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RÉUNION DU COLLÈGE : Organisation et méthodes de travail de la Commission von der Leyen - pour une Union plus ambitieuse

Aujourd'hui, à l'occasion de sa première réunion collégiale, la Commission **von der Leyen** a présenté des [décisions](#) relatives à son organisation et à ses méthodes de travail. Elles serviront à mettre en œuvre [l'agenda politique](#) de la présidente pour les cinq ans à venir, avec comme principes cardinaux la collégialité, la transparence et l'efficacité. « *Aujourd'hui j'ai présenté à mon équipe des documents-clefs qui façonneront la façon dont cette Commission va travailler,* » a annoncé la présidente **von der Leyen**, « *Nous sommes la branche exécutive de l'Union européenne: nous agissons pour le peuple européen, et nous voudrions que le peuple européen sache ce que nous faisons, dans leur intérêt.* » La Commission **von der Leyen** sera résolument géopolitique, effaçant la distinction entre affaires intérieures et extérieures, avec pour la première fois un groupe de travail spécifique préparant et coordonnant l'action du Collège en matière d'affaires étrangères. La présidente a également réitéré ses engagements en matière de parité. Vous trouverez [ici](#) les remarques de la présidente après le compte-rendu de la réunion du Collège, que vous pouvez également suivre en direct sur [FbS](#). Un communiqué de presse sur les méthodes de travail présentées aujourd'hui est disponible [en ligne](#). Par ailleurs, vous trouverez [ici](#) les différentes décisions présentées aujourd'hui, au sujet de l'organisation et des responsabilités des services de la Commission, de la composition des cabinets ainsi que sur I.D.E.A., le nouveau think-tank interne de la Commission. (*Pour plus d'informations: Eric Mamer – Tél.: +32 2 299 40 73; Dana Spinant – Tél.: +32 2 299 01 50*)

European Border and Coast Guard Agency's reinforced mandate now in force

Today, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency's reinforced mandate enters into force, giving it the operational capacity and powers needed to effectively support the 115,000 Member States' officers on the ground. Starting from January 2021, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency will be equipped with its own standing corps of border guards ready to be deployed wherever and whenever needed. The standing corps should reach its full capacity of 10,000 border guards by 2024. Under the [new Regulation](#) coming into force today, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency has a stronger mandate on returns and will be able to cooperate more closely with non-EU countries, including those beyond the EU's immediate neighbourhood, subject to the conclusion of an agreement with the countries concerned. Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: "All our efforts are now focused on ensuring the swift roll-out of the standing corps and helping the agency quickly take up its new tasks, so that it can assist Member States on the ground, constantly, reliably and in a spirit of solidarity. European borders are a matter of common concern and I am happy we are gearing up to manage them in a more European way." Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva **Johansson**, added: "Preparations for the roll-out of the standing corps are well underway, with a clear roadmap already prepared and endorsed, and an ongoing [recruitment campaign](#) for border guards launched by the Agency. In the implementation of the reinforced Agency, protection of fundamental rights will be a priority." (*For more information: Adalbert Jahnz - Tel.: +32 229 53156; Laura Berard - Tel.: +32 229 55721*)

Eurogroup and Economic and Financial Affairs Council meetings, 4 and 5 December 2019

Executive Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis** and Commissioner Paolo **Gentiloni** will represent the Commission at this week's Eurogroup and ECOFIN meetings. The Eurogroup will discuss the Commission's [Opinions on euro area Member States' Draft Budgetary Plans](#) and the [fourth Enhanced Surveillance report on Greece](#). It will also adopt its work programme for the first half of next year and is expected to re-appoint Hans Vijlbrief as President of the Eurogroup Working Group (EWG) for a second two-year term. The Commission will brief the Eurogroup on the main findings of the post-programme surveillance reports on Cyprus and Spain. The Eurogroup will then continue in an inclusive format to follow up on the [December 2018 Euro Summit](#) and the [June 2019 Euro Summit](#) on further strengthening Europe's Economic and Monetary Union. The discussions in this inclusive format will

focus, in particular, on the reform of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) Treaty, the roadmap for political negotiations on the European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS) and further follow-up to the agreement on the Budgetary Instrument for Convergence and Competitiveness (BICC) term sheet in October. Commissioner Paolo **Gentiloni** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. On Thursday, 5 December, the ECOFIN Council will kick off with a presentation by the Finnish Presidency of a [progress report](#) on the state of play on the banking union. This will take stock of the different work streams to strengthen the banking union, notably the proposal to establish a European Deposit Insurance Scheme (EDIS), the implementation of the banking package and the action plan to tackle non-performing loans. Ministers are set to adopt conclusions on the [EU energy taxation framework](#) – a part of the ongoing work towards a climate-neutral EU – as well as conclusions on the financing of EU development policies. In line with the [EU strategic agenda 2019-2024](#), conclusions on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism are also to be adopted. Finally, Ministers are expected to adopt conclusions that set out five main objectives to deepen the Capital Markets Union (CMU), in a bid to foster cross-border capital flows across the EU and to strengthen the economy. As a follow up to their previous discussions, Ministers should approve the ECOFIN work plan on climate action, which includes sustainable finance, green budgeting, green taxation and green investment. On behalf of the Commission, Executive Vice President, Valdis **Dombrovskis**, will present the report made on the implementation of the EU's 2018 sustainable finance action plan and will also update the Council on the preparation of the new Green Financing Strategy underpinning the upcoming European Green Deal. Ministers will then be invited to hold a strategic discussion on the future agenda for sustainable finance. Finally, the Council and the Commission are due to approve a [joint statement](#) on stablecoins. Executive Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis** will participate in the press conference following the meeting. (For more information: Marta Wieczorek – Tel.: +32 229 58197; Daniel Ferrie – Tel.: +32 229 86500; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

Nine more EU countries commit to the development of an ultra-secure quantum communication infrastructure

Yesterday, in Brussels, 9 EU Member States signed in coordination with the Commission a declaration on quantum communication infrastructure in Europe, joining 10 others to build an ultra-secure quantum communication infrastructure within the next 10 years. Thierry **Breton**, Commissioner for Internal Market, said: “*The declaration that several countries have just signed, following the initial signature in June, reflects the great importance that Member States are giving to the development of a European quantum communication infrastructure. This project is critical to the EU's technological sovereignty and to the preparation of the next generation of communications security with quantum-safe encryption, building on quantum entanglement properties. Cooperation at European level will be paramount for the EU to thrive as a global competitor in quantum technologies.*” Quantum technology can, for instance, make use of properties of quantum mechanics to make spying or tampering attempts on communication automatically detectable. Further details on the new signature of Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, France, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Finland can be found [here](#) and additional information about the declaration that was launched in June, as well as former signatories are available [here](#). Representatives of 24 major European companies that manufacture quantum technology products and systems recently signed a document expressing strong support for the initiative. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel. + 32 229 83583; Charles Manoury – Tel. +32 229 13391)

Mergers: Commission approves Varta AG's acquisition of Energizer's divestment business, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, Varta AG as a suitable purchaser of assets divested by Energizer in order to acquire Spectrum Brands' batteries and portable lighting business. The Commission also approved Varta AG's acquisition of the divested assets under EU merger rules, subject to conditions. In [December 2018](#), the Commission approved the acquisition of Spectrum Brands' batteries and portable lighting business by Energizer, subject to conditions. Energizer was required to sell its business of Varta-branded and unbranded household and specialty batteries to a suitable purchaser and notified to the Commission that Varta AG would purchase a package of assets. The Commission concluded that certain commitments were necessary to approve the transaction with respect to Hearing Aid Batteries sold in the mass retail channel. Following the investigation, the Commission was concerned that customers may face the risk of being shut out from that market, or face higher prices, lower quality and less choice. In order to address these concerns, Varta AG proposed to globally supply hearing aid batteries to any company currently or potentially active in the wholesale supply of hearing aid batteries under their own brand under certain conditions

for a set period of time. These commitments fully address the Commission's competition concerns. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns in the EEA. The Commission's decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments. On this basis, the Commission cleared the acquisition of the Varta business and approved Varta AG as a suitable purchaser. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control over Smith & Williamson by Permira

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over Smith & Williamson Holdings Limited ("Smith & Williamson") by Tilney Group Limited ("Tilney") both of the UK, ultimately controlled by Permira Holdings Limited ("Permira") of Guernsey. Smith & Williamson is an independent financial and professional services firm. Tilney is an independent wealth management firm. Permira is a private equity business engaged in the provision of investment management services to a number of investment funds. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the limited horizontal overlaps between the activities of the companies. 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.9580](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of sole control over Lotte UK by the Alfa group

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of sole control over Lotte Chemical UK Limited ("Lotte UK") of the UK by DAK Americas Exterior, S.L. ("DAK Americas") of Spain, ultimately controlled by Alfa, S.A.B. de C.V. ("Alfa Group") of Mexico. Lotte UK is active in the manufacture of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resin. DAK Americas is part of the Alfa Group, an industrial conglomerate, active in a range of areas including polyester, plastics and chemicals, aluminum auto components, refrigerated foods, and IT & telecoms. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns given the limited horizontal and vertical overlaps between the activities of the companies. 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.9605](#). (For more information: Arianna Podesta – Tel. +32 229 87024; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell participates in the 26th OSCE Ministerial Council in Bratislava

On 5 December, Josep **Borrell**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, will participate in the 26th [Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#) (OSCE) Ministerial Council in Bratislava. The annual meeting provides the Foreign Ministers of the [57 OSCE members](#) an opportunity to strengthen dialogue on security issues in the OSCE area and to review and assess the Organisation's activities. Josep **Borrell** will deliver a speech in the first plenary session and hold several bilateral meetings in its margins, including with Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania; the Foreign Ministers of the Eastern Partnership countries; Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia; Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey; Vadym Prystaiko, Foreign Minister of Ukraine; and Thomas Greminger, OSCE Secretary-General. Audiovisual coverage of the speech of High Representative/Vice-President **Borrell** and coverage of his meetings will be provided by [Europe by Satellite](#). (For more information: Peter Stano – Email: Peter.Stano@ec.europa.eu; Adam Kaznowski – Tel.: +32 229 89359)

Le vice-président Schinas et la commissaire Johansson en Grèce pour préparer le nouveau pacte sur la migration et l'asile

Demain, le vice-président pour la promotion de notre mode de vie européen, Margaritis **Schinas** et la

commissaire chargée des affaires intérieures, Ylva **Johansson**, se rendront à Athènes, en Grèce, pour une première visite dans le cadre d'un programme d'engagement bilatéral avec toutes les capitales afin de préparer le nouveau pacte sur la migration et l'asile. Lors de cette visite, ils rencontreront le Premier ministre Kyriacos Mitsotakis, le ministre de la protection des citoyens, Michalis Chrysochoïdis, le ministre délégué à la protection des citoyens, Giorgos Koumoutsakos, la vice-ministre du travail et des affaires sociales, Domna Michalidou, le vice-ministre de la défense nationale, Alkiviadis Stefanis, ainsi que la coordinatrice nationale pour les mineurs migrants non accompagnés, Eirini Agapidaki. Ils rencontreront également le personnel des agences de l'UE, y compris ceux travaillant pour l'Agence européenne de garde-frontières et de garde-côtes et pour le Bureau européen d'appui en matière d'asile. La commissaire **Johansson** rencontrera des représentants des organisations de la société civile. La commissaire, conjointement avec le vice-président, a l'intention de discuter, d'écouter et de dialoguer avec les gouvernements, les parlements et d'autres parties prenantes de tous les États membres dans le cadre des préparatifs du nouveau pacte. *(Pour plus d'informations : Adalbert Jahnz — Tél.: + 32 229 53156; Ciara Bottomley — Tél.: + 32 229 69971)*

Le commissaire Lenarčič en visite en Albanie à la suite du séisme destructeur

Suite aux entretiens de la présidente **von der Leyen** avec le Premier ministre albanais Edi Rama au sujet du soutien de l'UE aux personnes touchées par le récent tremblement de terre, le commissaire en charge de la gestion des crises, Janez **Lenarčič**, sera jeudi en Albanie. Dans le cadre de sa première mission en tant que coordinateur européen des interventions d'urgence, le commissaire **Lenarčič** rencontrera les experts de l'équipe européenne de protection civile, ainsi que des ingénieurs italiens et grecs, tous déployés dans le cadre du mécanisme de protection civile de l'UE. Il rencontrera le Premier ministre Edi Rama pour discuter de l'aide d'urgence actuelle et potentielle de l'UE. *« Mes pensées vont à toutes les victimes et à leurs familles. L'UE apporte une solidarité concrète au peuple albanais en ce moment difficile. Je tiens à remercier les nombreux premiers intervenants, venant d'Albanie et d'autres pays Européens, qui soutiennent le pays. L'UE s'est engagée à fournir un soutien supplémentaire au besoin »,* a déclaré la commissaire **Lenarčič**. Le mécanisme de protection civile de l'UE a déployé trois équipes de recherche et de sauvetage originaires de Grèce, d'Italie et de Roumanie et a livré des générateurs, des tentes, des sacs de couchage et des kits de premiers secours de Belgique, de Slovaquie, de Roumanie et d'Autriche. En outre, le service européen de cartographie par satellite Copernicus a produit des images satellites des zones touchées. *(Pour plus d'informations : Balazs Ujvari - Tel.: +32 229-54578; Daniel Puglisi - Tel.: +32 229 69140)*

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