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Vice President Tajani in Monza with President Napolitano, Prime Minister Letta and President Maroni for the launch event of Expo 2015.

On July 7th, Vice President of the European Commission, responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship, Antonio Tajani, will be in Monza, at the launch event of Expo 2015.

The presence of Tajani and the video message from President Barroso confirmed the strong commitment of the EU executive for this event, to which the European Commission participates with a large exhibition stand.

In the presence of the President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano, the Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta and the Governor of Lombardy, Roberto Maroni, Vice President Tajani will present the key elements of the Commission's contribution to the Expo, which relate to nutrition, research, space and the tourism industry.

On the EXPO's eve, some services of the first fully European infrastructure, Galileo (the satellite navigation system) and Copernicus (Earth observation) will enter their operational phase. These services will provide significant benefits to agriculture and to the competitiveness of key sectors, such as logistics, mobility, energy, financial services or security, with an impact estimated to 90 billion euros over the next 20 years. For this reason, Vice President Tajani will announce on Sunday the decision to set up, at the EXPO 2015, an interactive exhibition to illustrate to visitors the wide range of practical applications of technologies related to space.

Finally, the Vice President will present the guidelines for European action to simplify visas so the EXPO 2015 will be able to benefit from the maximum flow of tourists of the new emerging countries from Russia, China, India or Brazil. On the eve of the launch event Tajani said: "The EXPO will be a forum for creative solutions to address global challenges. Here we will propose the forefront of European industrial innovation to provide lasting solutions to phenomena of growing demography, resource scarcity, energy security or climate change. Europe intends to invest resources and ideas in the Expo 2015 as an important opportunity to enhance their industrial rebirth and its technological leadership."

Background

The World Expo 2015 will take place in Milan from 1 May to 31 October 2015. 20 million visitors are expected. The Expo will deal with the theme "Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life". This edition of the Expo is meant to become a milestone of planetary debate on food and sustainability and will be a platform for political discussions and policy initiatives on these issues. Over 120 countries have already confirmed their participation, attesting to the significant commitment generated by this event. The EXPO will showcase European industrial achievements, ideas, innovative solutions and technologies.

Food supply: central theme of EXPO 2015

Food represents a building block of the EU economy: the EU is the biggest world exporter in the field and the EU food industry is its largest manufacturing industry, generating an annual turnover of almost EUR 1 trillion and employing more than 4 million people. The Expo will offer a platform to discuss political initiatives.

Food is part of the European common and diversified cultural heritage, a worldwide symbol of the "EU way of life". This is partly the result of the policies put in place by the EU in the crucial fields of food safety and food quality. Particularly with regards to **food safety**, the EU, with its science-based approach founded on the clear separation between risk assessment and risk management, is acknowledged as being a model for the rest of the world. Regarding **food quality**, this is becoming increasingly important in today's health conscious society and in view of the ever clearer link between food and health. Once again the EU is at the forefront of the discussion in this field, promoting, both in terms of education and policy development, healthy standards in the field of nutrition, based on the parallel track of stakeholders' active commitment and consumers' information.

A **well-functioning food supply chain** and a real level playing field between economic operators constitute a fundamental pre-requisite for a solid agri-food sector. The European Commission is making efforts in to **strengthen the competitiveness of this sector** through the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain. One of the objectives of the Forum is to contribute to the **EXPO 2015**.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/food/index_en.htm

Expo 2015 to catalyse new international flows of tourists to Europe

The European Commission will showcase its effort to increase the flow of tourists from Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America to Europe. With the '**Europe – Whenever you're ready**' campaign, the European Commission aims at increasing the flow of tourists to Europe which is the top tourist destination worldwide. Thanks to the strong cooperation between Vice President Tajani and Commissioner Malmstrom, the European visa facilitation system will be simplified. Therefore, the Expo 2015 will be able to benefit from the highest number of international tourists coming from emerging countries.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/index_en.htm

EXPO 2015 will highlight Europe's space programmes: Galileo and Copernicus

In 2015 the first services of Copernicus and Galileo (the new European systems for earth observation and satellite navigation) will be operative. They will contribute significantly to

the competitiveness and sustainable development of agriculture and the agro-food industry. The World Expo will showcase **space applications related to agriculture**.

Precision farming is a technique that allows farmers to better allocate inputs (e.g. seeds and fertilisers) to specific cropland areas based on soil type, fertility levels and other characteristics of that site. GPS was the first positioning system to be used for precision agriculture.

Integrated satellite-based augmentation systems help to overcome the limitations of GPS and correct its measurements. EGNOS, the European augmentation system, offers farmers a free service, which increases GPS accuracy to within 20 centimetres.

Thus, EGNOS enables **farmers to automate many tasks in the production cycle** and maximize yields while at the same time reduce their impact on the environment.

Applications include:

- Low-value crop cultivation;
- Individual livestock positioning and virtual fencing;
- Land parcel identification;
- Field measurements and boundary mapping.

No installation costs or annual subscription costs are required, only a receiver is needed. 1 on 10 tractors in Europe are already equipped today with GNSS receivers, most of them are EGNOS enabled.

EGNOS applications in agriculture result in:

- 2,36% reduction in time, fuel and seed quantity ;
- 2,49% reduction in fertilize and Plant Production Products quantities.

Global sales of GNSS receivers are expected to grow steadily worldwide with an average of 16% annually between 2010 and 2020.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/satnav/index_en.htm

Copernicus applications relevant for agriculture

Farmers often face challenges because of water shortages, expensive fertilisers and other chemical products, which also have a negative impact on the environment. Satellite-based imagery can be helpful in pinpointing problematic areas and drive specific hot-spot surveys. Also, they can highlight trend anomalies when comparing years. When these data are integrated into agronomic models, crop yields can be forecasted. At continental and global levels, the capability of anticipating variations in crop yield is key to anticipating swings in the markets and therefore enhancing the governance of 'price and food' crises.

COPERNICUS satellites **support the timely and accurate monitoring of agricultural land use** state and changes at European national and regional levels. Agricultural monitoring is based on a combination of satellite observations, meteorological data, agro-meteorological and biophysical modelling as well as statistical analyses. Copernicus will help reduce the fertiliser and foresee agriculture commodities to stabilise the price.

More information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/space/copernicus/index_en.htm

Joint Research Centre (JRC) to support Expo in Italy

The Commission has appointed as its representatives for EXPO 2015 David Wilkinson, JRC Director for Scientific Policy and Stakeholder Relations and Giancarlo Caratti di Lanzacco, who is heading JRC's Unit 'Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer'.

The JRC has been chosen to coordinate the participation of the Commission to the Milan Expo because of its strong scientific and technical competence in the theme of the Expo and the proximity of JRC's Ispra site to Milan. As the JRC Ispra Site is located only 60km from the Expo site and the JRC is carrying out research activities which are closely related to the theme of the world exposition (food security, sustainability and food safety), it is expected that the JRC will offer some of its facilities, including the new Visitors' Centre, in order to host expert events in conjunction with the Milan Expo. In this context, the President of Expo 2015, Diana Bracco, came to Ispra on Saturday 4 May on the occasion of the JRC Open Day to discuss organisational aspects with David Wilkinson.