



Thursday, 20 April, 2017

EU Maritime Ministers to sign declaration to boost sustainable blue economy

EU Maritime Ministers will sign today a Declaration on Blue Growth, reaffirming their political commitment to further grow EU's sustainable blue economy. The Declaration will be adopted at the [Informal Ministerial Conference on Blue growth, Ocean Governance in the EU and the Mediterranean, Innovation and Nautical Tourism](#), co-chaired by Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu **Vella** today in Malta. It will give an additional boost to the sustainable development of key sectors including tourism, aquaculture, ocean energy and biotechnology. Blue growth has the potential to become a real European success story contributing more than €500 billion a year to EU's economy and representing 5.4 million jobs. The Informal Ministerial Conference will also discuss the Commission's recently launched [Western Mediterranean Blue Growth Initiative](#) and comes one month after the successful [MEDFISH4EVER declaration](#). The sustainable development of the Blue Economy will also be a major theme at the [Our Ocean conference](#) on 5-6 October 2017, co-hosted by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner **Vella**. The Commissioner's opening speech at the Informal Ministerial Conference on Blue Growth available [here](#).

Agriculture: Commission approves two new geographical indications from Italy

The Commission today approved the addition of two new products from Italy to the Register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). The first product is 'Marche', a virgin olive oil extra recognizable by its yellow-green color and an average intensity of fruity, bitterness and pungency. The production area includes the Adriatic region 'Marche' in northeastern Italy where the olive tree is the main tree crop. The oil "Marche" has long enjoyed great fame. The oldest historical references date back to the 12th century. The oil was sold to Florentine merchants in 1347 and exports to the other regions continued until the middle of the 17th century. The second product is 'Vitelloni Piemontesi della Coscia', beef. The oxen are raised in the regions of Piedmont and Liguria in the north-west of the country. The abundance of water and the fertility of the land are very favorable conditions which are particularly well suited to the traditional breeding of 'Vitelloni Piemontesi della coscia'. Due to their particular anatomical characteristics, animals are distinguished from other cattle by a very low lipid content and high protein content. The new names will reach more than 1390 products already protected. More information is available on the quality products website and the DOOR database of protected products

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of a business unit of Energhe by Duferco

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of sole control by Duferco over a business unit of Energhe S.p.A., both of Italy. The target is a business unit of Energhe, mainly active in the supply of gas and electricity. Duferco controls companies active in different sectors, including steel, energy and shipping. Duferco's activities in the energy sector include trading, renewable energy generation, wholesale and retail supply. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns as there are very minor overlaps between the companies' activities. 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.8445](#).

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of sole control of ITP by Rolls-Royce, subject to conditions

The European Commission has cleared under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of aircraft engine components maker ITP (Spain) by aircraft engine maker Rolls-Royce (UK). Rolls-Royce, together with ITP, MTU of Germany and Safran of France, is a member of the military engine consortium EPI (*Europrop International GmbH*). EPI designs and manufactures the engine powering the Airbus A400M, which competes with the Lockheed Martin C-130J aircraft, powered by a Rolls-Royce engine. The Commission had concerns that the transaction, as originally notified, would have enabled Rolls-Royce, by acquiring ITP, to obtain additional influence on the decision-making process of the EPI consortium, on matters that affect its competitiveness against the Lockheed Martin C-130J. In order to remove these concerns, Rolls-Royce offered commitments in relation to the EPI governance rules that will eliminate the conflict of interest created by the merger and ensure that the EPI consortium remains competitive. The Commission also examined whether the merged entity would have the ability and incentive to shut out the supply of ITP's engine components to other manufacturers of aircraft engines competing with Rolls-Royce, however this was not the case. The Commission concluded that the transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. The decision is conditional upon full compliance by Rolls-Royce with its commitments. [A full press release is available online in here](#)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of smart card maker Morpho by Advent International, subject to conditions

The European Commission has cleared under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of identity and security solutions provider Morpho, based in France, by Advent International of the US. The approval is conditional on the divestiture of Morpho's payment smart card business in France.

Morpho is the identity and security solutions business of the Safran group. **Advent International**, a private equity firm, controls smart card and digital security provider Oberthur. Both Oberthur and Morpho develop and supply identification and security solutions, including smart cards for the banking sector, telecommunication sector and identity document sector.

The Commission's investigation found that in France there are currently only three viable suppliers of payment smart cards holding the necessary national certifications and production sites to effectively supply French banks. The takeover would reduce that number to only two, which would significantly reduce competition. [More information here](#)

Eurostat: February 2017 compared with January 2017-Production in construction up by 6.9% in euro-area -Up by 4.4% in EU28

In February 2017 compared with January 2017, seasonally adjusted production in the construction sector increased by 6.9% in the **euro area** (EA19) and by 4.4% in the **EU28**, according to first estimates from **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. In January 2017, production in construction fell by 2.4% in the **euro area** and by 1.5% in the **EU28**. [More information here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Jourová on official visit to Estonia

Today, Commissioner **Jourová** will visit Tallinn to prepare the upcoming Estonian presidency in the field of Justice. She will also discuss the European Public Prosecutor's Office and justice in the cyberspace. She will meet the Prime Minister, Jüri Ratas, the Minister of Social Protection, Kaia Iva, and Lavly Perling, Prosecutor General of Estonia. Tomorrow, she will exchange views with the European Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu (the Parliament of Estonia). She will also meet the Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu and Merike Saks, Secretary General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication of Estonia. Finally, she will visit eu-LISA, the European Agency for the operational management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the area of freedom, security and justice, as well as the e-Estonia Showroom.

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