



TODAYS

News

Thursday, 10 July, 2014

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#### **EU Commission proposes to reduce Member States' GNI contributions to 2014 budget**

The Commission proposed a technical update (draft amending budget 4) to the 2014 EU budget based on revised estimates of traditional own resources and the VAT/GNI based resources, plus the budgeting of fines. Overall, Member States' contributions to the 2014 EU budget are reduced by some €2 billion. The combined effect of draft amending budgets 2, 3 and 4 is an increase in the financing of €105 million compared to the adopted initial 2014 budget. Link to the proposal:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2014/2014\\_fr.cfm#dab4](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2014/2014_fr.cfm#dab4)

NOTE: This is the fourth proposal to amend the 2014 budget.

**Draft amending budget 1** was adopted in February 2014 and did not affect the overall size of the budget (reshuffling of agreed amounts within the voted budget).

**Draft amending budget 2** was adopted in April 2014 and covered the surplus from the 2013 budget (EUR 1 billion)

**Draft amending budget 3** was adopted on 28 May 2014 and concerned mainly the payments from the unallocated margin and the contingency margin, as well as fines (altogether EUR 4.7 billion)

See also: [Website of the EU BUDGET](#)

#### **Infringements decisions: Commission acts for full and proper implementation of European legislation**

The Commission has decided today to refer to the EU Court of Justice 10 Member States. Financial penalties will be requested against Austria and Poland. The other referrals concern The Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Portugal, Spain and The United Kingdom. The Commission will also send 63 reasoned opinions to all countries except CZ, DK, HR, MT, NL. With a total of 420 decisions, the Commission aims at ensuring proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses.

A summary of the main decisions can be found in the [MEMO/14/470](#) . On the general infringement procedure, see [MEMO/12/12](#) .

## [Another record-breaking year for Erasmus](#)

The latest Erasmus statistics released by the European Commission today reveal that nearly 270 000 students - a new record - benefitted from EU grants to study or train abroad in 2012-2013. While studying at another university continues to be the most popular choice, one in five students (55 000) opted for Erasmus job placements in companies. The three most popular destinations for Erasmus students in 2012-2013 were Spain, Germany and France. Countries sending the highest number of students as a proportion of their graduate population were Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Finland, Latvia and Spain.

## Other news

### [European Commission offers communities help with their broadband development plans](#)

Today the European Commission launches its “Connected Communities” initiative – an umbrella for several systems designed to connect towns, cities, local broadband partnerships and operators to the advice they need to access finance and develop tailored business models for bringing fast broadband to their community. Project concepts and plans for broadband deployment should be sent to the European Commission by 15 October 2014. The best concepts will receive the Commission's "seal of approval", and given access to more in-depth support, which could come in the form of targeted feedback, technical assistance from the World Bank, access to EIB financing, EU structural funds, or state aid. European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes said: "If you're a local authority, a region, or a committed broadband activist, we are here to help you! We want to connect you to practical support and finance to help you achieve your vision for your community." See also [MEMO/14/474](#).

### [Employment: Commission proposes €1.6 million from Globalisation Fund for Dutch construction workers](#)

The European Commission has proposed to provide The Netherlands with €1.6 million from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to help 475 workers made redundant in the construction sector in the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel to find new jobs. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the EU's Council of Ministers for their approval.

EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor commented: "*The construction sector in Gelderland and Overijssel has been hit particularly hard by the effects of the crisis and the redundant workers are facing difficulties to find new jobs. This proposal for 1.6 million euros from Europe's Globalisation Adjustment Fund would contribute to measures to boost their chances of getting new employment.*"

### **Commissioner Hedegaard to meet with major economies' climate chiefs to advance global climate action**

Commissioner Hedegaard is set to attend the [Major Economies Forum](#) in Paris this Friday and Saturday where she will take part in discussions to advance international climate negotiations. She will also hold a series of bilateral meetings with global leaders, including Mr. Xie Zhenhua, Vice-Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission; Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Environment Minister of Peru and president of this year's UN climate summit. As from Sunday, Commissioner Hedegaard will continue her trip to Berlin to participate in the [Petersberg ministerial climate dialogue](#) hosted by German Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks. As part of discussions on stepping up urgency to deliver a global climate agreement in 2015, Commissioner

Hedegaard will also meet with Mr. Todd Stern, U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change and H.E. Ali Al-Naimi, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia.

### [EUROSTAT - House Price Index – First quarter of 2014](#)

House prices, as measured by the House Price Index (HPI), fell by 0.3% in the euro area and rose by 1.0% in the EU3 in the first quarter of 2014 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. These figures come from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Compared with the fourth quarter of 2013, house prices fell by 0.3% in the euro area and rose by 0.2% in the EU in the first quarter of 2014.

### [EUROSTAT - First population estimates](#)

On 1 January 2014, the population of the EU28 was estimated at 507.4 million, compared with 505.7 million on 1 January 2013. The population increase is due to a natural increase of 80 000 and a net migration of 700 000, while the remainder is due to statistical adjustments. As a long-term trend, the population of the countries making up the EU28 has increased by around 100 million since 1960 (from 407 million to 507 million).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of controlling stake in wind farm operator Skogberget Vind by the Gothaer insurance group**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over the Swedish wind farm operator Skogberget Vind AB by the Gothaer and Enercon groups, both of Germany. Skogberget Vind, which is currently solely controlled by the Enercon group, operates a wind farm in Northern Sweden and supplies electricity to the market at the wholesale level. The Gothaer insurance group markets life, health and property insurances with a focus on Germany. The Enercon group produces and markets wind turbines globally. The Commission concluded that the transaction would not raise competition concerns, because the overlaps between the activities of Skogberget Vind, the Gothaer insurance group and the Enercon group are 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.7222](#).

### **Mergers: The Commission clears acquisition of Sinarmas Cepsa Pte by Cepsa and Golden Agri-Resources**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Sinarmas Cepsa Pte ("Sinarmas") of Singapore by Cepsa Química S.A. ("Cepsa") of Spain and Golden Agri-Resources Ltd ("GAR") of Singapore. Cepsa is an integrated energy group present in every stage of the oil value chain. GAR is a company focused on sustainable palm oil production in Indonesia, including cultivating and harvesting of oil palm trees. Sinarmas will produce intermediates derived from palm oil, such as fatty acids, fatty alcohols and glycerine. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns given the very low combined market shares resulting from the transaction. 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.7289](#).

### [Antitrust: Commission welcomes Court judgment in Telefónica margin squeeze case](#)

The European Commission welcomes today's judgment by the EU Court of Justice (case [C-295/12 P](#)) confirming in full a Commission decision of 2007 that had fined Telefónica for a margin squeeze in the Spanish broadband market, in breach of EU antitrust rules. This judgment is important because it

confirms the Commission's power to enforce competition law against abuses committed on regulated markets and the Commission's methodology to establish the existence of a margin squeeze.

### [Publication of Single Resolution Board top management posts](#)

The recruitment process for the five permanent Members and the Vice-Chair of the Single Resolution Board – the European Resolution Authority for the Banking Union - has been launched today with the publication of vacancy notices in the Official Journal of the European Union and in the international press. Deadline for applications is 3 September 2014.

### [EU welcomes new UN Convention on transparency for investor-state dispute settlement](#)

The European Union welcomes the agreement reached on 9 July 2014 on a new United Nations convention to strengthen transparency in investor-state disputes. The Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration will make it easier to apply the UN's transparency rules to investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) carried out under existing investment treaties.

## What Commissioners said

### Commissioner László Andor's speech at Croatian Chamber of Economy

Commissioner László Andor will deliver this message at the Croatian Chamber of Economy : *"The European Social Fund can play a vital role in bolstering Europe's competitiveness and prosperity, because it invests in our most valuable asset — our fellow Europeans and especially our youth... Helping young people find a job must be among our top priorities, along with tackling the risk of poverty among the most vulnerable, such as older people, especially women, single-person households and the unemployed.... That is the most important message for economic stakeholders from Croatia and across the EU, while the negotiations on the current programming period are still in progress."* **Embargo: 14:30**



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