

CALENDRIER du 15 mai au 21 mai 2017

(Susceptible de modifications en cours de semaine)

Déplacements et visites

Lundi 15 mai 2017

Foreign Affairs Council

EU-Tajikistan Cooperation Council

15-18/05 European Parliament Plenary Session

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in Hannover, Germany: delivers a speech at an event for the 70th anniversary of the constituent meeting of the *Landtag* of Lower Saxony.

Mr Frans **Timmermans** in The Hague, the Netherlands: delivers a keynote speech at the Council of State (Raad van State).

Mr Frans **Timmermans** in Eindhoven, the Netherlands: visits VDL Enabling Technologies Group (VDL ETG).

Mr Andrus **Ansip** receives members of the Commercial Broadcasters Association (COBA).

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** and Ms Violeta **Bulc** receive cross-sectorial Social Partners (BusinessEurope, CEEP, UEAPME (European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises); and ETUC (Confederation of European Trade Union) on the Mobility Package.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** in Beijing, China: participates in the "[Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation](#)"; meets Mr Ma Kai, Vice-Premier of the State Council of China; and representatives of the business community.

Mr Günther H. **Oettinger** in Luxemburg: delivers a speech at a reception of the Conference of Presidents of the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Madrid, Spain: meets the CEOs of leading gas companies in Europe, members of GD4S group – Gas Distributors for Sustainability: GRDF, France; Italgas, Italy; DGSR, Romania; Gas Natural, Spain; Galp Gás Natural Distribuição, Portugal.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** signs a declaration to proclaim the 21 May 2017 as the "European Natura 2000 Day" together with Ms Adina Ioana Vălean, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety of the European Parliament; Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions

(CoR); and Mr Neil Kerr, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU during a [dedicated event](#), in Brussels.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Saarbrücken, Germany: visits the Helmholtz Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** participe dans un déjeuner de travail avec M. Jean-Pierre Clamadieu, Président du Comité Exécutif et PDG de Solvay, à Bruxelles.

M. Pierre **Moscovici** reçoit M. José Carlos Díez, chercheur d'économie à l'université d'Alcala et à l'école de commerce ICADE.

Ms Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** in Sulisław, Poland: meets entrepreneurs and local authorities of Opole region.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Turku, Finland: participates in and delivers a speech at the [EU Prize for Cultural Heritage Awards Ceremony](#), together with Mr Plácido Domingo, tenor and conductor.

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: delivers a keynote speech at the "Publicist prize" event organised by the Danish Publicistklubben.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** delivers a keynote speech at the event ["Open Innovation, Open Science and Open to the World: RISE group publication on the future of EU research and innovation policy"](#), in Brussels.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives Ms Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, University College London (UCL).

Mr Julian **King** participates in a debate on the present and future security priorities and needs in the context of the comprehensive assessment of EU Security Policy, organised by the European Organisation for Security (EOS), in Brussels.

Mardi 16 mai 2017

College meeting

General Affairs Council

European Economic Area Council

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in Strasbourg, France (until 17/05): receives Ms Mariya Gabriel, candidate for Commissioner; together with Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and meets the Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left in the European Parliament.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** in Strasbourg, France: exchanges views on the Energy Union Strategy with the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC) of the European Parliament.

Mr Günther H. **Oettinger** in Speyer, Germany: delivers a speech on the EU budget at the German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** in Amman, Jordan: delivers a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of SESAME (Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East) – first major international research centre in the Middle East, in the presence of King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Mercredi 17 mai 2017

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in Strasbourg, France: addresses the Plenary of the European Parliament on the conclusions of the 29 April European Council (Article 50); and attends the speech of Mr António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the European Parliament.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** in Vienna, Austria (until 18/05): on Energy Union Tour: visits smart city project “Smarter Together”; delivers a keynote speech at the 40th anniversary of the Austrian Energy Agency conference on “Energy 2027”; meets CEOs of leading Austrian energy companies; meets Mr Andrä Rupprechter, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria; Austrian Social Partners (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), Austrian Chamber of Labour (Austrian AK), Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)); delivers a lecture and exchanges views on energy and climate change with students at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences.

Mr Günther H. **Oettinger** in Wismar, Germany: delivers a speech at the annual meeting of Ministers for European Affairs of the German *Länder*.

Mr Günther H. **Oettinger** in Berlin, Germany: meets representatives of the Working Group on Europe and on Budget of the CDU/CSU *Bundestag* Fraction.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Ms Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** in Bad Neuenahr, Germany (until 19/05): attends the G20 labour and employment ministers meeting.

Mr Phil **Hogan** attends the presidium of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) for the handover of their paper on the Future of CAP, in Brussels.

Mr Phil **Hogan** receives Mr Kevin O'Connor, Associate professor at University College Dublin Conway Institute of Biomolecular and Biomedical Research.

Ms Violeta **Bulc** receives Mr Jean-Claude Kihn, President of Goodyear & Rubber Company, Europe, Middle East and Africa business unit.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Cluj-Napoca, Romania (until 18/05): participates in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#).

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** receives Mr Euclid Tsakalotos, Minister for Finance of

Greece; and Mr Panagiotis Kouroumplis, Minister for Maritime Affairs and the Islands of Greece.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** in Israel: meets Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel; Mr Eli Cohen, Minister for Economy and Industry; visits cyber tech park and pilot smart city within Digital Israel initiative; delivers a lecture at the Centre for European Studies Ben Gurion University; visits a lab funded by EU research and innovation funding programmes; and participates in the European Research Council (ERC) 10th Anniversary Event.

Mr Julian **King** in Berlin, Germany: meets Mr Thomas de Maizière, Minister for the Interior of Germany; and Mr Heiko Maas, Minister for Justice and Consumer Protection; participates in a meeting with the *Bundestag* Committee on Internal Affairs; and participates in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) on the Security Union and internal security.

Jeudi 18 mai 2017

Justice and Home Affairs Council

18-19/05 Foreign Affairs Council

18-19/05 Informal meeting of energy ministers

President Jean-Claude **Juncker** in Luxembourg: attends an event for the 80th birthday of Jacques Santer, former President of the European Commission and former Prime Minister of Luxembourg, organised by the Christian Social People's Party (CSV).

Mr Andrus **Ansip** in Tallin, Estonia (until 19/05): meets the members of the Economic Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament.

Mr Maroš **Šefčovič** in Vienna, Austria: on Energy Union Tour: exchanges views at the Permanent Council of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) meeting; and meets Ms Ulli Sima, City Councillor in charge of Environment and Animal Protection in Vienna.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** in Riga, Latvia: meets Mr Māris Kučinskis, Prime Minister of Latvia; participates at a launch event of the book "*Latvijas tautsaimniecības vēsture*", on the economic history of Latvia.

Ms Cecilia **Malmström** in Stockholm, Sweden: meets members of the parliamentary committee for foreign affairs to discuss the White Paper on the Future of Europe.

Mr Neven **Mimica** receives Mr Claver Gatete, Minister for Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda.

Mr Miguel **Arias Cañete** in Valetta, Malta: participates in the Informal meeting of energy ministers; in the [Informal High-Level Meeting on Energy Efficiency in the Mediterranean](#); and in signature ceremony of the political

declaration on 'Clean Energy for EU islands'.

Mr Karmenu **Vella** in Poole, the United Kingdom: delivers a speech at the [European Maritime Day: "The Future of our Seas"](#); meets Mr Jean D'Amour, Minister for Maritime Affairs in the Executive Council of Quebec; and Mr Pierre Erwes, Chairman of BioMarine International Clusters Association (BICA).

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany (until 20/05): delivers a keynote speech at the ["REFRESH Food Waste 2017 Conference"](#).

Mr Dimitris **Avramopoulos** receives Mr Eimutis Misiūnas, Minister for the Interior of Lithuania.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** in Bad Neuenahr, Germany: attends the G20 labour and employment ministers meeting.

Mr Christos **Stylianides** in Ioannina, Greece: participates in a [Citizens' dialogue](#).

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Prague, the Czech Republic (until 20/05): delivers a keynote speech at the Conference on General Data Protection Regulation organised by the Office of the Government; a keynote speech at the plenary meeting of the Lower Chamber of Parliament of the Czech Republic; exchanges views at a roundtable with stakeholders on Country Specific Recommendations; and meets representatives of the Committee on EU Affairs of the Senate of the Parliament.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Cluj-Napoca, Romania: visits Bonțida Bánffy Castle, a project supported by Creative Europe; meets representatives of Transylvania Trust Foundation; and participates in a panel debate and delivers a speech at the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) congress on "The Contribution of the Autochthonous Minorities to the European Cultural Heritage".

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Bucharest, Romania: meets Mr Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania; attends the Romanian Competition Council Anniversary Conference; participates in a joint meeting with selected members of the national Parliament; meets Mr Sorin Mihai Grindeanu, Prime Minister of Romania; Mr Toma-Florin Petcu, Minister for Energy; Mr Mihai Tudose, Minister for the Economy; Mr Alexandru-Răzvan Cuc, Minister for Transport; and Mr Augustin Jianu, Minister for Communication and Information Society.

Mr Carlos **Moedas** receives a group of Finnish editors-in-chief.

Vendredi 19 mai 2017

Foreign Affairs Council

Informal meeting of energy ministers

Ms Federica **Mogherini**, Mr Christos **Stylianides** and Ms Violeta **Bulc** at the Dead Sea, Jordan: attend the [World Economic Forum on the Middle East and](#)

North Africa.

Mr Andrus **Ansip** in Tallinn, Estonia: meets the members of the European Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament.

Mr Valdis **Dombrovskis** delivers the keynote address at the conference [“Completing Banking Union and developing Capital Market Union”](#), organised by the European Commission and European Central Bank, in Brussels.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives Mr Aditya Mittal, Group CFO and CEO of ArcelorMittal Europe.

Mr Jyrki **Katainen** receives representatives of the Association of Finnish Editors.

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: participates in G20 health ministers meeting.

Ms Marianne **Thyssen** in Bad Neuenahr, Germany: attends the G20 labour and employment ministers meeting; participates in a working breakfast on Youth Employment/Quality Apprenticeship; and visits the ThyssenKrupp Rasselstein GmbH to discuss Youth and Quality Apprenticeship upon invitation of Ms Andrea Nahles, Minister for Labour and Social Affairs of Germany.

Ms Věra **Jourová** in Prague, the Czech Republic: delivers a keynote speech at a colloquium on “Causes, consequences and possible outcome of the current crisis of the European Union” organised by the European Movement in the Czech Republic.

Mr Tibor **Navracsics** in Budapest, Hungary: participates in a [Citizens’ Dialogue](#).

Ms Margrethe **Vestager** in Copenhagen, Denmark: meets the members of the European Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Denmark; delivers a keynote speech in front of the trade unions HK and Akademikerne on EU competition rules; meets Mr Kristian Thulesen Dahl, leader of the Danish Peoples’ party; and participates in a policy forum organised by the students’ organisation of Copenhagen University.

Samedi 20 mai 2017

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Berlin, Germany: participates in the G20 Health Ministers meeting.

Dimanche 21 mai 2017

Mr Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in Ballymaloe, Ireland: delivers a speech at the [Ballymaloe Food and Drinks Literacy Festival](#).

Prévisions du mois de mai:

15/05 Foreign Affairs Council
15/05 EU-Tajikistan Cooperation Council
15-18/05 European Parliament Plenary Session
16/05 General Affairs Council
16/05 European Economic Area Council
18/05 Justice and Home Affairs Council
18-19/05 Foreign Affairs Council
18-19/05 Informal meeting of energy ministers
21-23/05 Informal meeting of agriculture and fisheries ministers
22/05 Eurogroup
22-23/05 Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council
23/05 Economic and Financial Affairs Council
29-30/05 Competitiveness Council
31/05 European Parliament Plenary Session in Brussels

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Daily News 12 / 05 / 2017

European Commission imposes anti-dumping duties on more Chinese steel products

The Commission today published [definitive anti-dumping measures](#) a new type of steel products originating in China. The latest investigation confirmed the preliminary findings that the Chinese seamless pipes had been sold in Europe at dumped prices. Chinese exports will now be taxed with an extra duty

ranging from 29.2% to 54.9%. This is another clear example of how the EU is using the available toolbox of trade defence instruments to address unfair imports of steel. The EU currently has an unprecedented number of trade defence measures in place targeting unfair imports of steel products related to high levels of industrial overcapacity and subsidies in China. At the same time, the Commission is seeking Member States' and the Parliament's approval to [its proposals](#) to make the system better suited to the current reality of international trade. The Commission welcomes the progress in that context, with the Council's support yesterday to a Presidency compromise text on a new anti-dumping methodology. In addition to that, the EU is tackling the root causes of overcapacity in the global steel industry by his active involvement in the [Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity](#) created last December. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185 and Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: + 32 229 51383)*

The Commission launches the EU Platform on Animal Welfare

The Commission is publishing today the composition of the EU Platform on Animal Welfare (the Platform) announced in January 2017. The Platform brings together 75 member organisations both from the public and private sector and relevant international intergovernmental organisations, in order to maximise the outcome of the discussions and thereby improve the welfare of animals in the EU. Following a call for applications for private sector organisations and independent experts, the Commission has selected a total of 40 members from academia, NGOs and industry. The other members of the Platform were nominated by competent authorities in the Member States and in EEA countries. Members were selected based on their experience in improving animal welfare and their capacity for stakeholder outreach. The Platform will support all players in the better application of EU rules on animal welfare through exchanges of best practices in the field of animal welfare; the development and use of voluntary commitments by businesses; and the promotion of EU animal welfare standards at global level. The inaugural meeting of the Platform is scheduled for 6 June 2017 in Brussels. For more information on the Platform see [here](#). *(For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)*

La Commission lance une consultation publique sur les règles encadrant le nom de domaine “.eu”

Le domaine “.eu” a été initialement [créé en 2002](#) et officiellement lancé le 7 décembre 2005. Il est donc désormais temps de vérifier si les règles qui encadrent le nom de domaine de l'Union européenne sont toujours adaptées. Avec plus de 3,7 millions d'enregistrements au total, “.eu” se place aujourd'hui au 7^{ème} rang des noms de domaine de premier niveau et offre un nom de domaine unique pour les organisations et les personnes résidant dans les États membres de l'UE ainsi qu'en Islande, au Liechtenstein et en Norvège. Depuis l'entrée en vigueur des règlements encadrant le “.eu”, le marché des noms de domaine a beaucoup gagné en dynamisme et en concurrence. C'est pour

cela que la Commission a ouvert aujourd'hui une [consultation publique](#) jusqu'au 4 août 2017 à laquelle toute personne intéressée est invitée à participer. Plus d'informations sont disponibles [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tél .: + 32 229 67083; Johannes Bahrke – Tél .: +32 229 58615; Inga Höglund – Tél .: +32 229 50698)

Winner of 2017 EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award announced

The European Commission and the Mies van der Rohe Foundation announced today the winner of the 2017 [EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture](#): the prize will be given to the innovative renovation of Kleiburg, a 1960s apartment building in Amsterdam, by NL Architects and XVW architectuur. The project, which was among five finalists from 356 projects nominated, was rewarded for the renovation of one of the biggest apartment buildings in the Netherlands by a consortium involving the owner, the neighbours, the Bijlmer Museum, which is dedicated to the history of the district where Kleiburg is located, and the architects. The 2017 Emerging Architect Special Mention is awarded to Belgian architects MSA and V+ for the NAVEZ project, five social units in northern Brussels, designed as a landmark at the entrance of the city and providing exemplary passive apartments for large families. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: *"I congratulate the winners of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award, who demonstrate the high quality of European architecture, its creative potential and its ability to address the social, economic and environmental challenges of our time. The Commission is committed to sustainable urban development and supports the values of contemporary architecture and its contribution to the well-being of our citizens. Moreover, the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 will be an excellent opportunity to strengthen the role of architecture in saving and enhancing heritage sites and buildings."* The award ceremony will take place on 26 May at the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona. The €60,000 biennial [Prize](#), which is the most prestigious in European architecture, was launched in 1987 to highlight the contribution of European architects to the development of new ideas and technologies in contemporary urban development. It is co-funded by the [Creative Europe Programme](#) and the [Fundació Mies van der Rohe](#). For further information, please see [here](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 2 29 67083; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

EUROSTAT: Mars 2017 comparé à février 2017 – La production industrielle en baisse de 0,1% dans la zone euro – Stable dans l'UE28

En mars 2017 par rapport à février 2017, la production industrielle corrigée des variations saisonnières a diminué de 0,1% dans la zone euro (ZE19) et est restée stable dans l'UE28, selon les estimations d'Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. En février 2017, la production industrielle avait également baissé de 0,1% dans la zone euro et était demeurée stable dans l'UE28. En mars 2017 par rapport à mars 2016, la production industrielle a progressé de 1,9% dans la zone euro et de 2,4% dans l'UE28. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini to attend the Plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**, in her role as Co-President of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), will participate in the annual Plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean tomorrow in Rome. The Assembly brings together 280 elected representatives from the national parliaments of all members of the UfM, equally distributed between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. The plenary session will be dedicated to Sustainable Development and New Job Opportunities in the Mediterranean area, which are issues crucial for the sustainable development and stabilisation of the region. The discussions are expected to focus on the creation of quality jobs and viable socio-economic development opportunities. Audio-visual coverage will be available on [EbS](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Catherine Ray – Tel.: +32 229 69921; Lauranne Devillé – Tel.: +32 229 80833)*

Vice-President Katainen visits Beijing, China, to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, will be in Beijing, China, on 14-15 May to represent the European Union in the "[Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation](#)". The "Belt and Road Initiative" is China's major economic diplomacy project to upgrade infrastructure which contributes to sustainable growth in the Euro-Asian region. The Forum, focusing for example on connectivity, is one of the biggest international events China hosts this year. Vice-President **Katainen** will meet Vice-Premier Ma Kai to discuss EU-China economic, trade and investment relations. More broadly, the European Union advocates for a level-playing field and reciprocity in its global trade and investment relations. Vice-President **Katainen** will also participate in a series of meetings with representatives of the business community. *(For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel.: +32 229 56185; Lucia Caudet – Tel.: +32 229 56182)*

Commissioner Thyssen in Madrid on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the European Disability Forum

Tomorrow, 13 May, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will be in Madrid, Spain, where she will attend the [Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum](#). On the occasion of the Forum's 20th anniversary, Commissioner **Thyssen** will give a keynote speech, reaffirming the Commission's commitment to make the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) a reality. The speech will be published [here](#). The Commissioner will also benefit from the occasion

to visit [European Social Fund](#) projects. She will first visit a [fair](#) organised in light of this year's 60th anniversary of the Fund, where she will get a first-hand look at projects co-financed by the European Social Fund and the [Once Foundation](#). There she will meet with entrepreneurs with disabilities to discuss about their experiences and businesses, as well as with representatives of companies that have employed people with disabilities. Furthermore, Commissioner **Thyssen** will visit a [smart, accessible and sustainable house](#) that manages to adapt itself to the needs and circumstances of the people who inhabit it. (For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 229 67094)

Commissioner Stylianides begins visit to Myanmar/Burma, announces new EU humanitarian funding

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** has today started his official visit to Myanmar/Burma from 12-14 May to meet with government officials and assess the humanitarian situation on the ground. His visit follows the meeting on 2 May in Brussels of HR/VP Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner **Stylianides** with State Counsellor and Foreign Minister, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and marks the first ever of a European Commissioner to Northern Rakhine State. Arriving in the country today he announced new EU humanitarian assistance to the country and the region. *"The European Union has not forgotten Myanmar/Burma. This is why we have mobilized over €12 million for direct humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction activities in the country. Our new funding will help deliver life-saving aid to the most vulnerable, and it will make communities stronger in the face of natural disasters. Humanitarian organisations need full access to all affected communities, so that help can reach those who need it the most,"* said Commissioner **Stylianides**. Over €9 million will be allocated for direct humanitarian assistance to communities living in the conflict-afflicted areas of the country, including Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin States. Some €3 million will fund disaster-risk-reduction activities to reduce the impact of natural disasters and strengthen the resilience of communities at risk in Myanmar/Burma. This new funding is part of a bigger package for South and East Asia and Pacific amounting to over €27 million. During his mission, the Commissioner is meeting with Union Ministers in Nay Pyi Taw before visiting projects financed by EU humanitarian aid in Northern Rakhine State. More details on his visit as well as audio-visual material will be made available at the end of the visit. (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Commissioner Jourová visits Eurojust in The Hague

Commissioner for Justice, Vera **Jourová**, is visiting today Eurojust, the agency of the European Union dealing with judicial co-operation in criminal matters. She will meet with the president of Eurojust, Ms. Coninx and speak to the College of Eurojust. She will present her priorities in the field of criminal justice, including the setting up of the European Public

Prosecutor's Office, which will investigate and prosecute on EU budget fraud and important cross-border VAT fraud. A press release will be available this afternoon on Eurojust's [website](#). *(For more information: Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253; Mélanie Voin – Tel.: +32 229 58659)*

The Commission extends the mandate of Jan Figel, Special Envoy for the promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union

The Commission has decided to extend by an additional year the mandate of Jan Figel as Special Envoy for the promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union. Since his appointment in May 2016 Mr Figel visited a number of third countries, including Iraq, Jordan, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates, and participated in many international events and processes. He has engaged very actively in dialogue with governments and civil society representatives, including religious and non-governmental actors. At the heart of Mr Figel's work lie the EU Guidelines on Freedom and Religion of Belief, adopted in 2013. Such new function has been well received within and outside the EU. "The EU is and must remain a credible promoter of human dignity for all and everywhere. Freedom of conscience and religion is a universal right and an essential value" commented Jan Figel. Mr Figel performs his duties in close cooperation with various Commission services and the European External Action Service. The Special Envoy will continue to serve as Special Advisor to Commissioner Neven **Mimica**, who is responsible for International Cooperation and Development, with the objective to foster greater awareness on freedom of religion or belief within the development cooperation agenda. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +32 229 92256)*

[Calendar](#)

The Commissioners' weekly activities

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

[Article – Open day: visit the European Parliament in Strasbourg](#)

This Sunday you enjoy the opportunity to discover that the European Parliament is about more than procedures and documents when it opens its doors to the public in Strasbourg. You will have the chance to ask MEPs questions, join a debate on issues affecting Europe, and even learn some salsa. Every year the European institutions welcome guests to celebrate the 1950 speech by then French Foreign minister Robert Schuman which led to the creation of the EU.

Visitors can start their exploration of the Parliament in Strasbourg at 10.00 CET. Arte's Annette Gerlach will moderate a debate between MEP's and members

of the public in the plenary chamber from 11.00 to 14.00. It will be up to the public, not politicians, to select the topics.

After the debate participants can go to the nearby Council of Europe, which is joining the event for the first time. Although separate from the EU, it also aims to promote European values and uphold human rights. Many international and local institutions and non-governmental organisations will also participate including representatives from the city of Strasbourg, Amnesty International, and others.

Further down the road, guests can visit *Lieu d'Europe*, a centre for European civic education, which will host several workshops, dance classes and concerts. There will be more Europe-themed, cultural, musical and sports events along the way.

Building political alliances to reconnect citizens with the EU

As the two EU political institutions with a direct link to citizens, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Parliament today joined forces to restore citizens' trust ahead of the European Parliament elections in 2019. They proposed joint measures to bring the European Union closer to citizens and deliver concrete answers to their concerns. From the side of the European Commission, the CoR was tasked to help bridge the gap between what people expect from the EU and what Europe is actually able to deliver on the ground.

Despite the recent victories of pro-EU candidates in France, the Netherlands and Austria, political leaders in Europe's regions and cities are still hearing calls from their citizens for Europe to change. Opening the CoR plenary session, alongside European Parliament President, **Antonio Tajani**, today, CoR President Markku Markkula stressed: "*As politicians elected in Europe's regions and cities, we have to use our leverage to show the concrete results and added value of the European project, while also addressing their real concerns. It is up to each one of us to bring the EU closer to them.*" This echoes the Declaration of Rome, in which Member States and EU leaders made a plea to better listening to citizens by working "together at the level that makes a real difference, be it the European Union, national, regional, or local, and in a spirit of trust and loyal cooperation, both among Member States and between them and the EU institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity."

President Tajani responded by highlighting that citizens have granted the EU

an opportunity to change: “ As local representatives, you have a leading role in increasing the efficacy of EU funds in your regions and communicating Europe to our citizens at the local level. Last week’s vote in France indicates that when properly explained, citizens can endorse the added-value of the single currency, and Europe as a whole ”, he stressed, before citing cohesion funds as the most visible part of the EU budget for citizens. “ We believe that our money should follow our political objectives and make a leap forward on the governance of EU funds while focussing on priorities to address citizens’ concerns .”, he said.

CoR First Vice-President **Karl-Heinz Lambertz** added: “ Citizens rightly expect more from the European project. To restore trust, everyone working for and with the EU must fulfil the promise of more social and economic progress whilst standing up for European solidarity. This needs a far more flexible approach to local public investment to demonstrate that the EU does benefit the daily lives of every citizen “.

This debate was further enriched with the participation of the European Commission Vice-President responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, **Jyrki Katainen**, who encouraged the CoR to take an active role in the debate on the [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#) . Addressing the CoR members, Vice-President Katainen said: “ I count on the European Committee of the Regions to continue participating to the reflection process on the Future of Europe, and make sure this debate will also reach the citizens. As representatives of regional and local authorities you play a crucial role in bridging the gap between what people expect of Europe and what Europe is actually able to deliver. I am looking forward to hearing the ideas and priorities Europe’s regions and cities have for the future development of our Union. They will be an important part of our common answers .”

CoR members also took the occasion to welcome the European Commission’s [reflection paper on “Harnessing globalisation”](#) , which was published one day earlier and underlines that forging resilience is a shared responsibility at EU, national, regional and local level. “ We want a more transparent and democratic EU, which defends the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and multilevel governance. In the face of increased globalisation, investment needs to address skills gaps and regulatory obstacles while being adapted to the territorial specificities ”, President Markkula concluded.

This White Paper is intended to be a wake-up call: the starting point for an honest and wide-ranging debate in the Union’s future beyond Brexit and will be the subject of a [Resolution](#) , which is due to be adopted by the CoR tomorrow. Debates on the “Future of Europe”, as well as the next Commission’s reflection papers, will continue to be a priority for the CoR, including on the occasion of a conference on the “Future of Europe” as part of its [CIVEX](#) external meeting in Caen (France) on 21-22 September.

CoR’s “Reflecting on Europe” campaign

As part of the ongoing reflection on the past, present and future of Europe, the CoR has launched a bottom up process called " [Reflecting on Europe](#) ", which aims to provide people with a local space to participate in an honest and open discussion about the way forward for the EU. This citizen-oriented process follows a request from the European Council's President, Donald Tusk, asking the CoR to send its recommendations on the ways to rebuild trust in the EU, through the voice of cities and regions. More recently, the European Commission 1 March White Paper calls for debates on the future of Europe in Parliaments, regions and cities. The CoR has also launched a [public online survey](#) that includes questions related to the future of EU policies. It will be used to collect and present citizens' feedback during local events and citizens' dialogues.

· Photos from the plenary session can be downloaded from our [CoR flickr gallery](#).

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[Remarks by HR/VP Mogherini on the EU's humanitarian support at the 2017 London Conference on Somalia](#)

Check against delivery!

Thank you very much and thanks to you and to the Secretary General of the United Nations [António Guterres] for convening this meeting and also for having this focus on the humanitarian situation. Just a few weeks ago in Brussels, we gathered some of the key partners and key donors that are around this table exactly to focus on how we can step up our humanitarian support to face the risk of famine now.

The European Union, as you know well, is by far the first donor for Somalia in all different sectors. When it comes to our response to the drought, it amounts to over €460 million; still we know that this is not enough and that we need to mobilise more resources. We will do our part, we will continue to do our part, but we need others to come in and increase the level of support if we want to avoid the catastrophe.

We believe also that the availability of resources is not the only challenge we are facing in Somalia when it comes to the risk of famine. Insecurity, access constraints, extortions of aid are among the biggest obstacles to deliver aid to the most needy. Restrictive access remains for us the major impediment for the roll out of full relief operations covering the majority of the needs.

We also have a concern about the visibility of the return process of up to 250 000 Somali refugees living in Kenyan refugee camps in the current context of severe droughts.

Beyond human suffering, we believe it is important – as the Secretary General mentioned – to contain the political risks. We are in a delicate moment for the institutions, the government, which is very much absorbed by the impact of the droughts while it has started its process only a few months after the inauguration of the President. We believe it is essential that we support and help the government to be seen delivering on the expectations of the population and remain focused also on the other critical political and security challenges the population needs to find answers to because there are somehow interrelated.

Two last things. One is the regional dimension; we are focusing on Somalia here because assisting Somalia at this moment also means assisting its neighbours to limit the spill over. Yet each country in the region, and particularly Ethiopia and Kenya, deserve specific attention and support. We should not forget it.

And, last but not least, we need to take climate change more seriously. This is true in general political terms – and I discussed this in the UN with the Secretary General in the last days- but also in our projections for the region.

Secondly, only stability and development can create an environment in which natural disasters can be coped with. And this is why the rest of the conference today will be also so important.

I thank you.