



Daily News 24 / 06 / 2019

Brussels, 24 June 2019

EU confirms support to Jordan with €100 million loan under Macro-Financial Assistance programme and high-level mission of Commissioner Hahn

The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, has today approved the disbursement of a €100 million loan to Jordan. With today's disbursement, the EU has now provided Jordan with €380 million in Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) funds since 2013. The current MFA programme has helped Jordan to cover its financing needs and supported the implementation of its structural reform agenda. Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner in charge of Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"Jordan has been profoundly affected by events in Syria since the crisis there began in 2011. Today's disbursement demonstrates the EU's commitment to continue to provide political and financial support to Jordan in these challenging times. It is an important and encouraging signal that Jordan intensifies its efforts to deliver on economic reforms in close cooperation with the international community. I look forward to continuing our work with the Jordanian authorities on their reform programme and in securing a stable, stronger economy for Jordan for the benefit of its entire population."* Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** is currently in Amman, Jordan. The Commissioner will lead tomorrow a high-level mission with the main European and International Financial Institutions to discuss support to Jordan socio-economic reform agenda with country's authorities, private sector and civil society organisations. During his visit, Commissioner **Hahn** will also meet with King Abdullah II, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz, Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Mohamad Al-Ississ and he will sign EU funded projects to support innovation, sustainable growth and job creation. Information on [EU cooperation with Jordan](#) is available online. A press release on the MFA assistance is available [here](#). More info on the visit of Commissioner **Hahn** is available [here](#). Photos and videos will be available on [EbS](#). (For more information: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Maja Kocijančič – Tel.: +32 229 86570; Alceo Smerilli – Tel.: +32 229 64887; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 58615)

L'UE approuve un versement de 150 millions d'euros dans le cadre de l'assistance macrofinancière à la Tunisie*

La Commission européenne, au nom de l'UE, a approuvé aujourd'hui le versement d'un prêt de 150 millions d'euros à la Tunisie. Il s'agit du deuxième des trois versements prévus dans le cadre du deuxième programme d'assistance macrofinancière à la Tunisie, adopté par le Parlement européen et le Conseil le 6 juillet 2016. Au total, le deuxième programme a une valeur de 500 millions d'euros. Avec le versement effectué aujourd'hui, l'UE fournit désormais à la Tunisie 650 millions d'euros de fonds AMF depuis 2015. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire chargé des affaires économiques et financières, de la fiscalité et des douanes, a déclaré: *« Ce versement démontre que l'Union européenne demeure déterminée à aider la Tunisie et son peuple. Le succès de la mise en œuvre de l'ambitieux programme de réforme auquel est subordonné ce versement témoigne de la détermination de la Tunisie à prendre les mesures nécessaires pour assurer la croissance et soutenir la relance de son économie. L'Union continuera d'appuyer ce processus »*. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tel.: +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Annikky Lamp – Tel.: +32 229-56151)

Dual Food Quality: Commission releases study assessing differences in the composition of EU food products

Since his [State of the Union Address in 2017](#), President Jean-Claude **Juncker** has been committed to addressing the issue of dual quality of products. The European Commission has taken forward different initiatives and today has published a study following tests of food products across the EU using the same methodology, in order to better understand the dual quality of food products in the EU. Analysing nearly 1,400 food products in 19 EU countries, the [study](#), carried out by the

Commission's in-house science and knowledge service, the [Joint Research Centre](#), shows that 9% of the compared products differed in composition, although the front-of-pack was identical. A further 22% of products with a different composition had a similar front-of-pack. The study did not show a consistent geographical pattern. Based on the new methodology developed, national competent authorities will now be able to perform the case-by-case analysis required to determine misleading practices prohibited under EU consumer law. Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, responsible for the Joint Research Centre, said: *"Some Europeans feel branded food products they buy are different, perhaps worse, compared to those available elsewhere. The Commission called on our scientists to help objectively assess the extent of such differences on the single market. The results are mixed: while I am happy that they found no evidence of an East-West divide in the composition of branded food products, I am worried that they uncovered up to one third of tested products having different compositions while being identically or similarly branded."* Věra **Jourová**, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, said: *"There will be no double standards in Europe's single market. With the new laws penalising the dual quality and strengthening the hands of the consumer authorities, we have the tools at hand to put an end to this practice. European consumers will be able to do their shopping in full trust that they buy what they see."* The Commission launches today a new [call for proposals](#) with a total budget of €1.26 million to strengthen consumer organisations' capacities to test products and identify potentially misleading practices. The deadline for applications is 6 November 2019. The study is available [online](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel.: +32 229 67083; Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Joseph Waldstein - Tel.: +32 229 56184; Melanie Voin - Tel.: +32 229 58659)

Commission publishes recommendations on improving the Single Market for food

Today the Commission published the [final report](#) of the [High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain](#), which provides recommendations in the areas of fair and efficient trading practices, competitiveness and price transparency. Commissioner Elżbieta **Bieńkowska**, responsible for the Internal Market Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs said: *"The Forum has done important work to counter unfair trading practices, improve producer cooperation and improve transparency in the food supply chain. Today's report points towards a number of important outstanding issues. By improving the Single Market for food, we can boost the efficiency of the food sector and create new jobs."* The Juncker Commission has been developing the industrial policy in the agro-food sector and related policy measures, which contribute to a better functioning of the food supply chain. The Forum, consisting of representatives of consumers, NGOs, food chain operators and Member States, assisted the Commission with this task. Building on the work of the Forum, the Commission has put forward proposals to [address unfair trading practices](#), [improve producer cooperation](#) and introduce [greater price transparency](#). To increase transparency, the Forum proposes to create a price composition indicator to be launched in autumn. It will show how consumer expenditure is distributed within the food supply chain. The tender for this project has been opened [today](#). The report also highlights the lack of harmonised rules and uneven enforcement in certain areas as well as problems with territorial supply constraints. Furthermore, the report provides recommendations on how to better respond to consumer concerns on dual food quality and provide better information to them. The Forum gave a mandate to the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) to develop a [common methodology](#) for comparing the quality of food products across the EU. The JRC then conducted a pan-European testing campaign of food products, the results of which have been [published](#) today by the European Commission. (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel.: + 32 229 56182; Victoria von Hammerstein – Tel.: +32 229 55040)

Aide humanitaire: l'UE mobilise plus de 18 millions d'euros en faveur de la République centrafricaine en 2019

Alors que de nombreuses personnes continuent de souffrir en République centrafricaine (RCA), l'Union européenne reste solidaire des populations dans le besoin et annonce une aide humanitaire de 18,85 millions d'euros pour 2019. Ce soutien supplémentaire porte l'assistance humanitaire de l'UE en faveur de la RCA à plus de 135 millions d'euros depuis 2014. Christos **Stylianides**, commissaire chargé de l'aide humanitaire et de la gestion des crises, a déclaré: *"Pour l'UE, la situation humanitaire en République centrafricaine n'est pas une crise oubliée. Nous continuerons à fournir de l'assistance afin de pourvoir une aide vitale aux personnes dans le besoin. Nous restons toutefois préoccupés par les actes de violence perpétrés contre des civils et des travailleurs humanitaires en République centrafricaine. Les personnes innocentes et les travailleurs humanitaires ne doivent pas constituer une cible."* Le financement humanitaire de l'UE en République centrafricaine vise à aider les personnes touchées par le conflit, à prévenir la violence et fournir un soutien médical, psychosocial et juridique aux victimes de violences et d'atteintes aux droits

humains, à s'attaquer à la crise alimentaire et nutritionnelle, et à soutenir la fourniture d'aide dans les zones où les infrastructures déficientes et les combats en cours rendent difficile l'accès aux travailleurs humanitaires. Le communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tél.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tél.: +32 229 69140)

Sustainable Finance: Commission hosts stakeholder dialogue to discuss latest expert reports

The European Commission is today hosting an event to exchange views on the reports of the [Technical expert group on sustainable finance \(TEG\)](#) and present the new [Commission guidelines on climate-related reporting](#) published last week. This event builds on the Commission's ongoing efforts to involve a wide range of stakeholders as it implements its [Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth](#). Commission Vice-President Valdis **Dombrovskis**, responsible for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, said: "One of the main objectives of our Sustainable Finance policy is to harness the power of private capital to achieve a climate-neutral economy by 2050. The reports published by the technical expert group on sustainable finance and new [Commission guidelines for climate-related reporting](#) provide a thought-provoking analysis on how to bring about a rapid green transition in the financial sector." On 18 June, the TEG delivered three major reports on the [EU Taxonomy](#), which presents the most comprehensive classification system for sustainable activities to date; an [EU Green Bond Standard](#), which recommends clear and comparable criteria for issuing green bonds; and an interim report that presents recommendations on [Climate benchmarks and benchmarks' ESG disclosures](#). On the same day, the Commission also published non-binding new guidelines to help companies disclose relevant climate-related information in a more consistent and more comparable manner. Today's event in Brussels will give all participants the chance to discuss the substance of these publications and anticipate possible next steps in terms of the EU's progress on sustainable finance. See [here](#) the updated factsheet on sustainable finance. More information and webstreaming of the event are available [here](#). (For more information: Vanessa Mock – Tel.: [+32 229 56194](#); Guillaume Mercier – Tel.: [+32 229 80564](#))

Commission and Member States to discuss progress made on the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy framework

Tomorrow, Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** will participate in the Council meeting of ministers in charge of Cohesion Policy. Discussions will focus on the state of play of negotiations on the future Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and on the preparation of the new programmes, with a stronger link to the recommendations issued in the context of the [European Semester](#). "I welcome the progress made so far and I call for fast negotiations when talks resume in the autumn. All new programmes should be able to start in January 2021 to provide certainty and continuity of funding for regions, cities and businesses," said Commissioner **Crețu** ahead of the meeting. "We will keep on working in the meantime", she added, "as the Commission is in contact with all Member States to shape the new programmes on the basis of the investment priorities we suggested in the latest country reports and country-specific recommendations." The Commissioner will present the rationale behind the enhanced link between the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy and the European Semester. She will stress that EU funds provide a substantial share of the resources needed for strategic investments and the implementation of structural reforms, and that at the same time, these investments can only deliver their full potential in an environment that is friendly to businesses and conducive to growth. A factsheet on the progress made in the negotiations on the 2021-2027 long-term EU budget and its programmes is available [online](#). (For more information: Christian Spahr - Tel.: [+32 229 50055](#); Sophie Dupin de Saint Cyr – Tel.: [+32 229 56169](#))

Migration: Asylum applications in the EU return to pre-crisis levels in 2018*

New figures published today by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) show that asylum applications in the EU have decreased for the third consecutive year in 2018. The number of asylum requests received has returned to pre-crisis levels. In 2018, a total of 664,480 applications for international protection were recorded in the EU, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The overall trend of greatly reduced numbers has continued in 2019, despite an increase during the first 5 months of 2019. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: "The strong decrease in asylum applications in the EU is the result of our joint EU efforts on all fronts. We are now better managing our borders, we have put in place strong partnerships with countries of origin and transit, and we have greatly increased our efforts to protect migrants along the road and fight the root causes of irregular migration. We have to continue our

work together with a common European approach." More information can be found in the [press release](#) issued by EASO today. The full Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2018 is available [online](#). (For more information: *Natasha Bertaud* – Tel.: +32 229 67456; *Tove Ernst* – Tel.: +32 229 86764; *Markus Lammert*– Tel.: +32 229 80423)

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of L3 Technologies by Harris Corporation, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of L3 Technologies by Harris Corporation, both aerospace and defence companies based in the US. The Commission examined in particular the effects of the proposed transaction on competition in certain markets related to (a) night vision devices, which are opto-electric devices that provide users with improved vision in low-light environments and total darkness; and (b) hand held video data links, which are hand held communication devices that enable the transmission of high-bandwidth, real-time full motion video from aircraft, including drones. As regards night vision devices, the Commission found that Harris Corporation and L3 Technologies compete head-to-head in the markets for image intensification night vision devices and image intensification tubes in the European Economic Area (EEA). The proposed transaction, as initially notified, would have significantly reduced competition in these markets. As a result, the Commission was concerned that the transaction would lead to higher prices and less choice for governmental defence departments, commercial customers and other customers of the companies' night vision products in the EEA. To address the Commission's competition concerns, the companies offered to divest Harris Corporation's global night vision business. These commitments fully address the Commission's concerns. Therefore, the Commission concluded that the proposed transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns in the EEA or any substantial part of it. The Commission's decision is conditional upon Harris Corporation's full compliance with the commitments. The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: *Ricardo Cardoso* – Tel.: +32 229 80100; *Maria Tsoni* - Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition de SecureLink par Orange

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition de SL Bidco B.V. (« SecureLink »), entreprise basée aux Pays-Bas, par Orange S.A., basée en France. SecureLink opère des infrastructures et fournit à des entreprises et à des clients institutionnels des services gérés dans le domaine de la cybersécurité. Orange fournit principalement des services de communications électroniques dans les secteurs de la téléphonie fixe, de la téléphonie internet et de la téléphonie mobile dans différents pays du monde. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence en raison de son impact très limité sur la structure du marché. L'opération a été examinée dans le cadre de la procédure simplifiée du contrôle des concentrations. De plus amples informations sont disponibles sur [le site internet concurrence](#) de la Commission, dans le [registre public des affaires](#) sous le numéro d'affaire [M.9385](#). (Pour plus d'informations: *Ricardo Cardoso* – Tel.: +32 229 80100; *Maria Tsoni* - Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves prolongation of Irish credit union resolution scheme

The European Commission has found the prolongation of an Irish scheme for the orderly winding-up of credit unions to be in line with EU state aid rules, in particular with the [2013 Banking Communication](#) (see also [MEMO](#)). The objective of the scheme is to safeguard financial stability when a credit union becomes unable to meet regulatory requirements. It allows Ireland to provide aid for transferring the assets and liabilities of a failing credit union to an acquirer through a competitive process. This will help to achieve the maximum value for the assets and liabilities, ensuring that the aid is limited to the minimum necessary for an orderly winding-up, and that no buyer gains an undue economic advantage through the acquisition of under-priced assets and liabilities. Credit Unions are small financial institutions that are not covered by the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD). Ireland has chosen to make a special sector-funded resolution scheme available to those credit unions, which has been used only three times since its set-up. The scheme is prolonged until 31 May 2020. The Commission initially approved the scheme in December 2011. It has been prolonged fourteen times since then, the last time in [November 2018](#). More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the reference SA.54244. (For more information: *Ricardo Cardoso* – Tel.: +32 229 80100; *Maria Tsoni* - Tel.: +32 229 90526)

State aid: Commission approves support for JC Decaux "Villo" bike rental system in Brussels; orders recovery of up to € 2.5 million of incompatible aid granted to JC Decaux

In March 2015, following a complaint by advertising company Clear Channel Belgium, the Commission opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether two measures granted by the Brussels authorities in favour of the advertising company JC Decaux were in line with EU State aid rules. The first measure concerned the "Villo" bike rental system in Brussels. The region of Brussels defined Villo as a Service of General Economic Interest and, in 2008, following a tender procedure, granted JC Decaux an exclusive concession for this service. In addition, the region of Brussels granted JC Decaux certain rent and tax exemptions, which were outside the scope of the original tender for the Villo concession contract. The second measure concerned the operation by JC Decaux of certain advertising panels in the city of Brussels beyond the contractually agreed date for their removal and without paying any rent to the city. The Commission assessed both measures under State aid rules, in particular the [EU State aid rules on services of general economic interest](#), which allow Member States, under certain conditions, to compensate companies that have been entrusted with public service obligations for the extra cost of providing these services. Concerning the first measure, it found that: (i) Villo is a genuine public service since it promotes an environmentally friendly form of transport and contributes to reducing congestion in Brussels; and (ii) that JC Decaux has not been overcompensated. On this basis, the Commission concluded that the support measures to JC Decaux concerning "Villo" are in line with EU State aid rules. However, with respect to the second measure under investigation, the Commission found that JC Decaux benefitted from an unfair economic advantage over its competitors. The Commission concluded that the measure constitutes incompatible State aid and that an amount expected to be less than € 2.5 million will need to be recovered by the Belgian authorities. More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [SA.33078](#). *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

Competition: EU and ASEAN reinforce cooperation on competition policy at first EU-ASEAN Competition Week in Kuala Lumpur

Officials and experts from the EU and the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Member States will meet in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 24 to 28 June to advance cooperation on competition policy and enforcement. The EU-ASEAN Competition Week, hosted by the Malaysia Competition Commission, is the first in a series of annual meetings that will provide a forum for technical discussions and exchanges of good practices between the two regional organisations. Representatives from the European Commission, EU National Competition Authorities, the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States Competition Authorities will discuss a wide range of topics, including merger review, state aid control, procedural fairness, competition law challenges in the digital economy and competition enforcement in regional networks. The EU-ASEAN Competition Week is part of the [Competition Cooperation project](#), a 5-year EU-funded programme offering technical cooperation to competition authorities in Asia. The objective is to exchange experiences and strengthen convergence in competition policy, to the benefit of citizens and businesses in both the EU and Asia. The EU-ASEAN Competition Weeks will be hosted by a different ASEAN Member State Competition Authority each year. *(For more information: Ricardo Cardoso – Tel.: +32 229 80100; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Arias Cañete in Germany to discuss the integrated national energy and climate plan

Today, Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel **Arias Cañete**, will be in Germany to present the [Commission's long-term vision for a climate-neutral economy by 2050](#), adopted by the Commission last November. He will first meet Peter Altmaier, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, to exchange views on climate neutrality objectives and to discuss growth opportunities arising from the modernisation and transition towards a climate neutral economy. Later today, the Commissioner will meet Svenja Schulze, Federal Minister for the Environment. Their meeting will focus on the importance of ambitious and rigorous National Energy and Climate plans to maintain the EU leading position in the fight against global warming. Discussions will also cover Energy Union governance process specific points, the Emission Trading System, carbon pricing and nuclear energy.

This visit is part of a number of country visits by the Commissioner aimed at discussing the Commission's long-term vision with Member States, in order to identify the most cost efficient and socially fair measures and policies to deliver on the Paris Agreement temperature goals. (For more information: Anna-Kaisa Itkonen - Tel.: +32 229 56186; Lynn Rietdorf - Tel.: +32 229 74959)

Commissioner Navracsics travels to Georgia for Eastern Partnership Conference

Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor **Navracsics**, will be in Tbilisi today and tomorrow (24 and 25 June) for the [Eastern Partnership Conference on Promoting Values through Education and Culture](#). Over 200 participants will gather to consider how cooperation in the fields of education, youth and culture can strengthen integrity in education and research, citizenship, media literacy, common values and inclusiveness. The Commissioner will give one of the opening speeches. Ahead of the event, he said: *"As we celebrate ten years of the Eastern Partnership, I am confident that our discussions in Tbilisi will enrich our understanding of how education, intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity can help us build stronger and more resilient societies. Together, we will open up fresh opportunities and empower the younger generation both in the Eastern Partnership region and in the EU to become independent, engaged citizens."* The Commissioner will have bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Mamuka Bahtadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Zakaliani, and Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, Mikheil Batiashvili. The Commissioner will attend a Creative Europe Fair organised to celebrate four years of Georgia's participation in the Creative Europe programme. During his visit, he will also meet thirty young people from Georgia who have taken part in Erasmus+ and other EU programmes. (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt - Tel.: [+32 229 67083](#); Joseph Waldstein - Tel.: [+32 229 56184](#))

Commissioners Vytenis Andriukaitis attends e-commerce food conference in Berlin

Today, June 24, Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis** in charge of Health and Food Safety will be in Berlin to attend the conference on [e-Commerce](#) of food: '[International Conference on Trends and Official Control](#)'. The conference, co-organized by the European Commission and the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) aims to bring together key stakeholders from across the e-Commerce of food sector. The Commissioner will deliver a welcome speech to open the event at 13.00 CET upon arrival. Following his, the speeches from Julia Klöckner, the German Federal Minister for Agriculture, Herbert Dorfmann, MEP, and Helmut Tschiersky, President of the BVL, will also be heard. Later that afternoon, Commissioner Andriukaitis will take part in a panel discussion on the responsibility of market places and fulfilment centres. The next morning on Tuesday June 25, the Commissioner visits the AMAZON FRESH Fulfillment Centre in Berlin. Ahead of his visit, Commissioner **Andriukaitis** said: *"This event is very timely as the EU is already one of the largest e-commerce markets in the world and we expect more and more people, especially younger generations, to buy food products online in the coming years. Whilst Internet shopping brings opportunities for consumers and businesses, we need to make sure that safety, authenticity and transparency are respected. The EU new official controls legislation has already foreseen the tools to make enforcement possible and to protect our citizens."* (For more information: Anca Paduraru - Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola - Tel.: +32 229 87624)

* [updated at 14:30 on 24/06/2019]

[Upcoming events](#) of the European Commission (ex-Top News)

MEX/19/3372