



Wednesday, 28 March, 2017

EUROSTAT: International trade in goods in 2016 - A third of EU trade with the United States and China - At Member State level, trade within the EU largely prevails though

In 2016, the **United States** (€610 bn, or 17.7% of total EU trade in goods) and **China** (€515 bn, or 14.9%) continued to be the two main goods trading partners of the **European Union** (EU), well ahead of **Switzerland** (€264 bn, or 7.6%), **Russia** (€191 bn, or 5.5%), **Turkey** (€145 bn, or 4.2%) and **Japan** (€125 bn, or 3.6%). More information [here](#)

President Juncker in Malta for the EPP Congress and Citizens' Dialogue with Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat and Commissioner Vella

Today and tomorrow (29 and 30 March) President **Juncker** will be in Malta to participate in the EPP Congress – "Europe secures our Future" and in a Citizens' Dialogue together with Prime Minister of Malta, Joseph Muscat, as well as Commissioner **Vella**. The Citizens' Dialogue is taking place this afternoon at 17:30 CET and can be followed live on [EbS](#) and on [Facebook](#). In the context of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, and following the publication of the Commission's [White Paper on the future of Europe](#), tomorrow President **Juncker** will address the plenary of the EPP Congress (+/- 12:45 CET) on the evolution of the EU in the years to come. President **Juncker's** speech will be broadcast live on [EbS](#).

Mergers: Commission blocks proposed merger between Deutsche Börse and London Stock Exchange

The European Commission has prohibited the proposed merger between Deutsche Börse AG and London Stock Exchange Group under the EU Merger Regulation. The Commission's investigation concluded the merger would have created a de facto monopoly in the markets for clearing fixed income instruments. The proposed merger would have combined the activities of the two largest European stock exchange operators, Deutsche Börse AG (DBAG) and London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). They own the stock exchanges of Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, as well as several of the largest European clearing houses. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The European economy depends on well-functioning financial markets. That is not just important for banks and other financial institutions. The whole economy benefits when businesses can raise money on competitive financial markets. The merger between Deutsche Börse and the London Stock Exchange would have*

significantly reduced competition by creating a de facto monopoly in the crucial area of clearing of fixed income instruments. As the parties failed to offer the remedies required to address our competition concerns, the Commission has decided to prohibit the merger." The full press release is available online in [EN](#). The recording of Commissioner **Vestager**'s press conference is available online on [EbS](#).

Commission registers 'Minority Safepack' European Citizens' Initiative

The European Commission has today decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative inviting the Commission "to improve the protection of persons belonging to national and linguistic minorities and strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity in the Union". The registration of this Initiative on 3 April 2017 will start a one-year process of collection of signatures of support by its organisers. A press release with more information is available [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Washington D.C

Commissioner **Jourová** will be in Washington D.C. from today to 1st April to meet her American counterparts to discuss EU-U.S. cooperation on criminal justice as well as the state of play on the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield. The visit will also be an opportunity to prepare the first joint annual review of the Privacy Shield. Commissioner **Jourová** will have meetings with Jeff Sessions, Attorney General of the United States, Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce of the United States, Jim Sensenbrenner, Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Maureen Ohlhausen, Federal Trade Commissioner, as well as Ken Juster, Deputy Director of the National Economic Council. She will also exchange views with privacy NGOs. She will take part in two roundtables with tech companies, one organised by the US Chamber of Commerce and another one by the Information Technology Industry Council. On Friday, Commissioner **Jourová** will deliver a keynote on Transatlantic data flows at an event organised by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and she will meet Hynek Kmoníček, Czech Ambassador to the US.

Commissioner Navracsics travelling to Florence for G7 Ministerial meeting on culture

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Florence tomorrow for the first-ever meeting of G7 Culture Ministers. The meeting is part of the preparations for the gathering of the G7 leaders in Taormina, Sicily, on 26-27 May. In Florence, EU Culture Ministers will focus on culture as a tool for dialogue among peoples. Commissioner **Navracsics** will speak during the Ministerial session, a side event organised by Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Dario Franceschini, and take part in the signing ceremony of the "Joint Declaration of Florence". Key international organisations working in the cultural sector will also attend the two-day meeting. Ahead of the event, Commissioner **Navracsics** said: *"I fully support this important initiative to place culture high on the agenda of the G7. Strengthening our cultural relations even further can make a vital contribution to better international relations overall. Implementing the EU's commitment to protecting cultural heritage and promoting intercultural dialogue is one of my priorities."* The increased focus on culture as a tool for dialogue among peoples is consistent with efforts by the Commission and the European External Action Service to implement the [EU strategy for international cultural relations](#) presented last June. One of the key actions of this strategy, an [EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform](#), has been set up with the support of EU funds. The Platform helps enhance European cooperation (between EU Member States and EU Delegations) as well as inter-cultural exchanges and [promote](#) the diverse cultures of the EU. The Commission is currently also

preparing legislation to prevent the inflows of illicitly traded cultural goods into the EU. To further highlight and promote the role of culture in building dialogue and driving economic and social development, the Commission has proposed 2018 to be the [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#).

Commission clears post-mandate activities for former Commissioner Jonathan Hill, subject to conditions

The Commission approved today the appointment of former Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, Jonathan Hill, to two positions – first as Senior Adviser to the law-firm *Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP* (Freshfields), subject to conditions aiming at excluding any conflict of interest, and second as one of the Independent National Directors of *The Times Newspapers Ltd*. Taking into account the opinion by the Ad hoc Ethical Committee, the Commission decided that Lord Hill's appointment as Senior Adviser to Freshfields is compatible with Article 245(2) of the [TFEU](#) under the following three conditions: during at least the eighteen months cooling-off period, Lord Hill (1) refrains from providing advice to Freshfields' financial services clients, (2) refrains from providing advice to Freshfields itself or to its non-financial services clients on issues related to the financial services sector, and (3) refrains from any lobbying activity on behalf of Freshfields or one of its clients with the Commission and its services on matters linked to his former portfolio. Lord Hill's envisaged position as one of six Independent National Directors of The Times Newspapers is not linked with his former Commission portfolio and does not present a risk of incompatibility either with his former function as Member of the Commission or with the interests of the Institution. More details are available [online](#)

Commissioner Vella hosts Ministerial conference in Malta to secure 10-year pledge to save Mediterranean fish stocks

Commissioner **Vella** will be in Malta on 29-30 March for the Ministerial Conference on Mediterranean fisheries organised by the European Commission. The ministerial conference is a significant political push to address the alarming state of stocks in the Mediterranean and its impact on the industry and coastal communities. Over 300 000 persons are directly employed on fishing vessels in the Mediterranean, whilst many more indirect jobs depend on the sector. The Conference will bring together the political voices of the northern and southern coast and will culminate with the signature of the Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration; a 10-year pledge to save the Mediterranean fish stocks and to protect the region's ecological and economic wealth. You can follow the event live [here](#) and the programme is available [here](#).

Commissioner King in Tallinn

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** will be in Tallinn, Estonia tomorrow and on Friday, where he will meet the President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid, Prime Minister Jüri Ratas and the Ministers of Interior and of Justice, respectively Andres Anvelt and Urmas Reinsalu. Discussions will focus on the latest developments in the field of security in view of the forthcoming Estonian Presidency of the Council, notably on information sharing, interoperability of information systems and cybersecurity. On Friday morning, Commissioner **King** will participate in a meeting of the EU Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament. Meetings are also scheduled with the Director of NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence Sven Sakkov, the Director of the Estonian Information System Authority Taimar Peterkop and with Krum Garkov, the Executive Director of EU-LISA, the EU's Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice, which is based in Tallin.

European Commission appoints three Directors and three Principal Advisers

Today, the European Commission appointed Ms Yordi Aguirre as Director for European and International Carbon Markets in its department for Climate Action (DG CLIMA), Ms Irena Moozova as Director for Equality and Union citizenship in its department for Justice (DG JUST), and Mr Gianluca Pecchi as Director for Resources and Support in its department for Interpretation (DG SCIC). The Commission also decided to appoint Mr Pieter Van Nuffel, Mr Jean-Paul Keppenne and Mr Clemens Ladenburger as Principal Advisers in its Legal Service. Ms Yordi Aguirre, a Spanish national, joined the Commission in 1997 and first became Head of Unit in 2007, responsible for Eco-innovation and LIFE at the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (EASME). Since June 2015, she is heading the unit in charge of Adaptation in the department of International and Mainstreaming in Climate Action (DG CLIMA). Ms Irena Moozova, a Czech national, joined the Commission in 2006 as Head of the European Commission's Representation in Prague. Since May 2010, she is heading the unit in charge of supporting the Commission Representations, in the department for Communication (DG COMM). Mr Gianluca Pecchi, an Italian national, joined the Commission in 2001 and first became Head of Unit in 2006 responsible for Internal Audit at the Secretariat-General. From 2010 to 2013 he was Head of Unit responsible for Internal Audit in the department for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW). Since January 2014, he is heading the department in charge of Finance and Administration at the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). Mr Pieter Van Nuffel, a Belgian national, joined the Commission in 1983 and its Legal Service in 1990, serving since November 2014 as acting Principal Legal Adviser; between 2002 and 2004, he was Head of Unit in the Commission team following the European Convention. Since July 2015 he is President Juncker's personal representative to the UN Good Offices Mission in Cyprus, a role that he will continue exercising. Mr Jean-Paul Keppenne, a Belgian national, joined the Commission in 1994 as Legal Adviser and since October 2015 he is Acting Director in charge first of the Institutions team and thereafter of the Economic Governance team at the Legal Service. Mr Clemens Ladenburger, a German national, joined the Commission's Legal Service in 1999. Since March 2008, he serves as Assistant to the Director-General of the Legal Service. Ms Yordi Aguirre, Mr Pieter Van Nuffel, Mr Jean-Paul Keppenne and Mr Clemens Ladenburger will start in their new positions on 1 April 2017, while Ms Irena Moozova and Mr Gianluca Pecchi will start on 16 April 2017.

COMING UP

- **Wednesday 29 March: Article 50 to be triggered**
- [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](#)

MEX/17/791



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