


 TODAY'S
 News

Monday, 15 June, 2015

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Investment Plan for Europe: Slovakia to contribute €400 million

Today Slovakia announced that it will contribute €400 million to projects benefiting from finance by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), at the heart of the €315 billion [Investment Plan for Europe](#). Slovakia is the seventh country to contribute to the Plan, before the EFSI becomes operational, after Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Poland. The contribution will come via Slovenský Investičný Holding and Slovenská Záručná a Rozvojová Banka, Slovakia's National Promotional Banks. Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, was in Bratislava as part of the Investment Plan roadshow and received the news in person from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Peter Kazimir. Vice-President **Katainen** said: *"I am very glad to be here in Bratislava for the announcement that Slovakia will contribute to the Investment Plan. Less than seven months after the Investment Plan got underway I now look forward to seeing the concrete results in the coming weeks – as I know our European citizens do as well."* Vice-President Maroš **Šefčovič**, responsible for Energy Union said: *"I welcome the decision of the Slovak Government to announce the contribution to the Investment Plan for Europe at the level of projects. Slovakia has the stable environment to invest: the Investment Plan brings great opportunities to businesses and public-private partnerships, notably in the fields of energy efficiency and infrastructure, be it energy, transport or digital"*.

European Commission delivers on European Agenda on Security

Today, the Commission moves ahead on its priority under the [European Agenda on Security](#) to prevent and combat terrorism. It adopted two proposals for Council Decisions authorising the Commission to sign, on behalf of the European Union, the [Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism](#), as well as the [Additional Protocol to the Convention](#). The adoption of the Additional Protocol is an important step towards strengthening the European response to terrorism and more specifically the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters. The Commission takes the Protocol full into account when launching an impact assessment of the 2008 [Council Framework Decision on combating terrorism](#) later this year, as announced in the [European Agenda on Security](#), with a view to updating it in 2016. The Protocol implements certain provisions of the [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178\(2014\)](#) on foreign terrorist fighters, such as the criminalisation of traveling to third countries for terrorist purposes (e.g. for the purpose of receiving terrorist training), participating in the activities of a terrorist group and receiving training for terrorist purposes. The provisions require all signatory parties to designate permanent contact points facilitating swift information exchange on those suspected of traveling abroad for terrorist purposes. So far, the EU has not

signed the Convention nor its Additional Protocol, though it has implemented some of its provisions in the 2008 Framework Decision on Terrorism. As the Protocol is supplementary to the Convention, the Commission wants to sign both simultaneously, and hopes that both proposed Council Decisions can be adopted swiftly, paving the way for the implementation of the relevant provisions.

Energy Infrastructure: Commission, France, Portugal and Spain boost regional cooperation to break energy barriers

Building missing cross-border links between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the EU energy market is a priority for the European Commission. Today we are setting a High Level Group to make that priority a reality. Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias **Cañete** said: *"Energy must flow freely across Europe. This will bring benefits to European consumers, strengthen our industry's competitiveness and set the conditions for new and much-needed jobs. It will also enable a better use access to the markets of renewable energy. The setting up of the High Level Group, which follows on the Madrid Interconnections Summit on 4 March, sets the course to achieve the integration of the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of the EU energy market. This time it's different and we will make it happen."* The Memorandum of Understanding for the South-West Regional group creating the High Level Group was signed today in Luxembourg. This Group will prepare a plan to implement the [Madrid Declaration on energy interconnections](#), signed on 4 March 2015 by Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker**, President of France François Hollande, President of the Government of Spain Mariano Rajoy and the Prime Minister of Portugal, Pedro Passos Coelho. The work of this group is central to ensuring that complete the work on the missing interconnections that are needed to meet the objective of 10% electricity interconnection target by 2020 which is part and parcel of the Energy Union priority of the Juncker Commission. You will find the [Energy Union and Interconnection Communication](#) on the central website of the Commission. The full press release is available [online](#).

Commissioners Avramopoulos and Jourová participate in Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg, 15-16 June

Meeting in Luxembourg today, EU Justice Ministers are expected to reach an agreement regarding the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on Data protection and on the Commission's proposal for a Regulation regarding the simplification of the acceptance of public documents. Ministers are also expected to reach an agreement on aspects of the Commission's proposal for the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). Over a working lunch, Ministers will discuss justice aspects of the Digital Single Market, notably the modernisation of contract and consumer rules for e-commerce. Home Affairs Ministers meeting tomorrow will discuss the European Agenda on Migration, as recently proposed by the European Commission, with a lunch debate on return policy. They will also discuss Schengen governance, the European Agenda on Security and the fight against terrorism.

State aid: Commission approves € 3 billion aid scheme in Germany to support high speed internet roll-out

The European Commission has found that the main elements of Germany's proposal for a national support scheme for the roll out of next generation access (NGA) broadband networks are in line with EU state aid rules. The €3 billion scheme aims at providing high speed internet access throughout the country, including in rural areas. This will favour economic, social and cultural integration. The Commission concluded that overall the scheme furthers the objectives of the EU Digital Strategy whilst maintaining competition in the Single Market. EU Commissioner in charge of competition policy Margrethe **Vestager** said: *"This aid scheme will make faster broadband services available also in areas of Germany where private investment is lacking. At the same time it ensures that consumers have a choice. It also shows that EU state aid rules enable Member States to work with the Commission to stimulate investment in infrastructure to create a true Digital Single Market."* The press release is available in [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of VDM Metals Group by Lindsay Goldberg

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of VDM Metals Group, currently controlled by ThyssenKrupp AG of Germany, by the private equity firm Lindsay Goldberg of the United States. VDM Metals Group, formed of several companies, produces, sells and trades high performance alloys, in particular nickel and titanium alloys. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because there are no overlaps between the companies' 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.7635](#)

EUROSTAT: In 2014, CO2 emissions in the EU estimated to have decreased by 5% compared with 2013

Eurostat estimates that in 2014 carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fossil fuel combustion decreased by 5.0% in the European Union, compared with the previous year. CO₂ emissions are a major contributor to global warming and account for around 80% of all EU greenhouse gas emissions. They are influenced by factors such as climate conditions, economic growth, size of the population, transport and industrial activities. Various EU energy efficiency initiatives aim to reduce emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. It should also be noted that imports and exports of energy products have an impact on CO₂ emissions in the country where fossil fuels are burned: for example if coal is imported this leads to an increase in emissions, while if electricity is imported, it has no direct effect on emissions in the importing country, as these would be reported in the exporting country where it is produced. The Eurostat press release can be found [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Euro area international trade in goods surplus €24.9 billion

The first estimate for euro area (EA19) exports of goods to the rest of the world in April 2015 was €173.6 billion, an increase of 9% compared with April 2014 (€159.6 billion). Imports from the rest of the world stood at €148.7 billion, a rise of 3% compared with April 2014 (€144.7 billion). As a result, the euro area recorded a €24.9 billion surplus in trade in goods with the rest of the world in April 2015, compared with +€14.9 in April 2014. Intra-euro area trade rose to €141.0 billion in April 2015, up by 2% compared with April 2014. The Eurostat press release can be found [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Investment Plan roadshow arrives in Slovakia and Austria

Today, Vice-President **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, and Vice-President **Šefčovič**, responsible for the Energy Union, are in Slovakia to present the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). During their visit to Bratislava, the Vice-Presidents will meet government leaders, investors, small business owners and members of the national parliament to discuss how the European Fund for Strategic Investments can help boost investment in Slovakia. Vice-President **Šefčovič** will also meet with representatives of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry from the Bratislava region to discuss the [Energy Union](#) strategy. On Tuesday, Vice-President **Katainen** will travel the few miles to Vienna to continue the roadshow where he will make a speech at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. Austria will be the 24th Member State that Vice-President **Katainen** has visited since December, with the UK, Malta, Slovenia and Lithuania still to come. Vice-President **Katainen** said: *"I look forward to discussing with government leaders, investors and project promoters how to make the most of the Investment Plan and in particular, how Slovakia and Austria can develop cross-border projects"*. Vice-President **Šefčovič** said: *"The Investment Plan brings great opportunities to Slovakia, notably in the fields of energy efficiency and infrastructure, be it energy, transport or digital"*.

Commissioner Hill is in Ireland to discuss ways forward for a single market of capital

Jonathan **Hill**, Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union is visiting Dublin on 15 June. He will meet Michael Noonan, Minister for Finance and Simon Harris, Minister of State responsible for International Banking. He also has a meeting with Patrick Honohan, Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland. The main focus of discussions will be the action plan which the Commission plans to put forward this autumn in order to develop a Capital Markets Union for all 28 EU Member States (see [SPEECH/15/5137](#)). In the afternoon, Commissioner **Hill** will have an informal meeting with the [Oireachtas Joint Committee](#) on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform. During his visit, he will also give a speech at a [conference](#) organised by the Federation of International Banks in Ireland (FIBI) and he will address the [Institute of International and European affairs](#).

Commissioner Crețu in Bulgaria on 15 and 16 June

Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** is in Bulgaria today and tomorrow. She is meeting Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and Deputy Prime Minister Tomislav Donchev. On 16 June she will participate in a Roundtable with the Ministers responsible for the shared management of EU funds. Discussions will focus on the implementation of the 2014-2020 Operational Programmes, with a particular attention to the use of financial instruments and key steps to ensure a smooth completion of the 2007-2013 projects. *"Cohesion Policy investments are vital for the growth, competitiveness and sustainability of the Bulgarian economy. The new programmes for 2014-2020 are performance-guided and target investments where they are the most needed. They offer real opportunities to improve the quality of the Bulgarian people's everyday life"*, the Commissioner said ahead of her visit. Bulgaria will benefit from €7.6 billion from Cohesion Policy funds for 2014-2020. More information on [Cohesion Policy and Bulgaria](#) and on [Regional Policy](#) is available online.

Commissioner Moedas announces new support for innovation at Innovation Summit in Riga

Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moedas** are today attending the first day of the [Innovative Enterprise Week](#) in Riga. Opening the conference, Vice-President **Dombrovskis** delivered a speech on the role of the Eurozone in supporting innovation. Commissioner **Moedas** announced the launch of 4 new initiatives that will provide new financing and support for innovative start-ups in cooperation with the European Investment Fund (EIF) and European Investment Bank (EIB). The initiatives will provide a €100 million for innovation in the fields of health and energy respectively, and aim to generate up to €1.6 billion in venture funding for innovative SMEs. They will expand the range of existing tools under the InnovFin programme that the EIF already offers together with the European Commission and EIB. Welcoming the launch of the new tools, Commissioner **Moedas** said: *"Today, we're taking another step to help businesses invest in innovation and make them attractive to private investors. With backing from Horizon 2020, these new tools will focus on an important challenges like health and energy innovation; provide new funding for SMEs and set up an advisory facility for innovative companies. This will help kick-start hundreds of new businesses across Europe, benefitting our society and economy."*

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General public inquiries:



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



