

Press release – Second anniversary of the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia

“Daphne Caruana Galizia would have been 55 years old today and would still have had a brilliant career ahead of her. Instead, we are here today to pay tribute to her because her commitment and dedication as a journalist meant she was taken away too soon.

This week marks two years since the brutal murder of the investigative journalist from Malta. At this moment it is sad but necessary to remember the importance of freedom of expression and the press in democratic countries like ours.

It is worrying to think that in the 21st century there is still a need for warnings to defend the rights and freedoms of citizens: these are the foundation of our European values and must be recognised and fought for on a daily basis.

Being killed for doing your job is never acceptable and it is gruesome to think that, according to data released on World Press Freedom Day, 95 journalists died in 2018 alone. Furthermore, only one country in four is recognised as ‘free’ by the World Press Freedom Index, despite freedom of the press being the cornerstone of our democratic system.

We want to encourage and support the work of the judiciary and the Maltese authorities in attempting to shed light on the brutal murder of Daphne and bring those responsible to justice.

I want to express my personal support to all those courageous journalists, men and women who, like Daphne, are forced to sacrifice something in their lives, if not life itself, in search of the most precious possession in our democracies: the truth. The European Parliament must be the guardian of the values of Daphne Caruana Galizia”

Press release – Plans to keep EU budget funding in 2020 in the event of a no-deal Brexit

The Budget Committee approved a measure to make sure that EU funds for 2019 and 2020 are fully available if the UK leaves the European Union without a deal. The draft regulation extends to 2020 the contingency plan [approved by European Parliament on 17 April 2019](#), previously limited to 2019.

The aim is to minimise any negative impact of the UK's withdrawal for beneficiaries of EU funding and for the European Union budget in the case of a no-deal scenario. The measure includes programmes such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ and agriculture and regional policies.

The proposal would make it possible to continue payments to UK beneficiaries throughout 2020, provided the UK continues to pay its contributions and accepts the necessary controls and audits.

The [draft recommendation](#) by rapporteur [Johan Van Overtveldt](#) (ECR, BE), Chair of the Committee on Budgets, endorsing the approval of the proposal, was adopted with 26 votes in favour, 4 against, and 3 abstentions.

Next steps

The plenary vote will take place during the 21-24 October II session in Strasbourg.

The regulation should enter into force as a matter of urgency and apply from the day following that on which the Treaties ceased to apply to and in the UK.

[Keynote speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič at the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System conference](#) **[“Changing the Game: Putting Foresight at the Heart of Policymaking”](#)**

Dear Ann,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am thrilled to be in your company today. Let me start by applauding your collaboration under the ESPAS umbrella. It shows what can be achieved when we pull together resources and brainpower from all our institutions and beyond.

We would all agree that the world is changing at unprecedented pace.

Despite our efforts at EU level, humanity's ecological footprint is deteriorating and has resulted in the global climate emergency. We risk suffering the worst – even fatal – effects of climate change in the generations to come.

We have embarked on a global race for leadership in key enabling – or I'd say empowering – technologies, including digital. This is not just about the economy. Yes, strategic technologies are a source of future prosperity but they are also a source of global influence.

Moreover, they are set to radically transform our societies. As the fourth industrial revolution unfolds, we are broadly unprepared for its impacts.

The multilateral, liberal international order that Europe stands for – in fact, it is in our DNA – is undergoing its deepest crisis since WWII. I know you spoke at length about the future of values.

The age of disinformation, combined with security threats and persisting inequalities across the board – between rich and poor, men and women, North and South, East and West, demographics or access to water and food – put a real strain on our democracy.

Those are only a few examples that point to the profound, structural and accelerated change on the horizon. For that reason, we know that our actions today will define the role and nature of Europe in this 21st century.

With this in mind, I would like to address the following questions with you:

First, how can the European Union ensure that it does not end up a middle power, caught between the two hegemons – the United States and China? How can we ensure that the 21st century will be European? I see you had an intervention on "The Future is Asia: are we ready for it". Politically, I would challenge you to question that title!

Second, how can we move from the multi-crisis management mode of the past few years to a political leadership by foresight, building a real culture of anticipation, preparedness and resilience?

I am truly honoured by President-elect's trust to put me in charge of both, Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight. It is a perfect match, the two domains reinforce each other and if linked successfully, it can be a true game-changer.

Today's choices are critical. And they require first, an honest assessment of where we stand and second, a clear vision of where we want to go in this new geo-strategic, geo-economic and geo-technological order.

It is no coincidence that the President-elect has branded her Commission a geopolitical one.

As you know, the new Commission is not yet in place. But based on the ESPAS work and this renewed political momentum, I would suggest we already start looking, together, at what should be our priorities.

As I said in my recent hearing at the European Parliament, I want Europe to strive for world-class anticipatory governance.

We will therefore build foresight capacity inside the Commission and with

external actors. My intention is to mobilise the resources of the Joint Research Centre as a key enabler and multiplier. But this will not suffice.

We will need to create synergies with other key actors inside and outside the Commission.

In this context, I foresee setting up an EU Strategic Foresight Network that would bring together the best of the EU institutions and Member States. I know that here, we can rely on the impressive resources of the ESPAS and its growing global community.

There is a huge potential that the ESPAS has started tapping into. Your global network allows looking at the world through different lenses. This is very much needed.

Our goal should be to build a strong governance system aimed at structurally embedding foresight into our policy-making. A well-established horizontal structure can empower our agenda-setting, contribute to policy coherence, and also result in on-demand Strategic Foresight Support Service for Member States – eventually supporting neighbours and partners as well.

As you know, I have been tasked by the President-elect to steer the work on an Annual Foresight Report on key transformative megatrends. It will feed into the preparation of the State of the Union address and our multiannual programming.

The Report could also trigger debates beyond the EU – globally, at international forums, such as G7 and G20. This will give us an opportunity to contrast our foresight with other powerful blocs – to see where we converge and how to collectively implement that shared vision.

Second, focusing on strategic prioritisation and action. We should make sure our foresight activities are anchored onto medium-to-long-term strategic policy objectives.

One of my responsibilities will be to bring well-prepared foresight work to the highest political level. We will discuss foresight conclusions with my fellow Commissioners and other leaders. This requires to be able to collectively address three set of questions – sequentially.

What long-term issues are of strategic importance to Europe?

Based on the foresight work, we should engage political actors to develop a common vision and send the right signals on our long-term objectives.

What gaps do we need to overcome to reach those goals?

We will need to identify enablers and obstacles. This will link up quite closely to the work on evidence-based policy-making. We will in particular need to connect the foresight work with our Better Regulation Agenda. I have already announced that I will transform the REFIT platform into a FIT FOR FUTURE one. We might also want to explore the idea of a Policy Design Board that would allow integrating robust foresight into our evidence-based policy-

making.

Finally, what policy orientations and actions should we collectively endorse?

In other words, what collaborative strategies we should put into place. I can give you a vibrant example of this – the European Battery Alliance.

Even if at the 12th hour, we had anticipated a tectonic shift towards e-mobility that should hit us by 2030. So with the industry leading, we started to act collaboratively to build a strong value chain for batteries in Europe.

In less than two years, we have created manufacturing partnerships and projects throughout the supply chain, we have boosted our innovation ecosystem, we have joined forces with Member States, regions, private and public investors throughout Europe – to produce at scale.

In less than two years, we have put Europe on a track to catch up with our Asian competitors.

In less than two years, we have started laying the grounds for our automotive industry to remain the best in the world, with sustainability at its core. This is unfinished business – in the next mandate, we will have to develop future-proof regulations and standards for batteries produced in and imported to Europe.

I am ready to discuss in which other strategic sectors Europe should and could make a real difference, provided we follow a similar collaborative approach.

Let me be clear: foresight will only be a game changer if it has joined-up, collective ownership, which will also require political courage. Because this cannot be a purely intellectual exercise. This brings me to my last point: the imperative of participatory governance

We will need to better engage with stakeholders – whether other EU institutions, national foresight institutions, other actors on the ground or the wider public as such. The work under the ESPAS is an essential part of it.

I often say about my current portfolio, the Energy Union could not have been built in or from Brussels only. We are succeeding thanks to close collaborations with all actors on the ground.

So outreach will be key.

We will need to bring foresight closer to our industry (as you know, some large companies have already built impressive foresight capacity that should be connected), closer to our civil society (NGOs, trade unions, think tanks, universities and so on), and more generally closer to our citizens.

Foresight will therefore feed into the Conference on the Future of Europe as well as other events organised by the Commission Representations in the Member States, perhaps in close collaboration with the European Parliament

representations and of course, with the Member States themselves – both governments and national Parliaments are expressing their interest.

I am also fond of initiatives engaging the young generations. I support the ESPAS Young Talent Network. I would also be ready to launch a Future of Europe Essay Competition for high-school students. In fact, we see them challenging and calling us to bold action.

To conclude, foresight is not a luxury item. It is a must.

I am convinced that we do not really have a choice if we want our Europe to be resilient, to remain a major global player in this turbulent time, and basically retain the ability to form its own future – together with our main partners.

We need to be able to shape the transformative megatrends at work. It is either this, or we become the victims of our future. Politically, that is simply unacceptable. This is fundamentally why we have decided that foresight should become a political priority for Europe.

We will have to move fast in view of the key challenges ahead of us. Let me point to those I consider crucial.

First, the new economy sectors and the future of work. The Commission committed to work on the human and ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. The transition to new technologies will be potentially highly disruptive.

Second, strategic value chains and how to manage new dependencies, e.g. on fossil fuels, raw materials, rare earths, technologies, military, space as the next frontier. This is ultimately about our shared strategic sovereignty.

Third, the future of our democratic fabric. We see the plague of nationalism, intolerance and xenophobia coming out again and expanding. Some of the world's populist leaders have no qualms in directly attacking and torpedoing representative institutions and counter-powers. At the same time, we see new forms of democratic governance coming to life, with civic activism on the rise, notably in Europe.

We have a political responsibility to address this forcefully. And foresight must play its part.

I see the following session is on "Democracy, Free Societies and Their Enemies". May this two-day conference – and in fact, your entire work – be productive and enriching potential solutions. You will have in me a strong supporter of your community and I am convinced that we will achieve great things together.

Article – Hohlmeier: fighting climate change is the priority for the EU's 2020 budget



The Parliament will vote on its position for next year's budget on 23 October. German EPP member [Monika Hohlmeier](#), chair of the budgetary control committee, talks about her budget proposals in our interview:

How would you describe your proposal for the EU's budget for 2020?

The overarching priority for the Parliament is that we wish to tackle the issue of climate change and in parallel combine it with possibilities to create new jobs and strengthen the competitiveness of our economy.

We wanted to give a clear statement that Parliament wants to significantly contribute to innovation, research and new, green technologies with next year's budget.

We also want to support digitalisation because for research on climate, we need good digital tools. Digitalisation not only helps with the EU's climate targets, but also enables us, for example, to improve research into severe illnesses or more efficient agriculture methods.

We want to give money to universities and research institutions that are conducting this type of research and collaborate successfully with industry.

The priority of climate and environmental protection continues in the area of the common agricultural policy and rural development with the successful [LIFE+ programme](#). Another important area is development policy, where we want to continue to reduce poverty, but also address issues such as plastic-free oceans and waste removal.

With our budget instruments, we can help tackle climate-related problems, for example, by supporting the use of renewables in countries where they could help solve the issue of access to sustainable energy and tackle the energy problem.

You have added €2 billion to the European Commission's proposal on climate spending for 2020. Will this be enough to reach the EU's 20% climate-related spending goal for 2014-2020?

No, we won't reach the target because in 2014 we had a contribution of less than 14% of climate-related expenditure, which we were unable to make up in the following six years of the current multi-annual framework [the EU's long-term budget].

Nevertheless, for 2020, my proposal is very clearly above the 20% target. We think that the young generation really has the right to tell us when it comes to climate "Please do something, do it quickly and don't just discuss the issue of what we could do."

We would also like to increase financial support for the successful [Youth Employment Initiative](#). The unemployment rate for young people is decreasing and this programme is contributing to helping them find work. We would also like to increase funding for [Erasmus+](#) to give more young people the opportunity to study abroad.

Will you be able to get the Council to agree with the priorities related to climate, young people and the future?

I think we definitely can get the Council on board. We have a special challenge because this is the last year of the current [long-term budget]. Some net paying countries want to cut the budget, while other member states would like to see more money in the area of cohesion or agriculture.

At the same time, Brexit is happening and we do not know what will happen after 31 October. I still hope that we will have a smooth Brexit. The cost of a hard Brexit for the EU would be €11 billion until the end of the current [long-term budget], something we should all want to avoid at any cost.

What would happen to the EU's budget in the case of a no-deal Brexit?

We are prepared. The UK cannot put us under pressure. If there is a hard Brexit, we would have to change the budget, but we already know that research teams in the UK are struggling to continue with their projects and cooperation with the EU.

I think the UK will end up contributing to many programmes, for example in the area of security and agriculture. There are lots of areas where they want

to be part of the EU, so the money will come back into the EU's budget the same way it does with Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and other third countries.

Parliament wants to ensure that there is no cherry picking for the UK, because it can never be accepted that a country leaving the EU gets a better deal.

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EU trade agreements: delivering new opportunities in time of global economic uncertainties

Despite the difficult global economic climate, European companies have continued to make good use of the opportunities created by the European Union's trade network – the largest in the world. In 2018 this network covered 31% of Europe's trade exchanges, a figure that is set to rise significantly (to almost 40%) as more trade agreements enter into force, according to the European Commission's [annual report on the implementation of trade agreements](#) released today. Overall, international trade accounts for 35% of the EU's gross domestic product (GDP). In 2018 EU exports to and imports from trade agreement partners showed positive developments, with a continued growth of 2% and 4.6% respectively, with a strong performance of EU agri-food exports. Commenting on the report, Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** said *"Trade agreements create opportunities for European businesses to grow and hire more people. Today's report shows that overall trade is up, and more of our global trade is covered by preferential deals than ever before. Our food and drink exports in particular are flourishing thanks to lower tariffs and legal protection abroad for artisanal EU products like Champagne and Feta. The report also provides evidence of how our focus on trade and sustainable development is bearing fruit. Furthermore, we have taken a number of unprecedented steps to enforce the commitments made by our trade partners in the last year, including notably on workers' rights. There is still work to be done, of course. But by opening up this data to the wider public we hope to launch a wider discussion about how to make sure trade agreements benefit as many citizens as possible."* A full [press release](#), [factsheet](#) and [Commission Staff Working Document](#) are available online. (For more information: Daniel Rosario – Tel. : +32 229 56185 ; Kinga Malinowska – Tel. : +32 229 51383)

State aid: Commission approves €380 million German rescue aid to Condor

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, Germany's plans to grant a temporary €380 million loan to charter airline Condor. On 25 September 2019, Germany notified the Commission of its intention to grant, via the German public development bank KfW, a €380 million rescue loan to Condor. The airline faces an acute liquidity shortage following the entry

into liquidation of its parent company, the Thomas Cook Group. Furthermore, Condor had to write off significant claims against other Thomas Cook Group companies, which Condor will no longer be able to collect. The Commission's [Guidelines on rescue and restructuring aid](#) allow Member States to support companies in difficulties, provided, in particular, that the public support measures are limited in time and scope and contribute to an objective of common interest. In the present case, Commission found that the measure will help ensure the orderly continuation of flight services, in the interest of air passengers. At the same time, the strict conditions attached to the loan and its duration limited to six months will reduce the distortion of competition potentially triggered by the State support to a minimum. The Commission therefore concluded that the measure is compatible with EU State aid rules. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

State aid: Commission opens investigation into proposed public support for Samsung plant in Hungary

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether Hungary's plans to grant €108 million of public support to Samsung SDI for investing in the expansion of its battery cell production facility in Göd (Hungary) is in line with EU rules on regional State aid. Samsung SDI is investing around €1.2 billion to expand the production capacity of lithium-ion cells and battery packs for electric vehicles in its existing plant located in Göd. In 2018, Hungary notified the Commission of its plans to grant €108 million of public support for the project. The Commission has doubts at this stage that the planned aid support of complies with all relevant criteria of the Commission's [2014 Regional State Aid Guidelines](#). In particular: (i) the Commission has doubts whether the measure has an "incentive effect". It will investigate whether the decision by Samsung SDI to invest in Hungary was directly triggered by the Hungarian public support or whether the investment would have been carried out in Göd, even absent the public support; (ii) the Commission also has doubts in relation to the public support's contribution to regional development and on its appropriateness and proportionality; and (iii) it cannot exclude at this stage that the public support may lead to the relocation of jobs from other EU Member States to Hungary. The Commission will now investigate further to determine whether or not the initial concerns are confirmed. The opening of an in-depth investigation provides Hungary and interested third parties with an opportunity to comment on the measure. It does not prejudice in any way the outcome of the investigation. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"Public investment is important to foster economic growth in disadvantaged regions in Europe. But public support should only be given if it's necessary to trigger private investment in the disadvantaged region concerned. Otherwise, it only gives the beneficiary an unfair advantage over its competitors, at the expense of taxpayers. The Commission will carefully investigate whether Hungary's planned support is really necessary for Samsung SDI to invest in Göd, is kept to the minimum necessary and does not distort competition or harm cohesion in the EU."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#), [HU](#). (For more information: Lucía

Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Giulia Astuti – Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears joint acquisition of United Pacific by Phillips 66 and Fortress Investment Group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of joint control over CF United LLC (“United Pacific”) by Phillips 66, and Fortress Investment Group LLC (“Fortress”), all of the US, ultimately controlled by SoftBank Group Corp. (“Softbank”) of Japan. United Pacific is the independent owner and operator of fuel stations and convenience stores in the West Coast of the US, selling motor fuel and daily consumer goods. Prior to the transaction, United Pacific was solely controlled by Fortress. Phillips 66 is a multinational energy company with a portfolio of integrated midstream, chemicals, refining and marketing businesses, which processes, transports, stores and markets fuels and products globally. Fortress is an alternative investment and asset management firm, which manages capital for a diverse group of investors including pension funds, endowments and foundations, and financial institutions. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concern, as the jointly controlled entity has no actual or foreseen activities within 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.9453](#). *(For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Mimica in Rome to reiterate EU commitment to support the fight against hunger worldwide

Commissioner Neven **Mimica** is at the Food and Agriculture Organisation’s headquarters in Rome today for a series of events around ending hunger worldwide. He will speak at the plenary opening of the 46th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, which is devoted the latest [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) Report. Commissioner **Mimica** will sign a €9 million contribution to support nature-friendly agricultural practices in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, as part of the EU’s broader support promoting environmental sustainability in the ACP regions. The new contribution will support ACP countries’ efforts to bring about sustainable changes in agricultural policies and practices to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and natural resources. These will contribute to tackling land degradation and desertification, and bolster food security and resilience to climate change. Commissioner **Mimica** will furthermore participate in an event of the [Global Network against Food Crises](#), which the EU has been supporting since its very launch in 2016. At this occasion, the Commissioner is announcing an EU contribution of €20 million to strengthen the Global Network’s work, which is a [follow-up to the €77 million announced](#)

[at the UN General Assembly last year](#). This new package will support countries most at risk of a food crisis through dedicated technical assistance. It will further strengthen the Global Network's collection and analysis of relevant data, through real time updates and information on all countries and hotspots at risk of food crises. The Commissioner will also announce an EU contribution of €5 million to the African Risk Capacity, to support its innovative insurance products focusing on countries with weaker institutional governance, low economic capacity and prone to extreme weather events. *(For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz De Gordejuela –Tel.: +32 229 6532; Christina Wunder – Tel.: +322992256)*

La Commission organise une conférence sur les services de micro-mobilité

La commissaire chargée des transports, Violeta **Bulc**, participe aujourd'hui à la conférence « [La micro-mobilité: le prochain enjeu?](#) » à Ljubljana, en Slovénie. De nouveaux concepts de mobilité tels que les vélos et les scooters électriques pourraient avoir le potentiel de réduire les embouteillages et améliorer la qualité de l'air dans les villes, par exemple en remplaçant les trajets en voiture. L'utilisation de ces véhicules doit néanmoins être sûre et durable. Se concentrant sur les derniers développements en matière de micro-mobilité partagée, la commissaire **Bulc** a déclaré: « *La micro-mobilité – scooters électriques, vélos, monoroues et autres dispositifs – est l'un des prochains grands sujets dans le domaine des solutions multimodales de mobilité intégrée. Correctement abordée, la micro-mobilité peut jouer un rôle significatif pour concrétiser la Vision zéro: zéro pollution et émissions, zéro décès et blessures graves, zéro embouteillages aux niveaux européen, national et local. Notre conférence à Ljubljana est consacrée à ce sujet. Différentes parties prenantes sont rassemblées pour identifier les questions urgentes et proposer des pistes de solutions sur lesquelles la nouvelle Commission pourra s'appuyer.* » Lors de la conférence, la commissaire **Bulc** visitera également une exposition publique sur les services de micro-mobilité. *(Pour plus d'informations: Enrico Brivio – Tél.: +32 229 56172; Stephan Meder – Tél.: +32 229 13917)*

Copyright: dialogue between platforms and rights holders starts tomorrow

The first meeting of the stakeholder dialogue on the application of Article 17 of the [Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market](#) on the use of protected content by online content-sharing service providers will take place tomorrow in Brussels. The stakeholders will discuss best practices on how content-sharing platforms and service providers should cooperate with rights holders. This dialogue is foreseen under the new directive and will help to prepare the guidance on the application of Article 17. The European Commission has invited stakeholder organisations to attend, based on the criteria listed in [the call of expression of interest for participating the stakeholder dialogue](#). The agenda is available [here](#). Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** will open the session at 09:45 CEST. Her speech as well as the discussions can be followed live via [webstream](#). *(For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67083; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)*

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