

Incendies de forêt au Portugal: l'UE soutient les efforts de reconstruction avec les fonds européens et poursuit l'aide d'urgence

Le Portugal continue d'être soutenu par le mécanisme de protection civile de l'UE pour les incendies de forêt qui ont lieu dans le pays. Depuis le 12 août, après que le Portugal a demandé l'aide de l'UE pour la deuxième fois cette année, plus de 160 pompiers, 27 véhicules et 4 avions anti-incendie ont été envoyés dans le pays et opèrent toujours dans les zones touchées grâce au soutien de l'Espagne, à travers le Centre de coordination des interventions d'urgence de la Commission. Pour soutenir le pays suite aux incendies mortels de juin qui ont affecté la région du Centre, aujourd'hui la Commission a approuvé la modification du [programme régional de politique de cohésion](#). Jusqu'à 45 millions d'euros au sein du programme peuvent désormais être utilisés pour faire face aux conséquences de la catastrophe naturelle et contribuer à revitaliser l'activité économique régionale. La commissaire à la politique régionale Corina **Crețu** a déclaré: *"Ces fonds réorientés aideront la vie dans la région du Centre à reprendre son cours normal et permettront aux Portugais de tourner la page de ce douloureux chapitre. Cela montre que l'UE est prête à intensifier son soutien lorsque ses citoyens en ont le plus besoin. Je tenais à manifester notre sincère solidarité aux Portugais, car les feux de forêts continuent de dévaster le pays. Je souhaite également exprimer notre profonde gratitude à ceux qui, au Portugal et ailleurs en Europe, se battent sans relâche contre les flammes."* Sur ces 45 millions d'euros, jusqu'à 25 millions d'euros peuvent maintenant être utilisés pour rétablir la capacité de production des petites entreprises locales, dont les équipements et les machines ont été détruits lors des incendies. 20 millions d'euros peuvent désormais être investis dans les services publics et la restauration des infrastructures essentielles: travaux de réparation sur les routes municipales, restauration à l'état de fonctionnement des systèmes de distribution d'eau ou remplacement des véhicules de transport municipaux. Suivant les incendies, les autorités portugaises avaient demandé la modification de ce programme de politique de cohésion et la Commission s'était engagée à traiter cette requête le plus rapidement possible. La décision prise aujourd'hui ne modifie pas le budget global du programme. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

European Solidarity Corps: First volunteers in Italy to help rebuild earthquake-hit regions

Today the first group of European Solidarity Corps volunteers is arriving in Norcia, Italy, to help with the ongoing efforts to repair damage and rebuild social services for the local community affected by the severe earthquakes that hit the region a year ago. The 16 young [European Solidarity Corps](#) volunteers – participating in the project 'European Youth for Norcia' led by Italian organisation 'Kora' – will help reconstruct historic buildings heavily damaged by the earthquakes, including the Basilica of San Benedetto

and the Monastery of the Benedictines. They will also work with the young and the elderly of Norcia, organising workshops, outdoor activities and cultural events. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will visit Norcia on 4 and 5 September. Commenting on the arrival of the first volunteers, he said: *"Less than a year after President Juncker announced his idea to create a European Solidarity Corps, it is up and running, delivering relief to people who need it. Norcia and its citizens have suffered greatly, and I am proud of the young Europeans who are showing solidarity by helping this community recover. With their efforts, especially to rebuild the historic Basilica of San Benedetto, these young people are also building a bridge from Europe's past to its future, an important contribution to the upcoming European Year of Cultural Heritage."* The volunteers heading to Norcia come from Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, and Spain. The project they are participating in is one of three projects under the European Solidarity Corps currently selected for activities in the Italian regions affected by earthquakes. In total, 230 European Solidarity Corps members will support Italian communities hit by the earthquakes until 2020, and €790,000 has been granted for these projects. More information can be found in the [press release online](#). More information about the EU's support in Italy can be found in this [factsheet](#). (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)

EU sends emergency relief for Sierra Leone

The EU has released an initial amount of emergency humanitarian assistance of €300, 000 for the most vulnerable families affected by the deadly mudslide and floods that have caused hundreds of casualties in Sierra Leone and displaced thousands. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** said: *"The EU stands in full solidarity with Sierra Leone during these difficult times. My heart goes out to the people of Sierra Leone, a country I visited when it was on the frontline of the Ebola outbreak. Our new emergency funding will help provide essential supplies such as water, sanitation hygiene, food assistance, basic shelter and protection. The EU is doing all it can to help."* The EU has also activated its emergency Copernicus mapping system to provide damage assessment maps to help with the relief efforts and a Commission humanitarian expert is on his way to assess the needs on the ground. Overall EU assistance to Sierra Leone amounts to €376 million in long-term development support from 2014-2020. The EU, together with Member States, was also at the forefront of efforts to support the country during the Ebola outbreak. Total assistance of €2 billion over 2014-2016, was provided to the three countries affected by the crisis, which included Sierra Leone, with €70 million in humanitarian assistance from the European Commission. (For more information: Carlos Martín Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Eurostat: Le taux d'inflation annuel stable à 1,3% dans la zone euro

Le taux d'inflation annuel de la zone euro s'est établi à 1,3% en juillet 2017, stable par rapport à juin 2017. Un an auparavant, il était de 0,2%. Le

taux d'inflation annuel de l'Union européenne s'est établi à 1,5% en juillet 2017, également stable par rapport à juin 2017. Un an auparavant, il était de 0,2%. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidthardt – Tel.: + 32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976)

Eurostat: Excédent de 26,6 milliards d'euros du commerce international de biens de la zone euro

D'après les premières estimations pour le mois de juin 2017, les exportations de biens de la zone euro (ZE19) vers le reste du monde se sont établies à 187,2 milliards d'euros, en hausse de 3,9% par rapport à juin 2016 (180,2 mrd). Les importations depuis le reste du monde ont quant à elles été de 160,7 mrd d'euros, en hausse de 6,2% par rapport à juin 2016 (151,3 mrd). En conséquence, la zone euro a enregistré en juin 2017 un excédent de 26,6 mrd d'euros de son commerce international de biens avec le reste du monde, contre +28,9 mrd en juin 2016. Le commerce intra-zone euro s'est établi à 157,5 mrd d'euros en juin 2017, soit +3,5% par rapport à juin 2016. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

Mergers: Commission clears joint acquisition of Eurocash by Norgesgruppen and Axfood

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the joint acquisition of Eurocash Food A.B. of Sweden by Norgesgruppen ASA of Norway and Axfood A.B. of Sweden. Eurocash operates eight supermarkets located in Sweden at a short distance from the Norwegian border which are primarily aimed at Norwegian consumers crossing the border to buy cheaper daily consumer goods. Norgesgruppen is the leading food retailer in Norway. Axfood is a major food retailer in Sweden. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the activities of Norgesgruppen, Axfood and Eurocash overlap only to a limited extent as regards procurement of daily consumer goods from suppliers and retail sale of daily consumer goods to Norwegian consumers. Moreover, several other stores targeting Norwegian consumers remain present in the Swedish border area. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition website](#), in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8468](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of a newly created joint venture by Danske Bank and A.P. Møller Mærsk

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of joint control over the newly created joint venture

Gatetu by A.P. Moller – Mærsk A/S (APMM) and Danske Bank A/S (DB), all three based in Denmark. Gatetu is a financial technology start-up that will offer software for online business to business (B2B) platforms to facilitate payments and other financial services at a global level. DB is active globally in retail and wholesale banking, pension schemes, insurance, mortgage finance, asset management, brokerage, real estate and leasing services. APMM is an international group active in container shipping and terminal services, operation of tankers, harbour towage, logistics and energy. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as the joint venture will generate limited revenues 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.8512](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Albany Molecular Research by Carlyle and GTCR

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control of Albany Molecular Research Inc. (AMRI) by Carlyle Partners VI L.P. (Carlyle) and GTCR LLC. AMRI is a global contract research and manufacturing organisation providing customers integrated drug discovery, development and manufacturing services. Carlyle is a global alternative asset manager, which manages funds that invest globally. GTCR is a private equity firm focused on investing in companies in the financial services, healthcare, technology and media & telecommunications industries. The transaction creates horizontal and vertical relationships between the activities of AMRI and the activities of the portfolio companies controlled by Carlyle and GTCR. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the companies' low market shares in the areas where their activities overlap. 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.8556](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

Mergers: Commission clears the creation of a joint venture by Singapore Airlines Engineering and Moog Singapore

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the creation of a joint venture by Singapore Airlines Engineering and Moog Singapore. Singapore Airlines Engineering, a subsidiary of Singapore Airlines, is active in passenger and cargo transport, as well as in engineering services related to air transport. Moog Singapore is active in the provision of maintenance, repair and overhaul services. The newly created joint venture will offer maintenance, repair and overhaul services for a range of Moog proprietary parts installed on certain aircrafts. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the joint venture will have no or only limited activities in the EEA. 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.8566](#). (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

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

[June 2017-Euro area international trade in goods surplus €26.6 bn-€7.1 bn surplus for EU28](#)

The first estimate for **euro area** (EA19) exports of goods to the rest of the world in June 2017 was €187.2 billion, an increase of 3.9% compared with June 2016 (€180.2 bn). Imports from the rest of the world stood at €160.7 bn, a rise of 6.2% compared with June 2016 (€151.3 bn). As a result, the **euro area** recorded a €26.6 bn surplus in trade in goods with the rest of the world in June 2017, compared with +€28.9 bn in June 2016. **Intra-euro area** trade rose to €157.5 bn in June 2017, up by 3.5% compared with June 2016.

These data are released by **Eurostat**, the statistical office of the European Union.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

[July 2017-Annual inflation stable at 1.3% in the euro area-EU stable at 1.5%](#)

Euro area annual inflation was 1.3% in July 2017, stable compared with June 2017. In July 2016 the rate was 0.2%. **European Union** annual inflation was 1.5% in July 2017, also stable compared to June 2017. A year earlier the rate was 0.2%. These figures come from **Eurostat**, the statistical office of the European Union.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

European Solidarity Corps: First volunteers in Italy to help rebuild earthquake-hit regions

The 16 young [European Solidarity Corps](#) volunteers – participating in the project ‘European Youth for Norcia’ led by Italian organisation ‘Kora’ – will help reconstruct historic buildings heavily damaged by the earthquakes, including the Basilica of San Benedetto and the Monastery of the Benedictines. They will also work with the young and the elderly of Norcia, organising workshops, outdoor activities and cultural events.

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *“Less than a year after President Juncker announced his idea to create a European Solidarity Corps, it is up and running, delivering relief to people who need it. Norcia and its citizens have suffered greatly, and I am proud of the young Europeans who are showing solidarity by helping this community recover. I am looking forward to seeing the projects myself and to meeting the volunteers and local authorities during my visit on 4 and 5 September. With their efforts, especially to rebuild the historic Basilica of San Benedetto, these young people are also building a bridge from Europe’s past to its future, an important contribution to the upcoming European Year of Cultural Heritage.”*

The volunteers heading to Norcia come from Austria, France, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, and Spain. The project they are participating in is one of three projects under the European Solidarity Corps currently selected for activities in the Italian regions affected by earthquakes. In September this year, additional European Solidarity Corps members will join the other two projects, led by the organisation Arci Culture Solidari and the Municipality of Pescara respectively. In total, 230 European Solidarity Corps members will support Italian communities hit by the earthquakes until 2020, and €790,000 has been granted for these projects.

Background

On 24 August 2016, a powerful earthquake struck near Norcia, causing major damage to the towns in the region and killing approximately 300 people. The town of Norcia suffered structural damage, fortunately without fatal injuries but leaving many people displaced. On 30 October 2016, another high-magnitude earthquake rocked Norcia, causing further heavy damage to the city.

Now that the immediate disaster relief is completed, rebuilding is beginning. The European Solidarity Corps, announced by President Juncker during his 2016 [State of the Union address](#), was set up precisely to answer needs such as these, and to give young people between the age of 18 and 30 the opportunity to take part in this type of solidarity activities across the EU.

The European Solidarity Corps projects are part of a wide range of EU support following the earthquakes of 2016 and 2017 in the Italian regions of Abruzzo, Lazio, Marche and Umbria. In June, the [Commission proposed €1.2 billion](#) from the [EU Solidarity Fund](#), the highest amount ever mobilised under this fund of which Italy is already the largest beneficiary.

Since its [launch on 7 December 2016](#), more than 34,000 young people have joined the European Solidarity Corps. [In March 2017](#), matching with organisations began; since then, about 15,000 participants have been contacted and 700 placements accepted. The aim is to have 100,000 young people taking part in the European Solidarity Corps by the end of 2020.

On 30 May 2017 the Commission presented a [proposal](#) to put the European Solidarity Corps on a firm footing, with a budget of €341.5 million for the years 2018-2020 and a dedicated legal base. In addition, the Commission proposed to extend opportunities for young people. As well as offering volunteering, traineeships and job placements, in the future the European Solidarity Corps will also offer participants the opportunity to set up their own solidarity projects or to volunteer as a group. The proposal for a draft Regulation now needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council before it can enter into force.

For more information

[Factsheet: EU-support in Italy](#)

[Factsheet: Taking the European Solidarity Corps forward](#)

[Factsheet for organisations](#)

[MEMO: Questions and Answers on the European Solidarity Corps](#)

[MEMO: Taking the European Solidarity Corps forward: Questions and Answers](#)

[European Solidarity Corps Portal registration page](#)

[European Solidarity Corps facebook page](#)

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Trend of converging working time across 28 EU Member States has stalled

(Dublin, Ireland): The difference in working time between workers in the 28 EU Member States remains large and is especially marked between the 'older' 15 EU Member States and the 13 new Member States that joined the EU since 2004, according to new research from Eurofound. This is particularly apparent when comparing annual leave entitlements for workers: a gap of 2.5 working weeks is evident between the most generous and the least generous. The trend of converging working time between the 28 EU Member States has clearly stalled.

The latest annual report, [Developments in working time 2015–2016](#), shows significant disparities in the average amount of collectively agreed annual leave days between workers in the EU Member States. With the addition of public holidays, 'high-leave' countries include Croatia with 41 leave days, Denmark with 39 days and Germany with 37. These should be compared with the figures for 'low-leave countries', such as Ireland, Hungary and Estonia, all which come in at just 28 days annual leave. The average figure for the EU28 was 33.8 days – 34.7 days in the EU15 and 31.3 days in the Member States that have joined the EU since 2004 (the NMS13).

Collective bargaining plays an important role in determining the duration of working time in many of the EU28 countries; it plays a lesser or sometimes negligible role in some of the NMS13. The nature and extent of this role also differs widely across countries, with bargaining at different levels (intersectoral, sectoral and company level) being more or less important.

The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK were the only countries registering changes to collectively agreed weekly hours between 2015 and 2016. Over the same period, the EU15 average was reduced from 37.6 hours to 37.5; consequently, this resulted in a reduction for the EU28 from 38.1 to 38 hours. At 35.6 hours, France remains the country with the shortest average collectively agreed working week in the EU. In some Member States – Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia – working time is not generally defined through collective bargaining.

The 'actual hours worked' are the hours that individuals spend in work activities, including production activities, ancillary activities, short breaks, and education and training necessary for successfully carrying out the job tasks. In the EU, full-time employees in the UK report the longest usual weekly working hours in their main jobs in 2016 – 42.3 hours, 0.1 hours less than in 2014 and 2015. They are followed by employees in Cyprus (41.7 hours), Austria (41.4 hours), Greece (41.2 hours), Poland and Portugal (41.1 hours). Employees in Denmark report the shortest weekly hours (37.8 hours). This is 4.5 hours less per week than their counterparts in the UK – the equivalent of more than five working weeks per year.

The report also looks at working time across selected sectors, including

chemicals, metalworking, banking, retail, and public administration. It finds that across all selected sectors, the NMS13 countries work significantly more hours compared to EU15.

The report aims to provide a definitive sense of which EU workers work the most hours. It complements Eurofound's database of wages, working time and collective disputes, which since 2000 has provided information about the systems in place that define working time as well as some of the main outcomes of these systems. In addition, the report updates and complements the report [Working time developments in the 21st century](#), which covers data on a range of aspects of working time, including collectively agreed working hours between 2000 and 2014.

Publication: [Developments in working time 2015–2016](#)

[Database of wages, working time and collective disputes](#)