



TODAYS
News

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New EU funding of €116.8 million to strengthen security sector and support socio-economic and regional development in Tunisia

The EU has adopted the first part of its annual assistance package in favour of Tunisia for a total amount of €116.8 million. It aims to strengthen the security sector and to support socio-economic and regional development. Since 2011, the EU has continuously supported Tunisia in its democratic transition and has extensively increased its financial assistance to the country. Following the recent terrorist attacks in Tunis (March) and in Sousse (June), the EU is even more determined to intensify its support to Tunisia. The political will of the EU to further strengthen relations with Tunisia was clearly expressed in the [March European Council Declaration](#) and the [July Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions](#). In the past months, several EU high level political visits and meetings took place including the recent visit of Tunisian Prime Minister **Essid** to Brussels and his meeting with President **Juncker**, as well as the visits of High Representative / Vice-President **Mogherini**, European Council President **Tusk** and Commissioner **Hahn** to Tunis. A press release is available [here](#).

EU provides humanitarian support to former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for migrants and asylum seekers

The European Union is providing €90,656 in humanitarian funding to help cope with migratory pressures in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The support will be channelled through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to help the national Red Cross Society assist some 4,600 people over the next three months. Assistance will primarily go to the Reception Centre for asylum seekers in the capital Skopje and at the main train stations at the southern and northern borders of the country. Aid will cover essential basic needs such as primary health care services, water delivery, food, hygiene kits, blankets, clothing, shoes and baby care products.

Information about latest TTIP round available

The Commission today [made public the](#) report on the 10th round of negotiations for a [Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership \(TTIP\)](#), which took place from 13-17 July 2015 in Brussels. The text is now available online. This publication is part of the Commission's transparency initiative and in line with the commitment to publish more information about the negotiations, along with legal proposals, position papers and other material. [Other new documents](#) released today include a paper for cooperation on textiles, as well

as the EU offer on services, investment and e-commerce tabled during the last round of negotiations, and a document on customs measures regarding intellectual property rights. *See also* [Top 10 mythes](#).

Spanish bean seed, Belgian potato, and French artichoke receive Commission protected status

The Commission has today approved the addition of one new product to the register of Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and two new products to the register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). For Spain, 'Fesols de Santa Pau' (PDO) are the seeds of the following traditional varieties of bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.): Tavella Brisa, Setsetmanera and Gra Petit; dried or cooked and preserved. For Belgium, 'Plate de Florenville' (PGI) is a potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) of the old French variety 'Rosa' - this late to semi-late variety has a very long dormancy and its cultivation requires on average 120 days in the ground. For France, 'Artichaut du Roussillon' (PGI) is an artichoke of the genus *Cynara*, belonging to the Asteraceae family; it comprises the following varieties: Blanc hyérois (also known as Macau), Calico, Pop Vert, Salambo and Violet VP 45. These three 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.

Facilitating e-commerce in the EU: a key initiative to boost the retail sector

The High Level Group on [Retail Competitiveness](#) has presented [recommendations](#) to the Commission on how to improve the competitiveness of the EU retail sector by removing barriers to a Single Market for retail services, supporting the development of e-commerce, helping SMEs to grow, promoting innovation and addressing working environment issues. The report shows that e-commerce has an impact on all the main areas identified and that the internal market in retail needs strengthening. E-commerce offers enormous untapped opportunities for the retail sector. Facilitating e-commerce and increasing confidence of businesses and consumers is an area of focus of the Commission's [Digital Single Market Strategy](#) adopted in May and a [public consultation](#) has been launched to gather views on contract rules for online purchases. The Group also reflects on the role that e-commerce platforms may play as gatekeepers, potentially restricting access of SMEs to the market. The related issues of business-to-business commercial relations will also be dealt with by the consultation on platforms foreseen in the Digital Single Market Strategy. Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for Internal Market and Industry, said "*Retail plays a key role in the economy. I thank the High Level Group for its recommendations on how to improve the competitiveness of this important sector. By boosting e-commerce as part of our Digital Single Market Strategy and further strengthening the Single Market with a strategy to be presented in October, my colleagues and I aim to provide the best framework for retail to continue to develop and create jobs and growth in Europe.*"

State aid: Commission opens in-depth investigations into Romanian measures in favour of two airports and airlines

The European Commission has opened two separate in-depth investigations to examine if measures in favour of two publicly-owned airports in Transylvania, Romania (Cluj-Napoca International Airport and Târgu Mureş Transilvania Airport) and airlines operating there (notably Wizz Air) are in line with EU State aid rules. The investigations concern in particular marketing fees paid to Wizz Air by Cluj-Napoca International Airport and low airport charges offered by Târgu Mureş Transilvania Airport to airlines operating there. Furthermore, the Commission will also investigate subsidies by local authorities to the airports themselves. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager** in charge of competition policy commented: "*There is intense pan-European competition in the aviation sector. Therefore, the Commission must ensure that airport charges and other conditions offered by public regional airports to attract airlines do not distort the level playing field in the market. Our investigations will show if the Romanian measures in favour of the two airports and airlines are in line with EU state aid rules*". A press release is available in [here](#).

State aid: Commission approves Irish state aid schemes for regional airports

The European Commission has found two Irish support schemes for regional airports to be in line with [EU rules on state aid for airports and airlines](#). In particular, the schemes will improve regional connectivity and the mobility of EU citizens, in line with common EU transport objectives, whilst maintaining competition in the Single Market. The schemes will run until 2019 with a provisional budget of €32.5 million and €10 million respectively. Four Irish regional airports (Donegal, Waterford, Kerry and Ireland West Airport Knock) will be eligible for receiving public financing on investments in airport infrastructure, ground handling infrastructure (such as baggage belts, etc.) and airport equipment. Waterford and Kerry airports will also be eligible for operating aid to cover part of the management costs related to the operation of the airport such as repairs and maintenance, insurance, light and heating, flight checking services or baggage handling. The decision also provides further guidance to Member States how the Commission applies the [2014 Aviation Guidelines](#). The non-confidential version of the decisions will be made available under the case number SA.39757, in the [State Aid Register](#) on the [DG Competition](#) website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

Antitrust: Commission closes antitrust proceedings against a number of cement manufacturers

The European Commission has decided to close an antitrust investigation [opened in December 2010](#) against a number of European manufacturers of cement. The Commission had indications suggesting possible import/export restrictions, market sharing, price coordination and information exchanges in the markets for cement and related products. Inspections were carried out in [November 2008](#) and [September 2009](#). The evidence obtained in the Commission's investigation was not sufficiently conclusive to confirm these initial concerns. The Commission will continue to monitor closely developments in the European cement markets.

Spring 2015 Standard Eurobarometer: Citizens see immigration as top challenge for EU to tackle

More Europeans say they have a positive image of the European Union and trust in the EU has gone up since last November. In addition, citizens see immigration as the major challenge facing the EU currently. With 38% (+14 points) it is now way ahead of the economic situation (27%, -6 points), unemployment (24%, -5 points) and the Member States public finances (23%, -2 points). It is the number one most frequently cited concern in 20 Member States reaching peaks in Malta (65%) and Germany (55%). These are some of the results of the latest Standard Eurobarometer survey published today. A press release is available [here](#). The 'First results report' is available [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Euro area unemployment rate at 11.1%

The euro area (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 11.1% in June 2015, stable compared with May 2015, and down from 11.6% in June 2014. The EU28 unemployment rate was 9.6% in June 2015, also stable compared with May 2015 and down from 10.2% in June 2014. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Commenting on the figures, Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility said: *"The Commission is working to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, stimulate investment and create jobs. The €315 billion Investment Plan can create millions of new jobs – not least for young people. But even when new jobs are created it is often very difficult for young people to successfully enter the job market. This is why, as one of our first priorities, we supported the Member States, already in May this year, with €1 billion in pre-financing from the Youth Employment Initiative to accelerate support measures on the ground. The funding is expected to reach up to 650,000 young people this year already. Another group facing particular difficulties are those people who have been unemployed for a longer time. This is why I will propose a new initiative after the summer to offer more efficient support to long-term unemployed"*. A press release is available [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Euro area annual inflation stable at 0.2%

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 0.2% in July 2015, stable compared with June 2015, according to a flash estimate from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Looking at the main components of euro area inflation, services is expected to have the highest annual rate in July (1.2%, compared with 1.1% in June), followed by food, alcohol & tobacco (0.9%, compared with 1.1% in June), non-energy industrial goods (0.5%, compared with 0.3% in June) and energy (-5.6%, compared with -5.1% in June). A press release is available [here](#).

STATEMENTS

Joint Statement of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner Věra Jourová on the occasion of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day

Ahead of Roma Holocaust Memorial Day on Sunday 2 August, First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** and Commissioner Věra **Jourová** have issued a joint statement: *"On 2 August 1944, around 3000 Roma women, children and elderly people were murdered in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were among hundreds of thousands of victims of the Roma genocide, and they suffered together with others who were persecuted under the Nazi regime. It is for these victims that today the European Commission marks Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. The genocide committed against the Roma by the Nazis must never be forgotten. Still today, too few Europeans know about this tragic episode of our past. And as events are fading in people's memory, we must be united in remembering those who fell victim to these heinous crimes. We owe this especially to our younger generations who are building the Europe of tomorrow – a Europe that is better and stronger. As Europeans, we have a joint responsibility to ensure that the atrocities of the past are recognised and lessons are learnt. History can never be allowed to repeat itself. Tolerance and respect must be the basis of our societies today and in the future."* Read the full statement [here](#).

Summer Recess: This is the last edition of Daily News until September.

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

