



TODAYS
News

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Commissioner will upgrade EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement

Today, EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and the Mexican Secretary of Economy Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal met in Brussels and announced the joint intention to upgrade the EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement. On this occasion, Commissioner Malmström commented: *“The EU and Mexico are strategic partners, linked through a Free Trade Agreement which, in the last 15 years, has multiplied our trade, our investments and created economic growth and jobs for both sides. Our agreement has removed mostly tariff barriers, and now our businesses face other types of barriers that we need to tackle. Our Agreement needs to adapt to a new reality. Therefore, we will make the modernised EU-Mexico trade agreement comparable to our deal with Canada and to what TTIP will become. I will request a mandate from the Council to launch negotiations this year and we will prepare the ground for the EU-Mexico Summit on 12 June 2015.”* This announcement came after Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and Mexican Secretary of Economy Idelfonso Guajardo participated in the CEPS conference "Upgrading the EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement" and the presentation of a research study by BBVA on effects of the EU-Mexico Agreement. The EU and Mexico are currently engaged in a scoping exercise (in the form of a Joint Vision Report) to ensure that both sides share a common understanding of the scope and level of ambition needed for a successful modernisation. They expressed their confidence in that the scoping exercise would be concluded soon. The speech Commissioner Malmström gave is available [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Fortum Distribution by Borealis

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Fortum Distribution AB ("Fortum Distribution") of Sweden by Borealis Siegfried Holdings B.V. ("Borealis") of the Netherlands. Borealis produces plastics and chemicals solutions. It belongs to the OMERS Administration Corporation ("Omers") of Canada. Omers is a pension fund with interests in a number of infrastructure companies, including energy utilities in Europe. Fortum Distribution operates several electricity distribution networks in Sweden. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would not raise competition concerns, because there are no overlaps between the parties' activities. 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.7608](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Domino by Brother

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Domino Printing Sciences plc of the UK by Brother Industries Ltd of Japan. Domino supplies industrial printing equipment. Brother manufactures and sells fax machines, electronic stationery, typewriters, printing equipment, label makers and scanners primarily for use in a home or office environment, sewing machines and online karaoke systems. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the companies' activities do not overlap. The transaction was assessed 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.7594](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Quadrica by Omnes Capital, Predica Prevoyance and Quadran

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Quadrica S.A.S by Omnes Capital, S.A.S. Prédica Prévoyance Dialogue du Crédit Agricole and Quadran S.A.S, all of France. Omnes Capital is an asset management company active in several branches, notably in the renewable energy sector. Predica Prevoyance is a subsidiary of the Group Crédit Agricole of France, active in the insurance sector. Quadran is an independent producer of renewable electricity mainly active in France. Quadrica will hold shares in wind farms which prior to the transaction were held by certain subsidiaries of Quadran. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the overlaps between the companies' activities are minimal. 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.7609](#).

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner Hahn on the situation in Kumanovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

"I am deeply concerned at the unfolding situation in the Kumanovo region and possible injuries and loss of life. I urge the authorities and all political and community leaders to cooperate, to restore calm and fully investigate the events in an objective and transparent manner within the Law. I urge all actors for utmost restraint. Any further escalation must be avoided, not the least in the interest of the overall stability in the country." The statement is available [online](#).

Statement by Commissioner Stylianides on the end of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia

After 42 days without new cases, the World Health Organization (WHO) today declared the end of the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. On this occasion, the EU Ebola Coordinator and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides made the following statement: *"This is great news – for Liberia and for the world. It is a tribute to the bravery and resilience of the people of Liberia, and of the many African and other international health workers who have worked hard for months to bring Ebola down to zero in Liberia. It shows that the fight against Ebola can be won. But it is an incredibly tough fight. We must not be complacent: our collective effort must be sustained until the outbreak is over in Sierra Leone and in Guinea. Both countries have made great strides in recent months to bring infection rates down. We must stand by their side as they work to bring cases down to zero. Now is not the time to let up and pull out resources. Beyond that, we have to help all three countries recover from the devastating impact of Ebola on their economies. We need to help them rebuild and strengthen their health systems. And we need to make sure they, and countries all around the world, are better prepared the next time an epidemic like Ebola strikes."* The statement is available [online](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Commission receives Organisers of 'Stop Vivisection' European Citizens' Initiative

This morning Vice-President Jyrki Katainen received the organisers of the 'Stop Vivisection' [European Citizens' Initiative \(ECI\)](#), who call on the EU to propose a European legislative framework aimed at phasing out animal experiments. As set out in the Lisbon Treaty and the ECI Regulation, the Commission must react within three months of submission of an ECI with 1,000,000 validated statements of support. The Commission will therefore decide by 3 June 2015 whether it will act by adopting legislation, act in some other way to achieve the goals of the ECI, or not act at all. The Commission must explain its reasoning through a Communication adopted by the whole College of Commissioners. This afternoon, following the presentation of the ECI to the Commission, a public hearing to discuss the proposal will be arranged in the European Parliament. Further details of the 'Stop Vivisection' ECI can be found on the Commission website [here](#).

Preparation of Economic and Finance Ministers Council (ECOFIN)

On 12 May in Brussels, Vice-President **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President **Katainen** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the EU's Council of Economic and Finance Ministers. On the legislative work front, the Ministers will discuss the state of play of the Commission's proposal for a [Regulation on the European Fund for Strategic Investments \(EFSI\)](#). Trilogues have now begun, discussions are constructive and everyone remains committed to the timetable. On the structural reforms front, the Council is due to adopt conclusions on the in-depth review of the situation of 16 Member-States that the Commission presented in February. The Council will also exchange views on the implementation of the Country-Specific Recommendations. Finally, the Council will adopt conclusions on the 2015 Ageing report, which provides an update of age-related expenditure projections for the Member States. Finally, the Ministers will be updated on the G20 meetings in Washington.

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

