

 TODAY'S
News

Thursday, 28 May, 2015

Click on [blue](#) link to view full Press**Negotiations on the Regulation for a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) successfully concluded**

Early on Thursday morning after a long night of discussions, EU legislators successfully concluded negotiations on the Regulation for a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the core of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). This means that the Fund will become operational and start financing projects at the end of the summer. The European Commission, represented last night by Vice-Presidents **Georgieva** and **Katainen**, acted as an honest broker and facilitator throughout the negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council. During last night's trilogue, the co-legislators agreed upon the final outstanding issues, including in particular the budgetary allocations to the EFSI guarantee fund, keeping to the ambitious timetable set out in January.

Infringements decisions: Commission acts for full and proper implementation of European legislation

The Commission has decided today to refer three Member States to the EU Court of Justice: Estonia, Germany and Romania. The Commission will send 27 reasoned opinions to 18 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. With a total of 127 decisions, the Commission aims at ensuring proper application of EU law for the benefit of citizens and businesses. A summary of the main decisions can be found in the [Fact Sheet](#). On the general infringement procedure, see [MEMO/12/12](#) and [MEMO/15/5053](#).

Commission asks the public for ideas to develop the Circular Economy

The European Commission has opened a [public consultation](#) to collect views on the main policy options for developing an ambitious new approach on the Circular Economy. Stakeholders' input will help feed the preparation of the new action plan, to be presented by the end of 2015. The consultation will run until 20 August 2015. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: "Today we are asking people across Europe for their input on how to design our policies in a way that stimulates a competitive green economy in Europe and protects the environment for future generations." Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** said: "We want to put forward a comprehensive action plan with incentives for both consumers and businesses to use resources more efficiently." On 25 June, the Commission will host a stakeholders' conference in Brussels which will

feed into the consultation process. The [conference](#) is open to all stakeholders interested in helping shape European policy in this area. A press release is available [here](#).

EU Council backs new EU rules giving more protection to over 120 million holidaymakers

The Council reached a political agreement on new rules that will bring protection for package holidays up to speed with the digital age at today's Competitiveness Council. The rules will extend protection of the [1990 EU Package Travel Directive](#) to cover not only traditional package holidays, but also give clear protection to 120 million consumers who book other forms of combined travel, e.g. a self-chosen combination on a website of a flight plus hotel or car rental. European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, **Věra Jourová** said: "*If you plan your holidays you should not have to worry about insufficient legal protection. Travellers will clearly know what they are buying and what their rights are, especially if something goes wrong during their holidays. These new rules also support the travel industry that will benefit from less administrative burden and much-needed legal clarity.*" More details available here: [Press Release](#) and [factsheet](#).

Agriculture: The Commission approves two new Protected Geographical Indications

The Commission has approved the addition of two new products to the register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGIs). These are, for Germany, '[Glückstädter Matjes](#)', soured herrings mostly produced from mildly salted herrings traditionally caught in the central and northern North Sea and later processed in the town of Glückstadt in Schleswig-Holstein; and for Portugal, '[Capão de Freamunde](#)', a cockerel, referred to as capon, reared free-range with a diet based largely on natural grasslands. The Capão de Freamunde is traditionally consumed in the winter season and for Christmas. These two denominations will be added to the list of over 1,200 products already protected. More information: webpages on [quality products](#) and [DOOR database](#) of protected products.

Antitrust: Commission sends Statement of Objections to Riberebro alleging participation in canned mushrooms cartel

The European Commission has informed Grupo Riberebro Integral S.L. and its subsidiary Riberebro Integral S.A.U. that it suspects the companies of having breached EU antitrust rules by colluding with competitors on both customer allocation and the pricing of canned mushrooms in the European Economic Area (EEA). The Commission has concerns that Riberebro may have colluded with other market participants within the EEA to allocate customers and coordinate prices of so-called "private label" canned mushrooms (i.e. manufactured by one company to be sold under another company's brand name). Sending a Statement of Objections does not prejudice the outcome of the investigation. The press release is available [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Averys by Equistone in industrial storage sector

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of the group Averys SAS by Equistone Partners Europe SAS, both of France. The group Averys designs, manufactures and installs storage and archiving solutions. Equistone manages a portfolio of capital investment funds. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given that there are no overlaps between the activities of the group Averys and the companies controlled by Equistone. 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.7605](#).

EUROSTAT: EU trade in goods with Japan almost in balance in 2014

After a significant decrease in 2009 following the financial crisis, the value of European Union (EU) imports of goods from Japan recovered until 2011 and then fell continuously to stand in 2014 at €54.6 billion, the

lowest level recorded over the last ten years. Exports, which declined only slightly in 2009, then recovered more strongly to reach a peak of €55.7 billion in 2012, and then slightly decreased over the following years to €53.3 billion in 2014. As a result, the EU trade deficit with Japan, which had constantly been above €20.0 billion between 2004 and 2011, has considerably reduced during the last three years to be almost in balance in 2014 at -€1.3 billion. While it was among the top 5 trading partners of the EU in 2004, Japan is now the seventh most important EU trading partner, accounting for just over 3% of total extra-EU trade in goods in 2014. Over this 10-year time period, the share of Japan in extra-EU imports dropped from 4.6% in 2004 to 3.1% in 2014, while its share in exports more than halved (7.3% in 2004 vs. 3.2% in 2014). A press release is available [here](#).

Statements

Vice-President Ansip: Talking digital in the United States

"*Breaking through barriers to build a Digital Single Market is a top priority for the European Commission*", Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, in charge of the digital single market, will say later on Thursday in a speech at the Brookings Institute in Washington, United States. "*Our focus is firmly on creating economic growth, employment and making the most of the digital age. It will provide opportunities for trade, investment, innovation – not only for Europe, but globally – also for the United States,*" **Ansip** will say. "*Europe's future DSM will provide equal conditions where all companies offering their goods or services in the EU are subject to the same rules*", he will add. "*This will guarantee legal certainty and is ultimately good for investments and business, whichever country they come from. We want to encourage companies, whether European or not, to develop, invest and make the most out of our massive marketplace*", **Ansip** will affirm. The full speech will be available online at 16.30pm CET.

Announcements

Commissioner Vella in Piraeus, Greece for European Maritime Day 2015

European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries is participating in the European Maritime Day 2015 taking place between 28 and 31 May 2015 in Piraeus, Greece. The event will bring together Europe's maritime community around the theme of ports and coasts as engines for Blue Growth. The conference will focus especially on innovation, cooperation, skills and qualifications for the maritime economy as well as on the available opportunities for private investment and public funding. Commissioner **Vella**, said: "*European Maritime Day is the forum for novel ideas and opportunities in the maritime sector. This year, Piraeus, the largest seaport in the Mediterranean, brings us together to celebrate the enormous potential that the seas and oceans offer to Europe to build sustainable blue growth and create blue jobs*". The conference will be [web-streamed](#) and press material is available [here](#).

Visa waiver agreements signature with 8 Caribbean and Pacific States

Today Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos** and H.E. Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Parliamentary State Secretary for EU Affairs of Latvia will sign, on behalf of the European Union, reciprocal short-stay visa waiver agreements with 7 countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa and Vanuatu. An equivalent agreement was already signed with Timor-Leste on 26 May 2015. These agreements will be provisionally applied as from today until their final ratification, therefore citizens of those countries will be able to travel already now without a visa to the EU for stays of up to 90 days (within any 180-day period). The same applies to EU citizens travelling to those countries. The exemption from the visa requirement for nationals of those countries was proposed by the Commission in 2012. The visa waiver does not apply to the United Kingdom and Ireland which are not part of the Schengen area

Vice-President Dombrovskis on European Semester visit to Croatia

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, will visit Croatia on 29 May to discuss **European Semester** of economic policy coordination and reforms underway in the country. The Vice-President will meet the President of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović; the Prime Minister, Mr Zoran Milanović; the Governor of the Croatian National Bank, Mr Boris Vujčić; and Cabinet Members. He will also address the Parliament and have a meeting with social partners. The Vice-President is visiting Member States as part of the Commission's outreach on the European Semester. It takes place on the basis of the **country-specific policy recommendations** published by the Commission in May. During these visits, the Vice-President engages national authorities and social partners in a constructive discussion on the issues raised in the recommendations. After Croatia, the Vice-President's next country visits will be to Hungary on 4 June and Slovenia on 5 June.

MEX/15/5066



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

