



Wednesday, 01 February, 2017

State of the Energy Union: Europe's energy transition on track

In line with its commitment to report annually on the state of the [Energy Union](#), the European Commission is publishing today its [second State of the Energy Union Report](#). This report looks at the progress made since the publication of the [first State of the Energy Union](#) in November 2015. In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and renewable energy, Europe is well on track to reach its 2020 targets. To further drive this process, the Commission today is announcing a [new Energy Union tour](#). Maroš Šefčovič, the Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union, said: *"The Energy Union is about more than energy and climate; it is about accelerating the fundamental modernisation of Europe's entire economy, making it low-carbon, energy and resource efficient, in a socially fair manner. Now that a large part of the relevant legislative proposals are on the table, 2017 should be the year of implementation. This message I will bring to Member States during the new Energy Union tour, which I will launch on 3 February"*. Miguel Arias Cañete, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, said: *"Europe is well on track to meet its 2020 climate and energy targets. Despite the current geopolitical uncertainties, Europe is forging ahead with the clean energy transition. Renewable energy is now cost-competitive and sometimes cheaper than fossil fuels, employs over one million people in Europe, and has reduced our fossil fuels imports bill by €16 billion."* Read the [press release](#) and two memos ([Progress Energy Efficiency](#) and [Progress Renewables](#)) online. The Second State of the Energy Union Communication and **all accompanying documents adopted today can be found [here](#)**.

College holds an Orientation Debate on the procedures for the adoption of delegated and implementing acts

In his [State of the Union Speech](#) in September 2016, President Juncker said, *"It is not right that when EU countries cannot decide among themselves whether or not to ban the use of glyphosate in herbicides, the Commission is forced by Parliament and Council to take a decision. So we will change those rules."* Today, the College of Commissioners followed up on the President's statement with an Orientation Debate on possible ways to ensure that political responsibility is taken where the applicable legislation requires. This initiative is included in the priorities of the [Commission's Work Programme for 2017](#). In recent years the Commission has been regularly obliged to take decisions on very sensitive issues when Member States have not been able to take a position, in particular with regards to topics like GMOs or glyphosate. Since the beginning of its mandate, the Juncker Commission has taken a number of internal measures to ensure that a political debate is held at the level of the College before submitting proposals for delegated or implementing acts on sensitive subjects. To ensure that the political responsibility is also assumed by other decision-

making bodies, as identified by the co-legislator, the Commission will present a proposal on 14 February to revise the Comitology Regulation. The College also discussed today a number of open comitology procedures.

End of roaming charges: EU negotiators agreed on wholesale prices, the final piece to make it happen

As the last step towards the end of roaming charges by 15 June 2017, representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed on how to regulate wholesale roaming markets (the prices operators charge each other when their customers use other networks when roaming in the EU). EU negotiators agreed on the following wholesale caps: 3.2 cents per minute of voice call, as of 15 June 2017 - 1 cent per SMS, as of 15 June 2017. A step by step reduction over 5 years for data caps decreasing from €7.7 per GB (as of 15 June 2017) to €6 per GB (as of 1 January 2018), €4.5 per GB (as of 1 January 2019), €3.5 per GB (as of 1 January 2020), €3 per GB (as of 1 January 2021) and €2.5 per GB (as of 1 January 2022).

More information [here](#)

EU and Mexico agree to accelerate trade talks

The EU and Mexico will hold two additional negotiating rounds before summer as part of an accelerated negotiation schedule for a new, reformed Free Trade Agreement. The dates of the upcoming rounds (3-7 April and 26-29 June) were agreed by Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia **Malmström**, and the Minister of Economy of Mexico, Ildefonso Guajardo. As part of this new schedule, fixed during a phone conversation, the two also agreed to meet in Mexico City between these rounds to take stock and push negotiators for further progress. In a joint statement, Commissioner **Malmström** and Minister of Economy Guajardo said: *"Together, we are witnessing the worrying rise of protectionism around the world. Side by side, as like-minded partners, we must now stand up for the idea of global, open cooperation. We are already well underway in our joint efforts to deepen openness to trade on both sides. Now, we will accelerate the pace of these talks in order to reap the benefits sooner."* The purpose of this modernising process is to better mirror other ambitious trade deals that the EU and Mexico have negotiated lately. **A full press release is available [online](#).**

Road Safety: Commission proposes to modernize driver training

The European Commission has today proposed to update and clarify the rules relating to the initial qualification and [continuous training of truck drivers and bus drivers](#). The objective of this revision is to improve road safety and facilitate the mobility of [professional drivers](#). The main innovations include the modernization of training, focusing on the protection of the most vulnerable users and the optimization of gasoline consumption, as well as better recognition of qualifications obtained in another Member State Member. Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport, said: "A new impetus is needed if we are to achieve the European objective of halving the number of road deaths by 2020. Education and Training have a direct impact on road safety, which is why today we are proposing to improve the rules for the training of road drivers. " This reform takes place within the framework of the [REFIT program](#), which aims to ensure that EU legislation produces results for citizens and businesses in an efficient, efficient and cost-effective way. The [Commission's proposal](#) must now be examined by the European Parliament and the 28 Member States of the EU according to the European Ordinary Legislative Procedure

Joint Statement of President Juncker and First Vice-President Timmermans on the fight against corruption in Romania

Today, President **Juncker** and First-Vice President **Timmermans** issued a statement on the fight against corruption in Romania: *"The fight against corruption needs to be advanced, not undone. We are following the latest developments in Romania with great concern. The irreversibility of the progress achieved in the fight against corruption is essential for the Commission to assess whether at some point monitoring under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) could be phased out. Our CVM Report, published last week, acknowledged the track record achieved so far by prosecutors and judges in Romania in addressing high-level corruption. At the same time, it made clear that any steps which undermine this progress, or have the effect of weakening or shrinking the scope of corruption as an offence, would have an impact on any future assessments. The Commission warns against backtracking and will look thoroughly at the emergency ordinance on the Criminal Code and the Law on Pardons in this light."* **The statement is available [here](#).**

STATEMENTS

Statement by Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica: Women's rights and empowerment are key for sustainable development

"The European Commission's international cooperation and development policy will continue to play a leading role in ensuring women's access to health and family planning services. Gender equality is a global priority. The European Commission supports this actively, in particular through the Gender Action Plan and EU external action. World-wide, around 225 million women are in need of modern contraception. More than 300,000 women die each year from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes, 99% of them in developing countries. Ensuring women's access to health and family planning services, including education and contraception, are indispensable to prevent vulnerability and disempowerment and ultimately, to achieve sustainable development. Gender equality in this area, as well as all others, is not just a priority, not just an essential step for eradicating poverty; it is a universal human right. The EU is providing significant financial support for health and gender programmes around the world, to address the direct and underlying causes and consequences of women's discrimination. Together with our partners worldwide we will continue to speak out on this issue, to empower women, to protect their rights and ultimately the health and safety of their families." The statement is available [online](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

European Commission appoints seven Directors and a Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board

Today, the European Commission appointed seven Directors and an externally recruited Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), four of whom are women: Ms Alexandra Panagakou as Director for Interpreters in its department for Interpretation (DG SCIC); Ms Panagakou, a Greek national, joined the Commission in 1991 as an interpreter, is currently serving as acting Director of the Directorate for Provision of Interpretation and is heading the unit for Professional Support for Interpreters; Mr Jean-David Malo as Director for Open Innovation and Open Science in its department for Research and Innovation (DG RTD); Mr Malo, a French national, joined the Commission in 2001 and is now head of unit for SMEs, Financial Instruments and State Aids at DG RTD; Mr Herald Ruijters as Director for European Mobility Network in its department for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE); Mr Ruijters, a Dutch national, works in the Commission since 1997, is currently serving as acting Director of the Directorate for Investment, Innovative & Sustainable Transport and is heading the unit for Transport Networks; Ms Dana Spinant as Director for Budget and General Affairs in its department for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO); Ms Spinant, a Romanian national, entered the Commission in 2009 and is currently head of unit for irregular migration and return policy at DG HOME; Ms Veronika Veits as Director for Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea in its department for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE); Ms Veits, an Austrian national,

joined the Commission in 1996 and is currently heading the unit in charge of WTO coordination, OECD, Export Credits and Dual Use at DG TRADE; Ms Maria Martin-Prat as Director for Services and Investment, Intellectual Property and Public Procurement in its department for Trade (DG TRADE); Ms Martin-Prat, a Spanish national, works in the Commission since 1995 and is currently heading the unit in charge of copyright at DG CNECT; Mr Thomas Gageik as Director for Digital Business Solutions in its Department for Informatics (DG DIGIT); Mr Gageik, a German national, is joining the Commission from the private sector, having worked in the area of IT services since 1988; and finally, Mr Andreas Kopp, a German national, as an externally recruited Member of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board; Mr Kopp is currently Lead Economist Transport at the World Bank and has been working in the field of economics since 1980. The first four new assignments take effect immediately, while the starting dates for last four appointments will be determined later.

2-3 February: Commissioner Andriukaitis meets the President of the Republic of Croatia and attends Citizens' Dialogue on his first visit to Zagreb, Croatia

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, is on official visit to Zagreb (Croatia) on 2-3 February. On Thursday, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** will have a series of meetings, including with Mrs Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Milan Kujundžić, Minister of Health and Mr Tomislav Tolušić, Minister of Agriculture. On Friday, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** will hold a Citizens' Dialogue with the Croatian public at the Lauba Gallery. Citizens and media can attend the debate in person; questions can also be submitted using the Twitter hashtag #EUdialogues. The event will be livestreamed [here](#). Registration and more on the Citizens' Dialogue [here](#).

MEX/17/198



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