



TODAYS

News

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Food safety: Commission to lift import restrictions on sunflower oil from Ukraine

EU Member State experts' today endorsed measures to lift import restrictions on sunflower oil from Ukraine that have been in place since 2008. A specific certification scheme was applied following the discovery that a number of consignments of sunflower oil from Ukraine were contaminated with mineral paraffin. Since tests carried out at EU borders have revealed no further contamination, the systematic testing regime has been gradually relaxed. In 2009, the 100% testing at import was replaced with a random sampling whilst maintaining the systematic testing before export from Ukraine. Today the Standing Committee of EU Member States experts' agreed to measures lifting the testing regime which will apply 20 days following publication in the EU Official Journal.

REFIT: Have your say on the Commission's impact assessments and stakeholder consultations

Following up on its [REFIT](#) commitment to further strengthen its smart regulation tools, the Commission has launched a public consultation on the revision of its internal guidelines for impact assessment and stakeholder consultation. Citizens can introduce their views at the following address http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm until 30 September 2014. Impact assessments and stakeholder consultations are key instruments of the Commission to make EU law lighter, simpler and less costly. They ensure that new Commission proposals are prepared on the basis of transparent, comprehensive and balanced evidence on the problem, the added value of EU action and the cost and benefits of alternative policy actions, taking account of stakeholders' views.

Further information on [impact assessments](#) [is available here](#).

[Western Balkans countries, Moldova sign up to Horizon 2020](#)

Five Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), and the Republic of Moldova today secured full access to the European Union's new seven year research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020. The six countries signed association agreements in Brussels together with Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission. All six countries have experience of cooperation on

research and innovation with the EU through the seventh framework programme (FP7), and are seeking to build on this under Horizon 2020.

[Unemployment May 2014: 11.6% in Euro area; 10.3% in EU28; Commissioner Andor's comments](#)

The euro area (EA18) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.6% in May 2014, stable compared with April 2014, but down from 12.0% in May 2013. The EU28 unemployment rate was 10.3% in May 2014, down from 10.4% in April 2014, and from 10.9% in May 2013. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

Eurostat estimates that 25.184 million men and women in the EU28, of whom 18.552 million were in the euro area, were unemployed in May 2014. Compared with April 2014, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 63 000 in the EU28 and by 28 000 in the euro area. Compared with May 2013, unemployment fell by 1.361 million in the EU28 and by 636 000 in the euro area.

European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor commented:

"Unemployment in Europe continues to slowly decline but as the Commission's latest quarterly analysis shows, long-term unemployment is still on the rise and the situation of households with low incomes has not improved. In short, a mild recovery continues but it is still leaving many people behind."

"Member States must do more to support job creation and combat social exclusion, notably through active labour market policies and greater social investment, including the Youth Guarantee."

"We can only really speak of a proper recovery when Europe's economy creates new jobs in hundreds of thousands every month on a sustained basis and we start making visible progress towards the 75% employment target of the Europe 2020 Strategy."

[Electronics: Commission launches a €5bn public-private partnership](#)

The European Commission will launch today a €5 billion public-private partnership - [Electronic Components & Systems for European Leadership](#) (ECSEL) - to make Europe the place to make and buy innovative micro and nano-electronics. This Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) will help industry launch new pilot projects and build on the €1.79 billion already invested in existing [pilot lines](#) and demonstrators. Also today, the Commission will receive from a group of [CEOs](#) from the electronics industry their [industrial roadmap](#) which will state that Europe can capture up to 60% of new electronics markets, and double the economic value of semiconductor component production in Europe within the next 10 years. Vice-President of the European Commission [@NeelieKroesEU](#) said: *"We need to join up our efforts if we are to win back and defend a leading position for Europe. I am happy that this partnership is now active - it shows that the EU and Member States can work together quickly when there is a clear case for action. The regulation to set it up was approved in less than a year!"* (+ [MEMO/14/454](#))

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Polish credit union orderly liquidation resolution scheme

The European Commission has authorised, under EU state aid rules, the prolongation of the Polish credit union resolution orderly liquidation scheme until 31 December 2014. The Commission found the prolongation of the scheme, initially approved on 18 February 2014 to be in line with its guidance on state aid to banks during the crisis (see [IP/13/672](#)). In particular, the prolonged measures are well targeted, proportionate and limited in time and scope. The Commission therefore concluded that they represent an appropriate means of remedying a serious disturbance in the Polish economy and are, as such, compatible with Article 107(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Unnecessary nickel tests no longer required for toys

While continuously striving to improve the safety of toys and, at the same time, seeking to cut "red tape" where possible the European Commission has decided today to exempt nickel in electric toys from the limit value regarding carcinogenicity (Toy Safety Directive 2009/48/EC, Annex II, section 3, No 5). However the nickel limit values to protect children against sensitisation and ingestion toxicity remain unchanged. The above exemption is possible without compromising safety since nickel is only carcinogenic when present in the form of inhalable fumes. The Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) considered, in its [opinion of 25 September 2012](#) , that nickel metal fumes are not expected to be released from toys, not even from badly functioning electric motors such as in model cars or railroad locomotives.

More information on the [Toys safety legislation is available here.](#)

[Taxation: Countdown to simpler and fairer VAT system](#)

The six month countdown has begun to a major change in the EU VAT system, which will ease life for many businesses and ensure fairer revenue distribution between Member States. From 1 January 2015, VAT on all telecommunications, broadcasting and electronic services will be due where the customer is based, rather than where the supplier is located. This changeover will ensure a more level playing field for businesses, and fairer taxation rights amongst Member States. In parallel, a mini One Stop Shop will be launched, greatly reducing costs and administrative burdens for businesses concerned. With the mini One Stop Shop, businesses supplying e-services to customers in more than one EU country will be able to declare and pay all their VAT in their own Member State. This is consistent with the Commission's goal of reducing tax obstacles and burdens for cross-border companies in the Single Market. The Commission has invested greatly over the past few years to ensure that national tax authorities and businesses are well-prepared and equipped to ensure a smooth transition to the new system next year. This work continues, along with an intensive information campaign, to ensure that both Member States and companies can reap the full benefits of these important changes. See [IP/14/758](#) and [MEMO/14/448](#) .

[Air transport: Commission adopts "pilot common project" to modernise European air traffic management \(ATM\)](#)

This is the first of a series of projects resulting from SESAR, the technological pillar of the Single European Sky (SES), to modernise the European Air Traffic Management system. The projects focus on the improvements of air traffic to and from airports, the increase of aircraft flexibility to fly more direct and more efficient routes and on sharing more precise information among all actors. By applying innovative technologies and more efficient operational procedures, the pilot common project will bring benefits in terms of safety, environment, capacity and cost-efficiency for the whole ATM network.

Better enforcing consumer rights in the EU: report analyses today's framework and paves way for future action

The European Commission adopted today a [Report on the functioning of the Consumer Protection Cooperation Regulation](#) (Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004), which lays down the general conditions and a framework for cooperation between national enforcement authorities in the field of consumer protection. The Report follows an external evaluation carried out in 2012 and a public consultation conducted in 2013-2014. The report shows that the good cooperation between national authorities and the European Commission since the entry into effect of the Regulation in 2007 has ensured successful enforcement of consumer protection rules for the benefit of consumers. However, major challenges still exist, for example in addressing widespread infringements affecting consumers in many Member States,

without traditional cross-border character. The Commission will seek ways to bring the findings of the report further and ensure better consumer protection across the EU.

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Het Gastenhuis by Amvest and NPM Capital

The European Commission has cleared under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over the home nursing company Het Gastenhuis by Amvest Vastgoed B.V., ultimately controlled by PGGM and AEGON, and by NPM Capital, ultimately belonging to SHV Holdings, a Dutch family company. All companies involved are based in the Netherlands. Het Gastenhuis is a recently created joint venture set up for the development and operation of small scale nursing home units for elderly persons with memory difficulties in the Netherlands. The Commission therefore assessed the effects of the proposed transaction on the market for residential nursing services and on the vertically related markets for the development and lease of real estate for use in the healthcare sector as well as the provision of rehabilitation tools to healthcare providers. The Commission concluded that the transaction would not raise competition concerns, given the limited market shares of the parties in any of the relevant markets. The operation 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.7243](#) .

Commissioner Füle meets released Belarusian political activist Ales Bialiatski

On 2nd July Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy meets in Strasbourg Mr Ales Bialiatski Belarusian political activist known for his work with Viasna Human Rights Centre. He is also the vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights. Mr Bialiatski was arrested on politically motivated charges and released from prison on 21 June after 1052 days of arbitrary detention in harsh conditions, including serving periods of solitary confinement.

[New Head of European Commission Representation in Copenhagen](#)

Mr Laurs Nørlund has been appointed as Head of Representation in Denmark (Copenhagen). He is taking up office today (1 July).



SOURCE: European Commission – News from the Midday Briefing.