



Friday, 24 March, 2017

The Treaties of Rome at 60: Commission recalls Europe's achievements and leads discussion on the future at 27

On 25 March, EU leaders will come together in Rome to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, which were signed on this day in 1957. Commission President, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, will participate in the Rome Summit, where a number of events are being organised to mark the occasion and to reflect on Europe's common future. This anniversary is a moment to look back on our collective achievements and to discuss the future of the EU at 27. Following the presentation of the Commission's [White Paper on the Future of Europe](#), EU leaders are expected to adopt the Rome Declaration, which will feature the Union's [past achievements](#), present challenges and pledge to work for unity at 27 and strengthen common action in key policy areas, to the benefit of citizens. European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"Our parents and grandparents founded this Union with one common vision: never again war. It was their strong conviction that breaking down barriers, working together – and not against each other – makes us all stronger. History has proven them right. For 60 years, the values on which this Union is built have not changed: peace, freedom, tolerance, solidarity and the rule of law bind and unite us. They must not be taken for granted and we must fight for them every day. Our democracy, our diversity and our independent and free press are the pillars of Europe's strength – no individual or institution is above the law. The European Union has changed our lives for the better. We must ensure it continues to do so for those that will follow us. For now, all roads lead to Rome. After Rome and however it is paved, there is only one way forward: European unity."* The Commission will also be organising in the months ahead public debates with the European Parliament and Member States, as well as online consultations, so that Europe's citizens have their say and are able to share their views on the future of Europe via the Commission Representations and a [dedicated website](#), which will be launched on 25 March. As part of this process, today High Representative / Vice-President **Mogherini**, together with the Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, will take part in a Citizen's Dialogue in Rome. Follow it live [here](#). For more information on the White Paper process see this [timeline](#). Various audiovisual products including 60 video testimonials from people across Europe are available [here](#). On social media, people can update their profile pictures with the [EU60 Twibbon](#), or even fold their own [EU60 Origami dove](#).

Commissioner Hogan in Croatia to discuss challenges for rural communities and sustainable agriculture

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil **Hogan** is on a two-day visit in Zagreb, Croatia to discuss the future of agricultural and rural policies as the European Union celebrates the 60th anniversary

of the Treaties of Rome and debates the [White Paper on the future of Europe](#). The Commissioner is participating today in a [Citizens' Dialogue](#) centred around the questions of the ongoing [consultation on the future CAP](#), of job creation in rural areas, innovations for sustainable agriculture and the impact of trade agreements on the growth of agri-food exports. For the event, Commissioner **Hogan** will be joined by the Croatian Minister of Agriculture Tomislav Tolušić and Croatian Member of European Parliament Marijana Petir. Ahead of the Citizens Dialogue, Commissioner Hogan attended a ceremony awarding a prize for Best Young Farmer in Croatia, which was followed by a panel discussion. During his visit, Commissioner **Hogan** met with the Prime Minister of Croatia Andrej Plenković and representatives of the parliamentary committees for Agriculture, European Affairs, Regional Development and EU Funds. While in Croatia, the Commissioner also undertook a project trip to a family-run poultry farm. The Citizens' Dialogue will be streamed live [here](#).

European Union provides further satellite imagery support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

The European Commission, on behalf of the European Union, has today renewed its strong support for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, under its recently extended mandate, for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. This new funding of €3 million, under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, will provide timely and focused assistance to the OSCE, in the area of satellite imagery. *"The use of satellite imagery allows for more in-depth monitoring of the situation in areas where regrettably monitors still do not have access to, and also for a more efficient deployment of monitors in general"*, said the High Representative/Vice-President, Federica **Mogherini**. *"This fresh support again underlines the European Union's strong commitment to the full respect of the Minsk agreements, which offer the best chance for moving towards a peaceful, sustainable solution to the conflict in Ukraine based on respect for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and our determination to accompany and support the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission."* A full press release is available online in [EN](#) and [FR](#). For more information on the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, visit the [website](#). For more information on EU-Ukraine relations, see the [factsheet](#) or the [website](#) of the EU Delegation.

Buying online and solving disputes online: 24 000 consumers used new European platform in first year

While there are strong rules in place in the EU to protect consumers, in practice consumers sometimes encounter problems getting redress when their rights are violated, particularly cross border. When consumers have made their purchase online, they should also be able to solve such problems online. Be it a seller refusing to repair a defective laptop within the guarantee period, or a travel agent not willing to refund a ruined holiday, such disputes can be settled faster and cheaper online and outside the court, via the [European Online Dispute Resolution](#) (ODR) platform, launched by the Commission on 15 February 2016. Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: *"While we are still in an early phase of this new tool, we can already say that the Online Dispute Resolution platform has been well received by consumers. We also see that the mere fact of a consumer using the platform often is incentive enough for traders to resolve the dispute. We are giving consumers a practical tool to help them benefit from their rights in practice. On the other side, traders also have a lot to gain from this platform and should use it more. Particularly for online traders it is essential to be seen as reliable by potential consumers. Using this tool will help them earn consumer trust, whilst providing them with a simple and fast way of resolving disputes."* In its first year, over 24 000 consumer complaints were lodged. More than a third of the complaints concerned cross-border purchases within the EU. Most complaints were about clothing and footwear, airline tickets and information and communication technology goods. The

Commission will prepare a first detailed report on the functioning of the platform towards the end of 2017. It is also planning further activities in 2017 to engage more traders and to further promote the platform amongst consumers. The Commission will also further improve the platform's user-friendliness and monitor whether traders comply with their obligation to put a link to the platform on their website. More information can be found in this [press release](#).

Commission's top scientific advisers publish opinion on cybersecurity in the Digital Single Market

Today the High Level Group of the Commission's [Scientific Advice Mechanism \(SAM\)](#) publishes an opinion on cybersecurity with recommendations to improve online access and safety for people and businesses in the EU. Recommendations touch upon the necessity to make systems more secure, to empower users, to strengthen Europe's cybersecurity industry and improve the coordination on cyber-incidents across Europe. The opinion also calls for a global cybersecurity governance framework, in which the EU would play a leading role. Commission Vice-President for the Digital Single Market Andrus **Ansip**, who requested the opinion, said: *"As cyber threats are getting increasingly sophisticated, cyber security is of major importance for the Digital Single Market. Europe's digital economy will only bring benefits to its citizens if they can be sure of its security. For example, the Commission is organising today a [roundtable on main challenges for cyber security in the energy system](#). The scientific opinion is another important part of our cybersecurity policy and will feed into our work on cyber security in 2017."* Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, added: *"Citizens need confidence in the Digital Single Market and the opportunities offered by digital technologies for better services and innovation. They need to feel reassured that their privacy is protected when they do business online, to enable growth and new business and at the same time to ensure that fundamental rights and values are protected. This independent scientific opinion provides many valuable insights to help us achieve these goals."* The SAM was set up in October 2015 to contribute to the quality of EU legislation and complements the existing science advisory structures of the Commission. More information on the opinion from 12.30 [here](#).

Mergers: Commission clears a joint venture between the Mitsubishi Chemical Group and the PTT Public Company Group

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of joint control over PTTMCC Biochem Company Limited of Thailand by the Mitsubishi Chemical Group of Japan and the PTT Public Company Group of Thailand. PTTMCC Biochem Company Limited will be active in the manufacturing and sales of specialised plastics, namely polybutylene succinate and polybutylene succinate adipate. The Mitsubishi Chemical Group is a global chemical company. The PTT Public Company Group is a state-owned oil and gas company. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given the companies' moderate combined market shares and the absence of any material activities in 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.8342](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Johannes Hahn visits Lebanon

Johannes **Hahn**, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, will be in [Lebanon](#) on Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 March to reiterate the EU's strong support to the country's democratic process and socio-economic development. The EU commends the actions that have been taken by Lebanon in support of the refugees since the onset of the Syria crisis, under very challenging

circumstances. The visit will take stock of the delivery by both sides of the commitments mutually agreed at the [London Conference of 2016](#) and under the [EU-Lebanon Compact](#). Commissioner **Hahn** and Lebanese authorities will discuss achievements and the way forward for the stabilisation of the country just a few days ahead of the follow-up [Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region](#) on 5th April 2017. On Monday, Commissioner **Hahn** will meet key political representatives of the country including President Michel Aoun, Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, Prime Minister Saad Hariri, Minister of Education, vice Prime Minister Ghassan Hasbani, Higher Education Marwan Hamade and Minister of State for Refugee Affairs Mouin Merhebi as well as representatives of civil society. On Tuesday, Commissioner **Hahn** will conduct field visits in parts of Lebanon where EU-funded projects are being implemented in the areas of integrated border management, solid waste management, primary health care as well as an informal refugee settlement. Videos and photos of the visit will be available on [EbS](#).

Commissioners Avramopoulos, Jourová and King to attend the Justice and Home Affairs Council

Commissioners Dimitris **Avramopoulos**, Věra **Jourová** and Julian **King** will attend the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in Brussels on 27 and 28 March. On Monday, Home Affairs Ministers will discuss the latest developments regarding the EU's external migration policy following the Malta declaration by Heads of State of Government from 3 February 2017. Ministers will also discuss progress made on relocation and the deployment of experts to the European Border and Coast Guard and EASO. Furthermore, Ministers will take stock of progress made following the Commission proposals for a reform of the Common European Asylum System, including for the Dublin mechanism and EU legislation on asylum procedures, reception conditions, and common criteria for international protection as well as resettlement. In addition, Commissioner **Avramopoulos** will present to the Ministers the Commission's Recommendation to Member States on making returns more effective and the EU Action Plan on Return. On security and borders, the legislative progress on the Commission proposals to establish a European Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS) and an Entry/Exit System (EES) will also be discussed, as well as the state of play of the Radicalisation Awareness Network. On Tuesday, Justice Ministers will discuss the latest developments relating to data retention as well as criminal justice cooperation in cyberspace, covering both the issue of encryption and how prosecutors and police officers can access e-evidence for their investigations. Furthermore, Ministers will discuss the criminal justice answer and the use of Eurojust in the context of foreign terrorist fighter returnees, on the basis of the report prepared by the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator. During a working lunch, the Ministers will also discuss the protection of whistle-blowers, in light of the ongoing public consultation. In the afternoon, Ministers will discuss the Commission's proposals on terrorist financing, including on countering money laundering by criminal law and on mutual recognition of freezing and confiscation orders as well as a proposal concerning contracts for the supply of digital content.

COMING UP

- [Thursday 30 March: Ministerial Conference on Mediterranean Fisheries in Malta](#)
- [Wednesday 12 April: Commission invites interested parties to Stakeholder Forum on the European Solidarity Corps](#)



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