



Tuesday, 27 September, 2016

### **EU pigmeat exports recovering in July 2016**

For the 12-month period from August 2015 to July 2016, EU agri-food exports reached a value of more than EUR 128 billion, corresponding to an increase of 0.7% in value terms compared to the same period one year ago. The monthly value of EU agri-food exports in July 2016 reached EUR 10.5 billion, a moderate slowdown compared to the high performance in July 2015. The most important reductions in export values (July 2016 compared to July 2015) were noted for Hong Kong, Russia and Algeria. On the other hand, exports to some Asian (India, China, Philippines, Vietnam) and North-East African (Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya) destinations increased compared to last year's data for July. The highest increases in monthly export values were achieved for pork, with EUR 1.1 billion corresponding to an increase of 29% compared to export values one year ago. In July 2016, agri-food imports to the EU went down by EUR 940 million, even more than exports, thus leading to a further increase in the monthly net trade surplus from EUR 1.8 billion in July 2015 to EUR 2.1 billion in July 2016. All the latest agri-food trade figures can be found [online](#).

### **Investment Plan for Europe: €300 million for Portuguese SMEs**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has signed four €70 million loans with the Portuguese banks Millennium Banco Comercial Português, Banco BPI, Banco Santander Totta and Caixa Geral de Depósitos as part of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), in which the EIB is the European Commission's strategic partner. The remaining €20 million loan will follow at a later stage. The project focuses on investing in start-ups and companies employing young, long-term unemployed and self-employed workers. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"The Investment Plan is a proven resource for innovative and R&D intensive SMEs and start-ups, and is delivering beyond our expectations. That is why we have recently increased the amount of financing available to SMEs under the Investment Plan. With today's announcement of €300 million for Portuguese start-ups and small businesses, we really see the Investment Plan making a difference to our citizens. I look forward to future Investment Plan news in Portugal"*.

### **Antitrust: Commission sends Statement of Objections to International Skating Union on its eligibility rules**

The European Commission has informed the International Skating Union (ISU) of its preliminary view that the ISU rules under which athletes face severe penalties for participation in unauthorised speed

skating events are in breach of EU antitrust rules. The ISU eligibility rules ban skaters from international speed skating events such as the Olympic Games or the World Championship, if they participate in international speed skating events that are not approved by the ISU. If skaters break these rules, they can face up to a lifetime ban. The Commission's preliminary view is that the rules restrict the athletes' commercial freedom unduly and result in a situation where they are not willing to participate in speed skating events other than those organised by the ISU or its members (national federations). This prevents new entrants from organising alternative international speed skating events because they are unable to attract top athletes. Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, in charge of competition policy, said: *"International sports governing bodies play a unique role in setting the rules of the game and ensuring standards of conduct. They are responsible for both the health and safety of athletes and for the integrity of competitions. We have concerns that the penalties the ISU imposes on skaters through its eligibility rules are not aimed at preserving high standards in sport but rather serve to maintain the ISU's control over speed skating. The ISU now has the opportunity to reply to our concerns"*. A full press release is available online in [EN](#)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Focus on wind power: Vice-President Šefčovič in Hamburg

Energy generated from wind is a key pillar driving the transition of Europe's energy mix. During the WindEurope Summit 2016 today in Hamburg, Vice-President for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič is delivering the keynote speech on making the energy transition work towards the modernisation of the European economy and is holding a joint press conference on the Energy Union and the *Energiewende* with German Vice-Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel and Hamburg Mayor Olaf Scholz. *"We are on track to achieve the objectives of both the Energy Union and the Energiewende but we need to keep up our efforts. Wind power is an indigenous source of energy in Europe. The more it is captured and used, the less energy dependent Europe becomes"*, said Vice-President Šefčovič. In the context of the transport sector's contribution towards building the Energy Union, Vice-President Šefčovič is also visiting today the port of Hamburg and the Airbus factory in Finkenwerder, where the Airbus A380 "Superjumbos" are being prepared for final delivery. The Political Guidelines for the Juncker Commission set the ambition for Europe to become the world leader in renewable energies. This is why the European Union is committed to having at least 27% renewables in our energy system by 2030. That ambition and those policies will help us deliver our target to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030. Further information on the [Energy Union](#) is available.

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## COMING UP

[27 September – 7 October: International deal to tackle aviation emissions](#)

[29 September: The Commission adopts its monthly infringements package](#)



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