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Draft rule paves the way for EU exports of apples and pears to the US: Statement by EU Health and Food Safety Commissioner Andriukaitis, Trade Commissioner Malmström and Agriculture Commissioner Hogan

"We welcome the publication by the USDA of the draft rule as a necessary step in the process to facilitate the export of apples and pears from the European Union to the United States. It is a welcome reflection of the increased level of engagement by the Commission with the US administration. It will be of significant benefit to European farmers, many of whom lost their main export markets overnight as a result of Russian sanctions imposed in 2014. The eventual opening of the US market will not offset the full impact of the sanctions, but it will certainly help the farming community by at least providing another commercial outlet for their produce. Following this initiative, we are looking forward to the rapid completion of the remaining legal and administrative steps in order to deliver further tangible benefits for the EU fruit producers. Opening the market for the 2016 harvest i.e. by September 2016 could be feasible, if all parties continue their efforts." Full statement and background available [here](#)

New European Professional Card makes it easier for professionals to work in other EU countries

From today, practicing a profession in another EU country becomes easier for general care nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, real estate agents and mountain guides, thanks to the [European Professional Card](#) (EPC). With the EPC these professions can get their qualification recognised in another EU country more efficiently - the assessment will be made on the basis of existing rules but the mechanism will be simplified through an electronic procedure. At the same time, the system provides for safeguards preventing abuse: an alert mechanism ensures that EU patients and consumers are adequately protected. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska** responsible for Internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs said: "*The European Professional Card is a big step forward in making it easier and faster for qualified Europeans to work where their competences are needed, sought and appreciated. It is a practical tool that brings benefits not only to professionals, but also to people who want their services. It is yet another real benefit of the EU Single Market.*" The EPC is not a plastic card, but an electronic certificate issued through the first fully online EU-wide procedure for the recognition of qualifications. Based on practical experience with its functioning, the EPC may be extended to other mobile professions in the future. More details are available on the DG GROWTH [website](#)

New record for the EU Code Week: more than half a million people took part in 2015

Almost 570,000 people learned to create with code (computer programming) during the last edition of the EU Code Week that took place from 10 to 18 October 2015. Thousands of events were organised all over Europe, and beyond, where people could learn how the computer works behind the screen. They could try and create a game, build a website or find out about hardware and robots. Organisers reported that the average age of participants was 14 years and 48% of those taking part were girls or women. In 2014, 150,000 people took part in events related to the EU Code Week. As part of its strategy for a [Digital Single Market](#), the European Commission supports the EU Code week and other initiatives which aim to boost digital skills, including coding. The Commission will also address coding, and other digital skills and expertise, in future initiatives on skills and training such as the [strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training](#) (ET 2020). In 2016, the Commission will present a comprehensive skills agenda to ensure that Europeans can acquire or upgrade skills that can better meet the demands of the labour market. Today, 90% of all jobs are expected to require at least a basic level of ICT skills, while 40% of adults in Europe have low level or no digital skills at all. The 2016 EU Code Week will take place from 15 to 23 October. More details are 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.