

 TODAY'S  
News

Wednesday, 11 March, 2015

Click on [blue](#) link to view full Press**Agriculture: Commission enables the collection of dairy surplus levy in 3-year instalments**

The Commission's proposal enabling the [recovery of the surplus levy related to the milk quota year 2014/2015 in 3-year instalments](#) was approved by Member States and will enter into force after its publication in the Official Journal before the end of March. Commissioner **Hogan** stated: *"This measure is a significant move that provides considerable flexibility to farmers as well as significant cash-flow benefit to those farmers who might otherwise face a substantial bill in 2015, at a time when they may be investing to take advantage of the post-quota environment."* Producers having exceeded their quota for 2014/2015 will have the possibility to make their payments over a maximum of three years in zero interest instalments. Member States will have to indicate the number of beneficiaries under the scheme and the amount not yet recovered every year until the end of 2017. The first yearly payment shall be made by 30 September 2015. Regulation (EC) No 595/2004 will be amended to include the newly adopted scheme.

**Investment Plan for Europe: Vice-President Katainen promotes #investEU in France**

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, travels to France today as part of his roadshow to promote the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). Vice-President **Katainen** is visiting Paris today, 12 March and Marseille tomorrow, 13 March. In Paris, the Vice-President will meet French Prime Minister Manuel Valls and Minister of Finance Michel Sapin as well as representatives of the French regions, businesses, investors and the media. In the company of the Minister of Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs Emmanuel Macron, he will visit [Numa](#), a pioneering digital innovation incubator in Paris. Vice-President **Katainen** said: *"I am very pleased to be in France to engage with local businesses, government and students about the Investment Plan for Europe and how it can help give the French economy a boost. I also welcome the excellent news that France will contribute €8 billion to the Investment Plan, as President Hollande announced last Friday. With four big Member States now having announced contributions, the momentum is building."*

**State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigation into Hungarian advertisement tax**

The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation into whether Hungary's advertisement tax introduced in June 2014 complies with EU state aid rules. In particular, the Commission has concerns that the progressive tax rates, ranging from 0 to 50%, could selectively favour certain companies and give them an unfair competitive advantage. The Commission has therefore also taken a separate decision prohibiting

Hungary from applying progressive rates until the Commission has finished its assessment (a so-called "suspension injunction"). The opening of an in-depth investigation gives interested third parties the opportunity to comment. It does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. Commissioner **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"It is very important that we ensure a level playing field on media markets throughout Europe. Many media today rely on advertisement income to finance their operations. I welcome the signals from the Hungarian government that they intend to make changes to the advertisement tax. Our state aid investigation will look in detail both at how the advertisement tax applies currently as well as how it is amended, to make sure there is no unfair discrimination against certain media companies."* Full press release available [here](#).

## **EU supports top science with €713 million in new research grants**

Today, the Commission is announcing that 372 new research grants, worth up to €2.75 million each, will be awarded to excellent scientists in Europe. The grants are part of the [European Research Council's scheme](#) to enable researchers to consolidate their teams and push forward our understanding of issues such as the nature of autism or dyslexia and gravity's role in the universe. The funding comes from the EU's research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 and will be awarded to [researchers of 38 different nationalities](#). On this occasion Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"With every project of this calibre, we're making Europe the laboratory of the world. Our most extraordinary and creative researchers benefit from EU funding and, in turn, Europe benefits every day from its investment in knowledge and people."* More information is available [online](#).

## **EUROSTAT: January 2015 compared with December 2014 – Industrial production down by 0.1% in euro area, stable in EU28**

In January 2015 compared with December 2014, seasonally adjusted industrial production fell by 0.1% in the euro area (EA19) and remained stable in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In December 2014 industrial production rose by 0.3% and 0.4% respectively. In January 2015 compared with January 2014, industrial production increased by 1.2% in the euro area and by 1.5% in the EU28. Read [EUROSTAT press release](#)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Ministers meeting with ambitious agenda at Justice and Home Affairs Council**

Today, Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship will be representing the European Commission at the Home Affairs Council. The Council meeting will discuss the migratory pressures in the Mediterranean as well as in the Western Balkans, the Greek Government's Road Map on Asylum for 2015, follow-up and implementation of measures on the fight against terrorism, and the signing of the first Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility with Nigeria. On Friday, Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, will represent the European Commission at the Justice Council. The Justice Ministers are expected to reach crucial agreements in the area of data protection, which would pave the way to an agreement in the Council on the General Data Protection Regulation during the Latvian Presidency. They are also expected to reach agreements on the Legal Aid directive and the Eurojust regulation, as well as a partial general approach on the public documents regulation. The Council will discuss elements of the judicial approach to foreign fighters and will hold an orientation debate on the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) regulation. The public debates and the press conference can be followed [here](#).

### **High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini travels to Egypt to attend the Egypt Economic Development Conference**

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** has been invited to attend the [Egypt Economic Development Conference](#) from 13 – 15 March in Sharm el Sheikh, [Egypt](#). This is a very important event for Egypt to show investors and political leaders its will and concrete steps taken to implement economic reform

and to facilitate foreign investment. In deciding to represent the EU at the conference, HR/VP **Mogherini**, who will deliver a speech, sends a signal of the EU's continuous support for Egypt at a critical juncture. In the margins of the conference, the HR/VP is expected to meet representatives from both Egypt and the region to discuss regional and security issues, including the situation in Libya.



See what will be discussed in the European Commission, European Council and the European Parliament [here](#)

