



Wednesday, 10 May, 2017

President Juncker speaks about Europe's future in Bonn and in Brussels

On the occasion of Europe Day (9 May), President **Juncker** spoke at length earlier this week about the European Union's future and its current challenges. On Monday, he addressed the *Bonner Akademie für Forschung und Lehre praktischer Politik* with a speech entitled "*Europe's end – Europe's beginning? The EU between crisis and breakup*", where he said: "*Europe is losing weight. We are the smallest continent. Those who do not know how to change these figures will know that the time has not come to divide us into national parts, but rather to stand united.*" The speech is available in German [here](#). Yesterday in Brussels, President **Juncker** also participated in a Citizens' Dialogue with the theme "*Europe Day 2017 – Which way forward for a better European Future?*", along with other prominent European figures. The video of the event can be watched on EbS [here](#).

Report on the state of EU-Tunisia relations: towards a strengthening of our Privileged Partnership

Today, the European Commission and the European External Action Service published their first report on the state of EU-Tunisia relations in 2015-2016, in accordance with the revised European Neighbourhood Policy and prior to the Association Council being held on 11 May 2017.

Six years on from the 2011 revolution, and particularly over the past two years, there has been tangible progress, in particular as regards democratic consolidation and promotion of good governance, enhanced security, and exchange and integration between the people of Tunisia and Europe. The EU's constant support, which began immediately after the revolution, was further displayed when Tunisia was associated in the Horizon 2020 research programme and the Erasmus+ programme, and when EU-Tunisia partnerships for both youth and mobility were adopted. A full press release is available [here](#).

Digital Single Market: Commission calls for swift adoption of key proposals and maps out challenges ahead

Having reached the middle of its mandate, the Commission published today the [mid-term review](#) of its [Digital Single Market strategy](#). It takes stock of the progress made and calls on co-legislators to swiftly act on all proposals already presented. The focus is now on obtaining [political agreements](#) with the European Parliament and the Council on all proposals, above all the [updated EU telecoms rules](#) which will boost

investments in high-speed and quality networks, which are indispensable for the full deployment of the digital economy and society. The Commission has also identified three main areas where further EU action is needed: (1) to develop the European Data Economy to its full potential, (2) to protect Europe's assets by tackling cybersecurity challenges, and (3) to promote the online platforms as responsible players of a fair internet ecosystem. Andrus **Ansip**, Vice-President for the Digital Single Market said: *"The Commission has lived up to its promise and presented all main initiatives for building a Digital Single Market. Now, the European Parliament and Member States need to adopt these proposals as soon as possible, for new jobs, business and innovation to take off across Europe. Two years on, we propose to update our strategy to reflect new challenges and technologies. We need cyber-secure infrastructure across all parts of the EU so that everyone – everywhere – can enjoy high-speed connectivity safely. We have already agreed on strong EU rules for personal data protection; we now need to make sure that non-personal data can flow freely to assist connected cars and eHealth services. We need high-performance computing along with a digitally skilled workforce to make the most out of the data economy. All these areas are essential for Europe's digital future."* More details can be found in the [press release](#) and [MEMO](#).

Commission launches reflection on harnessing globalisation

Following the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe presented on 1 March, today the Commission will publish its Reflection Paper on Harnessing Globalisation. Based on a fair assessment of the benefits and downsides of globalisation, the Paper aims to launch a debate on how the EU and its Member States can shape globalisation in a way that anticipates the future and improves the lives of Europeans. A press release and factsheet will be available online once the press conference with First Vice-President **Timmermans** and Vice-President **Katainen** starts, which you can watch [here](#).

President Juncker receives proposal for nomination of candidate for Commissioner from Bulgaria

President **Juncker** received this morning the proposal by Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov for nominating Mrs Mariya Gabriel as the candidate to replace former Member of the Commission Kristalina Georgieva. The proposal for nomination follows a phone call between President **Juncker** and Prime Minister Borissov on Friday, 5 May, in which the two agreed that a candidate for Commissioner should be nominated swiftly. The next step is now for President Jean-Claude **Juncker** to receive Mariya Gabriel for an interview. The purpose of the interview will be to determine the candidate's ability to serve as a European Commissioner, particularly in light of Article 17(3) of the [Treaty on European Union](#) (TEU), which states that: *"The members of the Commission shall be chosen on the ground of their general competence and European commitment from persons whose independence is beyond doubt."* On the basis of the interview, President **Juncker** will also decide on the allocation of a portfolio for the future Commissioner of Bulgarian nationality – in line with Article 17(6) of the Treaty on European Union which reserves to him the prerogative to organise the work of the Commission. Procedurally, the appointment of a new Commissioner of Bulgarian nationality requires common accord between the President of the Commission and the Council after the consultation of the European Parliament (Article 246, subparagraph 2 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#)). In addition, the Interinstitutional [Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the European Commission](#) requires the President of the Commission to "seriously consider" the results of the consultation of the European Parliament – which will have an exchange of views with the candidate – before giving his accord to the decision of the Council to appoint the new Commissioner (para 6 of the Framework Agreement). Following the [decision of former Vice-President Kristalina Georgieva to resign](#) from the European Commission, Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger** became on 1 January 2017 the Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human Resources, while President Juncker [temporarily assigned the Digital Economy and Society portfolio](#) to Vice-President Andrus Ansip.

Juncker Plan: EUR 50 million for SMEs in Czech Republic

The [Juncker Plan](#) has backed a European Investment Fund (EIF) agreement with Československá obchodní banka (CSOB), a financial intermediary based in Czech Republic, that will unlock EUR 50 million in loans for innovative small and medium-sized companies over the next two years. The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the central pillar of the Juncker Plan, was a crucial factor in making this loan agreement possible. European Commission Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"The Investment Plan for Europe aims to support jobs and growth through facilitating investment in infrastructure projects and access to finance for small and medium-sized businesses. Thousands of small businesses in the Czech Republic are already benefitting from the support of the Investment Plan. With today's agreement, I am glad that even more will have access to the finance they need to create jobs, expand and innovate."* The Juncker Plan is now expected to trigger around EUR 2 billion in investments in Czech Republic and EUR 183.5 billion across Europe. For the latest figures country-by-country, see [here](#). A full press release is available [here](#).

Antitrust: Commission publishes final report on e-commerce sector inquiry

The European Commission has published today the final report on the e-commerce sector inquiry, which identifies business practices that may restrict competition. It allows the Commission to target its enforcement of EU antitrust rules in e-commerce markets and has already prompted companies to review their practices. The report presents the Commission's definitive findings, taking account of comments received on the [preliminary report of September 2016](#) and confirming to a large extent the preliminary report's conclusions. The insight gained from the sector inquiry will enable the Commission to target EU antitrust enforcement in European e-commerce markets, which will include opening further antitrust investigations. Furthermore, the sector inquiry has prompted companies to review their commercial practices on their own initiative. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager** in charge of competition policy said: *"Certain practices by companies in e-commerce markets may restrict competition by unduly limiting how products are distributed throughout the EU. Our report confirms that. These restrictions could limit consumer choice and prevent lower prices online. At the same time, we find that there is a need to balance the interests of both online and 'brick-and-mortar' retailers. All to the benefit of consumers. Our findings help us to target the enforcement of EU competition rules in e-commerce markets"*. The full [press release](#) and a fact sheet in [here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Juncker on official visit to Romania

President **Juncker** is traveling to Bucharest for an official visit today and tomorrow, where he will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue and meet with Romania's political leadership. Tomorrow morning, President **Juncker** will meet the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis; Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu, the President of the Senate, Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Liviu Dragnea. President **Juncker** will then attend a reception hosted by President Iohannis in celebration of Europe Day (9 May). In the afternoon he will participate in a Citizens' Dialogue at the National Museum of Art of Romania on the subject of the future of Europe. The dialogue follows the presentation of the Commission's White Paper on the Future of the European Union, which intends to launch a broad debate across Europe about how the EU should evolve at 27. The event is expected to be attended by over 450 participants and will be broadcast live on EbS between 17:00 and 18:00 local time (16:00 to 17:00 CET).

Commissioner Corina **Crețu** will accompany President **Juncker** during the visit and will also participate in the Citizens' Dialogue.

HR/VP Mogherini to attend London Conference on Somalia tomorrow

High-Representative/Vice President Federica **Mogherini** will represent the European Union at the London Conference on Somalia taking place on 11 May. The Conference aims to agree a Security Pact which sets the foundations for Somalia's long-term security and strengthen the relationship of the international community with the country. The EU is engaged in Somalia through a comprehensive approach based on active diplomacy, support for political stability, improving security, development assistance and humanitarian aid. The EU has three active Common Security and Defence Policy missions in the country. In addition, the EU is one of the main contributors to AMISOM, the African Union's peace mission to Somalia.

Vice-President Šefčovič in Poland for second Energy Union Tour

On 10-12 May, Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** will travel to Poland for the second Energy Union Tour. Vice-President **Šefčovič** will meet the Polish energy minister [Krzysztof Tchórzewski](#) to discuss the changes facing the Polish energy sector. He will also provide an opening speech at the 9th European Economic Congress in Katowice on 'The energy industry in Europe – the most important questions'. He will then take part in other high-level meetings with governmental officials and also engage in a wider debate with energy and business stakeholders at various events, including a roundtable discussion on Polish coal and carbon regions in transition and at the Regional Assembly of the Silesian and Małopolska Regions and European Start-Up Days. Ahead of the visit, Vice-President **Šefčovič** said: *"Europe is in the middle of the energy transition. With its large renewable energy resources and great potential in energy efficiency, both in buildings and in the transport sector, Poland can play an important part in this transition. Poland is also a country with a traditionally strong coal mining industry. The Commission is committed to making sure that restructuring of the coal mining sector happens in a socially fair way and wants to provide targeted assistance in order to facilitate access to existing funds, encourage the exchange of good practices, support technology development and kick-off discussions on re-skilling needs and industrial roadmaps. The EU climate and energy targets and the legal framework in the Energy Union areas are matched with significant investment support from the EU budget. Poland is the biggest beneficiary of the solidarity mechanisms under the EU Emissions Trading System"*. Upcoming dates and more information on the 2017 Energy Union tour are available [here](#). More information on the Energy Union is available [here](#).

Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Thyssen attend High-Level Conference on Youth Employment

Valdis **Dombrovskis**, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union and Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, are today attending the [European Court of Auditors High-Level Conference on 'Youth Employment: confronting challenges and finding solutions'](#). The aim of the conference is to review how EU schemes have been delivering results in the labour market, to what extent they are providing appropriate support to young people and how Member States have been able to rise to the challenge. This follows on from the Court's special report *'Youth Unemployment – Have EU policies made a difference?'*. Since its launch in 2013, more than 10 million young people have already benefitted from the [Youth Guarantee](#). There are now 1.8 million fewer young unemployed in the EU and 1 million fewer young people not in employment, education or training (so-called NEETs). In line with the

observations of both the [Commission's report on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative](#) and the European Court of Auditors' report on youth unemployment, this High-Level Conference provides a timely opportunity to discuss lessons learned and the way forward so that the Youth Guarantee benefits those young people furthest away from the labour market even more. Vice-President **Dombrovskis**' keynote speech will be published [here](#), Commissioner **Thyssen**'s speech [here](#).

MEX/17/1264



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