

 TODAY'S
News

Friday, 29 May, 2015

Click on [blue](#) link to view full Press**EU- Japan Summit in Tokyo**

The 23rd bilateral summit between the European Union and Japan is taking place today in Tokyo, Japan. European Commission President **Juncker**, European Council President **Tusk** and Japanese Prime Minister **Abe** will hold a press conference at 19:30 (12:30 CET), their joint statement will be available [here](#). The ongoing negotiations for a strategic partnership agreement and a free trade agreement are on the Agenda of today's Summit. Speaking at the Keidanren, Japan's main industry federation, Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström**, in Tokyo to discuss these negotiations, said: "*We believe that if this deal is worth doing, it's worth doing right. We have to be ambitious on the substance as well as on the timing*" (see [speech](#) and [photos](#)). The EU and Japan are not only joining forces on trade, but also on the front of technology, research and innovation, with a new 5G agreement to cope with the increasing need for wireless Internet and complement current efforts to create a [Digital Single Market](#) in Europe. The agreement will allow to work towards a common understanding and standards of 5G, identify new harmonised radio band frequencies for 5G spectrum and cooperate on future 5G applications in areas like [connected cars](#) or [e-health](#). In parallel, the EU and Japan have also agreed to deepen their cooperation on Research and Innovation (R&I). The agreement will build on the strong research ties in areas like ICT and aeronautics and strengthen collaborations in health and medical research, environment, energy and physics. The partners will also set up a joint funding mechanism that will make it easier to finance common R&I projects and collaborate more closely on policy aspects, like Open Science. The EU has also signed an agreement to stimulate scientific exchanges between its European Research Centre (ERC) and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) ([IP/15/5069](#)).

Syrian refugee crisis: EU Trust Fund provides €40 million

Today, the new EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis, held its first board meeting and adopted European response programmes for € 40 million. It will provide aid to 400,000 Syrian refugees and host communities in need in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, focusing on education, livelihoods and food security targeting especially children and young people. Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission said: "*This Trust Fund is another illustration of the EU's commitment to help the victims of this crisis of unprecedented magnitude in Syria and the neighbouring countries.*" Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn** stated: "*The EU Trust Fund is a new and innovative way of pooling our*

resources into one single and flexible mechanism with high European visibility responding together to this unprecedented crisis in our southern neighbourhood." A press release is available [online](#).

Eurobarometer: Nine out of 10 Europeans want EU to keep giving humanitarian aid

Public support for the European Union's humanitarian aid has gone up in spite of the economic crisis, shows the latest [Eurobarometer](#) survey on humanitarian aid. Nine out of 10 citizens (90%) believe it is important for the EU to continue funding humanitarian aid, a rise of two percentage points since the previous survey in 2012. *"The solidarity of Europeans gives hope to hundreds of millions of people around the world who need aid for their very survival amidst conflicts, displacement or natural disasters. I am proud of the strong support of our citizens for Europe's humanitarian work: it drives our Union to keep being a force for good in this increasingly complex world,"* said Christos **Stylianides**, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management. Read the [press release](#).

Ahead of World No Tobacco Day on Sunday 31 May, the Commission publishes today a Eurobarometer on Europeans' attitudes towards tobacco

The survey reveals a downward trend in tobacco use across Europe. The overall reduction compared with 2012 is 2 percentage points (26% vs. 28%). The age category that saw the biggest drop (4 percentage points) was young people aged 15 to 24 (25% vs 29%). There are still notable variations in tobacco consumption with lowest rates seen in Sweden (11%) and Finland (19%) and the highest in Greece (38%) and Bulgaria (35%). Regarding quitting attempts, a majority of smokers have tried to quit (59%), with 19% having tried in the past 12 months. Regarding e-cigarettes, 12% of Europeans have now tried them, compared with 7% in 2012. 67% said they tried them to reduce or quit smoking. However, only 14% of e-cigarette users were able to stop smoking, indicating that they are not particularly effective as a quitting tool. A figure highlighted by Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, is that the average age that Europeans start smoking remains unchanged at **17.6 years**. *"Figures show that the fight against tobacco is not won, particularly amongst the young. It is unacceptable that Europeans continue to be attracted to smoking when they are teenagers. A central aim of the Tobacco Products Directive is to ensure that these dangerous products are not unduly attractive to the young. That is why it bans flavours that mask the harsh taste of tobacco as well as slim packs and packs with less than 20 cigarettes, and makes picture and text health warnings covering 65% of pack mandatory"* said the EU Health Commissioner, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**. Read the [press release](#).

EU and Malawi sign aid programme worth €560 million

[Today](#) the European Union and the government of [Malawi](#) signed an agreement for future cooperation amounting to €560 million. The so-called National Indicative Programme (NIP), financed from the [11th European Development Fund](#), which is the main financial instrument of the EU for development cooperation with the [African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries \(ACP\)](#), will cover the period until 2020. EU-Malawi cooperation will focus on three main sectors: governance, sustainable agriculture, secondary education and vocational training. Commissioner for International Development and Cooperation, Neven **Mimica**, commented: *"This signing is another milestone and an important step forward in the strong partnership between the EU and Malawi. We will continue working closely with the Malawian government, the private sector and civil society to strengthen the country's capacities and long term development. The substantial EU funding combined with necessary reforms and political dialogue will help Malawi to move towards sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction."*

Free movement: new Commission report on mobility of Croatian workers

Today the European Commission has published a report on transitional arrangements on free movement for Croatian workers. It concludes that future potential flows of Croatian workers to other EU Member States are likely to be small and unlikely to lead to labour market disturbances. This report is the basis for a review of the transitional arrangements by the Council. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen commented: *"Mobility can be an opportunity both for workers and the host economies. This has been shown by previous enlargements. The Commission is fully committed to*

facilitating labour mobility, while ensuring it is fair for all". More information is available in the [IP](#) and [factsheet](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Hypo Alpe Adria's Southeast Europe banking network by Advent

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of the Southeast Europe banking network of Hypo Group Alpe Adria AG of Austria (HGAA Southeast Europe banking network) by Advent International Corporation of the United States (Advent). The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will take a minority stake. The transaction is the result of Austria's commitment to sell HGAA's Southeast Europe banking network by 30 June 2015 in order to secure the [Commission's approval of HGAA's resolution plan](#). Advent is a private equity investor active in various sectors and countries, including financial services. HGAA's Southeast Europe banking network provides standard banking services to retail, corporate and public customers and is also active in the leasing business in Slovenia and Croatia. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, given the minor overlaps between the companies' activities in the European Economic Area (EEA). The transaction was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#), in the public case register under the case number [M.7551](#).

Mergers: Commission approves joint control of Corin by IDeA, IP and Hunt

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Corin Group PLC ("Corin") of the UK by IDeA Capital Funds SGR S.p.A. (IDeA), IP Investimenti e Partecipazioni S.r.l. ("IP"), both of Italy, and Hunt Capital S.A. ("Hunt") of Luxembourg. IDeA, IP and Hunt are all investment companies, involved in several industries. Corin produces orthopaedic devices and other ancillary medical 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.7611](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič takes the Energy Union Tour to Lower Saxony, Germany and Netherlands, 29 May 2015

Maroš Šefčovič will be travelling to Lower Saxony, Germany and Netherlands, within the framework of the ["Energy Union Tour"](#) to discuss the opportunities of the Energy Union and regional energy cooperation. He will meet with Lower Saxony's Environment Minister, Stefan Wenzel, and regional Ministers: Nienke Homan (Province of Groningen), Tjisse Stelpstra (Province of Drenthe), Michiel Schrier (Province of Fryslân) and King's Commissioner, Max van den Berg. The Vice-President will visit the energy research centre of Oldenburg University ('Next Energy') and the Energy Academy Europe at Zernike University. Finally, he will meet and discuss with local decision makers and entrepreneurs. Moreover, Vice-President will visit a Power to Gas facility (BioLNG from waste production facility), the Regional Green Gas Hub in Atterro, an electric power transformation substation (TenneT), a wind energy manufacturer (Enercon). Vice-President Šefčovič said: *"The creation of an Internal Energy Market passes through cross-border cooperation. That makes regional energy projects extremely important for the success of the Energy Union"*.

Commission today holds public hearing on derivatives regulation ('EMIR')

As part of its review of the EU [regulation](#) on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories ('EMIR'), the European Commission is holding a public hearing today in Brussels (see [IP/15/5014](#)). The hearing was opened this morning by Jonathan **Hill**, EU Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (speech will be available online). The conference focuses on several issues that include: requirements for central counterparties and non-financial corporate counterparties; clearing and risk mitigation requirements; and trade repositories and trade reporting requirements. Several representatives from trade associations, infrastructures and regulatory bodies are expected to attend. The programme can be found [here](#). The conference is also web streamed [here](#).

MEX/15/5077



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

