

 TODAY'S  
News

Monday, 04 May, 2015

Click on [blue](#) link to view full Press**EU increases its financial support in the aftermath of the earthquake in Nepal**

The European Commission has approved financial support worth €16.6 million and additional humanitarian aid of €3 million to assist Nepal after the devastating earthquake. The relief aid will go through humanitarian organisations operating on the ground. The development assistance will be provided directly to the Government of Nepal and will be available later this week. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, commented: *“This support is an expression of our solidarity with the Nepalese people. It is vital for the Government of Nepal to allow relief efforts to continue, as well as to kick-start rehabilitation work after the devastating earthquake. As soon as the needs assessments are carried out we will look into how we can further assist people in Nepal.”* Commissioner Christos **Stylianides**, responsible for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, has just returned from Nepal where he took stock of the needs and the European efforts to help. The details are available in a [press release](#) and factsheets on the [humanitarian](#) and [development](#) assistance of the EU to Nepal.

**Commission publishes updated EU textual proposal on regulatory cooperation in TTIP negotiations**

Today, the Commission published the updated EU textual proposal on regulatory cooperation, following the 9th round of negotiations for a [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (TTIP). This publication is part of the Commission’s transparency initiative and in line with the commitment to publish textual proposals, once they are tabled in negotiations. The proposal is available [here](#).

**Commission proposes EU joins international agreement fighting tobacco smuggling**

The European Commission has today proposed that the EU join an innovative, international agreement set to one day become the key multilateral instrument to fight illicit tobacco trade. The proposal is that the Council concludes the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products under the World Health Organisation’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC Protocol) on behalf of the European Union. Today’s decision should be adopted by the Council with the consent of the European Parliament for the Protocol to be ratified at EU level. Then, all Member States should either ratify or accede to the Protocol to become parties. Once this process is over, the Protocol will have a total of 29 EU signatories. It needs to be ratified by a total of 40 signatories to enter into force. So far, the Protocol, which was agreed in 2012, has 7 parties (Austria, Gabon, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Spain, Turkmenistan and Uruguay). The EU [signed](#) the FCTC

Protocol on 20 December 2013, which is the first step towards the EU becoming a party to the agreement. More about the FCTC Protocol is available on the [WHO website](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears creation of a joint venture for the analysis of oil and gas resources**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by Compagnie Générale de Géophysique SA ("CGG") of France and Wood Mackenzie Limited ("Wood Mackenzie") of the United Kingdom. CGG manufactures geophysical equipment and provides geoscience services to customers primarily in the oil and gas exploration business. Wood Mackenzie provides data and market intelligence to companies operating in the oil, gas, coal, carbon, metals and power generation markets. The joint venture will develop and sell software for the evaluation of the likely value of undeveloped oil and gas resources. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because of the moderate combined market positions resulting from 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.7549](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of E.ON Italy by EPH**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of E.ON Italia's coal and gas business by Energetický a průmyslový holding ("EPH") of the Czech Republic. EPH is mainly active in coal extraction, electricity and heat production, distribution and supply as well as gas supply with a focus on the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Poland, and the UK. E.ON Italia's coal and gas business produces and sells electricity at wholesale level in Italy. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because of the moderate combined market positions resulting from 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.7534](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears joint venture between Mitsui Chemicals and SK Holdings in chemical sector**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture headquartered in Korea between Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. ("MCI") of Japan and SK Holdings Co, Ltd. of Korea. Mitsui Chemicals is a leading manufacturer and supplier of value added specialty chemicals, plastics and materials. SK is a Korean holding company with interests in different sectors, including chemicals. Its subsidiary SKC, MCI's partner for the joint venture, produces certain chemicals and different types of films for various applications (e.g. optical film used in LCD and lenses, PET and PVDF film). The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because there are not overlaps between the parent companies' activities in the European Economic Area (EEA). Moreover, the joint venture has negligible foreseen activities within the territory of the EEA and the value of the assets within the EEA is low. 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.7552](#)

### **State aid: Commission approves amendments to the Romanian green certificate support system for renewables**

The European Commission has approved amendments introduced by Romania to its green certificate support system for renewables, first approved by the Commission in [July 2011](#). The Commission clarified that the support granted in the form of tradable "green certificates" involves State aid. The Commission found the modifications to the system, which tighten the criteria as compared to the 2011 scheme, to be in line with EU state aid rules, in particular the applicable 2014 Energy and Environment Aid guidelines

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Launch of the Lorenzo Natali Media Prize 2015

Today the European Commission launched the [Lorenzo Natali Media Prize 2015](#), which rewards outstanding contributions by journalists who report on development and in particular on the eradication of poverty. Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica** said: *"The aim of the European Year for Development is to inform EU citizens about development cooperation by highlighting the results that the EU, acting together with Member States, has achieved as the world's largest donor. This is why I'm delighted to launch the Lorenzo Natali Media Prize, which will reward some of the most talented professional and amateur journalists who report on development issues and contribute to the fight against poverty."* This year's Lorenzo Natali Media Prize, is launched under the motto 'Today's stories can change our tomorrow'. It is timed to coincide with the 2015 European Year for Development and comes just one day after [World Press Freedom Day](#). A press release is available [here](#).

### Commissioner Avramopoulos visiting Egypt and Jordan to discuss migratory pressures and security issues

Commissioner **Avramopoulos** is travelling to Egypt today, where he will be meeting with President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Minister of Interior Magdy Abdel Ghafar, and the Minister of Manpower and Migration Nahed El-Ashry. Tomorrow, he is continuing his travels to Jordan, where he will be meeting with Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Judeh, and the Minister of Interior Hussein Al-Majali. Both visits are timely for discussing cooperation in the fields of migration and security. *"The search and rescue operations which saved thousands of lives this weekend are a first sign that increased solidarity and cooperation in the Mediterranean is starting to give tangible results. Cooperation with third countries will be essential in the development of a comprehensive and long-term approach for managing migratory pressures,"* Commissioner **Avramopoulos** said

### Commissioner Hill travels to Madrid to promote Capital Markets Union (4-5 May)

Jonathan **Hill**, Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union is visiting Madrid on May 4 and May 5. On May 4, he is meeting José Manuel García-Margallo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation as well as Iñigo Méndez de Vigo, the Spanish Secretary of State for European Affairs. On May 5, he will meet Luis de Guindos, Spanish Minister for Economy and Competitiveness prior to speaking at the "[Nueva Economía Forum](#)". On the same day, he will also have a meeting with Alvaro Nadal, Chief Economist of the Prime Minister's office. During his visit, he will meet several representatives of the business and financial sector, as well as Luis María Linde, Governor of the Bank of Spain. He will also speak to students from the IE Business School about the Commission's plans to restore jobs and growth in Europe and the role of banks and capital markets in financing the economy.

### Energy Union Diplomacy: Commissioner Arias Cañete visits Algeria and Morocco on climate and energy cooperation

Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** will travel to Algeria and Morocco on 5-7 May to deepen energy and climate ties between the EU and its partners in the South and East Mediterranean regions. In Algeria, the Commissioner will launch the EU-Algeria high-level political dialogue on energy together with the Algerian Energy Minister Youcef Yousfi. In Morocco, the Commissioner and the Moroccan Energy Minister Abdelkader Amara will jointly unveil three new Euro-Mediterranean Platforms to incentivise dialogue, facilitate partnerships between stakeholders and strengthen cooperation between the countries of the Union of the Mediterranean. The three platforms - on gas, regional electricity market, and renewables and energy efficiency - will focus on market integration, developing new sustainable energy technologies and removing regulatory, infrastructural, and investment barriers in the region. On 7 May, the Commissioner will co-chair the [Union for the Mediterranean's](#) high-level conference on climate change. He will give an opening address before chairing discussions on the countries' intended contributions to the new

global climate agreement ahead of the Paris climate conference in December. He will also meet with the Moroccan Environment Minister Hakima El Haite and the Egyptian Environment Minister Dr Khaled Fahmy..

MEX/15/4911



Find out [here](#) what will be discussed next week in the European Commission, European Council and the European Parliament.

