



TODAYS  
News

Friday, 09 October, 2015

Click on [blue](#) link to view full Press

### **Data protection package on track: Commission proposal on new data protection rules in law enforcement area backed by Justice Ministers**

Today, Ministers in the Justice Council have sealed an overall agreement on the EU's Data Protection Directive for the police and criminal justice sector. Following the agreement reached in June 2015 on the Regulation (see [IP/15/5176](#)), today's agreement means the EU is fully on track to finalise its data protection reform by the end of this year, as called for by the European Council. Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** welcomed today's agreement: *"The right to personal data protection is a fundamental right in the EU. Victims and witnesses, but also suspects of crimes have the right to have their data duly protected in the context of a criminal investigation or a law enforcement action. The common rules and principles agreed upon today will ensure that. At the same time more harmonised laws will also make it easier for police or prosecutors to work together in cross-border investigations and to combat crime and terrorism more effectively across Europe."* The Data Protection Police Directive is a key contribution to the objectives set out in the EU's [Agenda on Security](#). More information available in the [press release](#) and a press conference will be live streamed via [EbS](#) at 15:00.

### **Employment and social situation in the EU: labour market shows positive signs of improvement for older workers and youth**

Labour markets and social indicators in the EU continue to gradually improve, benefitting from the strengthening in economic activity, according to the September 2015 edition of the [Quarterly Employment and Social Situation Review](#). GDP grew by 0.4% in the EU during the second quarter of 2015 compared to the first quarter and by 1.9% between the second quarter of 2014 and the second quarter of 2015. The number of people employed continues to increase overall, with employment rates increasing for all population groups, including notably for older and young workers. Marianne **Thyssen**, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility commented: *"The recent improvements observed in employment are encouraging, in particular for workers aged over 55 and long-term unemployed. These groups often encounter greater difficulties to come back to the labour market and need particular attention. Last month I proposed to strengthen the support given to the 12 million long-term unemployed in Europe. I am optimistic that the Council will agree on our proposal which can contribute to further improvements in employment rates of long-term unemployed before the end of the year"*. A press release is available in [here](#).

## **Commissioner Moedas promotes new EU "Science4Refugees" initiative at G7 Science Ministers' meeting in Berlin**

Today, Commissioner Carlos **Moedas**, responsible for Research, Science and Innovation is taking part in a high-level meeting of G7 countries' Science Ministers in Berlin to discuss the contribution of science to solving pressing global challenges. Following the G7 Summit Declaration adopted this June, the topics discussed will address strengthening global research efforts on poverty related neglected diseases; improving global research and digital infrastructures; ocean-related research activities and developments in clean energy. Commissioner **Moedas** will also use this occasion to present to Ministers the new EU "[Science4Refugees](#)" initiative launched earlier this week to help asylum-seeking and refugee scientists and researchers in Europe. The initiative will allow universities and other scientific institutions to voluntarily declare themselves as "refugee-welcoming organisations" and promote potential positions, internships, training courses or other actions available to asylum-seekers and refugees through EU's online [EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion](#) portal. More information about the "Science4Refugees" initiative is available [here](#).

## **Commission adopts specifications for health warnings on cigarette packages**

An implementing act adopted today by the European Commission lays out specifications for the new combined health warnings on packages of tobacco products for smoking (in particular cigarettes and roll-your-own tobacco), which are required under the [Tobacco Products Directive\(2014/40/EU\)](#). As stipulated in the Directive, the new health warnings will comprise a colour photograph, a text warning on the harmful effects of smoking and smoking cessation information. These should collectively cover 65% of the front and back of packages, in accordance with the aforementioned Directive. The implementing decision adopted today provides for technical specifications for the layout, design and shape of the combined health warnings taking into account different packet shapes. See a mock-up on a standard cigarette package [here](#). These new health warnings will appear on packages across the EU from May 2016. More information on EU tobacco policy can be found [here](#).

## **Commission advocates smarter urban mobility to combat climate change and boost Europe's economy**

Today Vice-President Maroš **Šefčovič**, responsible for the Energy Union, and Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, join Transport Commissioner Violeta **Bulc** in Ljubljana to participate in the forum of [CIVITAS](#), a network of 240 European cities. Together they will reiterate the Commission's commitment to smart and sustainable urban mobility, in line with President **Juncker's** [remark](#) that the fight against climate change will be won or lost in cities. Commissioner **Bulc** and Vice-President **Šefčovič** will notably host an event on decarbonisation, focusing on electrification and digitalisation of urban transport. Vice-President **Katainen** will present how the new European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the Commission's [Investment Plan](#), can financially support innovative urban mobility projects. Commissioner **Bulc** said: *"The EU will only reach its decarbonisation objectives by enabling a shift towards sustainable urban mobility. Yet smart and innovative solutions also have the potential of creating thousands of jobs and boosting growth. My presence today, along with two Vice-Presidents, illustrates the Commission's willingness to work across the areas and to pool all efforts to reach this objective. I invite all cities to join us in this"*.

## **Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of joint control over Koninklijke Ten Cate by equity funds Gilde Fund IV and Parcom Fund IV**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Koninklijke Ten Cate by Gilde Fund IV and Parcom Fund IV, all of the Netherlands. Koninklijke Ten Cate is a supplier of advanced textiles and composites, geosynthetics and artificial grass. Both Gilde Fund IV and Parcom Fund IV are private equity funds investing mainly in medium-sized companies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, in particular because there are no overlaps between the activities of Gilde Fund IV and Parcom Fund IV and their portfolio companies, on the one hand, and those of Koninklijke Ten Cate N.V. on the other hand. 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.7769](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of VTTI by Vitol**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of VTTI by Vitol, both of the Netherlands. VTTI owns and operates storage terminals for oil products worldwide and a bitumen processing facility in Antwerp (Belgium). Vitol trades commodities and financial instruments relating, in particular, to the oil and gas sector. The companies' activities overlap in the provision of oil products storage terminals and the production of refined products, in particular bitumen. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the companies' moderate combined market positions and the presence of a number of strong players providing storage terminal facilities for oil products and producing bitumen. 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.7770](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of GE's European vehicle fleet leasing business by BNP Paribas**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of the European vehicle fleet leasing business of General Electric Capital Corporation ("GE") of the United States by Arval Service Lease SA, a subsidiary of BNP Paribas SA of France. This transaction consists of the sale of several companies owned by GE which offer fleet leasing services in several European countries. Arval Service Lease also offers vehicle fleet leasing and management services in Europe. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of its limited impact on the market structure. 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.7715](#).

### **State aid: Commission approves UK pricing methodology for nuclear waste transfer contracts**

The European Commission has found that the pricing methodology for waste transfer contracts to be concluded between the UK Government and operators of new nuclear power plants is compatible with EU state aid rules. This methodology establishes the price that operators of new nuclear plants in the UK will have to pay for the underground disposal of their spent fuel and intermediate level waste in a planned UK geological disposal site. It aims at ensuring that it will be the nuclear power operators – and not taxpayers – who bear the cost of disposing their nuclear waste and that they set aside sufficient funds to cover their future liabilities. Under the EU Treaty each Member State is free to determine its energy mix. The Commission's role is to ensure that when public funds are used to support companies, this is done in line with EU state aid rules, which aim to preserve competition in the Single Market. A full press release is available online in [EN](#).

### **Eurostat regional yearbook 2015: A statistical portrait of the EU across the regional spectrum**

The [regional yearbook](#), published every year by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, provides an overview of European regional statistics covering a wide range of fields. It is thus a helpful tool to understand the regional diversity that exists within the EU. Commenting on the yearbook, Marianne **Thyssen**, responsible for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility said: *"Despite economic recovery and signs of improvements in the EU labour market, the employment situation varies between the EU Member States. We can observe the same pattern at regional level with wide disparities in employment rates between regions at national level. Through the European Social fund we are supporting regional development, promoting employment and social cohesion."* Corina **Crețu**, responsible for Regional Policy said: *"The annual regional yearbook is an essential tool to assess the impact of Cohesion policy on the ground and to tailor it further in order to better address the specific needs of territories and communities in the future."* A Eurostat press release is available [here](#).

## Announcements

### **Investment Plan for Europe: Vice-President Katainen completes his 28-Member State investEU roadshow in Slovenia**

Today, Vice-President Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, is in Ljubljana today on the final stop of the 28-Member State roadshow to promote the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). Vice-President Katainen will meet Prime Minister Miro Cerar, State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance Metod Dragonja and members of the national parliament. Vice-President Katainen will meet with start-ups and SMEs in the [Technology Parc Ljubljana](#). He will also give a [lecture](#) at the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Economics entitled "Europe at crossroads - Economic, Social and Political Challenges". The Vice-President will meet with the CEO of Slovenia's national promotional bank [SID](#). Vice-President Katainen said: "By visiting all 28 EU Member States we have helped raise awareness about the objective of Investment Plan and how it works in practice. Our biggest challenge is to counter the misconception that EFSI financing can only be accessed by governments. This is not the case: we want companies to go directly to the EIB. My advice to Slovenian companies and authorities is to set up investment platforms for specific sectors, like they have done in France for energy efficiency and in the Netherlands for innovative start-ups." See [full press release](#)

### **Commissioner Moscovici representing the Commission at a ministerial meeting on Climate Finance in Lima**

Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs will attend a key ministerial meeting on Climate Finance in Lima today. The session will gather Ministers of Finance from around the world to discuss ongoing efforts to scale-up climate finance, i.e. funding to help developing countries to both limit and adapt to climate change. This is an important milestone on the road to the crucial UN conference on climate change starting in Paris on 30 November, which needs to reach a new, robust climate change agreement. The EU and its Member States are the biggest contributors of climate finance to developing countries, providing €9.5 billion in 2013 in grants and loans. In addition, the European Investment Bank is providing €2 billion in financing for climate projects in developing countries. The EU is firmly committed to contributing its fair share to the international commitment of \$100 billion in climate finance annually by 2020. Furthermore, by 2020, at least 20% of the EU budget will be spent on climate action. Read a full memo on climate finance [here](#).)

### **Cohesion Policy Open Days 2015: Flagship event takes place in Brussels from 12 to 15 October**

The Cohesion Policy Open Days, co-hosted by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, bring together 6,000 stakeholders involved in the implementation of Cohesion Policy. On Monday 12 October, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu**, Commissioner for Innovation and Research Carlos **Moedas** and President of the Committee of the Regions Markku Markkula will open this year's edition. Building on the reformed Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020, the 2015 Open Days will focus on how the [European Structural and Investment Funds](#) can best contribute to delivering on the European goals of growth and jobs, which is the first priority for Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. The 13th edition of the Open Days features some 150 workshops and debates. Full details, including the [Media Programme](#), are available [here](#).

### **12-14 October: High-Level Conference draws lessons from Ebola**

A conference co-hosted by the Commission and the Luxembourg EU Presidency aims to draw lessons for public health from the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, to improve preparedness and response in the EU for future outbreaks. Luxembourg Health Minister, Lydia Mutsch, will open the conference alongside, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis. Other key-note speakers include EU Ebola Coordinator and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, and Director General of the World Health Organization Dr Margaret Chan. The [EU Health Award for NGOs](#)

[fighting Ebola](#) will be presented after the opening speeches. Four parallel workshops on 13 and 14 October will analyse: (1) the Ebola outbreak as a complex crisis: the EU response and inter-sectoral cooperation; (2) best practices for treatment and prevention including protection of health care workers, medical evacuation, diagnostic methods and vaccines; (3) communication activities and strategies addressed to the public and health professionals; and (4) the Ebola epidemic from a local challenge to a global health security issue. The final output of the conference will inform discussion amongst the Council of Ministers in the EPSCO Council in December. More information can be found [here](#).

### **EU Code Week starts tomorrow: bring your ideas to digital life**

[EU Code Week](#) (10-18 October) kicks off on 10 October with [thousands of events](#) all over Europe where people, from children to seniors, can learn how the computer works behind the screen. They can try and create games, build a website or find out about hardware and robots. Vice-President **Ansip**, in charge of the Digital Single Market, said: *"These days, you need digital skills as a basic requirement to get ahead in the modern workplace. It is not just about reading and writing anymore. Europeans need the right skills to get the full benefits from a Digital Single Market. Coding is a great way to start and I would like to thank all the volunteers across Europe who make the Code Week happen"*. (See Vice-President Ansip's blog post: [Let's get Europe coding – and train people for the future](#)). The [Digital Single Market Strategy](#), presented in May, supports an inclusive digital society where people have the right skills to embrace the opportunities offered by the Internet and raise their chances of getting a job. Early next year, the Commission will present an EU-wide skills agenda. On the one hand it will focus action to help more people to develop and upgrade their skills, including basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital competences. On the other hand, it will set out measures on how we can better anticipate skills needs and improve the recognition of qualifications. More information can be found [here](#).

MEX/15/5817



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

