



Thursday, 03 March, 2016

### Major increase in EU's contribution to improve global health

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, will today announce a major increase in the EU's financial contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The new funding with a total of €470 million for the period 2017-2019 represents an increase of €100 million or 27% in comparison to previous years (€370 million for 2014-2016). The announcement comes in the framework of a meeting with Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund, in Brussels. Commissioner **Mimica** said: *"One of the lessons learnt after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is the clear need to strengthen health systems in developing countries, so that infectious diseases can be controlled for good. With these €470 million, the EU's contribution to the Global Fund will contribute to achieve our shared ambition to save 8 million more lives and avert up to 300 million infections. I call on others to raise their contributions so that more resilient systems can be built, and the special needs of women and girls and those of key affected populations be better served"*. *"With this significant and increased pledge, Europe is demonstrating terrific leadership in global health,"* added Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund. *"At a time when Europe faces global challenges like the migrant crisis and climate change, ending epidemics is a top priority that is inter-connected with social stability, education and expanding opportunity."* A [press release](#) is available.

### High-quality and high-speed internet access vital to achieve a Digital Single Market

The Commission today published the first results of two public consultations: one on Europeans' broadband needs and the other focusing on the review of current EU telecoms rules. Well over 1500 people responded to the first consultation. Many users consider their needs in terms of internet speed and quality are not fulfilled. They also expect the use of internet services and applications to increase dramatically by 2025. They say policy measures are required to support the development of infrastructure in line with their future needs (more information [here](#)). The second consultation sought views on a large number of questions including on how EU rules could incentivise network rollout, on spectrum management, on the role of universal service rules and on institutional set up and governance. According to the overview released today, respondents felt that competition law principles should continue to underpin the EU's regulation in this field. However, they also widely recognise the need for policy adjustment to improve connectivity and advance the internal market (more information [here](#)). Creating the right conditions for digital products, networks and services to flourish is part of the Commission's [Digital](#)

[Single Market strategy](#). The Commission will propose a revised EU telecoms framework in the course of the year.

### **State Aid: Commission approves agreement between Greece and TAP allowing new gas pipeline to enter Europe**

The European Commission has found the Host Government Agreement between the Greek authorities and the Trans Adriatic Pipeline to be in line with EU state aid rules. The project will improve the security and diversity of EU energy supplies without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market. Margrethe **Vestager**, Commissioner in charge of competition policy, stated "*Today's decision opens the way for a multi-billion infrastructure project in Greece. The Trans Adriatic Pipeline will bring new gas to the EU and increase the security of energy supply for Southeast Europe. The investment incentives offered by the Greek Government are limited to what is necessary to make the project happen and in compliance with state aid rules.*" Maroš **Šefčovič**, Vice-President responsible for Energy Union, said: "*Today's approval of the TAP agreement is an important step towards completing the Southern Gas Corridor. The Energy Union framework strategy of February 2015 identified this project as a key contribution to the EU's energy security, bringing new routes and sources of gas to Europe. Just on Monday, the Southern Gas Corridor ministerial meeting in Baku, which I attended, confirmed the determination of all participating countries and consortia to complete this key infrastructure project in time.*" The builder and operator of the pipeline is Trans Adriatic Pipeline AG (TAP), a joint venture of several energy companies. TAP will invest €5.6 billion over five years in the project, of which €2.3 billion in Greece. The Trans Adriatic Pipeline is recognised as a [project of common interest \(PCI\)](#) in the framework of [the EU's Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Guidelines](#). A full press release is available online in [here](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Greendeli by Nordic Capital**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Greendeli of Sweden by Nordic Capital of Jersey. Nordic Capital invests in large and medium-sized companies based in the Nordic region and in German speaking parts of Europe. Greendeli imports, distributes and processes fresh fruit and vegetables in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap and are very limited on related markets. The operation was examined under the simplified merger review procedure. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7922](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Riello by UTC**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Riello Group S.p.A. of Italy by United Technologies Corporation ('UTC') of the US. Riello Group manufactures and sells combustion technology and water heating appliances, which range from residential to large industrial applications. UTC is a multinational corporation active in the provision of high technology products and services for the building sectors and aerospace industries worldwide. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the overlaps between the companies' activities are limited. 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.7945](#).

## **EUROSTAT: January 2016 compared with December 2015 - Volume of retail trade (includes figures for food) up by 0.4% in euro area, up by 0.8% in EU28**

In January 2016 compared with December 2015, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade increased by 0.4% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.8% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In December retail trade rose by 0.6% in the euro area and by 0.3% in the EU28. In January 2016 compared with January 2015 the calendar adjusted retail sales index increased by 2.0% in the euro area and by 2.8% in the EU28. A full EUROSTAT press release is [available online](#).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini to visit Albania on 3 and 4 March**

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will travel to Tirana on 3 and 4 March. She will meet key interlocutors of the country - including Prime Minister Edi Rama, Foreign Minister Ditmir Bushati, the President of the Republic Bujar Nishani, and representatives of political parties - to discuss the bilateral relations and the latest developments and perspectives for the EU-[Albania](#) relations. The HRVP will deliver a speech at the Parliament this evening. Video and photos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#).

### **Vice-President Dombrovskis in Cyprus**

Vice-President **Dombrovskis**, responsible for Euro and Social Dialogue, will be in Cyprus from Thursday to Saturday this week to discuss issues related to the economic and social situation as well as growth and investment opportunities in the country. The Vice-President will meet the President of the Republic of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades; *Minister of Finance, Harris Georgiades; and Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Zeta Emilianidou*. *Press points will take place following his meetings with Ministers Georgiades and Emilianidou*. Vice-President Dombrovskis will also hold discussions with *the Governor of the Central Bank of Cyprus, Chrystalla Georghadji, the President of the House of Representatives, Yiannakis Omirou, members of the parliament and social partners*. During his visit, he will participate in a round table to discuss deepening the EMU with renowned economists and academics. He will conclude with a visit to the Cyprus Institute, a research institute part funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme.

### **Vice-President Ansip and Commissioner Oettinger officially launch €131 million programme to modernise public administrations**

Today Vice-President **Ansip** and Commissioner **Oettinger** are at the conference 'From ISA to ISA<sup>2</sup> — new challenges and opportunities' in Brussels. They will officially launch the new [ISA<sup>2</sup> programme](#) – Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations – which was adopted by the EU at the end of last year. For the period 2016-2020, the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme will invest €131 million to help EU public administrations to provide digital services across borders. The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme builds on the success of its predecessor [ISA](#) which has supported the development of more than [20 e-government solutions](#) used across the EU (e.g. tools to manage procurements online, create and analyse online surveys, and more). By using ISA<sup>2</sup> solutions, administrations at all levels (European, national, regional and local), citizens and businesses will save time and money, and they will contribute to the creation of a [Digital Single Market](#). Today's conference also features Members of the European Parliament Carlos Zorrinho and Michal Boni as well as speakers of ten EU Member States who will share best practices to modernise public

administrations. In total, participants from 35 countries are expected. Web streaming will be available [here](#).

### **Regional Policy Commissioner Corina Crețu visits Romania, meets President Klaus Iohannis**

Today Thursday and tomorrow, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** is in Romania. She is meeting with President Klaus Iohannis and Vice Prime Minister Vasile Dâncu. Corina **Crețu** will participate in the "Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 Impact Assessment" conference and will also launch the "Less Developed Regions" initiative, which provides advice to national authorities for improving the deployment of ESI funds in regions with a GDP lower than 50% of the EU average. Ahead of the visit, Corina **Crețu** said: *"Completing the 2007-2013 programming period and supporting the successful implementation of the 2014-2020 period are important topics I will discuss with the Romanian authorities. This matters because administrative capacity is key for promoting economic growth and job creation"*. More information on ESI Funds in Romania is available [online](#).

### **Commissioner Jonathan Hill visits Denmark**

Commissioner Jonathan **Hill**, responsible for financial stability, financial services and capital markets union, will visit Denmark this Thursday and Friday to discuss issues related to his portfolio. He will meet with representatives from Danske Bank as well as members of the Danish Parliament's European Affairs Parliamentary Committee. He will meet Mr Claus Hjort Frederiksen, Danish Minister of Finance and Mr Troels Lund Poulsen, Minister for Business and Growth. He will have a working lunch with the Danish Chamber of Commerce and Danish Industries and give a speech at Danish Bankers' Association.

MEX/16/546



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