



Monday, 25 January, 2016

### **EU research funding creates excellent science and boosts EU competitiveness, evaluation shows**

Excellent science and more industrial innovation are just some of the benefits created by EU research funding between 2007 and 2013. These are some of the key findings of the independent evaluation of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), the EU's €55 billion research funding programme over the 2007-2013 period; which the Commission is publishing today. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation said: *"Independent experts have confirmed that our research and innovation investments are supporting world class science and improving our citizen's welfare. We are now using the lessons learned to further improve Horizon 2020, the new EU research and innovation funding programme, and make it simpler, more effective and more focused on finding innovative solutions to benefit our society and economy."* The evaluation, which is composed of an independent experts' report and the Commission's response to it, also shows that FP7 had a significant impact on creating growth and jobs around Europe. Such a focus on results and transparency, in line with the priorities of President Juncker, is being continuously strengthened throughout FP7's successor programme Horizon 2020. A full [press release](#), and [factsheet](#) available online.

### **EUROSTAT: The EU, a net investor in the rest of the world**

At the end of 2014, the European Union (EU) held Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stocks of €5 749 billion in the rest of the world (+7.6% compared with the end of 2013), while stocks held by the rest of the world in the EU amounted to €4 583 billion (+9.6%), meaning that the EU held a net investment position of €1 166 billion vis-a-vis the rest of the world. A Eurostat press release is available [here](#).

### **Commission publishes the 2015 Fiscal Sustainability Report**

The Fiscal Sustainability Report 2015 is a study produced every three years by the services of the European Commission (DG ECFIN). This report reviews the situation of public finances in the EU today and identifies the main remaining challenges for the medium and long term. It looks in particular at the impact of demographic ageing. The report confirms sustainable growth will be essential to ensure an appropriate pace of debt reduction. The report addresses all Member States except those under a financial assistance programme. It builds on the toolkit of indicators regularly used for the analysis of fiscal sustainability in the context of the European Semester. It will be available at 15:00 CET [here](#).

## **Commissioner Avramopoulos launches Europol's new European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)**

Today Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos will launch Europol's new European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) together with the *Dutch Minister of Security and Justice, Ard van der Steur* on behalf of the Dutch EU Council Presidency and Europol's Director Rob Wainwright in the margins of the informal Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Amsterdam. The ECTC will significantly reinforce Europol's counter-terrorism capabilities as a platform for Member States to increase information sharing and operational coordination. It will focus in particular on the fight against foreign terrorist fighters, the trafficking of illegal firearms and terrorist financing. Ahead of the launch, Commissioner **Avramopoulos** said: *"EU institutions responded swiftly and strongly to the terrorist attacks of last year and moved to augment the European Union's capacity to deal with the terrorist threat. As foreseen in the European Agenda on Security put forward by the European Commission, the establishment of the European Counter Terrorism Centre is a major strategic opportunity for the EU to make our collective efforts to fight terrorism more effective. I call on EU Member States to trust and support the European Counter Terrorism Centre to help it succeed in its important mission."* A press release by Europol is available [here](#).

## **Joint Statement following the High Level Political Dialogue between Turkey and the EU**

Today, High Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn**, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator Ambassador Volkan Bozkır for Turkey, issued this [statement](#) following the Turkey-EU High Level Political Dialogue meeting held in Ankara today, 25 January 2016.

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Proffice by Randstad**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Proffice AB of Sweden by Randstad N.V. of the Netherlands. Both Randstad and Proffice provide temporary employment services, permanent placement services and human resources services. The companies' activities overlap in the provision of temporary and permanent employment services in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the companies' moderate combined market positions resulting from the proposed transaction. 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.7835](#).

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Moto Holdings by CVC and USS Way**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Moto Holdings Ltd. of the United Kingdom, by CVC Capital Partners of Luxembourg and USS Way LP of the United Kingdom. CVC and its group companies advise and manage investment funds in various industries such as chemicals, utilities, manufacturing, retailing and distribution. USS Way belongs to the Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited, one of the largest private sector pension funds in the United Kingdom. Moto Holdings, currently a subsidiary of USS Way, is an operator of motorway service areas in the United Kingdom. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because no other CVC and USS Way group company is active in the operation of motorway service areas.

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.7900](#).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Vice-President Ansip to discuss EU digital priorities with citizens, startups and industry in Munich**

Digital innovation will be high on the agenda of Vice-President **Ansip**'s visit to Munich, Germany, tonight and tomorrow. Vice-President **Ansip**, responsible for the [Digital Single Market](#), will notably meet startups at the Center for Innovation and Business Creation at the Technical University of Munich (UnternehmerTUM). He will discuss research and development at the headquarters of BMW, as well as e-health and innovative wearables with the Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry. The visit indeed takes place in the context of the leading international trade fair for sporting equipment ([ISPO MUNICH](#)). Tomorrow at 14.30, Vice-President **Ansip** will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue at the International Congress Center of Munich (the debate can be watched live [here](#)).

### **Commissioner Mimica to attend event on peace and security in London**

Tomorrow, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica** will be on an official visit to London. He will take part in the Overseas Development Institute (ODA)'s event: 'Europe in the world: promoting peace and Security', where he will stress the growing need of global efforts to improve conflict prevention and peace-building, strengthen the rule of law, promote human rights, including women's rights, and ensure developing countries are active participants in global governance. His speech will be available here. The Commissioner will also discuss the leading role that the EU and Member States will take in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the House of Lords. A bilateral meeting with Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, is also foreseen.

### **Commissioner Bulc and Commissioner Crețu in Slovenia for the launch conference of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region**

Today Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu and Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** are participating in the [launch conference](#) of the [EU Strategy for the Alpine Region](#), a [macro-regional strategy](#) involving five EU countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and two non-EU countries (Switzerland and Lichtenstein). Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: *"The Alpine Region is among the most dynamic, innovative and competitive areas in Europe. However, socio-economic imbalances still need to be tackled. This is what the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region is for: to fully exploit the potential of the 48 regions involved – EU and non-EU countries alike – and to ensure that no one is left behind on the path to prosperity. It is now time to turn words into action."* Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** said: *"With four of the nine European transport corridors passing through the Alps, the region is a node with a particularly fragile environment. While Europe depends on the connectivity of the Alpine region, it is critical to combine it with the highest level of sustainability. The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region provides the vision and leadership that is willing to take up this challenge."* The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region focuses on stimulating an innovative and sustainable growth model; the seven countries of the macro-region will be able to step up a gear in their cooperation in the fields of research and innovation, support to SMEs, mobility, tourism, environmental protection and resource management.



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