

 TODAY'S
News

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EUROSTAT: Fourth quarter of 2014 compared with third quarter of 2014; Employment up by 0.1% in euro area and by 0.2% in EU28; +0.9% and +1.0% respectively compared with the fourth quarter of 2013

The number of persons employed increased by 0.1% in the euro area (EA18) and by 0.2% in the EU28 in the fourth quarter of 2014 compared with the previous quarter, according to national accounts estimates published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In the third quarter of 2014, employment increased by 0.2% in the euro area and 0.3% in the EU28. These figures are seasonally adjusted. Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, employment increased by 0.9% in the euro area and by 1.0% in the EU28 in the fourth quarter of 2014 (after +0.7% and +0.9% respectively in the third quarter of 2014). Eurostat estimates that, in the fourth quarter of 2014, 226.7 million men and women were employed in the EU28, of which 148.6 million were in the euro area. These figures are seasonally adjusted. These quarterly data on employment provide a picture of labour input consistent with the output and income measure of national accounts. Read [EUROSTAT press release](#).

Energy Union: EU-Turkey High Level Energy Dialogue officially launched by Vice-President Maros Šefčovič

On 16 March 2015, Vice-President Šefčovič and Turkish Energy Minister Yildiz launched a new High Level Energy Dialogue between the EU and [Turkey](#). Both agreed to hold the High Level Energy Dialogue at ministerial level on a more regular basis, at least once a year. The next Dialogue will include all relevant energy sectors such as gas, electricity, nuclear, renewables, energy efficiency and climate action, in particular with a view to the preparation to [COP21](#) in Paris. It will take place still this year, with the participation of Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Arias Cañete and Turkish Energy Minister Yildiz. Both as a candidate country currently engaging in accession negotiations with the EU and a contributor to the EU's energy security, Turkey has made an important progress in aligning its legislation with the "acquis communautaire". The screening of Turkey's energy legislation against the "energy acquis" has been completed. In this regard, Parties have both agreed to improve cooperation and their policy dialogue in the energy sector, which plays a key role in their relations. The launching of the High Level Dialogue also clearly underlines the commitment of the European Commission, as reflected in its recently adopted Energy Union Framework Strategy of 25 February 2015, to establish strategic energy partnerships with increasingly important energy producing and transit countries. Please read the entire [Joint Statement on the EU-Turkey High Level Energy Dialogue](#).

EUROSTAT: February 2015; Annual inflation up to -0.3% in the euro area; Up to -0.2% in the EU

Euro area annual inflation was -0.3% in February 2015, up from -0.6% in January. In February 2014 the rate was 0.7%. European Union annual inflation was -0.2% in February 2015, up from -0.5% in January. A year earlier the rate was 0.8%. In February 2015, negative annual rates were observed in twenty Member States. The lowest annual rates were registered in Greece (-1.9%), Bulgaria (-1.7%) and Lithuania (-1.5%). Positive annual rates were recorded in Sweden (0.7%), Malta (0.6%), Austria (0.5%), Romania (0.4%) and Italy (0.1%). Compared with January 2015, annual inflation fell in six Member States, remained stable in four and rose in seventeen. The largest upward impacts to euro area annual inflation came from restaurants & cafés (+0.12 percentage points), rents (+0.11 pp) and tobacco (+0.07 pp), while fuels for transport (-0.64 pp), heating oil (-0.19 pp) and telecommunications (-0.06 pp) had the biggest downward impacts. Read [EUROSTAT press release](#).

Education to help tackle radicalisation, EU Commission and Ministers agree

Tibor Navracsics, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, welcomed the political commitment made by EU Education Ministers and the European Commission in Paris today to join forces in tackling radicalisation. He said: *"We are all facing the same challenge: how to protect Europe's spirit of freedom and at the same time, strengthen our mutual understanding and respect. Working together at European level, we can share the best ideas, learn from and inspire each other. To address radicalisation, I plan to prepare the ground for inclusion, diversity and civic values in our schools to be at the centre of the new EU priorities for education and training I will present later this year. I also want to ensure we use the Erasmus+ funding programme in a more targeted way to help these efforts. Anti-radicalisation efforts will also form part of the European Agenda on Security, which the Commission will come forward with in May. Today's declaration should not be a one-off effort. I look forward to discussing our next steps at the Council meeting of Education Ministers in May."* Today's meeting in Paris was a joint initiative of the French government, the European Commission and the Latvian EU Presidency.

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Joris Ide by Kingspan

The European Commission has cleared under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of Joris Ide Group (Steel Partners NV/SA) of Belgium by rival Kingspan Group Plc of Ireland. Both companies manufacture sandwich panels and construction sheets in several production sites in the European Economic Area (EEA). The Commission concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns, in particular because the merged entity will continue to face sufficiently strong competition after the merger and customers will still have sufficient alternative suppliers in all markets concerned. A full press release is available [online](#). More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7479](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of healthcare company Allergan by Actavis

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Allergan of the US by Actavis of Ireland. Allergan is a healthcare company with a portfolio of pharmaceuticals, biologics, medical devices and over-the-counter products. Actavis develops pharmaceutical products. The companies' activities overlap in particular in two areas of ophthalmology: anti-glaucoma treatments and artificial tears and ocular lubricants for the treatment of dry eyes. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because the combined market shares of the companies will remain moderate and a number of strong players will remain in the market after the merger. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7480](#).

Announcements

Commissioner Vera Jourová speaking at the European Platform for Roma inclusion

The [European Platform for Roma inclusion](#) gathers all relevant stakeholders for the integration of Roma people in Europe on March 16-17. It aims to contribute to making both European and national policies more sensitive to Roma needs. Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Vera **Jourová** said in her statement: *"We know where the problems are. Together, we need to find solutions and make them work. We are mobilising all our available tools: policy, legal and financial to overcome stereotypes and intolerance."* The priorities for Roma inclusion should remain education, health, housing and employment. The panels of the stakeholder event can be followed [online](#).

High Representative/ Vice-President Mogherini to host Ceremony on the occasion of the launching of the Association Agreement(s) Negotiations with the Principality of Andorra, the Principality of Monaco and the Republic of San Marino on 18 March

High Representative / Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will host a ceremony on the occasion of the launching of the Association Agreement(s) Negotiations with Andorra, Monaco and San Marino. Following the ceremony, HRVP **Mogherini** will hold bilateral meetings with Mr Gilbert Saboya, acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Andorra; Mr Gilles Tonelli, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Monaco; and Mr Pasquale Valentini, Minister of Political and Foreign Affairs of San Marino. The ceremony will take place in the Berlaymont, European Commission, at 16:00. Accredited journalists who want to attend can contact: [Maja Kocijancic](#), [Eamonn Prendergast](#) and [Alceo Smerilli](#).

EU-Armenia: Shaping a positive agenda for future co-operation

Commissioner Johannes **Hahn** will visit Yerevan on 18 March to underline the current important and decisive year for [EU-Armenia relations](#), marked by the joint commitment and effort to enhance EU-Armenia relations, where possible and to negotiate a legal base for these future relations. During his mission, he is scheduled to meet the Armenian President, Prime-Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as representatives of the opposition and civil society. In addition, accompanied by the Armenian Minister of Education, he will visit the Yerevan Regional State College No 1, a Vocational Education Training Project supported by the European Commission. Commissioner **Hahn** will, as well, attend and address the [Fourth Ordinary Session of the EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly](#), presenting the main elements of the recently launched consultation on the [European Neighbourhood Policy review](#).

Commissioner Hill to visit Frankfurt on 16 and 17 March

Jonathan **Hill**, Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, is visiting Germany on 16 and 17 March. He will give a keynote speech at the Süddeutsche Zeitung Finance Day [Conference](#) and at the Frankfurt Finance [Summit](#). He will also meet Mr Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank, as well as Mr Jürgen Fitschen, President of the Board of the Association of German Banks. During his visit, he will discuss the recently launched Capital Markets Union as well as EU financial regulation and banking sector reform with representatives from the financial sector. Commissioner Hill's speech will be published online.

Commissioner Avramopoulos visits Europol in The Hague

Commissioner Avramopoulos is visiting [Europol](#) in The Hague, where he is meeting with its Director Rob Wainwright. Today also marks the official launch of the Joint Operation Team MARE (JOT MARE), a dedicated maritime intelligence centre to better identify and track smuggling networks operating in the Mediterranean. A press conference by Commissioner Avramopoulos and Director Wainwright is foreseen in Europol's press room at 12.00. The Commissioner's speech will be available [here](#).



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

