

TODAYS
News

Tuesday, 27 October, 2015

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Progress following Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting

This Sunday, upon the initiative of President **Juncker**, leaders representing Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia met in Brussels at the Commission and agreed to improve cooperation and step up consultation between the countries along the route and decided on pragmatic operational measures that could be implemented as of today to tackle the refugee crisis in the region. European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: "*Sunday was a day of unity. For the first time, the leaders of the Western Balkans sat together around a table and discussed the problems they are facing. And they agreed on a series of concrete and operational actions to better manage the situation.*" All 12 leaders – including the President of the Commission – agreed to nominate contact points within 24 hours to allow daily exchanges and coordination to achieve the gradual, controlled and orderly movement of persons along the Western Balkans route and to monitor the implementation of the [17-point plan](#) agreed on Sunday. A day later, all leaders have made good on their commitment and have nominated contact points. President **Juncker** named the Diplomatic Advisor in his Cabinet as the contact point for the Commission. On Thursday 29 October, the Commission will organise a plenary videoconference of all contact points to check the progress made. Leaders also committed yesterday to increasing the capacity to provide temporary shelter, food, health, water and sanitation to all in need, triggering the EU Civil Protection Mechanism where necessary. A day later, Croatia has activated the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism. In addition, the European Commission has today [decided](#) to increase the level of co-financing for transport of the assistance delivered via the EU Civil protection Mechanism for the countries needing help in the refugee crisis from 55% to 85%. Serbia, Slovenia and most recently Croatia have activated the mechanism in recent weeks for material support such as tents, blankets, sanitary equipment and other essentials to help refugees this winter. The Commission also yesterday [awarded](#) €5.9 million in emergency assistance to Greece from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to support the country in coping with the high number of arrivals of migrants and refugees on the Eastern Aegean islands. The Commission will continue to monitor the implementation of the commitments undertaken on Sunday, as well as those taken at the past two European Councils. For more information: A press release on progress following the meeting is available [here](#).

EU provides €365.5 million to support Southern Mediterranean countries

The EU has mobilised a substantial assistance package of €365.5 million to promote private sector development, democratic reforms and better living conditions in Southern Mediterranean partner countries (Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco). Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, commented: "*Today's new EU assistance package will directly benefit*

citizens in partner countries by creating jobs, stimulating growth and improving living standards, including among the most vulnerable. This EU support is crucial given the various challenges our Southern Mediterranean partners are currently facing". A press release is available [online](#).

New report highlights crucial role of EU customs authorities in fighting against counterfeit goods

New figures published today point to the pivotal role of EU customs administrations in the fight against counterfeit goods, with authorities detaining 35.5 million individual items of fake or counterfeit goods in 2014 with an overall total value of over €617 million. The statistics are contained in a report published by the European Commission on the enforcement of [Intellectual Property Rights \(IPR\) in the EU](#). According to the report, which cites figures for 2014, the high number of detentions can be linked to the large amount of small parcels in express and postal traffic due to the rise in internet sales. Information is also included on the categories of goods detained, on their countries of origin and on the modes of transport used to ship such goods. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"The protection of intellectual property should be a priority if we are serious about promoting innovation and creativity within the EU. This is also key for the health and safety of European consumers and for job creation. Our customs authorities carry out vital front line work in fighting against the import of counterfeit goods and the infringement of intellectual property rights."* A press release can be found [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Resource productivity in the EU up by 28% in 2014 compared with 2002

In the European Union (EU), resource productivity increased from 1.53 €/kg in 2002 to 1.95 €/kg in 2014, an increase of 27.8% in real terms. This was not however a steady increase. After remaining relatively stable between 2002 and the beginning of the economic and financial crisis, resource productivity in the EU increased considerably from 2008 to 2010, before dropping in 2011, and growing again since then. Resource productivity quantifies the relation between economic activity (GDP) and the consumption of natural resources (domestic material consumption - DMC) and sheds light on how efficiently natural resources are used. Between 2002 and 2008, GDP and domestic material consumption grew in parallel in the EU, leading to relatively constant resource productivity. Since 2008, domestic material consumption has fallen considerably, while GDP has grown more moderately, leading to a noticeable increase in resource productivity. In other words, since 2008, the EU has been doing more with less. Knowledge of the amount of resources used by a given socioeconomic system is very important for the purpose of understanding the interaction between this system and the environment. The use of material resources indeed plays a crucial role in the generation of environmental pressures, from the extraction of natural resources for production and consumption activities to materials released into the environment by the economic system, e.g. disposal of waste and greenhouse gas emissions. Moving towards a circular economy is at the heart of the resource efficiency agenda established under the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. A Eurostat press release can be found [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Ansip urges European Parliament to vote to end roaming charges and to guarantee the open internet in the EU

The European Parliament will vote this afternoon on the text agreed in June ([press release](#)) to end roaming charges as from June 2017 and to set net neutrality for the first time in EU law. This morning, Commission Vice-President **Ansip**, in charge of the Digital Single Market, thanked Members of the European Parliament for their efforts and urged them to approve the deal so that Europeans can benefit from these measures without any further delay. He said: *"Adopting the rules for a Telecoms Single Market will be a major achievement for the Digital Single Market. It will show Europeans that the Union can deliver tangible results. You now have the deal in your hands. It is a good deal, for Europe and Europeans."* (The Vice-President's speaking points are available [here](#)). Following the vote expected at around 13:00 this afternoon, Vice-President **Ansip** and Commissioner **Oettinger**, responsible for the Digital Economy and Society, will

publish a statement. Commissioner **Oettinger** will also participate in a press conference at 15:30 hosted by Member of Parliament Pilar del Castillo (available on [EbS](#)).

Data protection package on track: trilogues launched on new data protection rules in law enforcement area

Today, trilogues were launched in Strasbourg on the EU's Data Protection Directive for the police and criminal justice sector. This means the EU is fully on track to finalise its data protection reform by the end of this year. In parallel, trilogues on the Regulation are progressing well (see [IP/15/5176](#)). Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** welcomed the opening of trilogues in a meeting with Rapporteur Marju Lauristin ahead of today's first trilogue: *"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 which will be discussed 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 [here](#).

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

