



TODAYS
News



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State aid: Commission approves Dutch support for renewable energy

The Commission has found modifications to an existing Dutch scheme for supporting the production of electricity, gas and heat from renewable sources to be in line with EU state aid rules. The scheme is expected to make an important contribution to the decarbonisation of the economy. The Dutch scheme, Stimuleren Duurzame Energieproductie (SDE+), is based on a competitive bidding process among all forms of renewable energy to determine the level of the premiums that will be paid to the beneficiaries. The scheme has been expanded to include support for the co-firing of biomass, and now includes a separate bidding process for electricity produced from offshore wind. Moreover, from 1 January 2016, no subsidies will be paid for periods in which the wholesale price is negative. The SDE+ will be financed through an increased energy tax paid by consumers. The Commission assessed the measure under its [Guidelines for Environmental and Energy aid](#) adopted in April 2014 and found that the measure supports renewable energy in a market based way, as required by the Guidelines. The Commission therefore concluded that the measure would further common energy and environmental objectives without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. The non-confidential version of the decision will be made available under the case number [SA.39399](#) in the [State Aid Register](#) on the [DG Competition website](#) once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

Mergers: Commission clears joint venture between Riverstone and Barclays in energy sector

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by Riverstone Holdings LLC of the US and Barclays Bank plc of the UK. Riverstone is a private equity firm focused on investments in the energy and power sectors. Barclays is a global financial services provider engaged in personal banking, credit cards, corporate and investment banking and wealth and investment management services. Riverstone and Barclays would acquire joint control over Origo, a newly-established joint venture company based in Norway, which will be engaged in oil and gas exploration and production activities on the Norwegian and UK continental shelves. The Commission concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns because the overlaps between the companies' activities are minor and the joint venture will face competition from several big oil companies. 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.7422](#).

Mergers : Commission clears acquisition of Duferco Trading by Hebei Iron & Steel and Duferco Participations

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Duferco International Trading Holding ('DITH') by Duferco Participations Holding ('DPH'), both of Luxembourg, and Chinese Hebei Iron & Steel Group ('HBIS'). DPH is part of the BBH group, which is active in the energy, shipping and steel sector. It currently has sole control over DITH. HBIS produces various steel products in China. DITH trades steel products worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as there are no or only minor overlaps between the companies' activities in the European Economic Area (EEA). The operation was examined under the simplified merger procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7517](#).

STATEMENTS

Statement of the High Representative and Vice-President Federica Mogherini and the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the situation in Yarmouk, Syria

"The security and humanitarian situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria has gone from bad to worse. Innocent people are now being used as human shields by the fighting sides. The Syria crisis has already led to too much suffering. A new massacre must be avoided. The EU calls on all belligerents and all parties with influence over them to respect international law, ensure unhindered humanitarian access and provide safe passage for all civilians who wish to escape. UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 must also be fully implemented throughout the territory of Syria. The European Commission already released immediate emergency funding of EUR 2.5 million to UNRWA's operation in Syria, with specific focus on Yarmouk, Idlib, Dara'a and Aleppo. We will continue to work together with UNRWA Commissioner General Pierre Krähenbühl, and all other partners to help alleviate the suffering of the people in the greatest need, and with UN Secretary General Special envoy Staffan de Mistura to find a political solution to the crisis." The statement is available [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EU to discuss the future of European Neighborhood Policy at Informal Ministerial meeting with Southern partners

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini**, and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn**, will co-chair consultations with Southern ENP partners at the Informal Ministerial Meeting on the future of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) on Monday, 13 April, in Barcelona. The meeting is jointly hosted by the European Union, including the Latvian Presidency of the EU Council, and Spain, and will be attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs both from the EU and the ENP partner countries. It will allow for an in-depth discussion within the framework of the ongoing consultation process on the review of the ENP; the situation in the Southern Neighbourhood will also be discussed. A press conference is foreseen at 2pm at the venue of the meeting (Pedralbes Royal Palace in Barcelona). [Europe by Satellite](#) will provide coverage. For press arrangements please contact: oid@maec.es. Full press release available [here](#).

Commissioner Mimica attends World Water Forum (13-15 April)

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, will next week take part in the [7th World Water Forum](#) in the Republic of Korea. He is expected to outline the EU's commitment to achieving universal access to water and sanitation, as well as to addressing water as a cross-cutting issue,

along with that of energy and food security, so that the international community can pool their resources more effectively.

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

