



TODAYS
News

Thursday, 21 May, 2015

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EU to unlock €2 billion worth of investment for small businesses in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

At the Eastern Partnership Business Forum in Riga today, the European Commission launched the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) Facility for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Facility will provide some €200 million worth of grants from the EU budget over the next 10 years. This contribution is expected to unlock new investments worth at least €2 billion for the SMEs in the three DCFTA countries: Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. *"The European Commission promised concrete steps to boost trade and the exchange between the Union and our Eastern partners. Today we are delivering."*, said the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**. *"This is a concrete example of the EU's commitment to Eastern Partnership and of our determination to build closer economic relations with the partner countries"*, said Commissioner for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn**. Read the press release [here](#) and a memo [here](#).

Commissioner Crețu in Greece: Announces creation of a Joint Working Group to make the most of European Structural and Investment Funds

Speaking about the creation of the joint working group, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** and Greek Minister for Economy, Infrastructure, Maritime Affairs and Tourism Georgios **Stathakis** said: *"It has been decided today, on the occasion of the official visit in Greece of Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu, to create a Joint Working Group between the Commission and the Greek authorities to help Greece improve its implementation capacity of the European Structural and Investment Funds and seize the investments opportunities through the strengthening of administrative capacity (...) The country still has a significant amount of Cohesion Policy funds available under the 2007-2013 programming period until the end of the year; in order to ensure effective implementation, we decided to work together to come up with tailor-made solutions to direct investments where they are the most needed in a fast and strategic way. This initiative comes under the mandate of the High Level Working Group led by Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis** that was set at the initiative of both President **Juncker** and Prime Minister Tsipras. Full statement available [here](#).*

EU helps bring new vital aid into Yemen

In response to the rapidly growing humanitarian needs in Yemen, the European Commission is giving €5.1 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, said: "*Due to the extremely challenging security situation, the ICRC is one of the very few international humanitarian agencies in Yemen still able to deliver much needed aid to the victims of the conflict. I commend the humanitarian workers on the ground for their tireless efforts. We are proud to be supporting their work in these difficult circumstances*". The new funding will help provide food, water, medical supplies and other essential aid. The Commission's humanitarian aid allocated for Yemen so far in 2015 amounts to €25 million. A press release is available [here](#).

Commission asks for input on the implementation of and first experience with the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR)

The European Commission has today published a questionnaire about the European Market Infrastructure Regulation, or [EMIR](#), which is a centrepiece of the legislation introduced in the wake of the financial crisis in order to render financial markets safer and more stable. EMIR requires standard derivative contracts to be cleared through central counterparties (CCPs) and introduces an obligation to report derivative contracts to trade repositories. Today's [review](#) will enable the Commission to take stock of market participants' experience in implementing the regulation. Jonathan **Hill**, EU Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: "*EMIR is a crucial piece of legislation which has helped restore stability and trust in the European Union's financial markets. Although it has only been in force for a fairly short time, this review gives us an opportunity to see whether we are heading in the right direction and whether anything needs to be done differently. This will help ensure that our efforts have the best possible results.*" A press release is available [here](#).

EUROSTAT: GDP per capita in the EU in 2013: seven capital regions among the ten most prosperous

In 2013, regional GDP per capita, expressed in terms of purchasing power standards, ranged from 27% of the EU28 average in the French overseas department of Mayotte, to 325% of the average in Inner London in the United Kingdom. A press release is available [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Investment Plan for Europe: Vice-President Katainen takes roadshow to Dublin and Belfast

European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, travels to Dublin and Belfast on Thursday and Friday as part of his roadshow to promote the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). In Dublin, Vice-President **Katainen** will meet with Prime Minister Enda Kenny, Minister for Finance Michael Noonan and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Brendan Howlin. In Belfast, Vice-President **Katainen** will meet with First Minister of Northern Ireland Peter Robinson, Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, and Finance Minister Arlene Foster. Vice-President **Katainen** said: "*I am very happy to be in Dublin today and Belfast tomorrow to discuss how the Investment Plan for Europe can help create more jobs. The European Investment Bank announced in April that as part of the Investment Plan it will help finance a Public-Private Partnership in Ireland to create 14 new primary healthcare centres. These centres will offer healthcare at lower costs and shorter waiting times for treatment, and they will create more jobs across the country. I am also excited to participate in another Citizens' Dialogue, this time with a focus on the digital economy, alongside Paddy Cosgrave and Lord David Puttnam. Improving and increasing digital infrastructure such as rolling out high-speed broadband in rural areas is one of the objectives of the Investment Plan, and I hope Ireland can benefit from this.*"

Commissioner Avramopoulos at European Day for Border Guards in Warsaw

Commissioner **Avramopoulos** is giving the opening speech at the European Day for Border Guards, organised by Frontex, and bringing together senior government officials, border guard authorities, and experts. A press conference is foreseen with Commissioner **Avramopoulos** and Fabrice Leggeri, Executive Director of Frontex: the video will be available on [EbS](#).

Commissioner Thyssen visits Paris

On Thursday 21 May, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** is in Paris. She will meet with OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría to launch a new OECD report on income inequality which will contain data and analysis on trends, causes and policy responses for rising inequalities in OECD countries. A joint press conference will be held at the [OECD Conference Centre](#) at 11.00 which can be followed [online](#). This will be followed by a working lunch with French Minister of Work François Rebsamen to discuss among other issues France's Action Plan on Apprenticeships and a visit to the social centre "[L'Arche d'Avenir](#)", which offers services to homeless people and receives support from the European Commission through the "[Fédération Européenne des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abris](#)".

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

