



Thursday, 30 June, 2016

### **Draft EU Budget 2017: Commission proposes a budget focused on priorities - growth, jobs and a solid response to the refugee crisis**

The Commission has today proposed the 2017 draft EU Budget focusing on the two main policy priorities for Europe: supporting the ongoing recovery of the European economy and addressing the security and humanitarian challenges in our neighbourhood. Increased funding will go to investments in growth, jobs and competitiveness in the European Union and to secure the necessary resources to protect the external borders of the EU, to reinforce security inside and outside the Union, to provide support for the reception and integration of refugees, and to address the root causes in the countries of origin and transit. At 13:00 Vice-President Kristalina **Georgieva** will be in the European Parliament to present the Draft EU Budget 2017 in detail. The session will be broadcast live [here](#). A press point will follow at 14:00, next to room PHS 3C50 in the European Parliament in Brussels. It will also be broadcast live on [EbS](#). A [press release](#) in all languages and a [MEMO](#) will be made available at 13:00.

### **Agriculture: Commission further increases dairy intervention ceilings**

The European Commission [further increased](#) the public intervention ceiling for skimmed milk powder from 218,000 tonnes to 350,000 tonnes. The original ceiling of 109,000 tonnes had already been doubled in April but due to its quick uptake, the European Commission had announced early on its intention to further increase it to support EU dairy farmers facing difficulties with the agricultural markets. The dairy market trends monitored by the [Milk Market Observatory](#) show that there is still a need to rebalance supply and demand. At the Council of Agriculture Ministers taking place on Monday 27 June in Luxembourg, Commissioner **Hogan** declared that "*the Commission is working on a support package for the dairy sector, with financial resources if necessary*" and that "*any new package will, in addition to addressing stabilisation and reduction of production, also have to be equitable in its treatment of dairy farmers throughout the Union.*" The increase formally enters into force today resulting in the closing of the tendering system under which intervention buying-in of skimmed milk powder was happening. The fixed intervention price system therefore resumes. The [detailed breakdown](#) of the quantities bought-in under public intervention and/or stored in private storage per week and per Member State can be found online. More information on accepted bids can be found [online](#).

### **New EU rules for consumer-friendly information on retail investment products**

The European Commission has today adopted new rules specifying the content and underlying methodology of the so-called Key Information Document (KID) that will have to be provided to retail consumers when they buy certain investment products, as of 31 December 2016. These include asset management products and other "packaged" investment products sold by banks or insurance companies. The KID, introduced by the [Regulation on Key Information Documents for Packaged Retail and Insurance-Based Investment Products \(PRIIPS\)](#), is a standardised and simple document which is designed to present the main features of an investment product in a consumer-friendly manner, allowing consumers across the EU to compare investment-linked insurance policies, investment funds and investment products. Today's Regulatory Technical Standards (RTS) specify the exact contents of the KID: it must outline the product's aims, how risky it is, when investors can get their money back, how much it costs and its expected returns. All of this information must be set out in a standard way, regardless of the type of investment product. The European Parliament and Council now have a two-month scrutiny period, which they can extend for a further month

### **Commission proposes new rules to better protect children in cross-border family proceedings**

The European Commission presented today its proposal on improvements of EU rules to better protect children in the context of cross-border parental responsibility disputes related to custody, access rights and child abduction. The new rules will speed up the legal and administrative proceedings and ensure that the child's best interest is always taken into account. When families have disputes or international couples separate, cross-border judicial cooperation is crucial to give children a secure legal environment to maintain relations with both parents (and guardians) who may live in different European countries. First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"There are few things more traumatic for a child than seeing disputes between their parents. When these disputes end in legal proceedings with a cross-border dimension, the EU has a responsibility to ensure that they are solved as smoothly as possible. We need to make sure that different legal regimes are compatible to minimise complications, delays, distress and uncertainty. By building bridges between the different justice systems, children and families will be better protected."* Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Věra **Jourová** added: *"Children are at the heart of this reform. The separation of their parents is difficult enough. The children concerned deserve judicial proceedings that clarify their situation as quickly as possible and take into account their best interest. We propose today to upgrade the existing rules on the basis of practical experience during the past 10 years. The focus of this reform is clear: we need to speed up the cross-border cases. Time is of the essence for children's welfare, so we need these new rules quickly."* The updated rules are based on the assessment of the existing rules and aim to remedy the identified shortcomings. Specifically, the new rules propose more efficient procedures to tackle cross-border parental child abduction, rapid enforcement of decisions in other Member States as well as better cooperation among them, and ensure that the child is heard. These new rules will bring benefits to families and children as they will gain from reduced timelines for solving proceedings and will avoid the heavy costs usually linked to such procedures. A [press release](#), a [Q&A](#) and a [factsheet](#) with concrete examples are available online. Commissioner **Jourová**'s press statement is available on [EbS](#)

### **College travels to Bratislava to mark the official start of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

On the occasion of the start of the six-month Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union, President **Juncker** and the College of Commissioners will pay their first official visit to Bratislava. Today the College will meet with Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, and with Robert Fico, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic. Tomorrow, 1 July, the College will engage in four so-called "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. Afterwards, the College will meet with Andrej Danko, President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, before participating in a plenary meeting of the National Council on the topics of current EU challenges such as

migration, Schengen, the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as on the role of national parliaments and on the Energy Union and energy security of the EU. A press conference with President **Juncker** and Prime Minister Fico will take place tomorrow, 1 July (more details will be announced closer to the event). It will be available to follow on [EBS](#).

### **Commission brings together non-confessional organisations to discuss "Migration, integration and European values: putting values into action".**

Today, European Commission First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** hosted a high-level meeting with ten representatives from philosophical and non-confessional organisations from across Europe. This seventh annual high-level meeting discussed the topic "Migration, integration and European values: putting values into action". The meeting took place within the framework of the [ongoing dialogue](#) with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations based on Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty. First Vice-President **Timmermans** said: *"At a time when European societies are marked by a sense of crisis, it is essential to put our values into action. Nowhere is this discussion more relevant than with regards to migration and integration. Values cannot be imposed, they must be passed on and embraced across generations and communities, and we need to find concrete ways to achieve this. Because of their engagement in their respective communities, non-confessional organisations are among those who can provide concrete ideas to move this discussion forward."* More information is available in this [press release](#).

### **Energy infrastructure: €600 million in EU investment to support cross-border European networks**

Today, the European Commission opened a call for proposals under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to help invest in trans-European energy infrastructure projects. This infrastructure will be essential in achieving the Energy Union objective of connectivity. Up to €600 million will be made available with priority given to projects of common interest and actions that enhance the EU's security of energy supply, increase competitiveness and contribute to sustainable development and the protection of the environment. Once finalised, the projects will help complete the EU internal energy market and create a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy, a priority of the Juncker Commission. With a total indicative budget of €800 million for grants foreseen in 2016, this is the second of the two calls scheduled for this year for the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) in the field of energy. The deadline to submit applications is 8 November 2016. A decision on the selection of proposals to be funded is expected by March 2017. Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** said: *"Cross-border energy connections are at the heart of the Energy Union. They make us stronger together in the EU. With this CEF call we provide new investment opportunities for cleaner and smarter energy infrastructures"*. EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"The Paris Agreement sent a clear signal that the clean energy transition is here to stay. The Commission is committed to support this transition and invest where it is needed. The proposals will become the building blocks of this larger energy transformation, help connect the existing energy infrastructure across Europe, and bring significant benefits to our economy and our climate"*. EU financing for energy infrastructure under the Connecting Europe Facility is €5.35 billion for the period 2014-2020. Find more information about the call for proposal and the [Energy Union](#) online. Furthermore, the [Investment Plan](#) for Europe (EFSI) has already helped to finance [24 projects](#) in the energy and climate action sector.

### **Boosting SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors: European Commission and EIF launch a new guarantee scheme**

The European Commission and the European Investment Fund (EIF) today launched a €121 million guarantee initiative to support SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors via financial institutions. This scheme is expected to create more than €600 million worth of bank loans over the next six years. Guarantee institutions, commercial and promotional banks as well as other financial intermediaries benefiting from the €121 million guarantee will support more than ten thousand SMEs in a wide range of sectors such as audio-visual (including film, television, animation, video games and multimedia), festivals, music, literature, architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, cultural heritage, design, performing arts, publishing, radio and visual arts. The financial instrument, set-up under [Creative Europe](#) – the main EU programme dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors – will be managed by the EIF on behalf of the European Commission. Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society Günther **Oettinger** welcomed the initiative launched today: *"Creative minds and companies need to experiment and take risks to thrive, for our society and for our economy. We are helping them to get the bank loans they would normally not get."* EIF Deputy Chief Executive Roger Havenith said: *"Helping business to scale up and access market-based financing solutions is high on the European Commission's agenda. Providing credit risk protection and capacity building for finance providers are two essential ingredients in the recipe for support for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors. The Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility which we are signing today will help SMEs from the film to festival and music to museum arena across Europe to start up and develop."* A press release in all EU languages is available [here](#) as well as a set of [questions and answers](#).)

### **Investment Plan for Europe: EIF and Banca Sella sign €80 million agreement to benefit innovative Italian SMEs**

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and Banca Sella have signed a financing agreement for SMEs and small mid-caps in Italy. This transaction benefits from the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the heart of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#). The agreement will allow Banca Sella to provide €80 million in new loans to innovative companies in Italy over the next two years. The agreement comes under the Horizon 2020 programme's [InnovFin](#) initiative. EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos **Moedas**, stated: *"With this new transaction worth €80 million benefitting Italian SMEs under the EFSI, I am pleased to see the success that the Investment Plan for Europe has encountered in Italy so far. As one of the largest family-owned banks in Italy, Banca Sella will considerably help particularly innovative companies in putting their business plans into practice."*

### **State aid: Commission endorses Italy's ultra-broadband plan for 2016-2022**

The European Commission has found Italy's high-speed broadband plan, with a budget of about €4 billion, to be in line with EU state aid rules. The scheme will bring fast internet access to areas where it is currently not available, without unduly distorting competition. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The broadband scheme will bring faster internet to Italian consumers and businesses. It will help Italy to build the necessary infrastructure and contribute to creating a connected Digital Single Market in the EU. Thanks to good cooperation with Italy, we have been able to finalise the assessment of the scheme very swiftly"*. In line with the objectives of the [Digital Single Market](#), the Italian National Ultra-Broadband Scheme aims to increase the coverage of high speed broadband. This will contribute to Italy's objective of providing 85% of households and all public buildings (in particular schools and hospitals) with access to data transfer speeds of at least 100 megabits per second (mbps). The scheme will run until 31 December 2022. A full press release is available online in [here](#)

### **Antitrust: Commission opens formal investigation into AB InBev's practices on Belgian beer market**

The European Commission has opened an investigation, on its own initiative, to assess whether Anheuser-Busch InBev SA (AB InBev) has abused its dominant position on the Belgian beer market by hindering imports of its beer from neighbouring countries, in breach of EU antitrust rules. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said *“AB Inbev's strong position on the Belgian beer market is not a problem. However, we want to make sure that there are no anticompetitive obstacles to trade in beer within the European Single Market. Keeping out cheaper imports of its beer from neighbouring countries would be both against the interests of consumers and anti-competitive”*. The Commission will investigate further to establish whether its initial concerns are confirmed: its preliminary view is that AB InBev may be pursuing a deliberate strategy to restrict so-called 'parallel trade' of its beer from less expensive countries, such as the Netherlands and France, to the more expensive Belgian market. A full press release is available online in [here](#):

## **Electronic signatures, seals and other trust services valid throughout EU as of tomorrow**

From 1 July, people, businesses and public administrations across the EU will be able to carry out convenient, secure and legally-valid electronic transactions across borders. EU rules on electronic signatures, electronic seals, time stamps, electronic delivery service and website authentication, as well as electronic documents – as set out in the [eIDAS Regulation \(electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market\)](#) – will apply directly in all EU Member States. This means that, for example, an electronic signature will be recognised in the same way as a handwritten one, across the EU. They will have the same legal validity. Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President of the European Commission for the Digital Single Market, discussed this important step at an [eIDAS event](#) in Brussels this morning (see [VP Ansip's talk](#) and [webstreaming of the event](#)). He said: *“Life will become easier in a wide range of areas, from filing tax returns, enrolling in a foreign university or remotely opening a bank account to authenticating internet payments for online shopping or bidding in online tenders. Trust, convenience, security: these are what people expect from a well-functioning Digital Single Market.”* (See his [blog post](#)). [More details about eIDAS](#).

## **Commissioner Bieńkowska pushes for modernisation of automobile industry**

Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, today is hosting a meeting with representatives of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) to discuss the future of the European automotive industry. Opening the meeting, Commissioner **Bieńkowska** stressed: *“Road transport emissions need to come down to tackle climate change and air quality problems. Europe needs to move ahead on connected and automated driving. And we need to make sure that consumers and regulators can have confidence in the system for car testing and approval again. There is simply no alternative to moving ahead on all three.”* Speaking at a reception of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) on Wednesday 29 June, the Commissioner called on the car industry to develop new green technologies faster and move from low emissions vehicles to zero emission vehicles (her speech *“Shifting gears early to be ready for the future”* is available [online](#)). Earlier this morning, Commissioner **Bieńkowska** met with the CEO of Volkswagen, Mr Matthias Mueller, to discuss the measures taken by Volkswagen to fix the cars affected by defeat devices. The Commissioner reiterated her call for adequate and fair customer compensation in Europe in order to restore consumer trust.

## **Protection of euro banknotes and coins from being counterfeited: Commission reports on the Pericles programme**

In the fight against counterfeiting, the EU is increasingly cooperating with third countries outside Europe. In 2015, cooperation with China was launched and is expected to contribute to the successful fight

against counterfeiting at international level. Other focus areas were Latin America, the South East of Europe, and the Mediterranean region, according to the Commission's annual report on the "Pericles 2020" programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting. The report, which the Commission adopted earlier this week, is addressed to the European Parliament and the Council. "Pericles 2020" is an exchange, assistance and training programme for the protection of euro banknotes and coins against counterfeiting with an annual budget of around €1 million. In 2015, the programme funded 12 projects, including seminars, technical training and staff exchanges. Five Member States – Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Croatia – received grants. Participants included representatives from the police, judiciary, national central banks, mints and customs. The European Commission and the European Central Bank are working together to protect euro notes and coins in close cooperation with Europol and Interpol. For more information on how the European Union is working to protect euro banknotes and coins from being counterfeited, see this [video](#), which is released today. The full "Pericles 2020 for 2015" report is available [online](#).

### **Vice-President Ansip and Commissioner Jourová discussed data protection with businesses**

This morning, Vice-President **Ansip** and Commissioner **Jourová** met with business representatives to update them on the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield, which aims at ensuring high data protection standards for transatlantic flows of data and bringing legal certainty to businesses. The Commission intends to put the new framework in place before the summer. They also discussed the recently adopted General Data Protection regulation, its implementation and its contribution to the Digital Single Market. More information on the [Privacy Shield](#) and on the [Data Protection reform](#) are available online.

### **EUROSTAT: Euro area annual inflation up to 0.1%**

Euro area annual inflation is expected to be 0.1% in June 2016, up from -0.1% in May 2016, according to a flash estimate from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

Looking at the main components of euro area inflation, services is expected to have the highest annual rate in June (1.1%, compared with 1.0% in May), followed by food, alcohol & tobacco (0.9%, stable compared with May), non-energy industrial goods (0.4%, compared with 0.5% in May) and energy (-6.5%, compared with -8.1% in May). More information [here](#)

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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.