



Wednesday, 09 March, 2016

### 'The EU in 2015' – General Report of the activities of the European Union published

Today the European Commission has published the 2015 edition of the General Report of the activities of the European Union. The General Report covers the major events and initiatives of the year. This year, these include, amongst others, the EU's efforts to tackle the refugee crisis, the agreement on support for Greece, the EU's response following the Paris terrorist attacks and the launch of the Investment Plan for Europe, as well as other major initiatives such as the Digital Single Market, Energy Union and Capital Markets Union. The Report and a separate shorter summary of it present the EU's activities in a citizen-friendly way, designed to be accessible not only for those familiar with EU affairs, but also for the general public. This year, the interactivity and the visual impact have been significantly improved through extensive use of hyperlinks, photos, videos and infographics. The publication of the General Report is a Treaty obligation, set out in Article 249(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Report is available [here](#) and highlights [here](#).

### Commissioner Thyssen welcomes the signature of the Decision creating a European Platform tackling undeclared work

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, welcomes today's official signature by the European Parliament and the Council of the decision to establish a European Platform to tackle undeclared work. The main aim of the Platform is to reinforce cooperation between Member States in the fight against undeclared work, by exchanging best practices which could lead to the development of common guidelines and principles to help inspection authorities to tackle undeclared work more effectively. Commissioner **Thyssen** said: "*Creating a deep and fair internal market is one of the priorities of this Commission. In this context, yesterday we have put a revision of the [Posting of Workers Directive](#) on the table. Today we confirm our willingness to fight undeclared work. Undeclared work is a problem which causes serious damage - not only to working conditions, but also to fair competition between companies and to public budgets. I therefore warmly welcome today's signature, as I am convinced that reinforced cooperation and exchange between Member States in the fight against undeclared work will bring us again closer to a deep and fair internal market.*" The Platform will bring together different enforcement authorities, such as labour inspectorates, social security and tax authorities of all Member States. Social partners will also participate in the Platform. A first meeting, gathering all actors involved in the Platform, will take place on 27 May in Brussels. More information on the proposal can be found [here](#). The signing ceremony will take place today at 14:30 in Strasbourg.

## Commission approves two new Protected Geographical Indications from Germany and Spain

The Commission has approved today the addition of two new products to the register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). From Germany, '[Frankfurter Grüne Soße](#)' or '[Frankfurter Grie Soß](#)' is a fresh herbal blend made of fresh leaves, stems and buds. The seven types of herb used to make 'Frankfurter Grüne Soße'/'Frankfurter Grie Soß', whether grown outdoors or under cover, must be cultivated in Frankfurt am Main or in the towns bordering the city. From Spain, '[Polvorones de Estepa](#)' are baked dough pieces with almonds and cinnamon traditionally made for Christmas. Small, round and covered with icing sugar, Polvorones de Estepa are made in the municipality of Estepa located in the province of Seville. These new denominations will be added to the list of over 1,330 products already protected. More information: webpages on [quality products](#) and [DOOR database](#) of protected products.

## Investment Plan for Europe: €48 million in loans for 250 SMEs in Denmark

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and the Danish Growth Fund ([Vækstfonden](#)) have signed a [COSME](#) guarantee agreement to support DKK 360 million (c. €48 million) of loans to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Denmark over the next two years. This transaction benefits from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The EFSI agreement between the EIF and Vækstfonden is very good news for Danish SMEs, especially the most innovative ones, in need of risk capital to grow their businesses and increase their competitiveness. The Investment Plan for Europe is bearing fruit in Denmark!"* (For more information see [here](#)).

## Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Rhiag by LKQ

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of the Rhiag Group of Italy, by LKQ Corporation, of the US. Both Rhiag and LKQ are active in the manufacture and distribution of automotive spare parts for the independent aftermarket segment. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns, because of the moderate combined market shares of the parties in the manufacturing of automotive spare parts. With regard to the distribution of spare parts, the parties' activities are largely complementary as they are not active in the same Member States. Also, a number of other players are active in both manufacturing and distribution. 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.7923](#).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič in Athens for the Energy Union Tour

Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** will visit Athens on 10 March as part of the [Energy Union Tour](#). During his stay, the Vice-President will meet with the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Panos Skourletis, the Greek Minister for Energy and Environment. Furthermore, **Šefčovič** visits the Revithoussa island LNG terminal and meets representatives of the Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE) as well as of the Union of Industrial Consumers of Energy (UNICE) and Federation of Enterprises (SEV). He will also be discussing the State of the Energy Union with the Committee of Production and

Trade of the Hellenic Parliament. Ahead of his visit, Vice-President **Šefčovič** said: *"I am looking forward to discuss how we can best use our Energy Union strategy to stimulate innovation, boost growth and increase competitiveness in Greece. I encourage Greece to continue reforms of the energy system, which are at the core of the Economic Adjustment Programme. All Member States will benefit from the Energy Union, as we all face the same challenges: energy security, energy prices and climate change. Energy Union is the way how we can tackle these issues better, faster and cheaper together"*. Find more information on the Commission's website of the [Energy Union](#).

### **Commissioner Navracsics to call for stronger efforts to boost good governance at the EU Sport Forum**

The 7th edition of the [EU Sport Forum](#) - an event which annually gathers the Commission and the European sport community - is taking place in The Hague today and tomorrow. Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics**, responsible for Sport, will take part in a high-level panel on the importance of good governance in helping to tackle the threats to the integrity of sport. Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"We will need to work together to ensure that all sport organisations implement the principles of good governance, and that they are transparent and accountable. I am determined to play my part at EU level"*. Other issues will be addressed, such as grassroots sport and its role in integrating migrants as well as the impact of the [Digital Single Market Strategy](#) on the sports sector. The Forum will bring together some 320 leading representatives of European and international sports federations and umbrella organisations, the European Olympic Committee and other sports-related bodies. The discussions will feed into a report on good governance in sport, which the Commission is working on for publication in mid-2016. Then, during the second [European Week of Sport](#) in September, Commissioner **Navracsics** will invite big and small sport federations to commit publicly to good governance principles.

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