


 TODAY'S
 News


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Commission report on the benefits of TTIP for Small and Medium Enterprises

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has significant potential for small and medium sized enterprises, according to a report presented by EU Trade Commissioner **Malmström** today. *"Small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the European economy. That's why the EU and the US are working to deliver an ambitious agreement that meets their concerns. This report helps us do that, by pointing out the concrete obstacles and the problems that we have to solve. This is one of the issues to be discussed when our negotiators are meeting this week,"* Trade Commissioner **Malmström** commented. *"SMEs stand to benefit most when we reduce non-tariff barriers and cut red tape. We are working on that in the EU Single Market and here we can see why it is so important to do the same thing in the TTIP negotiations,"* Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs added. It presents the results of a survey of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) carried out in 2014 on challenges they face when exporting to the United States. It also uses newly available data to look at the scale of exports by EU SMEs to the United States. A press release is available [online](#).

Investment Plan for Europe: Vice-President Katainen takes roadshow to Poland and Greece

European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, is in Poland today and tomorrow as part of his roadshow to promote the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). He is accompanied by Commissioner **Bieńkowska**. Vice-President **Katainen** then takes the Investment Plan roadshow to Greece on Thursday 23 – Friday 24 April, where he will be joined by Commissioner **Avramopoulos**. Vice-President **Katainen** will meet government leaders, business representatives, SMEs, investors and students as part of the 28-country roadshow to promote and explain the €315bn Investment Plan. In Athens he will host a citizens' dialogue, answering questions from the general public. Vice-President **Katainen** said: *"Another busy week for the Investment Plan roadshow. Last week in the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Hungary I had many positive discussions about how the Investment Plan for Europe can benefit those countries, and I expect the same this week in Poland and Greece. I look forward to participating in the European Economic Congress in Katowice and to the citizens' dialogue in Athens, as I always find these events very inspiring."*

EU consular protection rules: better protection for European citizens abroad

After three years of negotiations, the EU Member States have adopted the Directive on consular protection for European citizens living or travelling outside the EU. The agreement by the Council clarifies when and how EU citizens in distress in a country outside the EU have the right to receive assistance from other EU countries' embassies or consulates. The aim is to ease cooperation between consular authorities and strengthen European citizens' right to consular protection. *"This Directive represents an important step in consular cooperation within the European Union. Following the Lisbon Treaty, it aims notably at ensuring the right of EU citizens to consular and diplomatic protection in a third country, in which the Member State of which they are a national is not represented. The EEAS and the EU Delegations will actively cooperate with Member States' embassies and consulates in contributing to these efforts"* said Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative of the European External Action Service and Vice President of the European Commission. *"At the start of my mandate, I promised to help EU citizens get better protection and rights. The Directive adopted today reinforces citizens' right to equal consular protection and contributes to increasing European solidarity in third countries. It lays down clear and simple rules on how Member States should coordinate and cooperate among themselves and with the Union delegations. With rising numbers of EU citizens travelling and living abroad it is crucial that everyone knows what their right to consular protection means in practice"* said Věra **Jourová**, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. A press release is available [online](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of office building in Paris region by Goldman Sachs and Altarea

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Tours Pascal, an office building located in La Défense, Paris, France, by Goldman Sachs of the United States and Altarea of France. Goldman Sachs is a global investment company. Altarea is a real estate investment and development company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, given the companies' moderate market position in the real estate sector in France and, in particular, in the Paris region. 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.7582](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Catlin by XL Group

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Catlin Group Ltd of Bermuda by XL Group plc of Ireland. Both companies are globally active providers of speciality non-life insurance and reinsurance, and focus on insurance lines such as marine, energy, fine art and political risk. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because the companies' combined market shares would remain small under any plausible market definition. 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.7554](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of US replacement tyre distributor ATD by two investment firms

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of ATD by Ares Management and TPG, all of the US. ATD is a replacement tyre distributor mainly active in the US. Both, Ares management and TPG are global investment firms. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because of ATD's limited activity in the European Economic Area (EEA) and because neither of the investment companies was active in the distribution of replacement tyres prior the transaction. 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.7578](#).

EUROSTAT: Europe 2020 education indicators in 2014

Today, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, publishes the most recent data for the EU and its Member States on the achievement of Europe 2020 goals on education. The share of persons aged 30 to 34 in the EU who have completed tertiary education has constantly increased, from 23.6% in 2002 to 37.9% in 2014. This pattern was even more significant for women (from 24.5% in 2002 to 42.3% in 2014) than men (from 22.6% to 33.6%). The Europe 2020 strategy's target is that at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds in the EU should have completed tertiary education by 2020. A press release is available [online](#).

EUROSTAT: Production in construction down by 1.8% in euro area - Down by 1.2% in EU28

In February 2015 compared with January 2015, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector fell by 1.8% in the euro area (EA19) and by 1.2% in the EU28, according to first estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In January 2015, production in construction grew by 1.6% and 0.6% respectively. In February 2015 compared with February 2014, production in construction fell by 3.7% in the euro area and by 2.4% in the EU28. A press release is available [online](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Energy Union: Commissioner Arias Cañete in Poland and Ireland for energy and climate talks

On 21 – 23 April, EU Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** will travel to Poland and Ireland. Together with Member of European Parliament Jerzy Buzek, ITRE Chair and former European Parliament President, he will visit a Clean Coal Technology Centre in Katowice, deliver a speech on "Energy Union – competitive, secure and sustainable energy for the European industry" at the [European Economic Congress](#) and meet Janusz Piechociński, the Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy for a bilateral. In Dublin, Commissioner **Arias Cañete** will meet the Irish Agriculture Minister Simon Coveney and Alex White, the Irish Minister for Communication, Energy and Natural Resources. He will also attend the [Annual Conference](#) of Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE) and provide a keynote speech on EU's policy for a secure and competitive gas supply.

Western Balkans 6 meeting in Brussels

On 21 April Commissioners **Hahn** and Commissioner **Bulg** will host a meeting in Brussels of the six Prime Ministers from the Western Balkans. The meeting in Brussels builds on the Western Balkan 6 ministerial meeting in Pristina on the core transport network for the region. The Brussels meeting is expected to confirm the agreement of the core network through a joint statement, and to discuss concrete ways which would help implement the core transport network.

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

