



Thursday, 14 January, 2016

Preparation of the Eurogroup meeting and of the ECOFIN Council meeting

This afternoon, Vice-President **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Moscovici** will participate in the Eurogroup meeting. The Eurogroup will take stock of the developments in the economic adjustment programmes of Greece and Cyprus. It will discuss the draft European Semester recommendation for the euro area and the interim results of the IMF Article IV consultation on the euro area. It will also hold a thematic discussion on national insolvency frameworks. A press conference, which can be followed from EbS, will conclude the meeting. On Friday 15 January, the Commission will be represented by Vice-President **Georgieva**, Vice-President **Dombrovskis**, Commissioner **Moscovici** and Commissioner **Hill** at the ECOFIN Council meeting. The Ministers will hold an exchange of views on the work programme of the Netherlands Presidency. On the legislative front, the Ministers will be updated on the implementation of the Banking Union at a very important juncture: the [Single Resolution Mechanism](#) (SRM) became fully operational on 1 January 2016. The Council will also hold a discussion on the reverse charge mechanism in the VAT framework. On the non-legislative front, the Council is due to adopt conclusions on the Commission's [Annual Growth Survey](#) and on [macroeconomic imbalances](#) and to discuss a [recommendation](#) on the economic policy of the euro area. Terrorist financing will also be on the agenda. This ECOFIN Council meeting will be also followed by a press conference.

Consolidating peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border region of Ireland: launch of the PEACE programme

This afternoon, Commissioner for Regional policy Corina **Crețu** receives Mrs Emma Pengelly and Ms Jennifer McCann, Junior Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive, and Ambassador Declan Kelleher, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU, on behalf of Mr Seán Sherlock, Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North-South Co-operation of Ireland, to officially launch the [new PEACE programme](#) which was adopted on 30 November 2015. This cross-border cooperation programme aims to deepen reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border region of Ireland and tackle remaining challenges through investments in shared education, shared spaces and services and projects that will bring people together. The signature ceremony will take place in the VIP Corner of the Berlaymont at 16:00 and will be broadcast live on [EbS](#).

EU welcomes end of Ebola transmissions and will continue to support affected countries

The World Health Organisation has declared that the Ebola transmissions in West Africa have come to an end for the moment, as Liberia marks today 42 days without new Ebola cases - an important landmark that neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone crossed last November and December

The largest Ebola epidemic on record has taken a tragic toll on life, with 11 300 deaths out of 28 600 cases since its declaration in March 2014, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

On the occasion, EU Ebola Coordinator and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** made the following statement [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Household saving rate nearly stable at 12.8% in the euro area

The household saving rate in the euro area was 12.8% in the third quarter of 2015, compared with 12.7% in the second quarter of 2015. The household investment rate in the euro area was 8.3% in the third quarter of 2015, stable compared with the previous quarter. These data come from a first release of seasonally adjusted quarterly European sector accounts from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union and the European Central Bank (ECB). A Eurostat press release can be found [here](#).

EUROSTAT: Business investment rate down to 22.1% in the euro area

In the third quarter of 2015, the business investment rate was 22.1% in the euro area, compared with 22.4% in the previous quarter. The business profit share in the euro area was 39.7% in the third quarter of 2015, compared with 39.8% in the second quarter of 2015. These data come from a first release of seasonally adjusted quarterly European sector accounts from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, and the European Central Bank (ECB). A Eurostat press release can be found [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of JVC by Freudenberg and Toray

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Japan Vilene Company (JVC) of Japan by Freudenberg of Germany and Toray of Japan. JVC is active in the production of nonwoven fabrics used for instance in automotive and electrical materials. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because it would not significantly change 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.7819](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Johannes Hahn visits the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

On Friday 15 January Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, will visit Skopje. Meeting with the representatives of the four main political parties who signed a political [agreement](#) last June/July, Commissioner **Hahn** will reiterate their responsibility to implement their agreement, including the need to ensure the conditions for credible elections, according to the deadlines which they had agreed. Commissioner **Hahn** will also recall the importance of implementing

the Urgent Reform Priorities to which the leaders have also committed themselves. Ahead of the visit, Commissioner **Hahn** said: *"15 January is a key deadline of the political agreement, the implementation of which is important both for the government and the citizens of the country. I expect that the outstanding elements of the political agreement will be resolved before or during my visit, allowing the election authorities to organise credible elections according to the agreed timetable."*

Commissioner Christos Stylianides to visit Serbia

Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**, will travel to Serbia tomorrow 15 January. The Commissioner will meet Prime Minister, Mr Aleksandar Vucic, Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Minister Mr Aleksandar Vulin, and representatives of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrants. A visit will then follow to the Šid Reception Centre, as well as the Adaševci aid point where he will meet representatives of UN agencies and other partners involved in assisting migrants and refugees. Ahead of the visit Commissioner **Stylianides** said: *"Serbia is a key partner in managing the current Europe-wide refugee crisis. I am travelling to the country to demonstrate our European solidarity on the ground. The harsh winter conditions many refugees are facing along the Western Balkans route, make it more important than ever to provide basic essentials such as temporary shelter, food, health, water, sanitation and protection for women and children."* In total, the European Commission has provided €21.74 million in humanitarian aid to the Western Balkans for the refugee crisis to date. A press point with Prime Minister, Mr Aleksandar Vucic will be made available on [EbS](#).

MEX/16/75



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