



TODAYS
News



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Digital Single Market Strategy: European Commission agrees areas for action

Digital technology is part of everyday life. From watching films, buying or selling online to connecting with friends – the internet is a goldmine of opportunities. But EU people and companies run into many barriers, such as geo-blocking or cross-border parcel delivery inefficiencies. This Commission has made it [a priority](#) to remove these obstacles and create a [Digital Single Market](#). The College of Commissioners today had a first discussion on the Digital Single Market Strategy due in May. Based on the work of Vice-President **Ansip** and his team, the College set out three main areas on which Commission action will focus during this mandate: 1. Better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services; 2. Shaping the environment for digital networks and services to flourish; 3. Creating a European Digital Economy and Society with long-term growth potential. See the [press conference by Vice-President Ansip at 12.00 CET](#), the [press release](#) and the [factsheet](#). [Speaking points](#) will be published after the press conference.

Adoption of the 2014 European Neighbourhood Reports

In a set of annual reports adopted today, the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy assessed the implementation of the [European Neighbourhood Policy](#) (ENP) with the 16 partner countries in the [East](#) and the [South](#) and made recommendations for the year ahead. 2014 saw the signing of association agreements with [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#), democratic transition in [Tunisia](#) and strengthened relations with [Morocco](#). Nevertheless, conflicts and crises, involving security and humanitarian problems, persisted in both the East and South, especially in the form of terrorist threats and attacks. Significant support was mobilised by the EU to help [Lebanon](#) and [Jordan](#) cope with the increasing effects of the [Syria](#) crisis. A technical briefing off-the-record (for accredited journalists only) is taking place at 13:00 CET in the press room of the Commission's Berlaymont building. Read the press release [here](#).

OTHER NEWS

Investing in an open and secure Europe: €1.8 billion to fund Asylum, Migration, Integration and Security

Today the European Commission has approved 22 new multiannual national programmes under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) for the period 2014-2020, worth together approximately €1.8 billion. An additional 36 national programmes will be approved later this year. These two strands of EU funding support Member States' efforts in the fields of asylum, migration and

integration, and internal security. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship **Dimitris Avramopoulos** said: "*Migration is one of the ten priorities of this Commission. Making migration policy work in all its aspects is essential to the overall success of our societies. We want people to thrive and we want people to be safe. But Member States cannot do this alone. That is why the European Commission has consistently given tangible support to the Member States and will continue to do so.*" Read the [press release](#).

EU pledges €160 million for Guinea-Bissau

Today, the European Union pledged €160 million for [Guinea-Bissau](#) to consolidate democracy, strengthen the rule of law, accelerate economic recovery and improve people's lives. The [announcement](#) was made at an international conference in Brussels, a day after the [lifting of Article 96 measures](#). The event comes at a decisive moment when Guinea-Bissau is on the path of political, institutional and economic reform after years of extreme fragility and political instability. The conference is co-chaired by Neven **Mimica**, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Ruby Sandhu-Rojon, Deputy Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme and H.E. Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. José Mário Vaz, President of Guinea-Bissau, Macky Sall, President of Senegal and Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the UN Department of Political Affairs are also taking part in the opening session. The opening session will be available on [EbS](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Indaqua by Mota Engil and Talanx

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Indaqua Industry and water management, S.A. by Mota Engil Ambiente e Serviços, SGPS S.A., both of Portugal and Talanx AG of Germany. Talanx belongs to the HDI Group, a global insurance company. Mota Engil is active in various sectors, including engineering, construction, mining, and waste management. Indaqua provides retail water supply services in Portugal. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns as the joint venture has limited activities in the European Economic Area (EEA). 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.7503](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Šefčovič and Commissioner Bulc meet with five Transport Ministers to further develop transport infrastructure in Central Europe

On 26 March, in Slovakia, Vice-President **Šefčovič** and Commissioner **Bulc** will meet with Transport Ministers from the Visegrád Group countries (the so-called V4: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and Austria, to discuss interconnections in Central Europe, in line with the [Trans-European Transport Network](#). They will focus on current interconnection projects relevant to Central Europe, particularly on the progress of Rhine-Danube, Baltic-Adriatic, and Orient-East Med transport corridors. They will also discuss the possibilities of using the [European Fund for Strategic Investment](#) for regional transport initiatives. Other topics on the agenda also include regional transportation projects built with EU funding and a more effective use of funds from the [Connecting Europe Facility](#). At the end of the meeting, the V4 Transport Ministers will sign a Memorandum of Cooperation on the development of transportation infrastructure. In addition, Austrian and Slovak representatives will sign a declaration on improving transport links between Vienna and Bratislava. (**Climate action: Commissioner Arias Cañete meets mayors of EU capital and large cities ahead of Paris climate conference**)

Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** will attend a high-level meeting on the role of cities in fighting climate change in Paris on 26 March. Together with Laurent Fabius, French Foreign Minister and future President of the [UN climate conference](#) in Paris in December as well as the French Energy Minister Ségolène Royal and Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, the Commissioner will join a meeting

bringing together mayors of EU capital and large cities ahead of the UN climate conference in December. Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will give a keynote speech and attend the signing ceremony of a declaration for more sustainable urban development and greener cities, renewing mayors' commitment to concrete and measurable actions to address climate change at city level. Cities and urban areas are home to 75% of the EU population and play an important role in limiting climate change and adapting to its impacts. The European Commission has created a framework to support cities and leverage urban climate action through initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors and Mayors Adapt. During his visit, the Commissioner will also meet with the industry network Cercle de l'Industrie. You will find more information on the [website of the Covenant of Mayors](#).

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

