



Monday, 12 September, 2016

### **Climate Diplomacy Week: maintaining the political momentum in support of climate action**

From 12 to 18 September embassies around the world are celebrating Climate Diplomacy Week, with events taking place to highlight climate action in the EU and beyond. Conferences, citizens' debates, exhibitions, films and social media activities aim to encourage informed debate and a joint response to the climate challenge. These events build on the momentum of the [Paris Agreement](#) - the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal agreed in Paris last December. The EU played a key role in brokering this deal and is now [focusing on ratifying the agreement](#) and putting it into practice on the ground. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica **Mogherini** said: *"Europe's security and prosperity are linked to the challenges we face due to climate change and the degradation of our environment. The EU is leading by example through implementing our commitments on sustainable development and climate change and is playing a driving role in supporting partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement."* Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete** added: *"Equally as crucial as the ratification of the Paris Agreement is the full implementation on the ground. The EU has a proven track record of commitment to climate action and the policies in place to meet our commitments. But we also have to do our work on ratification: the EU's ratification of the Paris Agreement would demonstrate solidarity and unity in these challenging times. Let's get it done!"* Follow the activities taking place via #ClimaDiplo.

### **EU announced new €115 million emergency support to improve conditions for refugees in Greece**

The European Commission has stepped up its funding to improve living conditions for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Greece, with €115 million in new funding for humanitarian organisations operating in the country. It brings total funding under the Emergency Support Instrument to €198 million. Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**, who announced this at the Thessaloniki International Fair on Saturday, 10 September, said: *"The European Commission continues to put solidarity into action to better manage the refugee crisis, in close cooperation with the Greek Government. The new funding has the key aim to improve conditions for refugees in Greece, and make a difference ahead of the upcoming winter. Over the past months, we have significantly contributed to restore dignified living conditions through our humanitarian partners. Together, we will continue our work until we reach our target"*. The new emergency support comes on top of the [€83 million the European Commission has already provided earlier this year](#) to international organisations and NGOs to address the most pressing humanitarian needs in Greece, including shelter, primary health care, psycho-social support, improved hygiene conditions as well as informal education and safe spaces for children

and women. Overall, the European Union is providing over €1 billion of support to Greece in tackling current migration challenges. A [press release](#) and a [factsheet](#) are available online.

### **Energy Union: ESI Funds improve energy connections between Germany and Poland**

The Commission has awarded €9.2 million from the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) for energy interconnectors between Germany and Poland. The project involves the construction of two gas transfer pipelines in the Polish region of Dolnośląskie, Lasów-Jeleniów and Gałów-Kielczów. The expansion of the Wierzchowice underground gas storage (UGS) facility is also being financed. The project will increase the capacity of pipelines importing gas from Germany through Lasów, and thus facilitate the transmission of gas between the two countries. Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič stated: *"Interconnectors are central to the completion of our Energy Union"*. Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu, said: *"This is Cohesion Policy contributing to the Energy Union in action; we provide households and businesses with secure, competitive and affordable energy"*. These 59 km of newly built pipelines will help optimise the gas flow in the transmission system in Poland and cover the demand for gas in an area of 3 million inhabitants – especially during winter. More information on [ESI Funds investments in Poland](#) and on [the contribution of the Funds to the Energy Union](#) is available online.

### **Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of Carlson Hotels by HNA Group**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Carlson Hotel of the US by the HNA Group Co. of China. Carlson provides hotel accommodation services worldwide. The HNA Group is a Chinese conglomerate active in various sectors including aviation, real estate and tourism. It also holds a minority shareholding in a global provider of hotel services. The Commission found that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the companies' limited combined market share in the provision of hotel services. 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.8126](#).

### **Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de Kermel par Ardian et Qualium**

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de l'entreprise Kermel S.A.S. par les entreprises Ardian France S.A.S. ("Ardian") et Qualium S.A.S. ("Qualium"), toutes trois françaises. Kermel est active dans le secteur de la fabrication et la vente de fibres aramides résistantes à la chaleur et au feu en Europe ainsi qu'en Amérique du Nord, en Afrique et en Asie. Qualium est une société de gestion de portefeuille dédiée aux opérations de reprise d'entreprises. Ardian est une société anonyme de capital-investissement. La Commission a conclu que la concentration envisagée n'était pas susceptible de poser de problème de concurrence car les entreprises ne sont pas présentes sur les mêmes marchés et leurs liens commerciaux ne sont pas significatifs. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur le site internet [concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public](#) des affaires sous le numéro d'affaire [M.8161](#).

### **Mergers: Commission clears joint venture between Verlinvest and CRC**

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the creation of a joint venture by Verlinvest of Belgium and China Resources Co ('CRC') of Hong Kong. The joint venture will invest in

companies in the healthy food & beverages and community healthcare services sectors, primarily in China. Verlinvest is an investment company active in the branded consumer goods industry, including food & beverages, retail and hospitality, digital and media. CRC is active in various sectors including energy, consumer products, pharmaceuticals, finance, consumer retail, healthcare, microelectronics and textiles. The Commission concluded that the proposed concentration would raise no competition concerns because the joint venture will have no or negligible activities within the European Economic Area. 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.8169](#).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Energy Union: Vice-President Šefčovič at the European Space Agency

Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič is visiting the Paris-based European Space Agency (ESA) today and tomorrow. During tomorrow's ESA Council meeting, strategic cooperation between the European Commission and ESA within the context of contributing to a resilient Energy Union - one of the key initiatives of the Juncker-Commission - will be at the centre of discussions. Ahead of today's visit, Vice-President Šefčovič said: "*Space offers enormous opportunities for Europe's society and economy, as well as holding strategic importance*".

### Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Greece

Commissioner **Jourová** will visit Athens today to meet with Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, Mr. Nikolaos Paraskevopoulos to discuss the ongoing justice reform in Greece, as well as priority EU justice files, such as the European Public Prosecutor's Office and the Digital Contracts proposals, and children in migration. Building on Commissioner **Jourová**'s regular meetings with NGOs working with migrant children, the aim of her visit is to better understand the situation of migrant children on the ground. She will visit the Eleonas reception centre with the General Secretary of Migration Policy Vassileios Papadopoulos and discuss this topic with several NGOs. A press briefing will take place from 12:30 to 13:30

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## COMING UP

**[Wednesday 14 September: President Juncker delivers his State of the Union address at the European Parliament](#)** Jean-Claude Juncker, will deliver his State of the Union address at the European Parliament. The speech will be followed by a plenary debate.

**[Wednesday 21 September: A transatlantic Citizens' Dialogue on tax avoidance and privacy in the digital age](#)**

Columbia University in New York will host the EU Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, who will discuss tax avoidance and privacy issues in the digital economy with the 2001 Nobel Laureate in Economics and University Professor Joseph E.



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