

TODAYS
News

Tuesday, 01 December, 2015

European Commission at the United Nations climate change conference in Paris

In his opening speech on the first day of [COP21](#) yesterday in Paris, President **Juncker** said *"Climate change is reshaping our planet and amplifying every kind of instability we face. We cannot tell future generations that we are not aware, because we are. We are aware of the risks that await us tomorrow. We know the threats we know the risks and we can prevent them. It is a question of political will and action. That's the whole point of this conference."* In addition to President **Juncker's** presence yesterday, the European Union's commitment to make the climate conference in Paris a success is further underlined by the presence of several Commissioners who, throughout the conference, will participate and work for a comprehensive, durable and dynamic agreement that will accelerate the global shift to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies. During the first week from 1 till 6 December the following Commissioners are present: On Wednesday, 2 December, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** will attend the sessions dedicated to climate resilience. On Thursday, 3 December, Transport Commissioner **Violeta Bulc**, will participate in a debate on the future of transport. **Pierre Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs will represent the EU on Friday, 4 December, in talks regarding Climate Financing, while **Karmenu Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, will be at the EU flagship event dedicated to reducing air pollution to save lives and combat climate change. On Saturday and Sunday (5-6 December) the EU's chief negotiator, Miguel **Arias Cañete**, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy will represent the EU discussing subjects such as emission trading and renewable energies. Many Commissioners will also be present at events organised by the [Lima-Paris Action Agenda](#), an initiative that brings together all stakeholders who are committed in the transition to resilient and low-carbon economic and social developments. Visit the dedicated [web page](#) of the European Commission on the UN Climate Conference in COP21.

EU steps up aid for Syria crisis

Today the European Commission announces new aid packages in response to the Syrian crisis to help the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey. **Federica Mogherini**, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, and **Johannes Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations announced €350 million under the EU Trust Fund for Syria, to provide urgently needed aid to 1.5 million refugees and overstretched host communities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq. This marks the single biggest EU measure to the Syria crisis to date. The support will provide basic education and child protection, better access to healthcare, improved water and waste-water infrastructure, as well as support to resilience, economic opportunities and social inclusion. Read more in the press release [here](#). **Christos Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management announced €60 million in immediate humanitarian aid to Iraq and Turkey, to be channelled through the United Nations, International

Organisations, and international NGO partners, to respond to life-threatening needs in the areas of food aid, health, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as shelter and protection. This funding marks the final allocation of the €200 million additional humanitarian aid package to provide immediate support to refugees in 2015, proposed in September this year by the Commission. At 12:30 today, Commissioners **Hahn** and **Stylianides** will give a press conference on EU aid for the Syria crisis which you can follow live on [EbS](#). For more detail, a press release is available [here](#).

"The CAP: Meeting the major challenges", Speech of Commissioner Hogan at the EU Agricultural Outlook Conference in Brussels

Speaking in front of over 400 stakeholders from the agricultural sector, today Commissioner **Hogan** today presented his vision for agriculture in the European Union and the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. Commissioner **Hogan** said *"the contribution of the CAP to addressing the economic, social and environmental issues shows that it is a policy not just for farmers but for all the people of Europe"*. He wholeheartedly applauded and praised farmers for their efforts to mitigate climate change and make the greening of the CAP work on the ground; however he added that climate-smart agriculture must go in hand in hand with ensuring that farming remains viable, underlining that feeding the world is a global necessity and *"we must support our producers using all the instruments at our disposal"*. In this context, Commissioner **Hogan** also announced several upcoming trade missions to boost EU agri-food exports, concluding that the CAP must keep on delivering for all EU citizens and remain a living policy, fit-for-purpose – *a Common Agricultural and Food Policy*". Highlighting that the CAP is *"the only EU policy which is fully integrated and funded from the EU budget"*, Commissioner **Hogan** said that with the CAP, the EU is *"driving a key strategic sector for the European economy and for European society"*, and that the EU's agricultural sector is becoming more innovative and competitive thanks to the CAP. A recording of Commissioner Hogan's full speech is available on [EbS](#) and the text is available [here](#).

Erasmus+ backs €30 million in new Master's studies loans in France

A new €30 million to support around 2000 student loans for Master's degree students is to become available in France under the novel Erasmus+ Master Loans scheme. This is thanks to a guarantee agreement signed today by the European Investment Fund (EIF) and the French BPCE bank, with the backing of the EU's Erasmus+ programme. EU Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics** said: *"Creating fresh opportunities for talented youth means investing in Europe's future. The new Erasmus+ Master loans in France are an innovative way of boosting students' mobility around Europe, allowing our young people to learn new skills and broaden their experience."* The loans, which are offered to students at favourable terms, complement the well-established short-term Erasmus+ study exchanges. They will be open to graduates from France taking their Master's degree in another Erasmus+ country, as well as to students from these countries moving to France for a full 1 or 2 years Master's degree. A press release is available [online](#).

Enhancing cross-border cooperation between Italy and Austria

The Commission adopted yesterday the 2014-2020 [cross-border cooperation programme](#) between Italy and Austria, worth over €98 million, with more than €82 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"The Alpine regions are among the most dynamic, innovative and competitive in Europe. I am glad that the regions alongside the Italian-Austrian border have decided to pool their resources to address common challenges, such as an eco-friendly tourism activity or an innovative economy. The programme will also help reach the objectives of [the macro-regional strategy for the Alpine Region](#)."* The descriptions of the 2014-2020 programmes are available on [Commissioner Crețu's webpage](#) and on the [Inforegio website](#).

€55 million of EU funds for increased cross-border cooperation between Latvia and Lithuania

The Commission adopted yesterday the new [cross-border cooperation programme](#) between Latvia and Lithuania. The programme is worth €65 million, with €55 million coming from the [European Regional Development Fund](#). EU investments under this programme will help preserve the environment, support employment and cross-border labour mobility, promote social inclusion and improve the efficiency of public services. The programme will also contribute to the implementation of the [EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region](#). The descriptions of the 2014-2020 programmes are available on [Commissioner Crețu's webpage](#) and on the [Inforegio website](#).

State aid: Commission authorises UK support to convert Lynemouth power station to biomass

Following [an in-depth investigation launched in February 2015](#), the European Commission has concluded that UK support for the conversion of Lynemouth power station from coal to biomass complies with EU state aid rules. The Commission assessed in particular whether the terms and conditions of the UK support would avoid overcompensation. In light of the comments received from interested third parties as well as detailed technical information submitted by the UK, the Commission is now satisfied that this is the case and the submitted parameters are robust. On the basis of this analysis the Commission concluded that the project's contribution to the European renewable energy and CO2 emissions reduction targets clearly outweighs any potential distortions of competition that could be triggered by the state support. The press release is available online in [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears creation of DES by BMW and Viessmann

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation a joint venture between BMW and Viessmann, both of Germany. BMW is a German stock-listed automobile, motorcycle and engine manufacturing company. Viessmann is an international heating systems manufacturer. The joint venture will operate under the name of DES, based in Germany and will offer energy optimisation services to companies. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities overlap only marginally. Moreover, they will be unable to shut out customers or suppliers because of the companies' modest overall market shares and the presence of a multitude of competitors on the various markets on which BMW and Viessmann are active. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7749](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Truck-Lite by Koch Industries and BDT

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Truck-Lite Co. LLC by Koch Industries Inc. and BDT Capital Partners LLC, all of the United States. Koch Industries is active in various sectors, including the manufacturing of electronic components. BDT is specialising in buyouts and investments in family-owned and entrepreneurially-led businesses. Truck-Lite is a lighting designer which manufactures a wide range of products. Both Koch Industries and Truck-Lite are active in the business for the manufacturing and supply of automotive electric distribution systems. Additionally, the connectors manufactured by Koch Industries and its electronic manufacturing services can be used as an input for certain of Truck-Lite's lighting products, such as main headlamps and exterior rear view mirror systems. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the companies' moderate market shares in all the relevant markets as well as the presence of a number of strong competitors. 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.7811](#).

Eurostat: Euro area unemployment rate at 10.7%

The euro area (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 10.7% in October 2015, down from 10.8% in September 2015, and from 11.5% in October 2014. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since January 2012. The EU28 unemployment rate was 9.3% in October 2015, stable compared to September 2015, and down from 10.1% in October 2014. This is the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since September 2009. These figures are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne **Thyssen** said " *While we are today recording the lowest unemployment rate in the EU since September 2009 and things are slowly moving in the right direction, there is still much more to be done. The European Commission remains fully mobilised in support of jobs and growth. In the first half of 2016 we will come forward with a European Skills Agenda which will support more people to develop and upgrade their skills. And only last week we have concluded negotiations on the reform of the pan-European job search network (EURES), which will get us closer to a fully functioning European labour market.*" A Eurostat press release is available [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commission appoints coordinators on antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred following the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental rights

Following First Vice-President **Timmermans'** and Commissioner **Jourová's** announcement at the First [Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights](#) held on 1-2 October, the Commission has appointed Ms Katharina von Schnurbein, as coordinator on combating antisemitism and Mr David Friggieri, as coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred. The key tasks of the two coordinators will be to bring the concerns of the respective communities to the attention of the political level of the Commission, and help coordinate efforts across services in the context of the Commission's overarching policy on racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The coordinators will liaise with the Member States, the European Parliament, other institutions and relevant civil society organisations. For more information, see [here](#).

Vice-President Ansip: Simple, secure and transparent online public services

"*Europe's public sector should be digital by default, open by default and cross-border by default*", Vice-President **Ansip**, in charge of the [Digital Single Market](#), said this morning at a [conference on e-government](#) in Luxembourg. "*My vision for public administration in Europe is for open, transparent and collaborative governments that make life easier for people and businesses. They should be designed around digital delivery of public goods – and no more borders*", he added. As part of its [Digital Single Market strategy](#) presented in May, the Commission will draw up by the end of 2016 an e-government action plan for the next five years. "*E-government is about creating value, and using innovation to do so. But above all, it is about people: creating a society where people can spend less time on administration and more on what they want in their daily lives*", Vice-President **Ansip** said. The new [ISA² programme](#) – Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations – that has recently been adopted by the EU will help a great deal. It has €131 million earmarked for modernising EU public administrations and providing interoperable digital services. The programme will run from 2016 to 2020. The full speech of the Vice-President is available [here](#).



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

