



TODAYS  
News

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### Research and innovation: Commission to invest €16 billion over next two years

Today, the Commission has adopted a plan that will see €16 billion invested in research and innovation over 2016-2017. The new funding opportunities available under [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's research and innovation funding scheme, are directly aligned with President **Juncker's** [policy priorities](#). They will address some of the most pressing challenges that Europe is facing and contribute to the digitalisation of our economy; modernisation of industry; prevention of human trafficking, crime and terrorism; and reaction to critical outbreaks of diseases. Commissioner Carlos **Moedas**, responsible for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"Research and innovation are the engines of Europe's progress and vital to addressing today's new pressing challenges like immigration, climate change, clean energy and healthy societies. Over the next two years, €16 billion from Horizon 2020 will support Europe's top scientific efforts, making the difference to citizens' lives."* The Work Programme is also designed to strengthen the open and inclusive nature of Horizon 2020, making it *"Open to Science, Open to Innovation and Open to the World"*. A [press release](#) and [factsheet](#) are available online. The press conference on the occasion will broadcast live on [EbS](#).

### 'Enjoy, it's from Europe': €111 million to promote European agriculture in 2016

In 2016 European food producers will benefit from programmes worth €111 million in support to find new markets outside the European Union and promote consumption of agri-food products inside the EU. Promotion measures are a key part of the measures presented by the European Commission to support farmers. The new [promotion policy](#) adopted [today](#) will make more resources available, increase the co-financing rate and cut the red tape for the approval of projects. The 2016 programme targets a selected list of third countries where there is the highest potential for growth, in particular in sectors experiencing a particularly difficult market situation, like dairy and pig meat. Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development Phil **Hogan** stated today: *"Europe's agri-food produce is second to none in the global marketplace. The €110 billion EU export market creates jobs and growth in rural areas across Europe. To continue this export drive, I am delighted to unveil this new promotion regime, which will see €111 million leverage further opportunities for EU agri-food produce in new markets, as well as grow our presence in existing markets. I am particularly pleased to announce the ring-fencing of €30 million for the troubled milk and pigmeat sectors as part of the recently announced €500 million agri-markets package. I look forward to mounting a diplomatic offensive in the coming months, leading trade missions to open further opportunities for EU producers across the globe."* A press release is available [here](#).

## Commission announces future setup for independent ethical advice

The European Commission today announces future institutional arrangements to draw on the best independent advice on ethical questions after the mandate of the current European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) ends in January 2016. The **President** of the Commission and Commissioner Carlos **Moedas** have decided that ethical questions need a new dedicated Group of experts. The future European Group on Ethics will report to the President and to the College of Commissioners as a whole. **President Juncker** is placing the Group under the direct responsibility of Commissioner **Moedas**. The Commission will start the process of nominations before the end of the year and expects the new Group to start functioning during the first half of 2016. Also today, Commissioners Carlos **Moedas**, responsible for Research, Science and Innovation, and Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, responsible for Health and Food Safety, are meeting the current members of the [EGE](#) to discuss the group's [latest opinion](#) on the ethical implications of new health technologies for patients, practitioners and European healthcare systems.

## Moldova joins the Central-Eastern and South-Eastern European Gas Connectivity (CESEC)

On 12 October, the Vice-President in charge of the Energy Union, Maroš **Šefčovič**, witnessed the signature of [the Memorandum of Understanding and its Action Plan](#) by the Prime Minister of Moldova Mr Valeriu Strelet. Moldova joined Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine as a Member in [CESEC High Level Group](#) set up by the Commission in February 2015 to boost natural gas diversification and market integration in the region. The joint work under the European Commission initiative on CESEC focuses on building new gas pipelines, but also on making the best use of existing infrastructure. The interconnectivity of the region is a priority for the Commission, as also highlighted in the [Energy Union strategy](#).

## Bulgaria invests €102 million of EU funds in the SME initiative

The European Commission adopted yesterday an Operational Programme worth €102 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) to boost the competitiveness of Bulgaria's small and medium-sized enterprises through increased access to finance. Investments under this programme, in the form of bank guarantees, are expected to generate between €400 million and €600 million of fresh loans for SMEs, thanks to the leverage effect of private investment. This programme is part of a broader initiative of the Commission to encourage Member States to double their use of [European Structural and Investment Funds](#) channelled through financial instruments in 2014-2020, in line with the objectives of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"I congratulate the Bulgarian authorities on signing up to the SME initiative; Bulgaria is now in the leading group of EU countries benefiting from this innovating tool. Small businesses are the engines of growth and job creation in Europe. For the prosperity of the EU economy, improving their access to finance is crucial, as it is the lifeblood of entrepreneurship."* More information on the [SME initiative](#) and on [Cohesion Policy in Bulgaria](#) is available online.

## Joining forces against antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred in the EU: outcomes of the first Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights

On 1-2 October, the Commission hosted its First [Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights](#). This was the first EU-level meeting of representatives from both Muslim and Jewish communities from across Europe to discuss how to combat antisemitic and anti-Muslim hatred, an issue described by First Vice-President **Timmermans** as being of *"existential importance to the future of Europe"*. Representatives from 25 Member States took part in the exchanges, listening and responding to concerns raised by individuals and grassroots organisations. Commissioner Věra **Jourová**, echoing several participants said, *"Combating anti-Muslim and antisemitic hatred is not an issue for the Muslim and Jewish communities alone. It is an issue about society as a whole. It is about basic principles and our core values"*. Action was called for to address these issues, taking into account the specific features of each phenomenon, covering all dimensions, from building a culture of tolerance and respect in particular through education to fighting hate speech online, hate crime and discrimination. In this respect, the First Vice-President **Timmermans** announced the nomination, within the Commission, of two coordinators, one for antisemitism and one for islamophobia, to

help ensure coordination of European efforts to face these two threats to our societies. The full conclusions of the Colloquium have been published today, and are available [here](#). Commissioner **Jourová** will represent the Commission in a Plenary debate in the European Parliament tomorrow, Wednesday 14 October, on antisemitism, islamophobia and hate speech in Europe.

### **Quarterly report for the Euro Area published**

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs today publishes its Quarterly Report on the Euro Area, featuring in-depth technical analysis of economic issues affecting the euro area. In this edition, staff economists compare the euro area's ongoing recovery with similar instances in its past and elsewhere and assess estimates of the EU's output gap. The report also takes a look at the factors driving inflation in the euro area and presents an abridged version of the Commission's July analysis of Ireland's economic adjustment programme. [Vol 14 N3](#) of the quarterly report will be published at 15:00 today.

### **Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of First Eagle by Blackstone and Corsair Capital**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over First Eagle Investment Management LLC by Blackstone Group L.P. and Corsair Capital LLC, all of the US. Blackstone is a global alternative asset manager and provider of financial advisory services. Corsair Capital is a private equity firm, focusing on investing in companies in the financial services sector worldwide. First Eagle is an investment management firm active in the US. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, since First Eagle has no assets and no revenues in the European Economic Area (EEA). 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.7754](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Veritas by The Carlyle Group**

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Veritas, the information management business of Symantec Corporation by The Carlyle Group L.P all of the United States. Carlyle is a global investment firm. Veritas produces storage software. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the companies' are not present in the same markets. 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.7765](#).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **EU to launch trade negotiation with Tunisia**

Today, Trade Commissioner Cecilia **Malmström** will be travelling to Tunis to launch negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Tunisia. The EU wants to mark its support to the political and economic reforms in the country by creating an ambitious partnership on trade and investment matters. Commenting on the launch of the DCFTA, Commissioner **Malmström** said: *"The EU stands by Tunisia's side to support its economic and political reforms and to help the country move forward. That's why I am delighted that today we take our trade relations to another level."* During her visit to Tunis, Commissioner **Malmström** will meet with Prime Minister Habib Essid and Minister of Trade Ridha Lahouel, all four organisations awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize as well as members of the Tunisian National Assembly, with whom she will discuss their expectations and ambitions regarding the future of [EU-Tunisia commercial relations](#). A new blog post by Commissioner **Malmström** on her trip is available [here](#). Downloadable photos from Commissioner **Malmström**'s meetings in Tunis will be published [here](#) during the course of the day. Also, video material from the press conference and the meetings with ministers and the Nobel laureates will be available [here](#) and [here](#).

## Commissioner Andriukaitis puts the spotlight on food waste at conference in EXPO Milan

The European Commission has today published the results of the first [Flash Eurobarometer survey](#) on food waste and date marking. Key findings confirm that date marking ("use by" and "best before") is poorly understood by Europeans. Just under half (47%) of Europeans understand the meaning of "best before" labelling and somewhat fewer (40%) are aware of the meaning of "use by". The study confirms the need to pursue targeted information and educational initiatives on date marking taking into account the level of understanding and information needs of different consumer groups in EU countries. The Commission will propose initiatives against food waste as part of the new circular economy package to be presented by the end of the year. European Commissioner in charge of Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis** said: *"If we do nothing, food waste could rise to over 120 million tonnes by 2020. In Europe alone, it accounts for estimated annual losses of €200 billion to the European economy. Food waste reduction requires commitment and action from farm to fork, and I am pleased to see that over three-quarters of Europeans recognise their own role alongside other actors. By working together to prevent food waste, we can save valuable food resources, money and lower our environmental footprint."* On 15 October Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis** will attend a high level, international conference titled "Fight Food Waste, Feed the Planet!" that will take place at the EXPO Milan 2015. Speakers will include representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), governments, NGOs (Slow Food, the European Federation of Food Banks) and food business (Belgian Farmers' Union, Boerenbond, Nestlé and Colruyt). The conference will include an interactive panel session and will be [webstreamed](#) and covered live on Twitter. For more information on food waste please see [here](#)

## Vice-President Ansip and Commissioner Oettinger speak on telecoms policies in the digital age at the Financial Times – European Telecommunications Network Operator's Association Summit in Brussels

At a [summit](#) co-organised by the Financial Times (FT) and the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) in Brussels this afternoon, Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, in charge of the [Digital Single Market](#) will draw attention to the fact that regulatory models across the globe are being challenged by innovative ideas, new digital business models and changing consumer demands. He will underline that Europe's telecoms rules need updating for the digital age; with no more barriers to access, splintered markets or national distortions. *"As regulators, what we can do is to provide the appropriate environment to underpin a single telecoms market driven by fair competition,"* the Vice-President will add, *"Pro-competitive regulation benefits consumers as much the telecoms industry. It is competition that will attract the investment to develop the high-speed broadband networks that Europeans need."* The Vice-President's full speech will be available [here](#) and webstreamed [here](#) as from 13:40. Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, responsible for the Digital Economy and Society, will also speak at the event (his speech will be webstreamed [here](#) as from 15:20).

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

