



TODAYS  
News

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### Common understanding on a temporary solution for Halloumi/Hellim cheese pending the reunification of Cyprus

In a meeting between President Jean-Claude **Juncker** and the two leaders in Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades and Mustafa Akinci, a common understanding was reached on Halloumi in Greek and Hellim in Turkish. The announcement was made by President **Juncker** during his visit to Cyprus: *"I am happy to announce that we found a common understanding as far as the geographic protection of "Halloumi/Hellim" cheese under EU law is concerned. This common understanding is highly symbolic and it confirms the willingness of the two parties to work together with the help of the Commission to build confidence with concrete measures"*. It will be translated into the relevant legal texts in close cooperation with the two leaders. The full text of the common understanding can be found [here](#).

### Commission releases Task Force report on Germanwings incident

Today the Commission is publishing the [report](#) it received from a Task Force led by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on the crash of Germanwings Flight 9525. Set up in May 2015 at the request of EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc**, the Task Force analysed the preliminary findings of the investigation to assess the adequacy of European air safety and security rules. In its report, the Task Force issues six recommendations, which the Commission will now thoroughly examine before deciding on future steps. Commissioner Violeta **Bulc** said: *"The safety of European citizens is at the heart of the Commission's transport policy and today's report is a valuable contribution. If improvements are to be made in the European safety and security rules, we will take the necessary action at EU-level"*. Further details can be found in a press release available in [here](#). An [updated Q&A on air safety and security](#) is also available.

### Investment Plan for Europe: the United Kingdom will co-finance around €8.5 billion in EFSI projects

Yesterday, the UK announced that it will contribute £6 billion (about €8.5 billion) to projects benefiting from finance by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), which is at the heart of the €315 billion [Investment Plan for Europe](#). The co-financing pledge – the biggest yet by any country – was announced while Commission Vice-President **Katainen** was in the UK as part of the Investment Plan roadshow. The UK is the ninth country to contribute to the Plan after Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria, even before the EFSI becomes operational. Vice-President **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"I am delighted that the UK announced £6 billion – nearly €8.5 billion – of co-financing for the European Fund for Strategic*

*Investments projects. This is the biggest announcement yet and will have a huge impact on SMEs and infrastructure in the UK. The Investment Plan for Europe is moving into high gear."* The press release is available in [here](#).

### **EU boosts humanitarian aid for Sudan by €4 million**

The European Commission has announced additional humanitarian aid of €4 million for Sudan, bringing the total of the Commission's assistance to the country in 2015 to €32 million. The new funding follows an increase in refugees from neighbouring South Sudan and internally displaced persons in Sudan. *"The humanitarian situation in Sudan is getting worse each day. In Darfur and in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States 5.4 million people are in need of life saving aid. The increasing number of refugees from South Sudan makes the already fragile context even more difficult,"* said EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides**. A press release is available [here](#).

### **EU labour market developments report: job recovery gains strength**

Labour market developments have been improving against the background of a gradual economic recovery in the EU. Unemployment in the EU has continued to fall and job finding rates have modestly improved. However, despite its recent fall, unemployment remains high. The number of unemployed in the first quarter of 2015 was 23.6 million in the EU. The share of long-term unemployed is on the rise, standing at 4.9% in the first quarter of 2015. EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** commented: *"Long-term unemployment is one of our most pressing challenges. The longer people are out of work, the more difficult it gets for them to find a new job and the greater the risk of poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion. This is why I will propose a new initiative after the summer to offer more efficient support to people who have been out of jobs for more than 18 months"*. A press release is available in [here](#).

### **State aid: Commission approves over €750 million aid for gas pipelines in Poland**

The European Commission has found that Poland's plans to grant aid of PLN 3 131.5 million (€ 758 million) for nine gas projects in Poland are compatible with EU state aid rules. The projects will contribute to building a true Energy Union by increasing gas interconnection capacity between Poland and neighbouring countries, by eliminating bottlenecks and by reinforcing the existing Polish gas transmission network. The Commission found that the public funding for the nine projects further objectives of common interest, in compliance with EU state aid rules, in particular its [2014 Environmental Protection and Energy State Aid Guidelines](#). EU Commissioner in charge of competition policy Margrethe **Vestager** said: *"Today's approval of this significant public investment in Poland's gas pipelines is an example of how state aid rules can encourage sensible public spending. And contribute to building a real Energy Union. Interconnections enable energy flows between countries, improve cross-border connections and allow diversification of gas supply sources."* The press release is available online in [here](#).

### **Mergers: Commission partially refers Danish Crown / Tican merger to Denmark's competition authority; clears proposed merger outside Denmark**

The European Commission has partially referred the proposed merger between Danish Crown and Tican to the Danish Competition and Consumer Authority (DCCA) at its request. Both companies are Danish and are active in the operation of slaughterhouses and in meat processing. After a preliminary investigation, the Commission found that the proposed transaction would threaten to significantly affect competition in certain markets in Denmark. Those aspects will now be examined by the DCCA under national law. At the same time, the Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed transaction in the other affected Member States (i.e. Poland, Sweden and the UK), concluding that the proposed transaction would not significantly impede effective competition in the European Economic Area (EEA) outside Denmark given the low market shares of the parties in these markets. The press release is available online in [here](#). More information will be available on the [competition](#) website, in the Commission's public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7565](#).

## **EUROSTAT: Production in construction up by 0.3% in euro area**

In May 2015 compared with April 2015, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector rose by 0.3% in the euro area (EA19) and fell by 0.3% in the EU28, according to first estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In April 2015, production in construction dropped by 0.2% and 0.6% respectively. In May 2015 compared with May 2014, production in construction grew by 0.3% in the euro area and by 0.5% in the EU28. A press release can be found [here](#).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Commissioner Andriukaitis visits Lecce (Italy): 19-20 July**

Vytienis **Andriukaitis**, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety will bear witness to the devastating impact that the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* is having on olive groves in southern Italy when he travels to Lecce in Italy on 19-20 July. According to the [European Food Safety Authority](#), *Xylella fastidiosa* presents a major risk to the EU territory. No treatment is currently available to cure diseased plants in the field and, most often, plants that are contaminated remain infected throughout their life or collapse quickly. The Commission is committed and stands ready to support and cooperate with the Italian authorities. Whilst recognising that Italy has declared a state of emergency, nominated a special Commissioner to coordinate the national response and announced a series of measures to be taken, including allocating a budget of €13 million, the disease continues to spread. Most recently, the Municipality of Oria (where 52 infected olive trees have been felled), has been affected and more needs to be done to control and eradicate this harmful plant disease. The Commission remains committed to protect and preserve the majority of olive trees which are not yet infected. Compensation to owners of destroyed plants is currently being assessed under the EU Common Agricultural Policy, including the Rural Development Programme. EU Member States experts last met on 9 July to discuss the situation and Italy gave an update on the measures that it is putting in place to combat this disease. EU emergency measures have been in place since February 2014. The EU Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) has so far carried out three audits which confirm the rapid spread of the bacterium in Apulia and the need for the proper enforcement of EU law. Further information including a [map](#) marking out the affected zones and a [timeline](#) of EU actions taken to tackle *Xylella* can be found [here](#).

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

