



Thursday, 21 January, 2016

### **Commissioner Vella in Poland for an official visit**

The Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** will travel to Warsaw on 21 and 22 January for talks with the Polish Government. Mr **Vella** will hold meetings with the Minister of Environment Jan Szyszko and the Minister of Maritime Affairs Marek Gróbarczyk. The meetings will focus on the [Circular Economy Package](#) presented by the Commission last month, air quality, the potential of blue growth and fisheries policy in the Baltic. Commissioner **Vella** will also meet a number of stakeholders from the fisheries sector as well as environmental non-governmental organisations.

### **Commission presents its 2015 Employment and Social Developments review: Investing in people is key to economic growth**

Today, the Commission presented its 'Employment and Social Developments in Europe' (ESDE) review for 2015. Each year, the ESDE report gives a review of the latest employment and social trends, reflecting on upcoming challenges and possible policy responses. This year's review reveals further positive employment and social developments in the EU. However, despite recent improvements, huge disparities still exist between Member States, in terms of economic growth, employment and other key social and labour market indicators. Many of these disparities are linked to an underutilisation of human capital on several fronts. The 2015 ESDE report looks at ways of tackling these disparities, focusing in particular on job creation, labour market efficiency, social protection modernisation and investment in people. Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, commented: *"We need to ensure that there are more and better opportunities for people in the EU, especially those furthest away from the labour market. We must also invest in enhancing people's skills, so that all women and men in the EU can realise their full potential. We need to invest in people to achieve growth and jobs. We need to ensure that our labour law and social protection systems are fit-for-purpose in the 21st century, and we need to foster entrepreneurship and innovation. The European Pillar of Social Rights will play an important role in this context."* More information can be found in the [press release](#) and the [memo](#).

### **EU announces €77 million in humanitarian aid for the Horn of Africa for 2016**

With the Horn of Africa continuing to face a multitude of crises from recurrent cycles of conflict to natural disasters, affecting millions of people, the EU has announced €77 million in humanitarian aid for the region in 2016. The Horn of Africa region is hosting some 1.7 million refugees. More than half

a million live in Kenya. EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides**, made the announcement during his visit to Kenya today, where he visited the Dadaab refugee camp, the largest in the world, hosting over 350 000 people. *"Today I travelled to Dadaab, where the first Somali refugees found shelter from conflict and hunger 25 years ago. I witnessed the immense needs of families whose lives have been changed forever. These people rely on our humanitarian assistance. I was also touched by the hospitality shown by the Kenyan people. No country can cope alone with the provision of essential services to so many refugees. We need to strengthen the resilience of both forcibly displaced populations and host communities"* said Commissioner **Stylianides**. Out of the €77 million announced today, €17 million will go towards life-saving and emergency aid for the most vulnerable in Kenya. This will include food, health care, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, protection and education in emergencies. Read the full [press release](#) and [factsheet](#) on EU humanitarian to the Horn of Africa. Audiovisual material will be made available on [EbS](#).

### **Intelligent Transport: sector issues guidance on how the EU can make the most of connected cars**

Following an invitation of the Commission, industry representatives and public authorities have today agreed on a shared vision for the coordinated deployment of Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) in Europe. This is an important step towards connected cars as C-ITS enable vehicles to communicate with each other and with the infrastructure. This can notably improve road safety and reduce congestion. Today's report will also ensure that through C-ITS road transport can reap all the benefits from digitisation and contribute to President **Juncker's** ambition of creating a [Digital Single Market](#). EU Commissioner for transport Violeta **Bulc** said: *"Digitisation of transport is a priority of my mandate as it has the potential to create new growth and smarter mobility. I want to see connected cars on European roads by 2019 and today's report is an important milestone towards that objective. It is nevertheless only a first step, more deliverables will come throughout 2016."* The report concludes that C-ITS could yield up to 3 Euros in societal benefits for every Euro invested and gives concrete recommendations to address issues such as digital security and data privacy. It can be accessed in full [here](#).

### **State aid: Commission adopts three decisions requiring taxation of ports in the Netherlands, Belgium and France**

The European Commission has required the Netherlands to abolish an exemption from corporate tax for its six seaports so as to align the regime with EU state aid rules. The Commission has also proposed in two separate decisions that Belgium and France align their taxation of ports with state aid rules. Commissioner **Vestager** said: *"Ports are key infrastructure for economic growth and regional development. I will soon present a proposal to facilitate unproblematic investments in ports that can create jobs, to exempt them from scrutiny under EU state aid rules. At the same time, the Commission's decisions today regarding the Netherlands, Belgium and France make clear that if port operators, public and private, generate profits from economic activities, these should be taxed under the normal national tax laws to avoid distortions of competition."* The full press release is available online in [here](#)

### **Mergers: Commission clears joint venture between Lov Group and De Agostini**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture between Lov Group Invest SAS of France and De Agostini S.p.A. of Italy. The companies will contribute with their respective businesses in the production and distribution of audio-visual content to the joint venture. Lov Group will contribute with Banijay and De Agostini will contribute with Zodiak

Media. Both Banijay and Zodiak Media are active in the production and licensing of broadcasting rights for general entertainment TV content in a number of countries, namely Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Spain and Sweden. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns, because the activities of Banijay and Zodiak overlap only to a limited extent. Moreover, a number of alternative suppliers of TV content will remain active in the markets after the transaction and customers can switch suppliers relatively easily. 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.7865](#).

### **EUROSTAT: Almost 8 million ICT specialists employed in the EU in 2014**

In the European Union (EU), nearly 8 million persons were employed in 2014 as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists, representing 3.7% of total employment. Over recent years, both the number and the share of ICT specialists in total employment have continuously increased to better adapt to an ever digitalised world. However, almost 40% of enterprises with at least 10 persons employed which recruited or tried to recruit personnel for jobs requiring ICT specialist skills had hard-to-fill vacancies in 2014. A Eurostat press release is 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.