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ESMA emphasises that none of the corrections aims to alter the substance or policy provisions of the Guidelines originally published on 10 October 2016. This revision exercise will not have an impact on the timeline for completion of the comply and explain procedure with the Guidelines. ESMA also makes available the compared [track changes version](#) to ensure full transparency on the changes made.

Next steps

The Guidelines are currently undergoing translation in the official languages of the European Union. Upon completion of the translation process, the national competent authorities must notify ESMA whether they comply or intend to comply with the Guidelines, with reasons for non-compliance, within two months of publication of the guidelines in the official languages of the EU.

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Daily News 08 / 08 / 2017

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition conjointe de LBC Tank Terminals par Ardian, APG et PGGM

La Commission Européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de LBC Tank Terminals, basée en Belgique, par les sociétés Ardian, basée en France, APG et PGGM, toutes deux basées aux Pays-Bas. LBC Tank Terminals opère dans les terminaux de stockage en vrac de produits chimiques, d'hydrocarbures et de produits pétroliers raffinés. Ardian est un fonds de capital-investissement. APG est actif dans le conseil aux entreprises, la gestion d'actifs, l'administration des pensions de retraites et le service aux employeurs. PGGM exerce des activités dans le secteur de la gestion des fonds de pensions, la gestion d'actifs, le soutien managérial et du conseil aux fonds de pensions, leurs employeurs affiliés ainsi que leur employés. La Commission a conclu que l'acquisition envisagée ne soulèverait aucun problème de concurrence car elle aura un impact limité sur la structure du marché. La transaction 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 de concurrence de la Commission, sous le numéro [M.8543](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

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

Trafficking for sexual exploitation:

Bulgarian OCG dismantled

07 August 2017

□An organised crime group (OCG) operating in the Sliven region of Bulgaria was dismantled following Eurojust's coordination of five investigations of trafficking of human beings (THB) for the purpose of sexual exploitation of Bulgarian women to the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as money laundering.

These five investigations resulted in two separate international operations, Operation Palma and Operation Leerdam, and respectively the establishment of two joint investigation teams (JITs), which were set up and coordinated as well as financially supported by Eurojust.

OPERATION PALMA

Operation Palma was initiated by the Dutch authorities in 2013, investigating criminal activity of trafficking of human beings that took place between 2003 and 2010. Following the first coordination meeting at Eurojust in November 2015, the authorities of Bulgaria and the Netherlands set up a JIT in January 2016 to coordinate their investigative efforts. Within the framework of this JIT, between 4 and 11 October 2016, coordinated operations were carried out in Sliven, Bulgaria, and Utrecht and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Two suspects were detained in Bulgaria, one of them on the basis of an European Arrest Warrant (EAW) issued by Prosecutors Office Utrecht and the other one for money laundering offences of large scale. At the same time in the Netherlands another suspect was arrested. During these coordinated operations a great number of witnesses were questioned in the Netherlands, Belgium and in Bulgaria (in Bulgaria by mixed Bulgarian/Dutch police-teams).

Searches and seizures were conducted in two different towns in Bulgaria. Photos and documents were seized, and the Bulgarian court imposed freezing orders on real estate and vehicle. The Dutch police is preparing a financial report concerning the illegally obtained profits by the main suspect in the Dutch case.

OPERATION LEERDAM

In November 2015, the Bulgarian authorities requested the support of Eurojust in another ongoing Dutch investigation, called Operation Leerdam, for trafficking of Bulgarian women to The Netherlands and Belgium.

Eurojust was instrumental in detecting links between the investigations carried out by the Bulgarian and Dutch authorities within the framework of Operation Palma and Operation Leerdam, and another ongoing investigation in Belgium on sexual exploitation in Antwerp and Brussels of victims of Bulgarian nationality.

In February 2016, Eurojust organised a joint coordination meeting during which prosecutors, investigators and police officers from Belgium, Bulgaria and the Netherlands in charge of the 5 linked investigations gathered for the

first time to discuss and agree on a coordinated approach to dismantle the OCG. The meeting was attended by twenty-five participants, including Europol officials. As a result of the coordination meeting, Belgium, Bulgaria, and the Netherlands set up a new JIT in Operation Leerdam to define and execute a common case strategy to ensure that the actions in one case would not interfere with the investigations in the other case.

In the framework of an international specialized operation, on 27 September 2016, the leader and two members of the OCG were arrested in Amsterdam. In Bulgaria, six other members of the OCG were arrested pursuant to EAWs and subsequently surrendered to the Belgian and Dutch authorities. One person was arrested in Germany based on a EAW issued by the Netherlands. Ten simultaneous searches were carried out in four different towns in Bulgaria. Evidence and documents related to the OCG were found and seized, as well as cash and drugs. Witnesses were questioned in Belgium, Bulgaria and the Netherlands. During all the investigative actions that took place in Bulgaria, members of the JIT from the Netherlands, including the prosecutor supervising the investigation in Utrecht, were present.

Eurojust supported the activities of the national authorities participating in these two separate JITs, including providing both investigation teams with significant logistical and financial assistance, which in the end amounted to approximately EUR 90 000.

Dimitar Hadzhiyski, Assistant to the National Member for Bulgaria at Eurojust, said: *'For the first time Eurojust facilitated the coordination between two separate JITs. Due to the active involvement of Eurojust, the links between all five national investigations carried out in Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Belgium were established, proper planning of the investigative activities was performed, which resulted in a very successful coordinated operation, dismantling the activities of the OCG.'*

[Daily News 07 / 08 / 2017](#)

EU mobilises planes to fight forest fires in Italy

The European Commission has helped mobilise 3 aircraft (2 Canadair and a reconnaissance plane) through the [EU's Civil Protection Mechanism's](#) voluntary pool of assets, following a request for assistance from Italy to battle forest fires in the country. In addition, the EU's emergency [Copernicus Satellite mapping system](#) is also helping the Italian civil protection authorities. *"The EU has provided immediate assistance to Italy, following a request for help. 3 planes from France will operate in Italy today. This support is through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism and shows the value of having a European response to natural disasters. The planes will work alongside the Italian civil protection putting EU solidarity into action,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Christos Stylianides. This is the second time this summer that Italy has activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for forest fires. The Commission's 24/7 [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) is closely monitoring the situation in Italy and the forest fire risk across Europe. [Photos](#) and [video](#) stockshots of the Emergency Centre are available, as well as a [MEMO](#) 'Fighting forest fires in Europe – how it works'. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

State aid: Commission approves aid scheme of up to €10 million for new air routes to the region of Limburg in the Netherlands

The European Commission has found that a Dutch scheme to grant start-up aid to airlines launching new routes to and from the airport of Maastricht/Aachen is in line with EU State aid rules. The Commission has concluded that the project will improve the connectivity of the region with other regions across Europe, in line with EU objectives, without distorting competition in the Single Market. The scheme will last until 31 December 2019, with a total budget of up to €10 million. There will be no overlap between any of the routes operated as part of the scheme and routes operated by other airports in the same catchment area. In particular, the Commission found that the scheme is in line with EU State aid rules, in particular the Commission's [Aviation Guidelines](#). These rules enable Member States to grant start-up aid to airlines, subject to certain criteria, to give them the necessary incentive to create new routes from regional airports. This increases the mobility of EU citizens by establishing access points for intra-EU flights and stimulates regional development. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number SA. 47746. (For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: + 32 229 80100; Maria Sarantopoulou – Tel.: +32 229 13740)

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