



Wednesday, 04 May, 2016

### Commissioner Hogan on official visit to Northern Ireland on 9 May

Mr Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, will be in Northern Ireland on Monday 9 May. After participating in a farm visit in Warrenpoint organised by the Ulster Farmers' Union, Commissioner Hogan will deliver a speech at the Europe Day reception hosted by the European Commission Representation in Belfast. He will then meet with Mr Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of Northern Ireland, Mr Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary of the Food and Farming Group at DARD and Mr Andrew Elliott, Director of the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels. At the end of the day, Commissioner **Hogan** will deliver the 2016 "annual Gibson lecture" at the Medical Biology Centre at Queen's University on the topic of the UK referendum and agriculture. Set up in 1999 in Queen's University Belfast, the Gibson Institute for Land, Food and the Environment is involved in education and research in the areas of, among others, rural development, agricultural and environmental economics, land use and environmental management.

### EU-Japan Leaders' Meeting

European Commission President, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, met Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzō Abe, on 3 May in Brussels. Prime Minister Abe is touring European capitals to prepare the [G7 Summit](#) of 26-27 May in Ise-Shima. In his [statement](#), President **Juncker** called on the G7 to show unity and leadership in the face of complex challenges. *"This is especially true of migration, one of the defining global challenges of our century,"* said the President. *"The international community must do its fair share, by helping to resettle refugees and by providing assistance."* The meeting also focused on the need to stimulate the global economy: *"This is why our Free Trade Agreement with Japan is so important,"* said President **Juncker**. *"Our negotiations have progressed but now we must finish the job. I am confident we can do this before the end of this year."*

### Commission presents proposals for a sustainable and fair Common European Asylum System

Today the European Commission is presenting proposals to reform the [Common European Asylum System](#) by creating a fairer, more efficient and more sustainable system for allocating asylum applications among Member States. The basic principle will remain the same – asylum seekers should, unless they have family elsewhere, apply for asylum in the first country they enter – but a new fairness mechanism

will ensure no Member State is left with a disproportionate pressure on its asylum system. Today's proposals also include transforming the existing European Asylum Support Office ([EASO](#)) into a fully-fledged European Union Agency for Asylum to reflect its enhanced role in the new system and reinforcing of the EU's fingerprinting database, Eurodac, in order to better manage the asylum system and to help tackle irregular migration. A [Press Release](#), [Memo](#) and [Factsheet](#) are available online.

### **Commission opens the way for decision by European Parliament and Council on visa-free travel for citizens of Turkey**

The European Commission is today proposing to the European Parliament and Council of the European Union to lift the visa requirements for the citizens of Turkey, under the understanding that the Turkish authorities will fulfil, as a matter of urgency and as they committed to do so on 18 March 2016, the outstanding benchmarks of its Visa Liberalisation Roadmap. The proposal is presented together with a Report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of the Roadmap. Visa liberalisation for Turkey is a key component of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 which stated that the fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016, provided that all benchmarks have been met. A [Press Release](#), [Memo](#) and [Factsheet](#) on today's report and proposals are available online

### **Back to Schengen: Commission takes next steps towards lifting of temporary internal border controls**

The Commission has today proposed a [Recommendation](#), to be decided upon by the Council, to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders, namely in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway for a maximum period of six months. National measures have already been introduced by these countries to address the threat to public policy and internal security resulting from the secondary movements of irregular migrants. Today's draft Recommendation proposes to extend these measures, in line with the Schengen Borders Code, as, and despite significant progress made by Greece, not all of the serious deficiencies identified could be adequately and comprehensively addressed within the three months' limit. A [Press Release](#), and [Memo](#) are available online.

### **Commission proposes visa-free travel for the people of Kosovo**

The European Commission is today proposing to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament to lift the visa requirements for the people of Kosovo by transferring Kosovo to the visa-free list for short-stays in the Schengen area. The [proposal](#) is presented together with the Commission's [positive assessment](#) confirming that Kosovo has fulfilled the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap. A [Press Release](#) is available online.

### **State of Play: Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement**

An updated Memo on the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement has been published today, providing the latest information on the assurances provided on the protection of asylum seekers returned to Turkey, the number of arrivals, returns and resettlements, and the deployment of Frontex and EASO staff. The Memo is available [here](#).

## **European Structural and Investment Funds: almost €280 million to improve transport links in the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia**

The Commission adopted yesterday three [major projects](#): the first, worth €46.6 million from the [Cohesion Fund](#), aims to improve railway connections in Prague. The EU-funded work will increase the competitiveness of the Czech railway system and save valuable time for travellers around Prague. The second, worth €31.5 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#), will fund the rehabilitation of a national road in the centre of Romania, between the cities of Târgu Mureş, Reghin and Săraţel. The aim is to improve accessibility in the region and road safety. The third, worth €201.7 million from the Cohesion Fund, will co-finance the construction of a section of the D3 motorway in the region of Žilina, in Northern Slovakia. This project, part of the [TEN-T Baltic-Adriatic corridor](#), will benefit industry and tourism in the country. More details on these projects are available [online](#). €70 billion from the ESI Funds will be invested in transport networks in the EU in 2014-2020. More information on ESI Funds investments is available on the [Open Data Platform](#).

## **European Commission appoints a new Director-General to its department for International Cooperation and Development**

Today, the European Commission appointed Stefano Manservigi as Director-General of its department for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) as of 16 May. Mr Manservigi, an Italian national, is currently Head of Cabinet of High Representative/ Vice-President Federica **Mogherini**. Mr Manservigi brings more than thirty years of experience in the Commission to this job, including six years as Director-General of the department for Development and Relations with Africa, Caribbean, Pacific States (DG DEV) and four years leading the department for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME). More information is available in the press release [here](#).

## **Commissioner Bulc visits Brussels Airport, pays tribute to the victims of March 22 attacks**

EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** yesterday visited Brussels Airport, following the reopening of the departures hall. After the visit, Commissioner **Bulc** said *"I would like to thank Brussels Airport CEO, Mr Arnaud Feist for his invitation. I came today to pay my respects to all the victims of the 22 March attacks. All my thoughts are with their families, their friends and with all of those who were left wounded. I also came to express my support and admiration for all the employees of Brussels Airport. They worked tirelessly to resume operations within days of the attacks and to quickly reopen most of the departure hall. I also discussed with Mr Feist the security measures in place at Brussels Airport and what is being done at EU level. My opinion is that transport should remain open and accessible to the travelling public, with the highest possible level of security."*

## **Commission welcomes agreement to make public sector websites and apps more accessible**

Negotiators of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed last night on the first EU-wide rules to make the websites and mobile apps of public sector bodies more accessible, especially for the blind, the deaf and the hard of hearing. The Directive will cover public sector bodies' websites and mobile apps, from administrations, courts and police departments to public hospitals, universities and libraries. Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the [Digital Single Market](#), welcomed the agreement: *"Internet access should be a reality for everyone. Leaving millions of Europeans behind is not an option. Last night's agreement is an important step towards a Digital Single Market, which is about removing barriers so that all Europeans can get the best from the digital world."* Günther H. **Oettinger**, Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, said: *"It is not acceptable that millions of European citizens are left behind*

*in the digital society. The agreement that we have just reached will ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the internet and mobile apps, to participate in society to a fuller extent and to lead a more independent life." A press release is available [here](#) in all EU languages.*

## **Commission publishes results of two public consultations under Digital Single Market Strategy**

The Commission has today published two reports as part of its preparatory work to create a [Digital Single Market](#). The first one is related to the public consultation on the review of the EU Satellite and Cable Directive (more information [here](#)). The objectives of the consultation were to collect views on how stakeholders evaluate the requirements of the Directive and on the possibility of extending some of its principles in light of market and technological developments as well as online practices. The Commission will take account of the results of the public consultation in its ongoing work to facilitate cross-border access to content in the EU. The second report published today covers the public consultation on the technical measures related to the end of roaming charges in the EU. A few days after a new decrease in roaming charges, the Commission is fully working on the preparation of the end of roaming charges set for June 2017. The results of the public consultation will notably contribute to the review of wholesale markets (i.e. the prices that operators charge each other for the use of their networks) to be presented in the coming weeks (more information [here](#)). Vice-President **Ansip**, in charge of the Digital Single Market, and Commissioner **Oettinger**, in charge of the Digital Economy and Society, said: "*We have now analysed almost all the contributions to the public consultations that we have launched under the Digital Single Market Strategy. One year after we presented our plans, we are on the right track to translate them into concrete proposals. Our next set of initiatives should be on the table at the end of the month. They will boost e-commerce in the EU and contribute to creating the rights conditions for a thriving digital economy and society, with modern rules for audiovisual media and policy directions in the area of online platforms*".

## **State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Irish credit union restructuring scheme**

The European Commission has found the prolongation until 1 October 2016 of an Irish scheme aimed at restructuring credit unions to be in line with [EU state aid rules on the restructuring of banks during the crisis](#) (see also [MEMO](#)). The objective of the scheme is to underpin the stability and long-term viability of credit unions and the credit union sector at large. Restructuring involves merging weaker and stronger credit unions, providing, if necessary, a capital injection to make up any shortfall in the capital reserve requirements of the merged credit union. Stabilisation involves assisting fundamentally viable credit unions that have temporarily slipped below the regulatory reserve requirements. The scheme will have a budget of € 250 million to support mergers and a budget of € 30 million to stabilise specific credit unions that will be funded via a sector levy. In particular, the Commission found that the measure ensures that the beneficiaries become viable in the long-term through restructuring or merging with sound credit unions and that they contribute to the cost of restructuring. Moreover, the impact on competition is limited because credit unions are small and only do business with members. The Commission first [authorised the scheme on 16 October 2014](#) it was subsequently [prolonged on 5 May 2015](#) and [16 November 2015](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference [SA.45129](#).

## **Commission completes recruitment process for Regulatory Scrutiny Board with three external appointments**

The Commission has today made the final three appointments to the [Regulatory Scrutiny Board](#), by externally recruiting three members. After a public call for applications which generated 94 candidates, the Commission has appointed today Mr Nils Björksten, Mr Claudio Radaelli and Ms Isabelle Schömann. Mr Björksten, a national of Finland, comes from the US Congressional Research Service. He is also

Adjunct Professor in Government and International Affairs at George Mason University, Washington D.C. Mr Radaelli, an Italian national, is currently Professor of Political Science and Jean Monnet Chair at the University of Exeter. Ms Schömann, a French national, is a Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute. The dates when they will take up their posts will be determined later. These new members will join the three Commission officials appointed to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board earlier this year: Mr Didier Herbert, Mr Vassili Lelakis and Mr Bernard Naudts. All members will work full-time for a non-renewable three-year term under the leadership of Ms Anne Bucher, who was [appointed](#) Chair of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board on 2 March. The Regulatory Scrutiny Board was created as part of the [Better Regulation Agenda](#) adopted on 19 May 2015, and started operating as of 1 July 2015. The Board's role is to grant an independent check of the quality of impact assessments and evaluations prepared to inform College decisions. All of its Opinions can be found [here](#). More information about the implementation of the Commission's Better Regulation Agenda is available [here](#).

### **Eurostat: Over a million persons died in the EU from a heart attack or a stroke**

In the European Union (EU) in 2013, heart attacks (around 644 000 deaths) and strokes (almost 433 000 deaths) were the cause of death for almost 1.1 million persons, accounting for slightly more than 1 in 5 deaths (21.6%). Since 2000 however, the share of both fatal heart attacks and fatal strokes has continuously decreased in the EU, from being responsible for 16.6% and 11.5% respectively of all deaths in 2000, to 12.9% and 8.7% in 2013. Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, commented: *"In 2013 over one million EU citizens died from heart attacks or strokes. This number is simply terrifying, especially because cardiovascular diseases are largely preventable. We must at all levels and in all relevant sectors continue to address the risk factors of chronic disease: tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diets and lack of exercise. Tobacco alone is responsible for nearly 700 000 premature deaths in the EU every year. My hope is that the EU Tobacco Products Directive – which starts to apply as of 20 May – will greatly discourage smoking and, as such, premature death in the EU."* A Eurostat press release is available [here](#).

### **March 2016 compared with February 2016 - Volume of retail trade down by 0.5% in euro area - Down by 0.7% in EU28**

In March 2016 compared with February 2016, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade fell by 0.5% in the euro area (EA19) and by 0.7% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In February the retail trade volume rose by 0.3% in the euro area and remained stable in the EU28. Read all about it [here](#)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini to visit Kosovo**

Federica **Mogherini**, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, will visit Kosovo on Thursday, 5 May. She will meet President Hashim Thaci and Prime Minister Isa Mustafa; she is also due to deliver a speech in the Kosovo Assembly to mark important developments in bilateral relations with the European Union. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo came into force on 1 April this year, while today the European Commission proposed to the Council and the European Parliament to lift visa requirements for the people of Kosovo. The situation in Kosovo and the wider region as well as the importance of the dialogue for normalisation of relations between Pristina and Belgrade are also on the agenda of HRVP's visit.

## Commissioner Crețu in Romania: ESI Funds stimulate the country's economic growth

From tomorrow until Tuesday, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** is in Romania. She meets with Mr. Vasile Dîncu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration and Mr. Cristian Ghinea, Minister in charge of EU funds. She delivers two keynote speeches: the first one on [Simplification and ESI Funds](#) at the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and the second one on EU funds in 2016-2020 at the European Funds Forum in Bucharest. She also visits the EU-funded County Hospital in Bistrița. *"The Romanian potential for growth is huge and ESI Funds can serve as strategic stimuli for the country's economy, if they are used in an efficient way. I'm here to address the bottlenecks hindering the smooth implementation of ESI Funds programmes. I will also encourage the national authorities to fully seize the opportunity of combining ESI Funds with the EFSI in such sectors as transport, ICT, research or energy,"* the Commissioner said ahead of her visit. More information on ESI Funds in Romania is available [online](#).

**NOTE: Next edition of the Daily News 10 May**

### Upcoming events

**[Monday 9 May: Europe Day](#)** European Commission - Upcoming events The news: On Monday 9 May, Europe Day will be celebrated across the EU. For the Commission's part, President Juncker and the College Members will participate in events at national and European level to mark the annual celebration, including Open Doors Days in EU Representations

**[26-27 May: The EU at the G7 summit in Japan](#)** European Commission - Upcoming events The news: The 42nd edition of the G7 will take place from 26 to 27 May in Ise-Shima, in the Mie Prefecture (Japan), under Japanese presidency. The European Union, who is a full member of the G7 (and the G20), will be jointly represented by by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk.

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