



Monday, 29 April, 2017

COMMISSIONER MALMSTRÖM MEETS CIVIL SOCIETY IN BRUSSELS

Commissioner for Trade Cecilia **Malmström** will meet today with civil society representatives in Brussels to present current developments and exchange views on the EU's trade agenda and broader policy issues, including the state of play of the negotiating processes with several partners, like Japan, Mexico and the Mercosur countries. The meeting will also be an opportunity to reflect on progress achieved in implementation of the 2015 '[Trade for all](#)' policy strategy communication, which outlined the main directions and pillars of trade policy under the Juncker Commission. A dedicated progress report will be published by the end of 2017. The meeting will bring together [175 participants](#) from the whole spectrum of civil society and will be [web streamed](#) to ensure the maximum of transparency for those not able to attend. The event is part of an ongoing process of [Civil Society Dialogue](#) on EU trade policy.

EU GREEN WEEK 2017: GREEN JOBS FOR A GREENER FUTURE

Today marks the start of the 17th annual EU Green Week. This year the focus is on green jobs. EU environmental policies are creating green jobs and contributing to economic and social growth across the EU *and* across sectors. This Commission's flagship policies such as the Circular Economy package or promoting the Paris Climate Agreement create significant employment opportunities. This opportunity can be best realised by making sure that new 'green' skills are promoted, which are a big part of the [EU New Skills Agenda](#). This Green Week will give a voice to companies making that green transition. From construction to renewable energy to profitable recycling, enterprises will illustrate the mainstreaming of green jobs. European employers' organisation, big and small, public and private and European Trade unions will show their support and commitment. The Week opens today in Malta and closes on Friday in Essen Germany, Europe's Green Capital for 2017. Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner **Vella** will open a [high-level conference](#) in Brussels tomorrow and Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen** will [close the conference](#) on Wednesday. Speaking before the event, Commissioner for the Environment and Maritime Affairs, Karmenu **Vella** said that; *"It's not about white collar or blue collar jobs, it's about moving to green collar. It's about greening existing professions, getting the green know-how to people who already have the skills, but lack that particular knowledge that will make all the difference. We need to find ways of making green the new normal - initiatives under the EU Circular Economy Action Plan and Skills Agenda will help."* Please watch the video introduction [here](#). The programme will also feature a series of [partner events](#) taking place across Europe.

As well as being invited to take part in person, stakeholders and the general public are encouraged to become 'virtually' involved by participating in a wide range of on-line and social media activities. For more information [here](#).

COMMISSION WELCOMES ADOPTION OF NEW RULES TO BLOCK TAX AVOIDANCE

The European Commission has welcomed the formal adoption today by Member States of new EU rules to prevent tax avoidance via non-EU countries. The agreed rules will stop companies from escaping tax by exploiting the mismatches between Member States' and non-EU countries' tax systems ('hybrid mismatches'). Today's agreement completes the Anti Tax Avoidance Directive (ATAD) which ensures that binding and robust anti-abuse measures are applied throughout the Single Market. *"Our campaign for fairer taxation in Europe continues to reap results. Today's agreement is further proof of what the EU can achieve when we work together against common challenges. It is another victory for fair taxation and another blow against those companies that try to escape paying their fair share,"* said Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs. Today's agreement will ensure that companies cannot avoid taxation by abusing mismatches between countries' tax treatment of certain income or entities, even if the mismatches involve third countries. The new rules will come into force on 1 January 2020, with a longer phasing-in period of 2022 for one provision. They build on the solid anti-avoidance safeguards initiated by the Juncker Commission and agreed at EU level. In addition to the ambitious Anti Tax Avoidance Directive, agreed in 2016, a host of new tax transparency rules have been adopted to ensure fairer and more open taxation throughout Europe. A full press release is available [here](#).

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 2017: EU-SUPPORTED FILM "THE SQUARE" AWARDED PALME D'OR

Three films supported by the [EU's Creative Europe MEDIA](#) programme received [awards at the Cannes Film Festival 2017](#). An art world satire "[The Square](#)" (Sweden, Germany, France, Denmark) by Ruben Östlund won the highest prize 'Palme d'Or'. The film tells the story of a father respected for his human values and the quality of his work in a Swedish contemporary art museum, but whose principles are shaken by a profound existential crisis. "The Square" received EUR 47.000 for its distribution across Europe. The second awarded film supported by the MEDIA programme this year was "[The Killing of a sacred Deer](#)" by Yorgos Lanthimos (Ireland, UK, Greece). It won the prize for the Best Screenplay. It was supported at the earliest stages of its development with EUR 58.000, and at the distribution stage through an additional EUR 179.000. In the section 'Un Certain Regard', the third MEDIA-supported film "Barbara" directed by Mathieu Amalric, was awarded the Prize for Best Poetic Narrative. Vice-President Andrus **Ansip**, responsible for the Digital Single Market, said: *"My warmest congratulations to the winners. It is once again a great success for the European film industry and the MEDIA programme. We will continue our efforts to support the circulation and promotion of European films across our continent and help European cinema make the most of the digital age."* This year, in total [20 films screened](#) at the Festival had been developed or distributed with support of more than EUR 1.6 million from the EU's Creative Europe MEDIA programme. This is the third year in a row that a film supported by [Creative Europe MEDIA](#) receives the prestigious Palme d'Or after "[I, Daniel Blake](#)" in 2016 and "[Dheepan](#)" in 2015.

CAR EMISSIONS AND SAFETY: COMMISSION WELCOMES MEMBER STATES' AGREEMENT ON STRICTER RULES

The Commission welcomes the agreement reached today by Member States on its legislative proposal to ensure that car manufacturers comply strictly with all EU safety, environmental and production requirements. [Proposed by the Commission in January 2016](#), the new rules represent a complete overhaul of the so-called car type approval framework: the system which allows cars to be placed on the market. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for Internal Market and Industry, said: *"Almost two years into the emissions scandal, we continue to hear of new allegations, revelations and investigations. It is high time that we have a credible, watertight car type approval system in place. We owe it to our citizens just as we owe it to car manufacturers which did not resort to cheating"*. The Commission proposal for a [Regulation](#) on the approval and market surveillance of motor vehicles aims to ensure more independent vehicle testing and more checks on cars already in circulation. The proposal also foresees greater EU supervisory powers over national authorities, test centres and manufacturers, including the possibility for the Commission to impose fines on manufacturers. It also includes an obligation on car manufacturers to grant relevant authorities access to their emissions software protocol. Following progress in the European Parliament, the Council agreement paves the way for the start of so-called trilogue negotiations with a view to a common agreement. The Regulation will complement other important steps taken by the Commission, such as the introduction of more robust and realistic testing methods for measuring both nitrogen oxides (NOx) and CO2 emissions from cars. For more information on EU legislation on vehicle type approval and on emissions, see [MEMO/16/4269](#).

COMMISSION WELCOMES MEMBER STATES' SUPPORT TO BOOST SERVICES SECTOR

The Commission welcomes today's agreement by Member States on two legislative proposals tabled by the Commission as recently as January 2017 as part of a wider [package of measures](#) to give a fresh boost to the services sector. Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, Commissioner for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: *"I welcome the speedy progress made in Council and look forward to the discussions in the European Parliament. We live in a services economy, and our latest country-specific recommendations show again that Member States stand to gain from a flourishing services sector. With these proposals we help Member States design future regulation in a way that allows services providers to blossom, whether they want to stay at home or do business in another EU country."* The Council has reached an agreement on two draft Directives: the so-called "proportionality test" for new national regulation on professional services and the "notification procedure" for new rules on services. The third legislative proposal of the services package, the Services E-Card, aims to help services providers navigate administrative formalities. For more information on the proposals for "A services economy that works for Europeans", see [MEMO/17/11](#).

EUROPEANS' HEALTH: LAUNCHING OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON EU BLOOD, TISSUES AND CELLS LEGISLATION

The Commission seeks to gather views on the extent to which the [2002 Directive](#) setting standards of quality and safety for human blood and the [2004 Directive](#) setting standards for human tissues and cells, have met their original objectives and whether they remain fit for purpose. The consultation of citizens and stakeholders, launched today, will run until 21 August 2017. Interested parties are invited to participate [online](#). Urging people to participate, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"Blood, tissues and cells are used for both routine procedures (such as in vitro fertilisation and cornea transplantation), as well as for lifesaving procedures (such as blood transfusion following serious injury, bone marrow transplants for cancer patients and skin grafts for patients with major burns). It is therefore vital that EU legislation ensures the highest level of safety. Patients' lives depend on it."* The

results of the public consultation and views expressed by stakeholders in other forums will be reviewed and will feed into a final evaluation report on the EU Directives on blood, tissues and cells to be published towards the end of 2018. More information is available [here](#).

EU ANNOUNCES OVER €44 MILLION OF HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO HELP PEOPLE IN NEED IN AFGHANISTAN, IRAN AND PAKISTAN

The European Commission has announced today new humanitarian assistance of over €44 million to help people in need in South-West and Central Asia, who continue to face the consequences of years of conflicts and displacement, as well as frequent natural disasters. The funding will support Afghan refugees and their families in Iran and Pakistan, help victims of conflict in Afghanistan and improve disaster risk management in Central Asia. *"The EU's assistance announced today will help hundreds of thousands of people affected by conflicts and natural disasters in South-West and Central Asia. I was recently in the region and saw first-hand the humanitarian needs. Children always suffer the most in long-lasting crises which is why a significant part of this funding will also focus on education in emergencies. Investing in children's future is crucial for the stabilisation of the entire region,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**. The Commissioner made the announcement as he met today with Mr Neil Buhne, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan. Read the full press release [here](#).

STATE AID: COMMISSION APPROVES €30 MILLION INVESTMENT AID FOR SCANDINAVIAN MOUNTAINS AIRPORT

The European Commission has found that Swedish plans to grant €29.9 million in investment aid to establish a commercial airport in Sälen, Sweden, are in line with EU state aid rules. The airport will improve connections in the Scandinavian mountains region whilst preserving competition in the Single Market. The airport facilities will be built at the site of an existing airfield, in an area that is a well-established ski destination. The remainder of the investment costs of the project will be funded by private investors. The Commission has concluded that the project complies with all criteria under EU state aid rules, in particular the Commission's 2014 [Aviation Guidelines](#) for investment aid to airports. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [SA.45863](#).

MERGERS: COMMISSION CLEARS ACQUISITION OF ALLFUNDS BANK BY HELLMAN & FRIEDMAN

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the proposed acquisition of Allfunds Bank, S.A. ("AFB") by Hellman & Friedman LLC ("H&F"). AFB, headquartered in Spain, acts as a logistic platform for the distribution of mutual funds, while H&F, of the US, is a private equity firm with investments in a variety of sectors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns because the companies' activities do not overlap. 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.8448](#).

MERGERS: COMMISSION CLEARS THE ACQUISITION OF THE SOFT TRIM AND ACOUSTICS BUSINESS OF IAC BY SHANGHAI SHENDA

The European Commission has approved under the EU Merger Regulation the acquisition of sole control by Shanghai Shenda Co, Ltd, controlled by Shangtex Holding Co. Ltd ("Shangtex") of China over the soft trim and acoustics business of International Automotive Components Group S.A. ("IAC") of Luxembourg. IAC manufactures and supplies a range of automotive interiors parts, including soft trim and acoustics products. Shangtex is active in the trade of textiles and the manufacturing of industrial textiles, such as soft trim and acoustics products for automotive applications. In the European Economic Area (EEA) it includes 11 manufacturing facilities and engineering and testing facility. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would not raise competition concerns given that the companies' activities do not overlap in the EEA. 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.8450](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VICE-PRESIDENT KATAINEN IN THE NETHERLANDS

Vice-President Jyrki **Katainen**, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, will be in the Netherlands tomorrow, Tuesday 30 May. He will deliver a keynote speech at the [European Family Business Summit](#) on the theme of 'The Future of Europe'.

MEX/17/1468



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