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Europeans show record support for the euro

More than three in four citizens think that the single currency is good for the European Union, according to the latest Eurobarometer results. This is the highest support since surveys began in 2002. According to the results of the latest Eurobarometer survey on the euro area, 76% of respondents think the single currency is good for the EU. This is the highest support since the introduction of euro coins and banknotes in 2002 and a 2-percentage point increase since last year's already record levels. Similarly, a majority of 65% of citizens across the euro area think that the euro is beneficial for their own country: this is also the highest number ever measured. The common currency is supported by a majority of citizens in all 19 euro area Member States. Jean-Claude **Juncker**, President of the European Commission, said: *"Almost 28 years after I added my name to the Maastricht Treaty, I remain convinced that this was the most important signature I ever made. The euro – now 20 years young – has become a symbol of unity, sovereignty and stability. We have worked hard over the past five years to turn the page of Europe's crisis, ensure that the benefits of jobs, growth and investment are reaching all Europeans and make Europe's Economic and Monetary Union stronger than ever. The euro and I being the only survivors of the Maastricht Treaty, I am glad to see this record-high support for our single currency on my last days in office as President of the European Commission. The euro has been the fight of a lifetime and it is one of Europe's best assets for the future. Let's make sure that it continues to deliver prosperity and protection to our citizens."* The full report is available [here](#). The press release, with annexes on key indicators attached, is available [here](#). (For more information: Annika Breidthardt - +32 229 56153; Enda McNamara – Tel.: +32 229 64976; Annikky Lamp - +32 229 56151)

Albania: EU mobilises additional emergency support following deadly earthquakes

The European Union is mobilizing additional emergency support amid the strongest earthquake in decades and numerous aftershocks in Albania. The EU Civil protection Mechanism was activated at the request of the Albanian authorities on 26 November. In addition to 3 search and rescue teams of more than 200 staff already deployed to Albania, the European Union is helping address Albania's request for additional support such as in-kind assistance and structural engineers. *"The European Union continues to support Albania at this challenging time. We will provide emergency help for as long as needed. Search and rescue teams, mobilized through the European Civil Protection Mechanism, are on the ground. I would like to thank Italy and Greece for already offering additional support through the Mechanism,"* said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**. [Copernicus system](#) has already produced 6 satellite images of the affected zones. The European Union's 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre is in constant contact with the Albanian authorities and continues to monitor the situation. The EU has deployed a Civil Protection Team, which is helping the authorities coordinate the response and assess the damage. On Wednesday, President **Juncker** sent a letter of condolences to Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama. A statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is also available [online](#). (For more information: Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela – Tel.: +32 229 65322; Daniel Puglisi – Tel.: +32 229 69140)

Roaming market review: use of mobile phones abroad has surged since end of EU roaming charges

The European Commission has published today the [first full review](#) of the roaming market, showing that travellers across the EU have benefitted a lot from the end of roaming charges in June 2017. The use of mobile data while travelling in the EU has increased tenfold compared to the year before roam-like-at-home. Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel** said: *"The review showcases once again how successful the abolition of roaming charges has been. Europeans are largely benefitting from the opportunity to use their mobile devices freely while travelling. At the same time, we can also clearly see that the EU roaming market continues to function well. Contrary to the fears of*

higher domestic prices due to the end of roaming charges, domestic prices for mobile services have actually overall decreased across the EU." The use of roaming data within the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) peaked in the holiday period of summer 2018 (third quarter) with 12 times higher use of mobile data abroad compared to before all retail roaming costs were scrapped. Over the same period, the volume of phone calls made while roaming was almost three times higher. Further details are available in the [press release](#). (For more information: Nathalie Vandystadt – Tel. +32 229 67 083; Johannes Bahrke – Tel.: +32 229 58615; Inga Höglund – Tel.: +32 229 50698)

Warsaw wins 2020 Access City Award for making the city more accessible to citizens with disabilities

The 2020 Access City Award goes to the city of Warsaw. By involving people with disabilities and accessibility needs in its endeavor to make the city more accessible, Warsaw was able to make a substantial overall improvement to the city's ease of access in a short space of time. At the award ceremony, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen said: "With the Access City Award, winning cities can be an inspiration for other EU cities and beyond that encounter similar challenges. Warsaw, winner of the 10th edition, is a model for others, showing that a lot can be done in a very short amount of time and that commitment can be key to success." The European Commission received 47 applications for the 2020 edition. The city of Castelló de la Plana in Spain and the city of Skellefteå in Sweden are the second and third place winners. Chania in Greece, Tartu in Estonia and Evreux in France all received a special mention. Chania was recognised for its use of technology to provide accessible parking, Tartu for its grassroots approach to accessibility and finally Evreux for its work on hidden disabilities. More information is available in this [press release](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion – Tel.: + 32 2 229 67094)

Nuit du cinéma européen 2019: des projections gratuites représentent le meilleur du cinéma européen

La deuxième édition de la [Nuit du cinéma européen](#), une initiative célébrant le meilleur du cinéma européen en proposant des projections gratuites, aura lieu du 2 au 6 décembre dans [54 villes](#) de l'UE. Le programme présente plus de 40 films européens sortis au cours de l'année écoulée et soutenus par le [programme MEDIA d'Europe Créative](#), notamment "Les Misérables", "La vérité", "Portrait de la jeune fille en feu" et "Il traditore". La commissaire Mariya **Gabriel**, chargée de l'économie et de la société numériques, a déclaré: « Le cinéma est l'un des meilleurs moyens de célébrer la diversité et la richesse de notre culture européenne et de renforcer les liens entre les personnes par le biais de leur passion commune pour les films. La Nuit européenne du cinéma n'est pas seulement une initiative visant à rendre hommage à nos artistes et à leur créativité, c'est aussi un exemple de la manière dont l'UE peut rapprocher le cinéma indépendant des Européens. » Le commissaire Tibor **Navracsics**, en charge de l'éducation, de la culture, de la jeunesse et des sports, a déclaré: « Les retours très positifs sur la première édition de la Nuit du cinéma européen montrent à quel point Les Européens ont soif de découvrir et de mieux comprendre leurs cultures respectives à travers le cinéma. Permettre aux gens de profiter d'un plus grand nombre de films venant d'autres pays européens fait partie des efforts constants de l'UE pour créer des communautés soudées et un sentiment d'appartenance partagé. » Après chaque projection, le public aura l'occasion de rencontrer des réalisateurs, des producteurs et des critiques pour discuter du film. L'événement est organisé par la Commission européenne, dans le cadre du [programme MEDIA de l'Europe créative](#), et [Europa Cinemas](#), le premier réseau de salles de cinéma axé sur les films européens. Le communiqué de presse complet est disponible [ici](#). (Pour plus d'informations: Nathalie Vandystadt - Tél. : +32 229 67083; Inga Höglund - Tél.: +32 229 50698)

EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation: €200 million for microfinance institutions and social enterprise lenders across Europe

The European Union, the [European Investment Fund \(EIF\)](#), and the [European Investment Bank \(EIB\)](#) have launched a €200 million loan fund to support lending to micro-enterprises and social enterprises under the [EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#). Commenting on the new EaSI loan fund, Marianne **Thyssen**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, said: " We are delighted about the launch of this new loan fund under our Programme for Employment and Social Innovation that will give a sizeable boost to microfinance institutions and social enterprise lenders in Europe. This new fund is another addition to the toolbox of EU level instruments dedicated to social finance. Moreover, it reflects the EU's unwavering commitment to delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights, building a more inclusive and fairer Europe, and supporting equal opportunities and access to the labour market." In line with the EU's policy objectives, the fund will

promote microfinance and social entrepreneurship in EU Member States and other participating countries, by encouraging microfinance institutions and social enterprise lenders to increase funding for micro-enterprises as well as social enterprises as a means of supporting financial and social inclusion. The loan fund will provide senior and subordinated loans to microfinance institutions and social enterprise lenders in order to boosting their lending capacity. It expands the range of EU level financial instruments available under the EaSI programme. More information is available [here](#). (For more information: Christian Wigand - Tel.: +32 229 62253; Sara Soumillion - Tel.: + 32 2 229 67094)

A European fund to support the circular bioeconomy

The European Commission and the European Investment Bank announced today that ECBF Management GmbH has been selected as an investment advisor for the European Circular Bioeconomy Fund. The Fund aims at providing financing for innovative circular bioeconomy companies and projects in the EU and in countries associated with [Horizon 2020](#), the EU's research and innovation programme. Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"Sustainable bioeconomy has the potential to play a major role for the European Green Deal. It will help us reach our environmental, climate, and biodiversity targets in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The European Circular Bioeconomy Fund will fill the funding gaps, attracting private investments that bring bio-based innovations closer to the market."* The upcoming fund, created as part of the [EU Bioeconomy Strategy](#), aims to raise funds from public and private investors with a target volume of €250 million and for a first close in early 2020. It will invest in areas such as agriculture and farming, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, biochemicals, biomaterials, and nutrition. There is a proposal for the European Investment Bank to invest up to €100 million in the fund, which is backed by a guarantee from [InnovFin - EU finance for Innovators](#), an initiative funded under Horizon 2020. A press release is available in the [EIB press page](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet - Tel. +32 229 56182; Marietta Grammenou - Tel. + 32 229 83583)

State aid: Commission approves German scheme for very high capacity broadband networks in Bavaria

The European Commission has approved, under EU State aid rules, a Bavarian scheme to deploy very high capacity networks in Bavaria. The aid will bring very fast broadband to customers in areas where the market does not provide them, in line with the EU broadband connectivity goals. The scheme follows an earlier gigabit pilot project, which was approved by the Commission in [December 2018](#). Contrary to the pilot project, which involved only six municipalities, the present scheme applies to the whole of Bavaria. Germany notified to the Commission the Bavarian scheme, which aims to develop a new, publicly financed very high capacity connectivity infrastructure that will deliver a faster internet for households, companies and public institutions in Bavaria. As the earlier pilot project, the Bavarian gigabit scheme will bring about a significant improvement - a 'step change' - in connectivity. The Bavarian gigabit scheme is in line with the strategic objectives of the [Gigabit Communication](#), as it allows for public investment in areas where the new 2025 targets are not yet met and no sufficient infrastructure is to be provided by private investors within the next three years. At the same time, it protects incentives for private investments, which are needed in order to achieve full coverage with very high capacity connectivity networks in Europe. The aid will be awarded based on open, transparent and non-discriminatory tenders, with all technologies being able to compete for provision of the service. On this basis, the Commission has approved the Bavarian gigabit scheme under the [Broadband State aid Guidelines](#). The project will contribute to the EU strategic objectives set out in the Commission's [Gigabit Communication](#), which encourages investments into very high capacity networks across the EU. Commissioner Margrethe **Vestager**, in charge of competition policy said: *"The Bavarian scheme promotes the deployment of gigabit-infrastructure. With this scheme, public money will be channelled into those areas which are most in need of better connectivity. At the same time, it will foster investment from private operators."* The full press release is available online in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#). (For more information: Lucía Caudet - Tel. +32 229 56182; Giulia Astuti - Tel.: +32 229 55344)

Mergers: Commission clears acquisition of joint control over Genesee & Wyoming Australia by PGGM and Macquarie

The European Commission has approved, under the EU Merger Regulation, the acquisition of Genesee & Wyoming Australia ("GWA") of Australia by the PGGM group of the Netherlands and the Macquarie group of Australia. GWA is active in the provision and operation of freight rail transport services in Australia. PGGM is a global provider of pension fund services. Macquarie is a global financial group and provider of investment services in the infrastructure, real estate, agriculture and energy markets for institutional investors. The Commission concluded that the proposed acquisition would raise no

competition concerns, as GWA has no actual or foreseen activity within the European Economic Area. 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.9567](#). (For more information: *Lucía Caudet – Tel. +32 229 56182; Maria Tsoni – Tel.: +32 229 90526*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-President Schinas, Commissioner Johansson and Commissioner Reynders take part in the meeting of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers

Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life Margaritis **Schinas**, Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva **Johansson** and Commissioner for Justice Didier **Reynders** will attend the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Brussels on 2 and 3 December. On Monday morning, Vice-President **Schinas** and Commissioner **Johansson** will join Home Affairs Ministers for policy debates on the future of EU migration and asylum policy and on the future of EU internal security. Over lunch, participants will exchange views on the future of home affairs policy for the period 2019-2024. The Commission and the Presidency will then inform Ministers about the implementation of [interoperability measures](#), which are intended to close important security gaps by making EU information systems for security, migration and border management work together in a more intelligent and targeted way. Ministers will also exchange views about the implementation of the strengthened European Border and Coast Guard, ahead of the entry into force of the revised Regulation on 4 December. The Counter-Terrorism Group will then update Ministers on further cooperation among counter-terrorism authorities, and the Commission will provide an update on the EU cooperation mechanism for preventing radicalisation. A press conference with the participation of Vice-President **Schinas** and Commissioner **Johansson** will take place on Monday afternoon at +/- 18:00 CET and will be live streamed on [EbS](#). On Tuesday, the Council is expected to reach a political agreement on two proposals of regulations ([Service of Documents](#) and [Taking of Evidence](#)) that aim to modernise cross-border transfer of legal documents and evidence in civil justice. Justice Ministers will also discuss environmental crime following the Commission's presentation of the final report on the eighth round of mutual evaluations in the field of criminal matters. Ministers are expected to adopt conclusions on victims' rights and conclusions on alternative measures to detention. The Council also aims to adopt conclusions on the future of civil justice cooperation. The Commission will brief Ministers on the state of play of the establishment of European Public Prosecutor's Office. Over lunch, participants will talk about the 'EU's new Rule of Law Cycle and the JHA Council'. Finally, on e-evidence, the Council will be updated on the negotiations with the US and the Council of Europe. Commissioner Reynders will participate in a press conference at 17:10, which will be live streamed on [EbS](#). (For more information: *Adalbert Jahnz – Tel.: +32 229 53156; Christian Wigand – Tel.: +32 229 62253*)

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