and the website of the [EU Delegation](#). (For more information: Margaritis Schinas – Tel.: +32 229 60524; Mina Andreeva – Tel.: +32 229 91382; Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Adam Kaznowski – Tel: +32 229 89359)

La Commission adopte une initiative visant à stimuler l'apprentissage en Europe

La Commission européenne adopte aujourd'hui une proposition de cadre européen pour un apprentissage efficace et de qualité. La recommandation recense 14 critères clés, que les États membres et les autres acteurs du domaine devraient utiliser pour améliorer la qualité et l'efficacité de l'apprentissage. Cette initiative contribuera à accroître l'employabilité et le développement personnel des apprentis, pour que la main-d'œuvre soit hautement qualifiée et compétente, pour répondre aux besoins du marché du travail. M. Valdis **Dombrovskis**, vice-président pour l'euro et le dialogue social, a déclaré à ce propos: « *L'apprentissage est souvent le tremplin dont un jeune a besoin pour démarrer sa carrière. Aujourd'hui, nous présentons des propositions pour améliorer cette précieuse expérience, à l'avantage tant des employeurs que des apprentis.* » M. Jyrki **Katainen**, vice-président de la Commission européenne chargé de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, a commenté l'initiative en ces termes: «*En nouant des liens directs entre la théorie et la pratique, entre l'école et le marché du travail, un apprentissage efficace et de qualité est un outil concret pour aider les jeunes à entrer dans la vie active solidement armés, tout en renforçant le capital humain en Europe.*» Mme Marianne **Thyssen**, commissaire pour l'emploi, les affaires sociales, les compétences et la mobilité des travailleurs s'est, elle, exprimée en ces termes: «*Nous voulons faire en sorte que les jeunes acquièrent les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour travailler. Deux apprentis sur trois trouvent directement un emploi après la fin de leurs études. Grâce à ce nouveau cadre, nous décrivons ce qui rend l'apprentissage hautement efficace. Une fois adopté, ce cadre permettra d'assurer que tous, apprentis comme employeurs, tirent parti d'un apprentissage de qualité.*» Cette initiative, qui prend la forme d'une recommandation du Conseil, s'inscrit dans le cadre de la [nouvelle stratégie en matière de compétences pour l'Europe](#) lancée en juin 2016. Elle est également étroitement liée au [socle européen des droits sociaux](#), qui prévoit un droit à une éducation, une formation et un apprentissage tout au long de la vie inclusifs et de qualité. Un [communiqué de presse](#) et une [foire aux questions](#) sont disponibles en ligne. (Pour plus d'information: Christian Wigand– Tel.: Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

La politique de Cohésion investit dans un réseau de transport moderne dans le Sud de l'Italie

Plus de 314 millions d'euros du Fonds européen de développement régional ([FEDER](#)) sont investis dans quatre projets de transport dans les régions italiennes de la Calabre, de la Campanie et de la Sicile, pour mieux relier le Sud de l'Italie au Nord et à ses voisins européens. «*Ces projets financés par l'UE réduiront les temps de trajets mais accéléreront la croissance du*

Mezzogiorno; j'ai donc été ravie de leur donner le feu vert," a déclaré la Commissaire à la politique régionale Corina Crețu. Dans la Calabre, 106,5 millions d'euros vont financer la construction d'une nouvelle ligne de chemin de fer entre la ville de Catanzaro et Germaneto, qui abrite un campus universitaire et un nouvel hôpital. La ligne entre la gare principale de Catanzaro (Cantazaro Sala) et la station balnéaire de Catanzaro Lido va également être rénovée. Les travaux devraient être terminés en mars 2020. Ailleurs en Calabre, 106 millions d'euros contribueront à construire une ligne de tramway dans l'agglomération de Cosenza. La ligne, qui fera 21 km, reliera le centre de Cosenza au campus de l'Université de Calabre, en passant par la ville de Rende. Les travaux devraient s'achever en mai 2020. En Sicile, 56,5 millions d'euros vont rénover la connexion ferroviaire entre la gare de Catania-Bicocca et Augusta, sur la ligne Syracuse-Messine qui longe la côte Est de l'île et la relie au continent. Le projet, qui devrait être achevé en juin 2021, comprend des travaux dans les stations, la reconstruction d'un tunnel et de nouveaux rails. Enfin, en Campanie, 45,4 millions d'euros vont financer une nouvelle route qui reliera le port de Salerne à l'autoroute A3, qui fait partie de l'axe de transport stratégique qui court de Palerme à Berlin. Le projet, qui devrait être achevé en juin 2019, contribuera à alléger le trafic dans la ville, à faciliter le transport de marchandises depuis et vers le port et donc à dynamiser l'économie de toute la région. (Pour plus d'informations: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Commission reports on employment and social situation in the EU: record high employment rates and signs of improvement for the youth

The EU remains on a firm path towards more employment and growth according to the latest [Quarterly Review](#) on Employment and Social Developments in Europe. Employment in the EU continues to grow at a consistent pace and in almost all Member States. Employment increased by 1.5 % in the EU and 1.6% in the euro area in the second quarter of 2017 compared to the same period in 2016. There are 3.5 million and 2.4 million more people employed in the EU and euro area compared to last year. This means that 235.4 million people are now employed in the EU. This is the highest level ever recorded. The EU employment increase over the past four years has particularly benefited the younger generation. While youth unemployment is still too high in the EU, the rate decreased steadily and faster than overall unemployment: it now stands at 16.9 %, reaching a level lower than in 2008. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, commented: *"Today's results are encouraging. More people than ever before in Europe have a job and unemployment has reached a nine-year low. And we see 2.2 million more employees with permanent contracts compared to last year. We need to continue on this path and improve the economic and social conditions for all. With the European Pillar of Social Rights, we have our roadmap towards well-functioning and fair labour markets that are fit for purpose in the 21st century. We would like to see it proclaimed together by Parliament, Council and Commission at the Social Summit in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017."* The Quarterly Review also shows that the EU's economy continues its expansion in all Member States with a growth of 2.4 % in the EU and 2.3 % in the euro area over the last year. This also translated in an improvement of EU households'

financial situation with greater income from work, while the increase in social benefits came to a halt. A full press release is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

La Commission européenne publie ses dernières prévisions pour les marchés agricoles

La production céréalière de l'Union européenne devrait augmenter dans l'année à venir, bien que les niveaux risquent de rester sous la moyenne. Il s'agit là d'une des conclusions du dernier rapport sur les perspectives à court terme des marchés agricoles réalisé par la Commission européenne et publié aujourd'hui, jeudi 5 octobre. L'étude couvre aussi d'autres cultures, telles que le sucre où une hausse de la production mondiale est attendue durant l'année. La [fin des quotas sucriers](#), devenue effective le 30 septembre 2017, expose plus les prix européens à la volatilité des prix sur les marchés mondiaux, mais devrait entraîner une hausse significative de la production de betteraves à sucre. En ce qui concerne les secteurs de la viande et du lait, la demande européenne et mondiale pour les produits laitiers devrait rester forte, avec un prix stable pour le lait. En parallèle, le secteur de la viande dans l'UE devrait bénéficier d'exportations importantes de bœuf et de mouton. Enfin, nous attendons une amélioration dans la production de volailles et leur commerce durant l'année. Le rapport complet avec des analyses détaillées sur les différents marchés est disponible [en ligne](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Clémence Robin – Tel.: +32 229 52509)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of PharMerica by KKR and Walgreens Boots Alliance

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of PharMerica Corporation by KKR & Co. L.P. and Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. ("WBA"), all three of the US. PharMerica provides long term care pharmacy, infusion therapy, and specialty pharmacy services in the US. KKR is a global investment firm. WBA operates retail pharmacies across the US and Europe, as well as across a global pharmaceutical wholesale and distribution network. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because PharMerica has no actual or planned activities 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.8620](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Ursa by Xella

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Ursa of Spain by Xella of Luxembourg. Ursa produces insulation materials. Xella is a diversified building materials company and is owned by the private equity company Lone Star. The Commission concluded that the acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the limited overlaps between the activities of the companies. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8604](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

European guidelines for telecom market regulation: results of public consultation

The Commission published today the [results](#) of the public consultation to revise the European guidelines helping national telecoms regulators decide when to intervene in telecoms markets. This is an important step to update the guidelines as soon as possible, since the previous guidelines were adopted in 2002 and do not reflect anymore the recent European case laws. The consultation collected responses from the National Regulatory Authorities, service providers and other stakeholders on the review of the Significant Market Power Guidelines: 54 stakeholders from 22 Member States provided input, in particular on market definition as well as single and joint significant market power. The Commission will present the draft guidelines to the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) this year. Once BEREC will give its [comments](#) on the draft, the Commission will finalise and adopt the guidelines in the first half of 2018. The updated guidelines anticipate also the implementation of the new European Electronic Communications Code, as the proposed provisions for the market analysis take into account the current situation on the national markets. The [European Electronic Communications Code](#) together with the guidance are key elements for building strong digital infrastructure for the Digital Single Market. Results of the public consultation are available [here](#). More details on the Digital Single Market state of play are available in an [overview factsheet](#) and a [timeline of the Commission's digital proposals](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 460 76 70 83; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

STATEMENTS

Joint statement by Commissioners Oettinger and Jourová on the European Parliament's consent to establishing the European Public Prosecutor's Office

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** in charge of Budget and Human Resources and Commissioner Vera **Jourová** in charge of Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, welcome European Parliament's consent to establishing the European Public Prosecutor's Office. They declared: "We welcome today's vote of the European Parliament, giving its green light to the creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office. A vast majority of Members of the European Parliament decided to endorse this historic step. An EU public prosecutor will help to better protect EU tax payer's money. Existing EU bodies such as the EU Anti-Fraud office, OLAF, cannot prosecute in the Member States but

have to hand over their files to national bodies. This can make it more difficult to pursue cross border cases and to bring cases to a timely conclusion. The new EU public prosecutor will do exactly that – make sure that criminals are brought to justice and that misspent money is recovered much more quickly. (...) As President Juncker said in his State of the Union speech, the new European Public Prosecutor can be a powerful tool to protect citizens even beyond its current competence for crimes against the EU budget. The European Public Prosecutor's Office could also be tasked also with prosecuting cross-border terrorist crimes. Next year, the Commission will lay out the next steps on a future extension of the tasks of the new European Public Prosecutor's Office. For now our immediate priority is to establish an independent, strong and effective European Public Prosecutor to fight crimes against the EU budget, and to get it up and running as soon as possible. Today's consent paves the way for the Council to adopt the Regulation next week."The full statement is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659; Andreana Stankova – Tel.: +32 229 57857)

Joint statement by Commissioners Navracsics and Moedas on the EU's approach to maximise the impact of science

A study by the Commission's [Joint Research Centre](#) (JRC) published in [Nature](#) today confirms that EU researchers perform considerably well thanks to the scientific openness of European countries. The article shows a significant correlation between the degree to which a state cooperates with other countries in the field of research and the quality and success of its research. On the occasion of the publication Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, responsible for the Joint Research Centre, and Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: "In research and innovation, cooperation across disciplines and countries is a must. That is one of the many areas where the EU has a clear added value as Member States perform exceptionally well thanks to the enhanced collaboration within the Union and with third countries. It unquestionably helps our researchers produce world changing science and our public and private sectors to improve people's lives. In fact the EU-28 has maintained its share of the world's top 10% most highly cited scientific publications, in the face of strong competition from China and elsewhere. Across five different locations in the EU 2000 researchers from the Commission's Joint Research Centre support European policy makers with the best available science. We are particularly proud of the role played by the Commission's research and innovation programmes [Horizon 2020](#), and the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#), which has enabled more than 100,000 research fellows to work abroad since its launch 20 years ago. As two very recent examples, EU funded scientists have participated in the ground-breaking research that led to this year's Nobel Prizes in Physics for the discovery of gravitational waves and in Chemistry for the development of cryo-electron microscopy. We warmly congratulate the researchers on their achievement." More information on the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions is available in this [factsheet](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Lucía Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379; Julia-

Henriette Bräuer – Tel.: +32 229 80707)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

The international [Our Ocean Conference](#), co-hosted by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, is currently taking place in Malta, on 5 and 6 October. This morning, High Representative **Mogherini** on behalf of the European Union, announced an ambitious package of 36 EU-initiatives to foster healthier, cleaner, safer and more secure seas. In her [opening speech](#), High Representative **Mogherini** said: *“The sea is a global common. It is Our Ocean because it belongs to humanity, to each and every human being. We all have a responsibility to preserve what’s common – to preserve it as a treasure and avoid that it turns into a threat.”* She added: *“The European Union believes that a globalised world needs a more cooperative global governance. We believe in the power of diplomacy, we invest in it, we believe and invest in the power of common rules and international institutions. And it is difficult, actually impossible, to imagine a global governance without a cooperative oceans’ governance.”* Amounting to over €550 million and launching complementary activities worldwide, the announcement underscores the EU’s determination to improve the situation of the seas. At the same time, as hosts, the EU seeks from the outset of the conference to set an example and send a strong message of encouragement to the rest of the world to step up and take action in the face of growing ocean challenges such as plastic pollution, protection of marine life, impact of climate change and criminal activities at sea. Over the coming days, the international community – governments and private sector alike – will come together to deliver on this objective. Detailed information on the 36 EU commitments can be found [here](#). A live stream of the Our Ocean Conference and the press conference (at 12:00 CET) are available [here](#). High Representative **Mogherini**’s [speech](#) and Commissioner **Vella**’s [speech](#) are available online. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: + 32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: +32 229 93321)

Commissioner Thyssen visits Luxembourg and participates in a Citizens’ Dialogue

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** will travel to Luxembourg tomorrow and deliver a keynote speech on the Commission’s priorities in the employment and social field to the Luxembourgish Members of Parliament, followed by an exchange of views. The Commissioner will participate also in a Citizens’ Dialogue in Luxembourg. The exchange of views with citizens will focus on the Commission’s social agenda, including on [posting of workers](#), [social security coordination](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). The Commissioner will also discuss these key topics with representatives of the social partners. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)

[EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas](#)

Malta, 5 October 2017

EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

At the ongoing EU-hosted [Our Ocean conference](#) in Malta (5-6 October), the European Union has committed to 36 tangible actions to foster healthier, cleaner, safer and more secure seas. Amounting to over €550 million and involving activities worldwide, the announcements underline the EU's determination to improve the situation of the seas and send a positive signal of encouragement to the rest of the world – governments and private sector alike – to step up and tackle the growing ocean challenges, from plastic pollution and protecting marine life to the impact of climate change and criminal activities at sea.

The EU's 36 commitments are described in detail below.

[Maritime security](#) is the basis for global trade and prosperity, but it is under threat – from natural disasters to piracy, trafficking and armed conflict. To make our oceans safer and more secure the European Union announced:

- **€37.5 million** to ensure maritime security and **counter piracy** along the **south-eastern African coastline and in the Indian Ocean**. The funds are to be implemented by four regional organisations (IGAD, COMESA, EAC and IOC) in cooperation with UNODC, INTERPOL and FAO. The programme supports alternative livelihood initiatives in the coastal pirate areas of Somalia, investigation capacities at national and regional level, prison reforms, prosecution and judicial capacity, disruption of illegal financial flows, combating money laundering, and various other maritime tasks, in addition to a regional mechanism for the coordination and exchange of maritime information.
- **€4 million** of investment in its **satellite monitoring programme** (Copernicus) in 2017 to support EU agencies and EU Member States in monitoring oil pollution and large-scale commercial fisheries (including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing) in the **Northeast Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the North Sea, the Black Sea, the Pacific Ocean and around the Canary Islands**. Copernicus will also introduce new services to support law enforcement and navigation safety in ice-infested areas.

- continued **support for maritime security** in the **Gulf of Guinea**, including through the Gulf of Guinea Inter-Regional Network and the launch of two new programmes: the SWAIMS programme (Support to West Africa Integrated Maritime Security), worth **€29 million**, and the programme to improving port security in West and Central Africa, worth **€8.5 million**.
- **€1 million** in 2017 to support the upgrading of the ICT systems of **EU maritime authorities** and facilitate cooperation between them. Furthermore, the European Union announced that it will contribute **€80,000** to facilitate cooperation between **coastguard authorities** in Europe.
- the **launch of a prototype surveillance tool** in September 2017 which detects ships to reveal the extent of human activities at sea. The 'Search for Unidentified Maritime Objects' tool, or 'SUMO' for short, is a piece of software that automatically analyses data from radar imaging satellites to find vessels as small as 1 metre long, even in cloudy conditions or at night. The SUMO tool is open source, to promote uptake by users and developers and facilitate international cooperation on mapping of ship routes, monitoring shipping intensity, identifying polluting ships, monitoring fishing activities, countering piracy and smuggling, and controlling maritime borders.

Marine pollution is a massive problem, with over 10 million tonnes of litter ending up in the sea each year. By 2050, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish. To tackle these challenges, the EU announced:

- The launch of **WISE-Marine**, a gateway to information on European water issues for the general public and stakeholders to promote better ocean governance and ecosystem-based management. The platform will be expanded and integrated further in the years to come.
- **€2 million** in 2017 to support the implementation of the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** by the Member States and a further **€2.3 million** to support regional and inter-regional cooperation for this objective. The EU law aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of the waters of EU Member States by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend.
- **€2.85 million** for **marine pollution prevention** and preparedness projects and **€2.5 million** for marine pollution exercises, to support and complement the cross-border cooperation efforts between EU countries and with selected countries in the EU's vicinity.
- draft measures to reduce the **leakage of plastics into the environment** by the end of 2017, as part of its upcoming **plastics strategy**.
- draft measures in 2017 to **reduce the discharges of ship-generated waste** and cargo residues into the sea.

The sustainable **blue economy** is forecast to double by 2030, from an estimated €1.3 trillion today. The theme was added by the EU to this year's edition of the Our Ocean conference to foster stronger synergies between sustainable ocean solutions and economic growth and employment in coastal communities around the world. To this end, the EU announced:

- More than **€250 million** to fund **marine and maritime research** in 2017. This includes €40 million to support low-emission and advanced

waterborne transport and over €30 million for marine energy. Furthermore, the EU announced that it will provide €12 million to support two new innovation projects on cleaning actions to combat marine litter and other pollutants. Finally, the European Union announced to support the BlueMED Initiative for cooperation on a healthy, productive and resilient Mediterranean Sea through science and research with over €50 million.

- A further strengthening of its work on the **All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance** by fostering enhanced cooperation frameworks with Atlantic partners such as Brazil and South Africa on marine science, research and innovation under the Belém Statement, and will allocate over **€60 million** in the period 2018-2019 to fulfilling this objective. The EU will also continue to implement the ground-breaking **Galway Statement on Ocean Research Cooperation** with the USA and Canada. The European Union reported that the number of research teams working in international consortia on the challenges facing the Atlantic Ocean will exceed 500 by 2019.
- A **€14.5 million** investment initiative in 2017 to promote a sustainable **blue economy** in the European Union. Around **€8 million** of the fund is to provide start-up grants for high-potential projects in emerging blue economy sectors across the EU. In order to better monitor and combat marine litter, a further **€2 million** will go towards providing support for innovative technologies to monitor and/or combat marine litter in waters around the European Union. Furthermore, **€3 million** will go towards facilitating twinning projects in the Mediterranean Sea Basin, such as between maritime training and education institutes, businesses operating in the blue economy and local fishing communities. Finally, **€1.5 million** is to be allocated to restoring marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean.
- The launch of the **Pacific – European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme**, worth **€45 million**. Sweden announced that it will contribute €10 million to the programme. The purpose of the programme is to support sustainable management and development of fisheries for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity.
- Work on **accelerating Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide**, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO), as both committed to on 24 March 2017. Maritime spatial planning (MSP) works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way. Building on the Joint Roadmap, the EU will provide a grant of **€1.4 million** to IOC-UNESCO to **develop international guidelines** for MSP. As part of this venture, **two MSP pilot projects** will be launched in early 2018: one in the **Mediterranean** and another in the **South Pacific**. Furthermore, an **International Forum** for MSP will be created to facilitate discussions on how MSP, including cross-sectoral actions, should be applied globally. The first workshop is to take place in spring 2018.
- **€3 million** to support projects in EU countries to set up cross-border cooperation on **maritime spatial planning**. Maritime spatial planning works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take

place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way.

- **€23 million** of investment in the marine environment monitoring service of its **satellite monitoring** programme (Copernicus) in 2017 and 2018. The service focuses on climate change, fisheries and marine protection. It was also announced that Copernicus will, for the first time, create Ocean Monitoring Indicators, including on biochemistry. These indicators, important for measuring ocean health, will be published in the Ocean State Report that will be available online by the end of 2018.
- Its commitment to further progressing **Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements** with coastal states. These agreements already assist countries in the development of sustainable fisheries, the effective management of monitoring and control systems and the fight against IUU fishing. The new generation of agreements are to have a more integrated approach, including promoting a sustainable blue economy as well as advancing investment in the fisheries sector. This new approach should allow partner countries to gain more value from the ocean economy in a sustainable manner.
- **€8.5 million** for the preservation of marine and coastal **biodiversity** in the **Caribbean Sea Basin** for the benefit of communities that depend on these ecosystems. This action targets in particular natural areas that are threatened by misuse, overexploitation, pollution and climate change effects.
- Nearly **€6 million** to support projects in EU countries to set up cross-border cooperation on **maritime spatial planning**. Maritime spatial planning works across borders and sectors to ensure human activities at sea take place in an efficient, safe and sustainable way.
- Financing to test the **first wave and tidal array deployments** in Europe in 2017 by contributing **€1.5 million** to support administrations and project developers involved in environmental monitoring.
- Its intention to develop the **Pilot Blue Science Cloud**, which is to modernise the process of accessing, managing and using **marine data**, with the goal of improving the handling of large quantities of different marine and maritime data using cloud technologies. Furthermore, the Blue Cloud is intended to further foster work between EU scientists and their international partners. Cloud technologies can improve global and regional ocean observations and forecasting, as promoted in the framework of the G7 Future of the Sea and Oceans initiative and as part of the worldwide effort to build an improved Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).
- At least **€1 million** to support the **World Bank's Global Fisheries Programme (PROFISH)**. The aim of the programme is to improve environmental sustainability, human wellbeing and economic performance in the world's fisheries and aquaculture, with a focus on the welfare of the poor in fisheries and fish farming communities in the developing world.

[Climate change](#) has very direct consequences for the oceans, with rising sea levels and increasing acidification among the most alarming. The European Union therefore announced:

- A **€10 million** project with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

concerning climate change mitigation in the **maritime shipping sector**. The project aims to establish five Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres (MTCCs), one in each of the target regions – **Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific** – thereby forming a global network. The network's task is to enable developing countries in these regions to develop energy-efficiency measures in maritime transport.

- **€1.5 million** for reducing black carbon emissions in the **Arctic**. The project is intended to reinforce international cooperation to protect the Arctic environment.
- **€600,000** over the next two years for an integrated **Arctic** project focusing on the three priority areas of EU Arctic policy: Climate Change and Safeguarding the Arctic Environment; Sustainable Development in and around the Arctic; and International Cooperation on Arctic Issues.

Marine protection: Less than 5% of the world's marine and coastal areas are currently protected by law, and even less is enforced – despite the UN's 2020 target of 10% protection. The European Union therefore announced:

- The European Commission announced the **phase-out by end 2017 all single-use plastic cups** in water fountains and vending machines in all its buildings and meetings. It also committed to report on all its efforts towards a further reduction of the use of other single-use plastic items in all its buildings and events at the occasion of the 2018 Our Ocean Conference. Measures to achieve this will include improving its green public procurement, reducing single-use plastics in canteens and cafeterias, promoting use of tap water, launching a wider awareness-raising campaign for staff on waste reduction, sorting and recycling and greening Commission events.
- **€20 million** to support the management of **marine protected areas** in **African, Caribbean and Pacific countries** through the programme BIOPAMA II (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme).
- Together with Germany, support for the establishment of a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary **multi-stakeholder platform for regional ocean governance** by 2020. This platform will be developed under the Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance (PROG), initiated in 2015 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales – IDDRI) and the Think Tank for Sustainability (TMG). The development of the platform has been announced by Germany as a voluntary commitment on the occasion of the UN Ocean Conference for their implementation of SDG14 (5-9 June 2017). The PROG forum will provide new knowledge on integrated ocean governance at three different levels: (1) within regions; (2) between regions; and (3) between the regional level and the global level. Building on a collaborative process with international partners in 2018, the European Union and Germany will organise the first meeting in 2019.
- **€1.5 million** to analyse ecosystems and economic activity on the **mid-Atlantic Ridge and the Rio Grande Rise**, in order to support the definition of a coherent set of Areas of Particular Environmental Interest.

- Its intention to support the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean in establishing a **Fishing Restricted Area (FRA) of at least 2,700 km²** to protect demersal stocks in the habitat recognised as essential nursery and spawning ground for a number of marine species outside territorial waters of Italy and Croatia of the **Jabuka/Pomo Pit area of the Adriatic Sea**. The creation of the Jabuka/Pomo Pit FRA will be for decision at the annual session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 16-19 October 2017.

Sustainable fisheries are a prerequisite for continued access to sufficient, nutritious seafood for coming generations. To ensure sustainable fisheries around the world, the EU announced:

- **€15 million** under the PESCAO programme for the improvement of regional fisheries governance in **Western Africa** with the aim of developing a regional fishing policy, putting in place a regional coordination against illegal unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and improving fish stock management at regional level.
- **€5.7 million** in 2017 to support the work of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in improving the sustainability of fishing resources in the **Mediterranean**. This is a follow-up to the **Medfish4Ever Declaration**, a 10-year pledge to save the Mediterranean's fish stocks and protect the region's ecological and economic wealth that was signed on 30 March 2017.
- A minimum of **€1 million** in 2017 for the FAO global programme to support the implementation of the landmark **Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing**. The programme provides policy, legal and technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen enforcement of the Agreement. Furthermore, the EU announced that it will host the international conference to assess and review the Port State Measures Agreement in 2020. Finally, the EU announced that it will contribute **€225,000** in 2017 to FAO for the development of a **global record** that is to **register fishing vessels**, refrigerated transport vessels and supply vessels worldwide.
- New rules that are expected to enter into force by the end of 2017 to better and more sustainably manage the **external fishing fleet**. The new rules will allow the European Union to better monitor and control its fleet and efficiently address the problems of reflagging and chartering, thus enhancing efforts to combat IUU fishing.
- Its commitment to reaching a **multilateral agreement on fisheries subsidies** at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference that is to take place in Buenos Aires in December 2017. With this objective, the EU put forward a revised proposal in July 2017 at the World Trade Organisation to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, to **eliminate subsidies** that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to refrain from introducing new subsidies of this kind. The proposal, aimed at implementing SDG 14.6, also contains provisions on enhanced transparency and guidelines on special and differential treatment for developing and

least developed countries. Furthermore, the EU will do its utmost to further this agreement and to support it through the stages of negotiation and implementation.

Further information

[Our Ocean website](#)

Watch live stream of the Our Ocean conference (available in EN, FR, ES, CN, RU, AR)

Watch live stream of EU press conference from Malta (Friday 6 October 13:00 CET)

MEMO/17/3588

[Commission reports on employment and social situation in the EU: record high employment rates and signs of improvement for the youth](#)

Employment in the EU continues to grow at a consistent pace and in almost all Member States. Employment increased by 1.5 % in the EU and 1.6% in the euro area in the second quarter of 2017 compared to the same period in 2016. There are 3.5 million and 2.4 million more people employed in the EU and euro area compared to last year. This means that 235.4 million people are now employed in the EU. This is the highest level ever recorded. Compared to the third quarter of 2014, this corresponds to 8 million and 5.6 million more people employed in the EU and euro area respectively.

EU employment increase over the past four years has particularly benefited the younger generation. While youth unemployment is still too high in the EU, the rate decreased steadily and faster than overall unemployment: it now stands at 16.9 %, reaching a level lower than in 2008.

Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, commented: *“Today’s results are encouraging. More people than ever before in Europe have a job and unemployment has reached a nine-year low. And we see 2.2 million more employees with permanent contracts compared to last year. We need to continue on this path and improve the economic and social conditions for all. With the European Pillar of Social Rights, we have our roadmap towards well-functioning and fair labour markets that are fit for purpose in the 21st century. We would like to see it*

proclaimed together by Parliament, Council and Commission at the Social Summit in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017.”

The Quarterly Review also shows that the **EU’s economy continues its expansion** in all Member States with a growth of 2.4 % in the EU and 2.3 % in the euro area over the last year. This also translated in an **improvement of EU households’ financial situation** with greater income from work, while the increase in social benefits came to a halt. Nearly all Member States continued to see growth in household income between the first quarter of 2016 and the first quarter of 2017.

Further figures on the labour market confirm the improved health of the EU economy:

- **Unemployment rate in the EU and euro area has continued its steady decline since mid-2013 in almost all Member States.** In August 2017, it decreased to 7.6 % in the EU and 9.1 % in the euro area, a yearly reduction of 0.9 percentage points in both cases. The rate recorded in August 2017 was the lowest in the EU since November 2008.
- **Long-term unemployment rate, which has been decreasing for three years, declined by further 0.5 percentage points** in the year to the first quarter of 2017. In almost all Member States, long-term unemployment is declining. But the share of long-term unemployment in total unemployment is still high, at around 45 %.
- **The number of employees with permanent contracts grew by 1.4 % in the year to the first quarter of 2017.** This represents an increase of 2.2 million employees, which is four times more than the increase in temporary contracts (500.000, 1.5 % yearly growth).

Background

The Quarterly Review on Employment and Social Developments in Europe provides an overview of recent social and labour market developments in the EU. It looks at short-term changes in GDP and employment trends.

On 26 April 2017, the Commission presented the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. Delivering on the Pillar, the Commission presented a legislative proposal to improve work-life balance of working parents and carers, and launched social partner consultations to modernise the rules on labour contracts (link to [second stage](#)) and on access to social protection for all.

In his [2017 State of the Union address](#), President Juncker confirmed the Commission’s commitment to move forward with the Pillar as an essential means to assert European values and create a deeper and fairer EU: *“If we want to avoid social fragmentation and social dumping in Europe, then Member States should agree on the European Pillar of Social Rights as soon as possible and at the latest at the Gothenburg summit in November.”* The Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth will take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 17 November 2017. More information on the Summit can be found [here](#).

More information:

[Quarterly Report on Employment and Social Developments in Europe](#)

[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

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[European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships: Questions and Answers](#)

[IP/17/3585](#)

What is being proposed?

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships.

The Framework sets out 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, ensuring both the development of job-related skills and the personal development of apprentices. It takes into account the diversity of vocational education and training (VET) systems across the EU and respects the Member States' competence in the area of VET.

What criteria are being proposed?

The Commission proposes the following 14 criteria to define quality and effective apprenticeships, in line with national or sectoral requirements or collective agreements:

Criteria for learning and working conditions:

1. **Written contract:** An apprenticeship should be based on a written contract between the employer, the apprentice and the vocational training institution.
2. **Learning outcomes:** Comprehensive learning outcomes should be defined by the employers and vocational training institutions, ensuring both job-related skills and personal development.
3. **Pedagogical support:** In-company trainers should be designated and cooperate closely with VET providers and teachers. Teachers and trainers should be supported to update their skills.
4. **Workplace component:** At least half of the apprenticeship duration should

be carried out in a workplace, and there should be opportunities to undertake part of such placements abroad.

5. **Pay and/or compensation:** Apprentices should receive pay and/or compensation, taking into account cost sharing arrangements between employers, apprentices and public authorities.
6. **Social protection:** Apprentices should be entitled to social protection, including necessary insurance.
7. **Work, health and safety conditions:** The host workplace should comply with relevant rules and regulations on working conditions, in particular health and safety legislation.

Criteria for framework conditions:

8. **Regulatory framework:** A clear and consistent regulatory framework should be in place, based on partnership and a transparent dialogue among all relevant stakeholders.
9. **Involvement of social partners:** Social partners, including at sectoral level, should be involved in the design, governance and implementation of apprenticeship schemes.
10. **Support for companies:** Financial and/or non-financial support should be provided, particularly for small, medium-sized and micro-companies.
11. **Flexible pathways and mobility:** There should be flexible entry requirements, as well as opportunities for further education and training. Apprenticeships should lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Transnational mobility should be a component of apprenticeships.
12. **Career guidance and awareness raising:** Career guidance, mentoring and learner support should be provided to ensure successful outcomes and reduce drop-outs.
13. **Transparency:** The transparency of, and access to, apprenticeship offers within and between Member States should be ensured.
14. **Quality assurance and graduate tracking:** There should be quality assurance of apprenticeships and tracking of employment and career progression of apprentices.

Why is it needed, and why the focus on apprenticeships?

Apprenticeship schemes proved to be particularly effective in bringing young people from education and training into work. Evidence shows that 60-70% of apprentices move directly into a job following their apprenticeship, and in some cases this increases to 90%. Apprenticeships provide the combination of technical, transversal and soft skills that employers are looking for.

As efforts are being made to expand apprenticeship supply, it is vital to know what the criteria for success are. This is what the new Framework provides.

How does this fit into the priorities of the European Commission?

The proposal for a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships contributes to the EU's priority on jobs, growth and investment. It is part of the 2016 [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) and its

ambition to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation. The initiative also contributes to the realisation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which states as first principle that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning. It links to [the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework](#) and it is also a follow-up to the 2016 Communication on [Investing in Europe's Youth](#), in which the Commission announced its intention to propose a Quality Framework for Apprenticeships.

What impact will it have in Member States?

This depends on each national system. The Framework will benefit all EU Member States and in particular those with less of the quality elements in place.

A study conducted in preparation of this initiative indicates that:

- 14 countries have less than 50% of the criteria in place: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Romania.
- 6 countries have between 50% and two thirds of the criteria in place: Czech Republic, Malta, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.
- 8 countries have more than two thirds of the criteria in place: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia and the UK.

What are the next steps?

The proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships has been sent to the Council to kick-start negotiations among Member States. Member States will now have to agree on the final text based on the proposal from the Commission.

How was the Framework developed?

The Framework builds in particular on the tripartite [Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training \(ACVT\)](#) on "A Shared Vision for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning" from December 2016. Furthermore, it builds on the joint work of the European Social Partners on the quality and cost-effectiveness of apprenticeships, leading to a [Joint Statement by the European Social Partners](#) (BusinessEurope, CEEP, ETUC, UEAPME) in June 2016. Two hearings with European cross-industry and sectoral social partners were organised in March and June 2017. The proposal is also built on input from the European VET providers associations and stakeholders in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. The Framework also supports the priorities of a recently launched [European Apprentices Network](#), with quality being one of its key priorities.

What is the state of play on the ten priority actions under the New Skills Agenda for Europe:

The Upskilling Pathways initiative

Nearly 70 million adults in Europe struggle with reading, writing or using a

computer. To help people master these basic skills, Member States in December 2016 adopted a Council Recommendation on 'Upskilling Pathways', based on a Commission proposal, under which they committed themselves to strengthening support for low skilled/low qualified adults. Beneficiaries will be offered: i) an individual skills assessment, to identify existing skills and upskilling needs; ii) a package of education or training designed around this assessment; and iii) opportunities to have acquired skills validated and recognised. By mid-2018, Member States will outline the measures they intend to take to implement this initiative, including which groups of low-skilled adults should be given priority.

The European Qualifications Framework

For workers and learners to move across Europe, their qualifications need to be trusted and understood. Therefore the Commission has proposed a revision of the 'European Qualifications Framework' to make people's skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, under the form of a Council Recommendation. Member States have adopted this Recommendation in May 2017. Thanks to this framework, employers can better understand foreign qualifications and people can put their talent to use all across Europe.

The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

Almost 40% of our labour force, or 80 million people, do not have basic digital skills, while 40% of our companies cannot find the ICT specialists they need. To close this gap, the Commission launched the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition. It brings everyone involved together – including Member States, companies, and education providers – to take action and boost digital skills. Under this umbrella, so far 17 national Digital Skills and jobs coalitions are in place and Member States are working on national digital skills strategies. 70 organisations have made pledges under the Coalition to take action to provide training and help develop digital skills.

The Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills

To address skills mismatches in different sectors of the economy, the Commission launched the 'Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills'. It brings together businesses, trade unions, education and training institutions and other stakeholders to develop skills strategies which meet the needs of specific sectors to grow. More specifically, the first call to support European partnerships in six pilot sectors was launched in January 2017 (automotive, defence, maritime technology, space/geo information, textile, leather clothing and footwear, and tourism). The winning consortia have been decided and projects will start by December 2017. Six additional sectors are identified for the next Erasmus+ Call for Proposals to be published in October 2017 (construction, steel and paper, green technologies and renewable energies, additive manufacturing and maritime shipping).

The Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals

Making the most of migrants' skills is a win-for-all. Therefore the Commission has launched a multilingual 'EU Skills Profile Tool for Third

Country Nationals' to help national authorities identify the skills of non-EU migrants, to ease their path to work or education, and ultimately their integration in society. The Tool – an enhanced CV – was launched on 20 June 2017, World Refugee Day. Reception centres, asylum support offices and public employment services across Europe can now use this tool to help in their daily work.

The Europass Framework

The Commission has put forward a proposal to modernise the Europass CV along with other Europass documents as well as tools to improve the transparency of skills, qualifications and learning opportunities across Europe on a dedicated website. This will help employers and employees to compare skills and qualifications all over Europe. Negotiations on the Commission's proposal are on-going in both the Council and the European Parliament.

Making Vocational Education and Training a First Choice

Vocational programmes can have excellent outcomes but they are often seen as a second alternative to academic studies. The Commission is supporting Member States to improve their Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems, including to make sure that there are no dead-ends: that VET students can progress to higher education or academic studies if they choose to, and vice-versa. In November we will hold the second edition of the Vocational Skills Week – a cross-Europe campaign to promote how quality vocational training can open the doors to exciting and rewarding careers. We expect 1,500 events and 1 million people to get involved. The EU supports apprenticeships also through various other instruments. The European Alliance for Apprenticeships has so far mobilised over 700,000 places for young people. At least 390,000 apprenticeships have been offered already under the Youth Guarantee. Erasmus+ supports mobility for apprentices, including a new ErasmusPro initiative aimed at supporting 50,000 placements of vocational learners in companies abroad for the period 2018-2020.

Analysing brain drain

Free movement within Europe allows people to put their skills to use where they are needed. But it can also pose challenges, where some regions lose talent, acting as a drag on their competitiveness. To better understand the impact of this brain drain in Europe, the Commission launched a dedicated study to be combined with mutual learning between countries to share direct experiences. The results are expected by mid-2018.

The initiative on graduate tracking

On 30 May 2017, the Commission presented a [proposal for a Recommendation on tracking graduates](#). The Council Recommendation will cover graduates from vocational education and training programmes as well as higher education. Knowing what happens to graduates after they finish their studies eg. how quickly do they get a job, how well do they progress in their careers or further education, is crucial to informing and adapting learning programmes so they offer the best springboard possible to future success. This

initiative will encourage and support Member State authorities to improve the quality and availability of information on what happens to their how graduates.

The Key Competences Framework

Following a [public consultation](#) which concluded in May, the Commission will present its proposal to update the 2006 [Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#) before the end of the year. This review will seek to determine which skills and competences young people need to acquire to succeed in the job market and in life.

The Youth Guarantee

At least 390,000 apprenticeships have been offered already under the [Youth Guarantee](#). The Youth Guarantee makes it possible to give every young person a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Erasmus Pro

Erasmus+ supports mobility for apprentices, including a new [ErasmusPro](#) initiative aimed at supporting 50,000 placements of vocational learners in companies to spend at least 3 to 12 months abroad for the period 2018-2020. Only a small fraction of apprentices spend time learning in another Member State and even then, it is usually for a very short amount of time (one month on average).