



Friday, 03 June, 2016

### **G20 Agriculture Ministers commit to sustainable agriculture and antibiotics resistance**

The European Commission welcomes the commitment by the G20 Agriculture Ministerial meeting to support sustainable agriculture for ensuring global food security and to fight antimicrobial resistance, including the phasing out of antibiotics as growth promoters in animals. The G20 conclusions also called for greater cooperation in ICT roll-out in farming and reaffirmed the group's commitment to the major global agreements including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Nairobi WTO deal. EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil **Hogan**, who was representing today the EU at the meeting in Xi'an, China, said: *"I welcome the G20 conclusions as a sign of our common commitment to tackle the global challenges of food security, sustainable agriculture, innovation and ICT use in farming."* In Brussels, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis** also welcomed today's outcome and declared: *"It is encouraging to see progress in cooperation on fighting AMR on international level given the global nature of the challenge. European Union will continue contributing to broader collective actions, including in promoting international awareness, methodologies, and surveillance systems, where the EU can act as a global leader."*

### **Commission welcomes new global agreement to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing**

On 5 June, the [Port State Measures Agreement](#), a key international treaty aimed at combating illegal fishing, will come into force. The Agreement, adopted and promoted by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation, allows countries to keep illegal operators out of their ports and to prevent them from landing illegal catches. EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** welcomed the entry into force of the Agreement: *"We now have a powerful instrument that will help fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing at European and at global level. This is a significant improvement to international ocean governance. The EU has always played a leading role in the fight against IUU fishing activities and was among the first to approve this major international agreement already in 2011 ... We need to make sure that all coastal states ... have the means to effectively implement the Port State Measures Agreement. The fight against illegal fishing has become global and perpetrators will soon have nowhere to hide."* Read the full statement [here](#).

## **EUROSTAT: 5 June: World Environment Day - How satisfied are inhabitants of EU capital cities with the air quality and noise levels? Very or rather satisfied in most EU capital cities**

“Generally speaking, please tell me if you are very satisfied, rather satisfied, rather unsatisfied or not at all satisfied with the quality of the air and the noise level in your city?” inhabitants of 83 European cities were asked in 2015. Results show significant disparities between capital cities in the **European Union (EU)**, with levels of satisfaction regarding air quality ranging from 22% to 88% and for noise levels from 31% to 82%. [Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

**European Union joins Mission Innovation, a global initiative on clean energy** The European Union has joined [Mission Innovation](#), a global initiative on clean energy, at its inaugural ministerial meeting in San Francisco on 1-2 June. Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union, said: *"The European Commission is honoured to be part of Mission Innovation. Scaling up clean energy innovation is key to the success of the [European Energy Union](#) and to the implementation of the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#). It also represents a major global economic and industrial opportunity. Mission Innovation therefore coheres perfectly with our upcoming research, innovation and competitiveness strategy."* Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: *"I have set three goals for the EU research and innovation policy - Open Innovation, Open Science, and Open to the World - and Mission Innovation combines all three. Open innovation by bringing a variety of actors together, open science by promoting synergies and the sharing of research results, and openness to the world by being a prime example of a truly global collaboration. I am confident that Mission Innovation is well geared to accelerate the clean energy revolution."* Mission Innovation was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) in Paris. So far, 20 of the world's major economies, representing 58% of the world population and over 80% of global clean energy research budgets, have pledged to double their government investment in clean energy research and innovation over the next five years. The European Commission has now joined this initiative on behalf of the EU, which is expected to allocate €10 billion of funding to clean energy under the EU research and innovation programme [Horizon 2020](#) for the period 2014-2020. *A full press release is available [online](#).*

## **State aid: Commissioner Vestager agrees to strengthen bilateral partnerships with Italy, Romania and Bulgaria at High Level Forum; presents working paper on state aid and tax rulings**

*"Businesses need State aid rules to protect them from unfair competition"*, Commissioner in charge of competition policy Margrethe Vestager has told Member States. *"But they don't want our rules to slow down the delivery of support that doesn't hurt competition. Businesses want us to help them invest in research, in training, in protecting the environment. We've been able to make that easier thanks to you."* Commissioner Vestager was speaking today in Brussels at the High Level Forum on State aid to discuss progress on implementation of the State Aid Modernisation initiative launched in 2012. Commissioner Vestager also said to Member States that *"one of the biggest threats to fair competition is when multinationals don't pay their fair share of tax"*. To help Member States to comply with the rules, she said, *"we've given guidance in our [Notice on the Notion of Aid](#) and, today, in a dedicated [working paper](#)."* To avoid harming competition, *"governments should treat multinationals in the same way as companies that operate individually."* In the context of better implementation of State Aid Modernisation, the Commission has offered the possibility for Member States to enter into strengthened bilateral partnerships to improve management of state aid. One such [partnership with Italy](#) was agreed today by Commissioner Vestager and Italian State Secretary for European Affairs Sandro Gozi. This follows agreement with Bulgaria in April. Constructive work is also advancing to strengthen a partnership with Romania.

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Visa Europe by Visa Inc.**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Visa Europe of the United Kingdom, by Visa Inc. of the US. Together, the two companies operate the VISA payment scheme. According to an agreement concluded after Visa Inc. and Visa Europe's de-merger in 2007, the companies cannot operate in the same territories. Visa Europe is active in the European Economic Area (EEA) and neighbouring countries while Visa Inc. is active in the rest of the world. As a result, the companies' activities do not overlap and the Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would therefore raise no competition concerns. 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.7786](#).

## **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over UK WIG by the 3i Group and Wood Creek**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over UK WIG I Limited, of the United Kingdom by the 3i Group plc, also of the UK, and U.S. WIG Holdings LP (known as "Wood Creek") of the US, ultimately controlled by Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company ("MassMutual"), also of the US. UK WIG owns and operates communication towers and other wireless infrastructure and is currently controlled by Wood Creek. 3i Group is an investment management business. Wood Creek is a holding company and MassMutual is a life insurance company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the companies' activities do not overlap. 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.8031](#).

## **EUROSTAT: Volume of retail trade stable in euro area Up by 0.5% in EU28**

In April 2016 compared with March 2016, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade remained stable in the euro area (EA19) and rose by 0.5% in the EU28, according to estimates from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In March the retail trade volume fell by 0.6% in both zones.

In April 2016 compared with April 2015 the calendar adjusted retail sales index increased by 1.4% in the euro area and by 2.4% in the EU28. [Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

## **European Commission appoints new Head of Representation in Luxembourg**

The European Commission appointed Ms Yuriko Nadia Backes as the new Head of its Representation in Luxembourg. She will take up office on 1 September 2016, bringing over twenty years of experience in European and international affairs and politics to the post. She has served under different Luxembourgish administrations both in Luxembourg and abroad since the mid-1990s. Ms Backes obtained a Bachelor in International Relations from the London School of Economics, a Master of Arts in Japanese Studies from the London School of Oriental and African Studies and a Master of Arts in European Political and Administrative Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges. A complete press release for Ms Yuriko Nadia Backes is available [online](#)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## Commissioner Navracsics participates in a Citizens' Dialogue in Debrecen, Hungary

EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, Tibor **Navracsics**, will participate this afternoon in a [Citizens' Dialogue in Debrecen](#), where he will engage in open discussions with civil society. The dialogue will focus on the role of education and culture in fostering growth and job creation, the skills agenda, which the Commission will adopt soon, and the state-of-play of the [Investment Plan](#). For the Citizens' Dialogue, Commissioner **Navracsics** will be joined by Szabolcs Takács, State Secretary for EU Affairs at the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office. While in Debrecen, the Commissioner will also meet Komolay Szabolcs, Deputy Mayor of Debrecen, which is the second biggest city in Hungary.

### Upcoming Events.

**30 May–3 June: [Green Week 2016 - Investing for a greener future](#)** The Commission will host Green Week, the biggest annual occasion to discuss European environment policy, taking place from Monday, 30 May to Friday, 3 June 2016.

**15 June: [10th edition of the European Development Days European](#)** The tenth edition of the European Development Days will take place in Brussels on 15-16 June. The background: The European Development Days is Europe's leading forum on international cooperation and development

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