



Friday, 20 May, 2016

EU agri-food exports keep increasing

EU agri-food exports to third countries in March 2016 were worth €11.3 billion, about €1 billion higher than in February 2016, according to the latest [monthly report](#) on agri-food trade. The figures show the highest increase in exports to China – which were 11.8% higher in March 2016 than in March 2015. For the past 12 months, exports to China increased to €2.6 billion, a 33% rise compared to the same period one year ago. For monthly export values, the highest increases were achieved for pork (from €318 million to €422 million in March 2016, an increase of 32.5%), followed by oilseeds (other than soya beans), some food preparations and wine. Over the last twelve months, export values went up most for wine, which witnessed an increase of €783 million or 8% compared to the 12-month period one year earlier.

Emissions trading: slight decrease in emissions in 2015

Emissions of greenhouse gases from installations participating in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) are estimated to have decreased by just under 0.4% last year, according to the information recorded in the Union Registry. The surplus of emission allowances that has built up in the system since 2009 was considerably reduced last year as a result of "back-loading", which postponed the auctioning of 300 million allowances from 2015 to 2019-2020, combined with stable emissions. EU Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: "*The good news is that the EU ETS emissions dropped slightly last year, which confirms the decreasing trend over the last five years. Also, 2015 marks the first year in which the surplus shrank considerably on the European carbon market – thanks to the back-loading of allowances. This shows that our efforts to address the serious market imbalance start to bear fruit. But back-loading is just the beginning. The Market Stability Reserve will need to complete the work.*" More information on the [website](#) of the European Commission.

EUROSTAT: First estimate for March 2016 - EU28 current account surplus €17.6 bn - €13.2 bn surplus for trade in services

The **EU28** seasonally adjusted current account of the balance of payments recorded a surplus of €17.6 billion in March 2016, compared with surpluses of €10.7 bn in February 2016 and €7.7 bn in March 2015, according to estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. Read online [here](#)

Commission awards €56 million in emergency funding to improve conditions for migrants and strengthen the registration and asylum process in Greece

The European Commission has awarded €56 million in emergency funding to improve conditions for migrants in Greece, to increase the capacities of the Greek authorities to register newly arriving migrants and to process their asylum claims. €46 million is provided under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and €10 million comes from the Internal Security Fund (ISF). The funding will create better conditions for vulnerable migrants and strengthen the registration and asylum process with additional human resources, better IT infrastructure, an increased availability of interpretation and better access to information. The funding will support different projects: €30 million is awarded to the UNHCR to support the Emergency Response Plan for Greece and strengthen the capacity of the Greek asylum service and of the new Reception and Identification Service; the International Organization for Migration (IOM) will receive €13 million to provide assistance to the most vulnerable migrants stranded in Greece; the Greek Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and the Greek Asylum Service are awarded a total of €13 million to enhance the efficiency of the asylum process, strengthen the registration process and provide operational support to the Hellenic Police at the external borders. This funding will contribute to the implementation of the emergency response plan developed together by the Commission, the Greek authorities and relevant stakeholders to address the ongoing humanitarian situation on the ground and the implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March. Since the beginning of 2015 the Commission has awarded €237 million in emergency assistance to support the Greek authorities as well as international organisations and NGOs operating in Greece. The emergency funding comes on top of the €509 million already allocated to Greece under the national programmes for 2014-2020 (€294.5 million from AMIF and €214.7 million from ISF).

Investment Plan for Europe: More than €100 billion of investments less than one year into Fund

Yesterday the European Investment Bank - the European Commission's partner in the Investment Plan, approved eight more projects, taking the total of approved investment projects to 64, and the number of Member States to benefit from the Plan to 26. This also brings the total investment so far to almost a third of the targeted €315 billion. The new projects are in strategic areas such as research and development, energy efficiency and digital technology. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"Today's news shows this Commission means business. Together with our partner the EIB, we are delivering on our Investment Plan: less than a year into its existence, the European Fund for Strategic Investment has triggered more than €100 billion of total investment in the EU. We are keeping the promise to put Europeans back into jobs and help the European recovery."* More information is available in the [press release](#).

Changes for tobacco products sold in the EU: Statement by Commissioner Andriukaitis

“From today, all EU countries must comply with the [Tobacco Products Directive](#), whose measures for tobacco products on the EU internal market aim to reduce the numbers of tobacco users with a particular focus on discouraging young people from taking up smoking and to ensure that citizens across the EU are fully aware of the harmful effects of tobacco use. I congratulate the countries that have already transposed the Directive into national law, and encourage an effective enforcement of the new rules in all Member States without delay. I am confident this will happen, and that the anti-tobacco momentum which has emerged in the EU in recent years – as evidenced by falling smoking rates and the introduction of plain packaging in some Member States – will continue to grow. The benefits of falling smoking rates are clear: not only do people enjoy better health and wellbeing, and significantly lower rates of chronic diseases and premature death related to tobacco, there is also a substantial economic benefit. A reduction in tobacco

consumption of just 2% translates into annual healthcare savings of approximately €506 million for the EU. Once the new rules are applied and enforced in all 28 EU countries they will play a vital role in amplifying and consolidating the progress made to date. This makes the new Tobacco Products Directive a true triumph and a lasting legacy for public health in the EU." For more information - in all languages - on the 10 key changes to tobacco products sold in the EU, see [here](#).

European Union helps reshape international assistance at the World Humanitarian Summit

The European Union (EU) and its Member States will jointly call for a global partnership for a more efficient and effective humanitarian aid system at the first-ever [World Humanitarian Summit](#) in Istanbul, Turkey. As a major donor and key policy-setter, the EU and its Member States will play a leading role at the Summit on 23-24 May, where over 50 world leaders and some 5,000 humanitarian, development and political stakeholders gather to shift from response to crisis towards effectively managing prevention and early action and supporting resilience and self-reliance. Worldwide, over 125 million men, women and children are in need of humanitarian assistance. Despite record contributions in recent years, donors cannot fully cover the growing humanitarian needs generated by today's emergencies. A [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) are available online.

Road Safety Awards: Commission rewards initiatives in Spain, UK, Denmark, Poland and Albania

EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta **Bulc** today presented the [Excellence in Road Safety Awards 2016](#) at a ceremony held in Brussels. European roads may be safest in the world, [26 000 people nevertheless lost their lives in 2015](#) and the Road Safety Awards acknowledge the best activities and good practices that can save lives on our roads. Commissioner **Bulc** said: *"I am very impressed with the commitment and creativity that this year's winners have demonstrated. Grassroots initiatives like these are crucial in our efforts to reach our strategic goal to halve road fatalities by 2020. I can only encourage everyone, at whatever level you work, to carry on the great work and to pass on your experiences, so that great ideas can be used again elsewhere."* Awards in the category "school challenge" went to the [Colegio Público Miguel de Cervantes in Gijón](#) (Spain) and to the [Lockerbie Academy](#) (United Kingdom). Awards in the category "best practice" went to [Børneulykkesfonden](#) and [Codan Forsikring](#) (Denmark), to the [Centrum Bezpieczeństwa Ruchu Drogowego](#) (Poland) and to the [ACA Automobil Club](#) (Albania). More information on the winners is available [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative / Vice-President Mogherini visits Mexico on 24-25 May

High Representative / Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will visit Mexico on 24-25 May. During her visit, she will meet President Enrique Peña Nieto, Foreign Affairs Minister Claudia Ruiz Massieu, Minister of Interior Osorio Chong and the Attorney General, Arely Gómez, with whom she will discuss EU-Mexico relations. She will also participate in the opening of the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), as well as opening the Second Round of the High Level Dialogue on Security and Justice, covering a broad spectrum of issues including the combat of organised crime, rule of law and human rights. The HR/VP will also meet with civil society.

High Representative / Vice-President Mogherini visits Colombia on 26-27 May

High Representative / Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** will pay a visit to Colombia on 26 and 27 of May. During her visit she will convey the strong political support of the EU of the current peace process in Havana. She will meet HE President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Maria Angela Holguin and other members of the Government. She will have a chance to take stock of the state of EU relations with Colombia, which have included important developments in the past years. The HR/VP will also meet with representatives of civil society, as well as visit a project dedicated to the victims of armed conflict.

Commissioner Thyssen participates in European Youth Event

Today and tomorrow (20 and 21 May), the [European Youth Event](#) entitled 'Together we can make a change' will take place in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The event will bring together thousands of young Europeans who will exchange ideas and perspectives on youth-related issues - with each other, European decision makers and speakers of various professional backgrounds. One of the main topics of this year's edition will be youth unemployment and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will actively engage with the participants on this subject. First, she will give a key-note speech on the 'Skills gap: Bridge over troubled water' which will be made available [here](#). Later this afternoon, the Commissioner will also participate in a discussion on how to reduce youth unemployment. Finally, the Commissioner will officially open the [#CedefopPhotoAward exhibition 'Youth in Education and Training in Europe'](#). Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Thyssen** commented: *"I have confidence in our youth and I believe that together we will make a change. As Commissioner for Employment, I am determined to fight for a society where all young people can find their way into a quality job, develop their careers, and realise their professional dreams and goals. Let's put all the odds on the side of our youth - the young of today are our best bet for tomorrow."* The sessions in which Commissioner **Thyssen** is participating will be [live streamed](#). The complete programme of the two-day event can be found [here](#).

Upcoming Events

[Thursday 26 May: The Commission adopts its monthly infringements package](#) European Commission - Upcoming events The news: On Thursday 26 May 2016, the European Commission will adopt its monthly infringements package. These decisions seek to enforce EU law across Europe so that citizens and businesses can benefit fully from the internal market.

[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 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.

