



Wednesday, 16 November, 2016

Commission presents study on impact of future trade agreements on the agricultural sector

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** and Commissioner Phil **Hogan** presented to agriculture ministers at the Council meeting the [study](#) on the cumulative effects of 12 future trade agreements on the agri-food sector, including specific results for producer prices and production volumes for a range of products accounting for 30% of the value of the EU exports in the sector. The study illustrates the potential for European agricultural products on the world market, while at the same time also showing the sensitivity of specific agricultural sectors. The Commission also published yesterday the [latest agri-food trade figures](#) which showed a record value for EU agri-food exports in September 2016 of almost €11.5 billion, confirming the opportunities for the sector. The detailed knowledge on the potential impacts that the present study on future trade agreements provides will allow the Commission to make informed choices during the negotiation process. The study as such is not a prediction or forecast but a highly theoretical exercise with many limitations reflecting potential outcomes of the successful conclusion of the agreements covered. Commenting on the study, Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen** said: *"The overall picture is positive for high-value European agricultural exports. This study shows that there are sensitivities, however, it focuses on only one part of agricultural sector and does not measure a number of agri-food products which have significant export growth potential. This balance is fully reflected in the EU's trade negotiating strategy, in which we seek to protect our vulnerable sectors through measures such as tariff rate quotas, while maximising our positive interests whenever possible. Growth in the area of processed food, in particular, also has positive knock-on effects for the primary production sector. EU exports of agricultural commodities support 1.4 million jobs and another 650,000 jobs in the processed foods sector also depend on our ability to export. The EU economy as a whole benefits greatly from trade as shown by the recent free trade agreement with South-Korea."* Commissioner **Hogan** said that: *"Some Member States and stakeholders have expressed concern on the accumulated effect of the bilateral trade agreements which the EU has been and continues to pursue. This study responds to those concerns and, based on the assumptions made, shows that the effect of international trade agreements on agriculture and the European agri-food sector is broadly positive."* The press conference of Vice-President **Katainen** and Commissioner **Hogan** is on [Ebs](#). A [press release](#) and a [memo](#) are available online in all languages.

European Semester Autumn Package: Working for a stronger and more inclusive economic recovery

The Commission today sets out its views on the EU's economic and social priorities for the year ahead, building on the guidance from President **Juncker's** [2016 State of the Union](#) address and on the latest economic data from the [Commission's Autumn 2016 Forecast](#). Today's package starts the 2017 cycle of economic governance, the so-called European Semester. President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"The 2017 European Semester we start today will be decisive for Europe to manage its economic and social turnaround. I believe we can do it. This is why today the Commission is recommending a positive fiscal stance*

to support the recovery and the monetary policy of the European Central Bank, which should not bear the burden alone. Every Member State should play its part: those that can afford it need to invest more, while those which have less fiscal space should pursue reforms and growth-friendly fiscal consolidation."

A [press release](#) and [memo](#) are available online. The remarks of Vice-President **Dombrovskis**, Commissioner **Thyssen** and Commissioner **Moscovici** at the press conference are also available online. Further information is available on the [European Semester](#) and [DG ECFIN](#) websites.

EUROSTAT: 20 November: Universal Children's Day- One in four children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU- 25 million children in this situation in the EU

In 2015, around 25 million children, or 26.9% of the population aged 0 to 17, in the **European Union** (EU) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that they were living in households in at least one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers (income poverty), severely materially deprived or with very low work intensity. Since 2010, the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the **EU** has slightly decreased, from 27.5% in 2010 to 26.9% in 2015. However contrasting trends were observed across the EU Member States. [Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

Security Union: Commission proposes a European Travel Information and Authorisation System and reports on progress made towards an effective and sustainable Security Union

Today the College is discussing a Commission proposal to establish a European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) to strengthen security checks on visa-free travellers. This follows the announcement in September by President **Junker** in his 2016 [State of the Union address](#), and is a first deliverable of the priorities for action identified in the [Bratislava Roadmap](#). The College is also expected to adopt its second monthly report on progress made towards an effective and sustainable Security Union. A press conference with First Vice-President **Timmermans** and Commissioner **Avramopoulos** will take place after the College meeting today and can be followed live via [EbS](#). Press material will be online and available at the start of the press conference.

Investment Plan for Europe: EUR 40 million for innovative companies in Luxembourg

The European Investment Fund (EIF) and BGL BNP Paribas have signed an agreement to enhance access to finance for innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Luxembourg. 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 BGL BNP Paribas to provide loans at advantageous conditions to innovative SMEs in Luxembourg over the next two years. EIF's guarantee is provided under the "EU InnovFin finance for Innovators" initiative with the financial backing under Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The agreement would not have been possible without the backing of the Investment Plan. Commenting on the signature, European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"Today marks yet another important date for innovative companies in Luxembourg, as EIF and BGL BNP Paribas sign the third InnovFin agreement in the country. The Investment Plan for Europe is delivering on its commitment to ensure better access to finance for SMEs across Europe. Given its success so far, we have proposed to extend the European Fund for Strategic Investments and place even more emphasis on giving a helping hand to small companies."* For more information see [here](#)

State aid: Commission approves Greek support scheme for renewable electricity and cogeneration

The European Commission has found the new Greek support scheme for renewable electricity and high efficiency cogeneration to be in line with EU state aid rules. The scheme will help Greece to reduce CO2 emissions, in line with EU energy and climate goals, without unduly distorting competition. In July 2016 Greece notified plans to support electricity from renewable energy sources and high-efficiency cogeneration. The Commission found that the Greek scheme promotes the integration of such electricity into the market, in line with the Commission's [2014 Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy](#). The Commission concluded that the scheme was likely to increase the proportion of green electricity and reduce pollution, while limiting distortions of competition due to the state support. The scheme will help Greece to meet its 2020 target of producing 18% of its energy needs from renewable sources. A full press release is available online in [here](#)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of MTS Globe by Kuoni

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of MTS Globe of Spain by Kuoni Travel Holding Ltd of Switzerland. MTS Globe is a service provider to the travel industry in the Mediterranean area. Kuoni is a global intermediary of travel services, including hotel accommodation services, to the travel industry and a provider of visa application outsourcing services to governments. Kuoni is controlled by the investment fund EQT VII, which is part of the EQT group of private investment funds. The portfolio companies of the EQT group are active in a variety of industries and one of its funds controls the hotel chain Scandic Hotel Groups, which is primarily active in Northern Europe. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because of the companies' minor overlapping activities. Moreover, the vertical links arising from Scandic's upstream provision of hotel accommodation services and MTS Globe's activities as an intermediary in the travel industry do not pose any competition concern because of the transactions' limited impact on the market structure. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M_8231](#).

Mergers: Commission clears joint acquisition of Schön Klinik by Carlyle and the Schön family

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over Schön Klinik SE of Germany, by CGP Peggy SARL of Luxembourg, a special purpose vehicle belonging to the Carlyle Group, and the current owner, the Schön family. Schön Klinik is a private hospital operator for publicly and privately insured patients in Germany that focuses on the acute medical treatment of mental illnesses, orthopaedics and neurology. Carlyle manages funds that invest globally across four investment disciplines: corporate private equity, real assets, global market strategies and investment solutions. Carlyle is also a shareholder in AMEOS Group, a private operator of acute general somatic and mental illnesses hospitals in Germany and Austria. The Schön family is actively engaged in particular in the management of Schön Klinik. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns, because the merged entity will continue to face competition from several hospital operators in the markets concerned. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8146](#).

Mergers: Commission clears non-UK part of AMC's acquisition of Odeon and UCI Cinemas

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of Odeon and UCI Cinemas of the United Kingdom by AMC of the United States. The ultimate parent company of AMC is the Dalian Wanda Group of the People's Republic of China. AMC, Odeon and UCI Cinemas all provide cinema entertainment. AMC only has one cinema outside the United States, in the Manchester area of the United Kingdom. In October 2016, the Commission granted a request to refer the assessment of the transaction's effect on competition in the UK to the UK competition authority. The Commission has found today that the remainder of the transaction would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap outside the UK. The Commission examined the transaction under its simplified merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.8177](#).

Commission appoints a Director to its fisheries department

The Commission has today appointed Ms Dora Correia to the position of a Director for Resources in its department for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE). Ms Correia, a Portuguese national, joined the Commission in 1996. During her career, she worked on a variety of topics, including the multiannual financial framework 2007-2013 and better regulation. Between 2007 and 2010, she was an Assistant to the Secretary-General of the Commission. Between 2010 and 2012 she was Member of the Cabinet of Vice-President Šefčovič, then in charge of Interinstitutional Relations and Administration. She is currently Head of Unit "Information, Communication, Inter-Institutional Relations, Evaluation and Programming" in DG MARE and an Acting Director for Resources.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Ansip in South Korea to further cooperation on digital priorities

Tomorrow and on Friday, Vice-President for the [Digital Single Market](#) Andrus **Ansip** will be in South Korea to discuss cooperation on digital priorities such as data flows, standards-setting and cybersecurity. Vice-President **Ansip** and South Korean partners will take stock of their [joint work on 5G mobile technology](#), more particularly within the [5G Champion research project](#) whose results will be showcased on the occasion of the 2018 Olympic Games of Pyeongchang. They will also share best practices in areas such as e-government. During his visit, Vice-President **Ansip** will meet the South Korean Minister of Interior Hong Yun-Sik and the Minister of Science, ICT and Future Planning Choi Yang-hee. He will visit the Samsung Innovation Museum and meet the CEO/President of Samsung Electronics Jong-Kyun Shin. He will also visit the Gyeonggi Centre for Creative Economy and Innovation and meet European startups based in South Korea.

Commissioner Thyssen visits the Vatican and meets with Pope Francis

Tomorrow, 17 November, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, will travel to Rome to visit the Vatican. She will participate in a conference on Business Leaders as Agents of Economic and Social Inclusion, where she will give a speech on the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development through dialogue between business leaders and international institutions. The speech will be made available [here](#). Following the Conference, she will have an audience with His Holiness Pope Francis, together with the other Conference participants, including Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness Pope Francis; Ms. Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma, President of the Commission of the African Union; Mr Luis Almagro, General Secretary of the Organisation of American States; Mr Mark Joseph Carney, Governor of the Bank of England and Chairman of the G20's Financial Stability Board; and Mr Vic Van Vuuren, Director of the Enterprises Department at

the International Labour Organisation. Commissioner **Thyssen** will also meet with Monseigneur Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States at the Vatican. More information on the Conference can be found [here](#).

Commissioner Thyssen takes part in awareness-raising activity of European Anti-Poverty Network

This afternoon, within the framework of the [15th European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty](#), paper helicopters will be launched in the air above the European Commission's Berlaymont building by people with a direct experience of poverty. The helicopters will have messages written on them and will be handed over to Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**. Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Thyssen** said: *"While for the first time poverty and social exclusion in the EU are back to pre-crisis levels, it still affects 119 million people. It is essential to ensure that their voices are heard to fight inequality and continue putting a more social Europe at the heart of our agenda through the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)."* The event is organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network.

Commission welcomes new member to the EIT Governing Board

Today the European Commission has appointed Dr Prof Ana Trbović to the Governing Board of the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT). The EIT brings together educational and research institutions, businesses and students to develop new ideas and products, foster the creation of start-ups and enable young people to develop entrepreneurial and other skills, helping to boost Europe's competitiveness and capacity for innovation. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"Dr Trbović is highly respected for her academic work. As a member of the Governing Board, she will help guide the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities in delivering new and cutting-edge education activities, developing innovative solutions to significant societal challenges and extending their activities further across Europe's regions."* Dr Trbović's biography and more information on the appointment is available [online](#). The EIT Governing Board is composed of professionals chosen for their expertise and experience in education, research and business. Dr Trbović will join other members at the next Board meeting in December.

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