



Wednesday, 29 June, 2016

Pesticides: after EU Member States fail to take responsibility for the decision on glyphosate extension, Commission extends the approval until European Chemical Agency issues its opinion

Despite repeated efforts from the Commission to address concerns expressed about the re-approval of glyphosate, Member States were not prepared to take responsibility for a decision as no qualified majority was reached at the Standing Committee on 6 June and again at the Appeal Committee on 24 June. As a result, taking into account the extremely thorough and stringent scientific assessment of the active substance by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Member States' national agencies, the Commission extended today the approval of glyphosate for a limited period of time, until the end of 2017 at the latest. By the end of 2017, an additional opinion on the properties of the active substance is expected from the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) the competent EU agency for the assessment of dossiers for the classification of chemical substances. Its opinion will be fully taken into account when deciding on subsequent steps. The Commission has also proposed to the Member States to restrict the conditions of use of glyphosate in the EU. These conditions include a ban of a co-formulant (POE-tallowamine) from glyphosate-based products, obligations to reinforce scrutiny of pre-harvest uses of glyphosate as well as to minimise the use in specific areas (public parks and playgrounds). Discussions with the Member States took place this week but were inconclusive. The Commission regrets that Member States have not yet been able to agree to these restricted conditions and will direct the necessary efforts to have them adopted as soon as possible. [Questions and Answers on Glyphosate.](#)

President Juncker participates in the European Council (28 June) and in the Informal Meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the EU-27 (29 June)

In yesterday's joint press conference at the end of the European Council meeting, Commission President **Juncker** expressed his satisfaction that the European Council had once again given its full backing to the political priorities of the Commission, in particular those related to **jobs, growth and investment**. He also welcomed the swift political agreement on the establishment of a **European Border and Coast Guard** and called for its final formal approval by the European Parliament and the Council as soon as possible. He paid tribute to the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the EU and to the excellent inter-institutional cooperation. He expressed his full support for the new **EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy** presented by High Representative / Vice-President **Mogherini**. President **Juncker** also explained why the Commission is of the view, based on its legal analysis, that the **EU-Canada trade agreement (CETA)** is an "EU-only" agreement. He took note of the wish of most leaders that it should be considered as a mixed agreement, implying national ratification, and announced that the Commission would reflect on this basis in the coming days. Regarding the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** he was reassured by the fact that the European Council wants the Commission to continue negotiations. When asked

by a journalist on the reason for the negative outcome of the United Kingdom Referendum, President **Juncker** gave his assessment that *“if you are telling the public over years that something is wrong with the European Union (...) you should not be taken by surprise if voters do believe you”*. He insisted that the notification under article 50 to withdraw from the European Union be triggered by the next British Prime Minister as soon as possible, in line with the [joint statement](#) agreed by the Presidents of the four EU institutions last Friday. Before this notification, there will not be any formal or informal negotiation with the United Kingdom, President **Juncker** repeated, referring to the written instruction he had given in this sense to the members of the College and senior Commission staff. He repeated that he was saddened by the outcome of the referendum, but said that now everybody had to act on its result. In his press conference with President Tusk **after today's meeting of Heads of State or Government of the EU-27**, President **Juncker** said: *“Es wird keinerlei Art von Verhandlungen geben bevor die britische Notifizierung über einen möglichen Austritt uns erreicht. No notification without negotiation.”* He said that there was agreement that there would be no internal market à la carte: *“Those who have access have to implement all our freedoms without exceptions and nuances.”* President **Juncker** then added that while the EU needed further reforms, these were not a complement or the contrary of what was done now, referring to the conclusions of the European Council which mentioned the strategic agenda of the Council as well as the [10 priorities of the Commission](#) which were entailed in this agenda. He said: *“It is about speeding up reforms, not about adding reforms to already existing reforms.”* Both press conferences are available on [EBS](#).

REFIT Platform hands First Vice-President Timmermans first set of opinions on ways to cut the burdens and improve the results of EU legislation

An important step forward in the Commission [Better Regulation Agenda](#) was taken yesterday, 28 June, when First Vice-President **Timmermans** chaired the [REFIT Platform](#) and received a first set of 18 opinions agreed by its members. Based on stakeholders' and members' input, the recommendations provide suggestions on how to improve the results of EU legislation by reducing unnecessary burdens, eliminating overlapping regulatory requirements and simplifying legislation. The Commission will react to all the Platform's suggestions and publicly explain how it intends to follow up in the context of its 2017 Work Programme. The First Vice-President thanked the Platform members for their valuable work so far, saying: *“Bridging the gap between the regulated and the regulators is the reason why we created the Platform. I highly welcome this first output. It shows the Platform's capacity to tap into the experience of those dealing with EU regulations on a daily basis and suggest practical changes that can make a real difference for our small enterprises, our citizens and public administrations without lowering the ambition of our policy goals. It is now for the Commission to make sure that everything that is valuable in the recommendations is taken up and provide clear reasons for any suggestions the Commission may decide not to follow”*. The REFIT Platform consists of forty-eight members from a diversity of stakeholders, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and all Member State governments, who come together to contribute to making EU legislation and its implementation in Member States more efficient and more effective in achieving its objectives. The Platform, created in 2015, works on the basis of their own input and experience as well as input received from the public via the ['Lighten the Load'](#) tool. This new online portal is open for all members of the public to provide their suggestions for reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens they experience in their daily lives. Platform members assess the merits of stakeholder contributions and look at practical ways to follow up on their suggestions, without undermining policy objectives. The Commission will react to all the Platform's suggestions and systematically and publicly explain how it intends to follow up.

EU-Jordan: Commission proposes further EUR 200 million in Macro-Financial Assistance

Following a request by Jordan, the European Commission is ready to assist the country further in overcoming its economic difficulties and achieving sustainable growth. Today, the Commission [has proposed](#) additional Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) to Jordan of up to EUR 200 million in medium-term

loans at favourable financing conditions. Pierre **Moscovici**, European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Today we are taking further action to help Jordan preserve macro-economic stability and to support the reforms needed for more sustainable and inclusive growth. Jordan has been strongly affected by events in Syria since the crisis there began in 2011. Last week's attack on the Syria-Jordan border is just the most recent example of this. The country has also suffered from severe energy shocks and the weak international environment. The protracted refugee crisis has created significant financing needs, while the balance of payments and fiscal position remain vulnerable. The EU remains committed to supporting Jordan in these difficult times."* This assistance is part of a wider effort by the EU and other international donors, agreed at the London conference "[Supporting Syria and the region](#)" in February 2016, to help Jordan and other countries in the region mitigate the economic and social impact stemming from the regional conflicts and the presence of a large number of Syrian refugees in the country. A press release [here](#), provides more detailed information on the proposal.

Commissioner Navracsics to receive experts' recommendations on promoting sport diplomacy and grassroots sport

EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will today be presented with the [final reports](#) – available from 13:00 - of two High level groups on sport diplomacy and grassroots sport which started work in autumn 2015. The report on sport diplomacy includes 15 recommendations designed to help ensure that sport can play a more significant part in helping the EU being a stronger actor on the global scene and be used as a tool to promote European values such as freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values. The second report and set of recommendations address how grassroots sport can make a contribution to society in the areas of health, social inclusion, learning and skills development, volunteering, sustainable financing, urban planning and infrastructures. Speaking ahead of the event, Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"I am pleased to see these fresh ideas that will help me advance work on two of my priorities in sport policy. The Commission will immediately start assessing how we can take these recommendations forward. We will ensure that, with Member States and the sport family, we use the potential of sport to the fullest, both in building open communities and in promoting our values."* The 15 members of each group included active and former athletes, academics, representatives of think tanks and media, personalities having exercised high-level responsibilities in the field of sport, and representatives of major sport organisations. During the handing-over ceremony, the Commissioner will give his first reactions to the recommendations.

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Greek bank guarantee scheme

The European Commission has authorised the prolongation of the Greek guarantee scheme for credit institutions until 31 December 2016 under EU state aid rules. Whilst the liquidity situation of the Greek banks is gradually improving, the Commission has found that the 6-month prolongation of the guarantee scheme is in line with the [rules on state aid to banks during the crisis](#), in particular because the prolonged measure is targeted, proportionate and limited in time and scope. During the application of the crisis rules for state aid to banks, the Commission is authorising guarantee schemes on banks' liabilities for successive periods of six months in order to be able to monitor developments and adjust conditions accordingly. The Greek guarantee scheme was initially approved [in November 2008](#). The authorisation of the scheme was prolonged several times, last time in December 2015 until end June 2016. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the [public case register](#) under the case number SA.45629.

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Polish credit union resolution scheme

The European Commission has authorised, under EU State aid rules, the fifth prolongation of the Polish credit union resolution scheme until 31 December 2016. The Commission found the prolongation of the scheme, initially [approved on 18 February 2014](#), to be in line with its [guidance on State aid to banks during the crisis](#). It found that the measures are well targeted, proportionate and limited in time and scope. The objective of the scheme is to safeguard financial stability and minimise the use of taxpayer money, when a credit union becomes unable to meet regulatory requirements. It allows to provide aid for transferring part or all of the assets and liabilities of a failing credit union to an acquirer through a competitive process. This will help to achieve the maximum value for the transferred assets and liabilities, ensuring that the aid is limited to the minimum necessary to ensure an orderly winding-up and that no buyer gains an undue economic advantage through the acquisition of under-priced assets and liabilities. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number SA.45517.

Antitrust: Commission re-adopts two amending decisions on heat stabilisers cartel

The European Commission has re-adopted two amending decisions on the [heat stabilisers cartel](#), following annulment by the EU General Court. In 2009, the Commission fined ten producers of heat stabilisers €173 million for fixing prices, sharing customers, allocating markets and exchanging sensitive commercial information. In the 2009 decision, ACW, Chemson and GEA were held jointly and severally liable for part of the imposed fine. As a result of a calculation error, the fine imposed on ACW exceeded the ceiling set by EU antitrust rules, namely 10% of the concerned undertaking's turnover. To correct this error, the Commission adopted an amending decision in 2010, without changing the total amount of the fine for Chemson (€1 913 971) and GEA (€3 346 200). [In July 2015](#), the EU General Court annulled the 2010 amending decision for GEA because it found that GEA was not able to submit its views before the Commission adopted the amending decision. The Commission has now given all companies the opportunity to present their views and has thus re-adopted the 2010 amending decision without changes. In the context of the 2009 decision, Akzo Nobel, Akcros and Elementis were held jointly and severally liable for part of the imposed fine. However, on the basis of a [judgment](#) by the EU Court of Justice in a different case, the infringement was time-barred for Elementis. The Commission therefore repealed the 2009 Decision with regard to Elementis and adopted an [amending decision](#) with regard to Akzo Nobel and Akcros in 2011. This 2011 amending decision did not change the total amount of the fines for Akzo and Nobel Akcros. [In July 2015](#), the EU General Court annulled the 2011 amending decision because it found that the companies had not had sufficient time to submit their views before the Commission adopted the amending decision. The Commission has now given Akzo Nobel and Akcros the opportunity to present their views and has thus re-adopted the 2011 amending decision. The re-adopted decision includes a 1% fine reduction for Akzo Nobel and Akcros (the fine is €40 194 000 for Akzo Nobel and €11 881 980 for Akcros), which follows from a separate General Court [judgment](#) on an appeal by the companies against the original 2009 decision. The amending decision will be made available under the case number [38589](#) in the public case register on the Commission's [competition](#) website. For more information on the Commission's action against cartels, see the [cartels website](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of certain aviation fuel assets belonging to ExxonMobil by WFS

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of certain aviation fuels businesses located at 25 airports in the European Economic Area and belonging to ExxonMobil by WFS, both of the US. ExxonMobil is active in the exploration, production and sale of crude oil and natural gas, and the refining and marketing of petroleum products. WFS is a global fuel logistics, transaction management and payment processing company, principally engaged in the distribution of fuel and related products.. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns

because it has a limited impact on the market structure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.7965](#).

EUROSTAT: Engineering, manufacturing and construction dominated by male graduates Women overrepresented in Education

Almost 5 million tertiary education students graduated in the European Union (EU) in 2014: 58% were women and 42% men.

Male dominated education fields are Engineering, manufacturing and construction (where men account for 73% of the graduates in this field) and Science, mathematics and computing (58%).

On the other hand, four out of five graduates in Education are women (80%). Another field where women are largely overrepresented is Health and welfare, with 75% female graduates.

Read the EUROSTAT data [here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioners Thyssen and Navracsics to attend the Skills Summit 2016 in Bergen, Norway

EU Commissioners **Thyssen** and **Navracsics** will participate in the [Skills Summit](#), organised by the Norwegian government and the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#). The Summit kicks off tonight and will conclude on Friday, in Bergen, Norway. Hot on the heels of the recently adopted New [Skills Agenda](#) for Europe, the Skills Summit will convene ministers with responsibility for a range of skills-relevant portfolios to exchange views on how best to maximise countries' skills potential to boost productivity, innovation and social inclusion. EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said: "*Europe's greatest asset is our human capital. The New Skills Agenda for Europe sets out how, working in partnership with countries and stakeholders, we can ensure that people and their skills are at the heart of inclusive growth. The Skills Summit is an important moment to discuss why skills matter and how to foster them.*" Commissioner **Thyssen's** speech will be made available [here](#). EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, said: "*We need to work together to give everyone the chance to acquire a broad set of skills from early on in life. Education is at the heart of this effort, and I am looking forward to discussing with our partners how we can best harness its potential to enable people to lead independent lives and make sure our economies stay innovative and competitive.*" The Summit will also be attended by Ema Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, Ángel Gurría, OECD Secretary General and a number of Ministers from OECD member countries as well as other key partner states. The outcome of the discussions will be published in the form of a Chair's Summary. In the margins of the Summit, Commissioner **Thyssen** will hold bilateral meetings with Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ms Anniken Hauglie, and the Minister of Education and Research, Mr Torbjørn Røe Isaksen. She will also participate in a pre-conference meeting with stakeholders, to discuss ways to strengthen stakeholder involvement in developing a skills strategy.

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Upcoming Events.

30 June-Friday 1 July: [College travels to Bratislava to meet with the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) On 30 June and 1 July, the College of Commissioners is travelling to Bratislava for its traditional visit to the incoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which in the second semester of 2016 will be held by the Slovak Republic. President Juncker and the Commission Members will discuss the priorities of the Slovak Presidency during a plenary session with the Slovak government. Before participating in a plenary meeting of the National Council – the Slovak Parliament – the College will engage in four cluster meetings with members of the Slovak government, grouped around the themes: external relations, security, migration and justice; energy and climate policy, transport and natural resources; growth, competitiveness and internal market; and the EU Budget, Economic and Monetary Union, and the social agenda



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