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Croatia: EU invests in world-class health research centre for children

The EU is investing more than €48 million from the [European Regional Development Fund](#) to extend the Children's Hospital in Srebrnjak, on the outskirts of Zagreb, Croatia. The project involves the construction of a 15,000-m² facility and the purchase of research and medical equipment, in order to transform the hospital into a clinical research centre where new medicines can be developed and used. Once completed in February 2022, the hospital will focus on treating common and chronic diseases in children and adolescents. Commissioner for Health & Food Safety Vytenis **Andriukaitis** said: *"The EU Cohesion Policy is about improving peoples' lives, and in this case, about saving lives. Thanks to this project, children in Croatia will benefit from the latest medical research and Croatian researchers will enjoy world-class facilities near Zagreb to conduct their work."* The aim of the project is also to retain talented medical researchers and practitioners in Croatia, with an expected increase in hospital staff by 67%. The centre's work will cover medical fields such as asthma, allergies, rheumatology, cardiology, paediatric surgery, sports medicine, rehabilitation and clinical trials. Finally, the new facility will have an eco-friendly design, with reduced waste and water consumption. (For more information: Johannes Bahrke – Tél.: +32 229 58615, Sophie Dupin de Saint-Cyr - Tel.: +32 229 56169)

Plan Juncker: La Banque européenne d'investissement investit 80 millions d'euros dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel

La Banque Européenne d'Investissement (BEI) investit 80 millions d'euros dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel, soutenu par le Fonds européen pour les investissements stratégiques (EFSI) ou Plan Juncker. Eiffel Essentiel est dédié aux transitions qui affectent ces secteurs clés : l'énergie, l'agriculture et la santé. Le fonds ambitionne de financer une vingtaine d'entreprises pour des montants d'investissement de 10 à 50 millions d'euros par entreprise, en une ou plusieurs fois. Pierre **Moscovici**, commissaire européen pour les affaires économiques et financières, la fiscalité et les douanes, a déclaré : *« L'UE s'est engagée à soutenir des projets d'investissement durable tels que celui qui est présenté aujourd'hui. En garantissant l'investissement de 80 millions d'euros de la Banque européenne d'investissement dans le fonds Eiffel Essentiel, le plan Juncker aide les entreprises du secteur des énergies propres et de l'agriculture durable, en leur permettant d'accéder à des financements indispensables à leur développement. »* L'engagement cible du fonds, qui restera ouvert à souscription jusqu'à fin 2020, est de 400 millions d'euros. Un communiqué de presse est disponible [ici](#). En juillet 2019, le plan Juncker a mobilisé 424 milliards d'euros d'investissements supplémentaires dans toute l'UE, dont 70,4 milliards en France. Le plan soutient actuellement 967 000 petites et moyennes entreprises en Europe. (Pour plus d'informations: Annika Breidhardt – Tél.: +32 229-56153; Siobhan Millbright – Tél.: +32 229 57361)

Commission announces the winners of the EU Contest for Young Scientists

The winners of the [EU Contest for Young Scientists](#) were announced today during the [31st edition of the competition](#) that is being held in Sofia, Bulgaria. This year the top prizes were awarded to Adam Kelly from Ireland for the project "Optimised Simulation of General Quantum Circuits", Magnus Quaade Oddershede from Denmark for "The wingtip's influence on the efficiency of airplane wings", Alex Korocencev and Felix Christian Sewing from Germany for "Hoverboard - a Magnetically Levitated Vehicle", and Leo Li Takemaru and Poojan Pandya from the USA for "Investigating the Role of the Novel ESCRT-III Recruiter CCDC11 in HIV Budding: Identifying a Potential Target for Antiviral Therapy". The winners will receive €7000 for each of the four outstanding projects. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"I warmly congratulate the winners of this year's contest on their outstanding achievement. I am convinced that we will see many of the 154 participants hitting the headlines in the coming years with breakthrough discoveries and innovations. We need all the bright minds in Europe to make positive and impactful change!"* The EU Contest for

Young Scientists, which was set up by the European Commission in 1989, aims at giving students the opportunity to compete with the best of their contemporaries at European level, meet others with similar abilities and interests and get guidance from some of the most prominent scientists in Europe. It also complements and supports national efforts to attract young people to study science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), and to eventually pursue careers in science and research. The number of participating young scientists has risen from 53 in the first competition in 1989 to an average of 150 a year. More information about the prize itself and the other winners is available [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel.: +32 229 83583)

EU invests €210 million to help bring innovative projects to market

The European Commission will invest a total of €210 million to 108 innovative projects helping them to reach the market faster. The funding is provided through the pilot phase of the [European Innovation Council](#) (EIC), which supports innovators, entrepreneurs, small companies and scientists with bright ideas and the ambition to scale up internationally. Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos **Moedas**, said: "Each of the companies receiving funding through the European Innovation Council is offering a solution to a problem that affects the daily lives of Europeans, be it in the area of health, environment, energy and more. I am delighted to see that the European Innovation Council is already delivering on its promise of supporting innovators with the vision and ability of bringing about positive change in the world". The selected projects include a hybrid simulation platform for neurosurgery, a technology replicating the rain process to supply sustainable drinking water, an anti-metastatic cancer vaccine, a technology to map air quality with high-spatial resolution and many more. They will receive funding under two strands (the EIC Accelerator and the Fast Track to Innovation) of the €3 billion pilot of the European Innovation Council, which runs from 2018 to 2020, under the EU research and innovation programme [Horizon 2020](#). From now on, the EIC Accelerator will allow for optional equity investment in addition to a grant. Innovative companies can apply only for a grant or for up to €17.5 million in combined grant and equity financing to scale up quickly and effectively. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou – Tel. +32 229 83583)

Mergers: Commission clears E.ON's acquisition of Innogy, subject to conditions

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition by E.ON of Innogy's distribution and consumer solutions business as well as certain of its electricity generation assets. The approval is conditional on full compliance with a commitments package offered by E.ON. E.ON and RWE, which controls Innogy, are both energy companies based in Germany. They are active across the energy supply chain, from generation and wholesale to distribution and retail supply of electricity and gas. They are each active in several Member States but their activities mostly overlap in Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and the UK. Today's decision follows an [in-depth investigation](#) of E.ON's proposed acquisition of Innogy's distribution and consumer solutions business as well as certain electricity generation assets of Innogy. During its in-depth investigation the Commission had concerns that the transaction, as initially notified, would have significantly reduced competition in the following markets: (a) German market for the supply of electricity for heating purposes, (b) German market for the supply of electric vehicle charging stations on motorways; (c) Czech market for the retail supply of gas (to all customers) and electricity (to households and small businesses); (d) Hungarian market for the retail supply of electricity to unregulated businesses. To address the Commission's competition concerns, E.ON offered the following commitments: (i) To divest most of E.ON's customers supplied with heating electricity in Germany and, at the option of the purchaser, all assets that may be needed to operate effectively in the market; (ii) To discontinue the operation of 34 electric charging stations located on German motorways.; (iii) To divest E.ON's business in the retail supply of electricity to unregulated customers in Hungary, including all assets and staff; (iv) To divest Innogy's entire business in the retail supply of electricity and gas in Czechia, including all assets and staff. The Commission concluded that the transaction, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. This decision is conditional upon the full compliance with the commitments. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy, said: "It is important that all Europeans and businesses can buy electricity and gas at competitive prices. Today, we can approve the acquisition of Innogy by E.ON because the commitments offered by E.ON will ensure that the merger will not lead to less choice and higher prices in the countries where these companies operate." The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Concentrations: la Commission autorise l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de SFR FTTH par les groupes Allianz, OMERS et Altice

La Commission européenne a approuvé, en vertu du règlement européen sur les concentrations, l'acquisition du contrôle conjoint de SFR FTTH, entreprise basée en France, par AGF Benelux S.à.r.l., une filiale exclusive de Allianz SE, toutes deux basées en Allemagne, OMERS Infrastructure European Holdings B.V. ("OMERS Infrastructure"), basée aux Pays-Bas, et Altice S.A. basée en France. SFR FTTH comprend l'activité liée au réseau fibre de SFR S.A., société exclusivement contrôlée par Altice, dans les zones du territoire français se trouvant en dehors des zones très denses définies par l'Autorité de régulation des communications électroniques et des postes. Allianz est un groupe de services financiers globaux, active dans l'assurance et la gestion d'actifs. OMERS Infrastructures est la branche infrastructures de l'administrateur de fonds de pension canadien OMERS Administration Corporation. Altice est active dans la fourniture de services de communications électroniques et les médias. La Commission a conclu que l'opération envisagée ne soulèverait pas de problème de concurrence dans la mesure où Allianz et SFR FTTH ne sont pas actives sur le même marché ou sur des marchés liés. En outre, SFR FTTH étant déjà sous le contrôle conjoint des groupes OMERS et Altice, il n'y aura aucun changement en termes de chevauchement des activités de SFR FTTH et, respectivement, d'OMERS et d'Altice. La transaction 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.9464](#). (Pour plus d'information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the merger between Global Payments and Total System Services

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the merger between Global Payments Inc. and Total System Services Inc. ("TSYS"), both of the US. Global Payments is a global provider of payment solutions, which offers services including enterprise and payment management solutions, payment card processing, online payment portal solutions, and merchant acquiring. TSYS is a global provider of payment solutions, which offers services including payment card processing, merchant acquiring services, and products, such as software for payment card processing. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no competition concerns given, on the one hand, the limited horizontal overlap between the companies' activities and, on the other hand, the absence of anti-competitive vertical effects resulting from the combination of the activities of TSYS and Global Payments. The transaction was examined under the normal merger review procedure. More information is available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the public [case register](#) under the case number [M.9452](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Mergers: Commission clears the acquisition of Phoenix Wind Repower, LLC by UBS AG and Ares Management Corporation

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the proposed acquisition of Phoenix Wind Repower, LLC ("Phoenix") of the US by UBS AG of Switzerland and Ares Management Corporation ("Ares") of the US. Phoenix owns interests in wind farms in Texas. UBS provides financial services to private, corporate and institutional clients. Ares is an asset manager. The Commission concluded that the proposed transaction would raise no competition concerns because Phoenix is not active outside the US. 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.9530](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526)

Food safety: the Commission publishes its annual report on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The 2018 report (hyperlink to be added) on the use of the [Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed](#) published today shows that a total of 3699 notifications of food or feed risks were reported by the Member States to the European Commission last year. Of these, 1118 were classified as 'alert', indicating a serious health risk for which swift action was required by food operators or authorities. Aflatoxins in nuts and mercury in swordfish were the two most frequently reported issues in food checked at the EU border and on the EU market. As in previous years, only a small percentage of the notifications in 2018 related to feed (9%) and food contact materials (4%). Also in 2018, a

significant number of notifications related to a multi-country foodborne outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* linked to frozen corn. The RASFF was instrumental for tracing and removing the affected products from the market. Commissioner Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, in charge of Health and Food Safety said: *"2019 marks the 40th anniversary of the RASFF which is recognised across the board, within, and outside the EU, as a crucial tool to ensure that food placed on the market in the EU is safe. Traceability of food and, if need be, a swift removal of goods from the market are commitments we have towards consumers. The increased activity of the RASFF network as shown by this year's report is a confirmation of the enhanced cooperation by food operators and Member States' authorities, which constitutes a positive message for consumers"*. (For more information: Anca Paduraru – Tel.: +32 229 91269; Aikaterini Apostola – Tel.: +32 229 87624)

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

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