

Dichiarazione dell'alto rappresentante Federica Mogherini, a nome dell'Unione europea, in occasione della Giornata mondiale

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Free, diverse and independent media are indispensable to promoting and protecting democracy worldwide. A free press and freedom of expression are among the very same foundations of democracy, contribute to stable, inclusive, and resilient societies and can help defuse tensions and contain conflicts. The EU supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes ensuring universal access to information and protection of freedom of expression.

Supporting independent, quality and ethical journalism is essential. By facilitating the free flow of quality and well-researched information on matters of public interest, and by acting as the “public’s watchdog”, independent media are the basis of a participatory democracy and a tool to make governments accountable for their actions. The EU ensures that respect for freedom of expression is integrated in all EU policies and development programmes. The EU is notably funding specific projects in third countries enhancing quality of journalism, access to public information and freedom of expression. Since June 2015, the EU has supported at least 45 endangered Human Rights Defenders that promote the right of freedom of expression under its small grant scheme.

The EU condemns the increase of threats and violations against journalists and media professional offline and in cyberspace. All states are expected to fulfil their global obligations to protect freedom of expression and the safety of journalists by providing a supportive legal environment and prosecuting all attacks against journalists. The EU consistently opposes – in bilateral contacts with third countries as well as in multilateral and regional fora – any legislation, regulation or political pressure that limits freedom of expression and takes concrete steps to prevent and respond to attacks against journalists and bloggers.

The EU Guidelines on Freedom of expression online and offline, adopted in 2014, and their continued implementation, reaffirm the EU’s determination to promote freedom of opinion and of expression as rights to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality, through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Erklärung der Hohen Vertreterin Federica Mogherini im Namen der Europäischen Union anlässlich des Welttags der Pressefreiheit am

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إع ن الممثلة العليا ل اتحاد ا وروبي فيدريكا موغريني باسم ا اتحاد ا وروبي بمناسبة اليوم العالمي 2 لحرية الصحافة في 3 أيار/مايو

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Declarația Înaltului Reprezentant, Federica Mogherini, în numele Uniunii Europene, cu ocazia Zilei Mondiale a Libertății Presei

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Marché unique: la Commission agit pour faciliter son fonctionnement pratique et améliorer le respect des règles

La Commission européenne présente aujourd'hui des mesures pour permettre aux particuliers et aux entreprises de régler plus facilement leurs formalités administratives en ligne, que ce soit dans leur propre pays ou lorsqu'ils travaillent, vivent ou font des affaires dans un autre pays de l'Union européenne. Les propositions visent également à assurer un meilleur respect des règles européennes. Jyrki **Katainen**, le vice-président en charge de l'emploi, de la croissance, de l'investissement et de la compétitivité, a déclaré: *"Les règles de l'UE protègent 500 millions de personnes au sein du marché unique et leur offrent la possibilité de vivre, de travailler et de faire des affaires dans n'importe quel pays de l'Union. Tout cela n'est possible que si les règles sont respectées. Les propositions présentées aujourd'hui contribueront à développer une culture du respect des règles. Elles permettront également aux particuliers et aux entreprises d'avoir pleinement accès aux procédures et à l'information en ligne, à la fois dans leur pays d'origine et à l'étranger."* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, commissaire pour le marché intérieur, l'industrie, l'entrepreneuriat et les PME, a ajouté: *"Aujourd'hui, nous mettons à disposition des outils concrets pour le marché unique. Le portail numérique unique constitue aussi une incitation forte pour moderniser les administrations publiques par la mise en place d'ambitieuses stratégies d'administration électronique axées sur l'utilisateur. Par ailleurs, le nouvel outil d'information sur le marché unique SMIT contribuera à renforcer l'action de la Commission en matière de contrôle de l'application de la législation, de manière à ce que les droits des citoyens liés au marché unique soient dûment respectés et que les entreprises européennes se heurtent à moins d'obstacles lors de l'extension de leurs activités et de l'entrée sur de nouveaux marchés."* Le train de mesures est composé de trois initiatives concrètes adoptées aujourd'hui par la Commission: le portail numérique unique, l'outil d'information sur le marché unique (SMIT) et le plan d'action SOLVIT. Un [communiqué de presse](#), un [MEMO](#) et une [fiche d'information](#) sont disponibles. (Pour plus d'informations: Lucia Caudet – Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Maud Noyon – Tel.: +32 229 80379; Mirna Talko – Tel.: +32 229 87278)

European Youth Week 2017 encourages young people to contribute to the debate

on the future of the EU and of EU youth action

The eighth edition of [European Youth Week](#) is currently taking place with a broad range of events from 1 to 7 May and activities organised in all 33 countries participating in the EU's [Erasmus+](#) programme. With the slogan "Shape it, move it, be it", it encourages young people to get involved in the discussions on the future of EU youth policy, to move abroad with Erasmus+, and to be part of the newly launched [European Solidarity Corps](#) which gives opportunities to young people to express their solidarity with those in need. Already more than 28,000 young people have signed up to the European Solidarity Corps and first participants already started their placements. A proposal for a dedicated legal base to consolidate and further shape this new initiative is [scheduled for adoption on 24 May](#). Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will take part in the official launch event of the European Youth Week, a two-day [European Conference on future EU Youth Strategy](#), in Brussels tomorrow. Already today, he will have a meeting with a number of young people and representatives of youth organisations to prepare these discussions. Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"With our current cooperation with Member States on youth policy drawing to a close in 2018, we need to reflect on the future. We want to hear the views of everyone involved in EU youth affairs to make sure that cooperation in youth action delivers, enabling young people to find their place in society and build the Europe of the future. I look forward to exchanging ideas on our future youth strategy during Youth Week and for the rest of the year."* During the week the spotlight will be on the inspiring stories of change-makers and their projects under Erasmus+ that encourage more young people to take part. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 2 296 70 83; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Discover an EU-funded project near you: the 2017 "Europe in my Region" campaign kicks off

Visit an aquaculture research centre in Ílhavo, Portugal, a language school equipped with the latest IT equipment in Split, Croatia, or take a guided tour in Vienna to spot and visit EU-funded projects in the city. The "EU in my Region" campaign starts today and throughout May, hundreds of EU-funded projects open their doors to the public; find one near you on this [interactive map](#). Photo and blogging competitions are also organised so that citizens can share their experience. Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"Open your eyes and you will see that the EU's Cohesion Policy is everywhere around you, working for a better quality of life in your region and city. There are so many success stories out there and everyone needs to tell them. Not just us, in the EU institutions, but also Member States, local authorities and people, those who found a job, who got a training opportunity or access to broadband thanks to Cohesion Policy. Let's do this together."* Find more details on the campaign [here](#). (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen – Tel.: +32 229 56186; Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr – Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Parliament approves budget implementation in 2015

On 27 April, the Parliament gave the final approval, known as 'discharge', to the way in which the European Commission implemented the EU budget in 2015. The discharge is an EU mechanism for transparency and accountability. It is granted by the European Parliament on a recommendation from the Member States in the Council. This annual procedure enables the Council and the European Parliament to keep the management of the taxpayers' money under democratic control. Apart from approving the Commission's accounts and its handling of the EU budget, the vote also signals the European Parliament's strong support for the drive to further increase the effectiveness of EU budgetary spending, through the Commission's ['EU Budget focused on Results'](#) initiative. The Commission is responsible for implementing the EU budget in cooperation with Member States in line with the principles of sound financial management. *(For more information: Alexander Winterstein – Tel.: +32 229 93265; Nicole Bockstaller – Tel.: +32 229 52589)*

State aid: Commission approves the sale of three Italian bridge banks to UBI Banca

The European Commission has approved under EU state aid rules the sale of three Italian bridge banks Nuova Banca Marche, Nuova Banca Etruria and Nuova Carichieti to Unione di Banche Italiane (UBI Banca). The Commission has assessed the integration plan by UBI Banca, which would turn around the three loss-making bridge banks by fully integrating them into UBI Banca and thus enabling their return to viability. This will also avoid undue distortions of competition. The three bridge banks were created in [November 2015](#) when the Bank of Italy decided to put Banca delle Marche, Banca Popolare dell'Etruria e del Lazio and Cassa di Risparmio della Provincia di Chieti into resolution. The Commission concluded that the process for the sale of the three bridge banks, conducted by the Italian authorities, was open and competitive and selected the best available bid. The purchase by UBI Banca of the three bridge banks depended on their remaining non-performing loans being sold to a third party. In that context, the resolution fund injected additional capital of €810 million into the three bridge banks and granted a set of guarantees for risks related to the acquired entities. The Commission concluded that the measures were in line with EU state aid rules. The Commission's approval was based on the [Commission's 2013 Banking Communication](#) that have been in place unchanged since August 2013. More information will be available in the [state aid register](#) on the [Competition](#) website under the case numbers [SA.39543](#) (Banca delle Marche), [SA.41134](#) (Banca Popolare dell'Etruria e del Lazio) and [SA.43547](#) (Cassa di risparmio della Provincia di Chieti). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Yizhou Ren – Tel.: +32 229 94889)*

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of M.K.M. Building Supplies by Bain Capital Investors

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of M.K.M. Building Supplies of the UK, by Bain Capital Investors

of the US. M.K.M. Building Supplies is a building materials merchant, with 47 branches across England and Scotland. Bain Capital Investors is a private equity firm. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns because the companies are not active in the same markets and market shares in all vertically linked markets remain limited. The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8432](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Eurostat: Mars 2017 – Le taux de chômage à 9,5% dans la zone euro – À 8,0% dans l'UE28

Dans la zone euro (ZE19), le taux de chômage corrigé des variations saisonnières s'est établi à 9,5% en mars 2017, stable comparé à février 2017 et en baisse par rapport au taux de 10,2% enregistré en mars 2016. Il s'agit du taux le plus faible enregistré dans la zone euro depuis avril 2009. Dans l'UE28, le taux de chômage s'est établi à 8,0% en mars 2017, en baisse par rapport au taux de 8,1% de février 2017 et à celui de 8,7% de mars 2016. Cela demeure le taux le plus faible enregistré dans l'UE28 depuis janvier 2009. Ces chiffres sont publiés par Eurostat, l'office statistique de l'Union européenne. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). *(Pour plus d'informations: Christian Wigand– Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: +32 229 67094)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EU-Jordan: Brussels' high-level meeting for strengthening trade, business and investment opportunities in Jordan

Tomorrow, the European Union and [Jordan](#) will hold a high-level meeting in Brussels to further strengthen the bilateral trade and investment opportunities. The event will bring together high profile actors from the EU and Jordan. It will be an opportunity to raise awareness of the business opportunities available to Jordanian companies under the new more flexible rules of origin for access to the European market agreed in 2016. In July last year, the EU decided to simplify the rules concerning the use of foreign components to allow more Jordanian products benefit from import duty discount upon imports into the EU. Products that can benefit from better access to the EU market include textiles, engineering and electrical appliances, chemical and plastic products, as well as furniture and other wooden products. The initiative aims to support Jordan's economy in midst of the Syrian refugee crisis and to complement Jordan's own efforts to increase economic activity and create sustainable jobs for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The meeting is part of a longer-term EU engagement to support private sector development and investment in Jordan. The entire event will be [live streamed](#). Commissioners Cecilia **Malmström** and Johannes **Hahn** will represent the Commission and, together with Mr Yarub Qudah, Jordan Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, will hold a press point at 16:00 at the VIP corner of the Berlaymont building. A dedicated [press release](#) and an updated [factsheet](#) on EU

support to Jordan will be available online tomorrow. (For more information: Maja Kocijancic – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Daniel Rosario – Tel.: + 32 229 56185; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: + 32 229 64887; Kinga Malinowska – Tel.: +32 229 51383)

Commission discusses with stakeholders financing investments in a sustainable blue economy

Key stakeholders in sustainable business and investment are coming together in Brussels to discuss investment needs in the blue economy and what financing can do to ensure the sustainability of such investments. The meeting is taking place at the initiative of the European Commission, the [World Wide Fund for Nature](#) (WWF) and the [Prince of Wales' Charities International Sustainability Unit](#) (ISU) with the joint ambition of safeguarding the health of our ocean, whilst understanding what approaches are needed for the ocean to sustainably support livelihoods, food security and jobs well into the future. According to projections from the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD), by 2030 the output of the ocean economy, roughly €1.3 trillion globally, could more than double. Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, commented: *"I firmly believe that future investments in the blue economy – whether by public or private institutions – should ensure environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes and a science-based management of ocean and coastal resources. The active involvement of financial institutions in contributing towards healthy and productive ocean will be indispensable."* In the coming decade, sectors such as marine energy, aquaculture, tourism and transport could offer significant investment opportunities but we need to determine how economic development in the ocean is undertaken whilst ensuring that the health of the ocean's assets are sustained and improved. The discussion is part of the Commission's wider efforts to engage with the private sector and NGOs with a view to generating commitments on sustainable ocean use for the ['Our Ocean 2017'](#) conference, hosted in Malta by HRVP **Mogherini** and Commissioner **Vella**, from 5 to 6 October 2017. (For more information: Enrico Brivio – Tel.: +32 229 56172; Iris Petsa – Tel.: + 32 229 93321)

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